

# Public Secondary School Teachers' Conceptions and Practices of Assessment in Distance Learning

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to describe the conceptions and practices of public secondary teachers in assessing learners under distance learning in the Division of Pampanga during the School Year 2021-2022. A mixed methods type of research, particularly sequential explanatory design, was employed involving the 58 public secondary school teachers. The researcher developed survey and interview guide questionnaires that were employed for data collection. Most teacher respondents were female and classified as late young adults. Findings revealed that teachers strongly agree on the importance of assessment in improving teaching and learning. Similarly, they demonstrate a strong agreement in their practices for conducting remote assessments. Furthermore, the study identified various challenges teachers faced when assessing learners through distance learning, such as difficulties in delivering effective learning, issues with student attitude, the intrusion of different entities, and parental involvement in their child's education. Furthermore, findings revealed a significant difference in the conception and practices of public secondary teachers when grouped according to sex, except for their conception of assessment in terms of school accountability. There is also a significant relationship between the respondents' profile (sex) and conception with a p-value of .265 and between the respondents' sex and the practices of assessments with a p-value of .309. These findings highlighted the need for an improved assessment practices plan to further enhance teachers' assessment conception and practices, emphasizing academic integrity to achieve greater parity with the legal bases supporting teachers' assessment practices appropriate for various learning modalities.

**Keywords:** Teachers' Conception of Assessment, Assessment Practices, Distance Learning.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Assessments are crucial for students to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint areas for improvement, and monitor their learning progress. It plays a crucial role in education as it significantly impacts the support and motivation provided to students to understand and monitor their learning progress. Moreso, assessments serve as valuable tools for teachers to facilitate student learning. By using assessments, teachers can gain insights into students' individual strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to tailor their instruction accordingly.

Chaudhury (2020) stated that education teaches individuals about society and the environment while honing their abilities to change them for the better. It also supports people in developing their perspective on their lives, preparing them to have their own points of view and form their own opinions on various aspects of life. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created significant difficulties in educational assessment. Traditional forms of assessment, like written exams and standardized tests, have proven challenging for educators to administer due to remote learning and limited access to technology. Additionally, it has been difficult for educators to accurately assess students' learning and progress because of the lack of face-to-face interaction and their inability to watch students in a classroom setting. Despite these obstacles,

educators have had to adjust and discover fresh ways to evaluate student learning, such as through online tests and portable formative evaluations.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way individuals live, interact, work, teach, and learn. The implications and consequences of the pandemic on education are unclear, but they will likely present greater challenges for educators and learners in vulnerable and unstable circumstances. The majority of nations worldwide experienced unprecedented total or partial lockdowns, which led to the immediate closure of schools and universities (Flores & Swennen, 2020). According to UNICEF (2020), temporary school closures have been announced by most countries globally due to the spread of COVID-19, which affects over 91% of students worldwide, or approximately 1.6 billion young people and children. Furthermore, according to UNICEF (2020), the COVID-19 situation presents an opportunity for education systems to reform their assessment methods and establish new practices at all levels, from the classroom approach to remote learning systems. However, ensuring the continuity of education delivery is not limited to simply "teaching a class." It involves safeguarding the educational experience and maintaining the institutional and emotional connections that children have with their school, teachers, and peers. In the current context, the continuation of educational services requires more than providing educational materials (whether written, televised, or digital), but also the development and maintenance of meaningful personal relationships (UNICEF, 2021). Furthermore, distance learning options are available for the continuation of education, which involve using digital and non-digital platforms to assist parents, guardians, and teachers in accessing remote educational resources and support. Furthermore, while children were quarantined, there were urgent initiatives to transfer the teaching process online on an unproven and unprecedented scale, conduct online assessments on a trial-and-error basis, and develop content suitable for distance learning using technology and tools (UNICEF, 2021).

According to Kentnor (2015), distance education is a method of instruction introduced previously; its beginning can be found in the 18th century. Over the last 300 years, its evolution and progression have paralleled advances in communications technology, and distance learning is becoming increasingly popular. Although distance learning gained popularity in the late 1800s, its rapid expansion started in the late 1990s, when the online technological revolution took off. It is not a new phenomenon, but it continues to reach new heights as technological advancements progress. In line with this, as cited by UNICEF (2021), distance learning is an inclusion mechanism for those with employment or jobs that prevent them from attending conventional education programs. It was regulated and supported by the distribution of educational study materials. As educational technology advances, the methods by which we impart and receive knowledge in conventional and online classrooms will also continue to advance (Kentnor, 2015).

Moreover, distance learning is a self-study model with no set schedule, allowing individuals to organize their learning experience based on the materials provided by the educational institution. The introduction of radio and television changed distant learning by allowing individuals to be reached on a far larger scale than was previously feasible with only written materials. The advent of the digital age has recently given rise to new opportunities and difficulties. Furthermore, in terms of assessment, digital technology can be used for various purposes because of its versatility (UNICEF, 2021). Conversely, the shift towards an "online mode" has presented significant difficulties, including limited internet access, an unreliable power supply, underprepared teachers, inadequate monitoring methods, and challenges in establishing teacher-student rapport in the digital realm. Some problems encountered include bridging the impersonal online experience, increased screen time, and the lack of tools for content creation in regional languages (Gupta & Vineet, 2020). For certain students, digital learning is difficult due to the need for reliable internet access or technology, creating a digital divide that persists between countries and income levels within countries. OECD data indicates that while 95% of students in Switzerland, Norway, and Austria have access to a computer for schooling, only 34% of students in Indonesia have access. As a result, teachers and students face challenges in delivering effective teaching in a distance learning environment, and assessment is undoubtedly an essential component. Many schools are grappling with grading practices, with some opting for pass/fail structures and others adhering to traditional grading practices. Of course, some fall somewhere in the middle. However, whether we report student learning as a grade or pass/fail, we will all require an assessment to assess student progress (Miller, 2020).

In a review of literature, according to Duwairi (2013), in assessment for learning, teachers use assessment as an investigative tool to learn everything they can about their student's abilities and knowledge, as well as any misunderstandings, assumptions, or knowledge gaps they might have. "Assessment as learning" is grounded in constructivist principles and originates from the concept that learning goes beyond the mere transmission of information from one person to another. Instead, it entails an active process of cognitive restructuring that takes place when individuals interact with novel ideas (Duwairi, 2013).

According to Lynch (2018), assessment is crucial to the current education system. It functions as a means of evaluating individual performance and comparing it across a range of contexts and populations. Additionally, assessment is employed to gather significant insights into a student's progress or development and to empower them to participate in decisions related to their learning process. Once teachers receive this information, they can assess each student's achievement level, and consequently, the educational objective of the assessment is to provide information about student's progress and needs, facilitate teachers in organizing and implementing follow-up instruction, and enable students to understand how they can improve their learning (Brown & Remesal, 2017). Educational objectives and learning outcomes can be successfully linked by integrating appropriate assessment practices that align with teaching and learning objectives (Eltanahy, 2017). Teachers could also use SMS or phone-based engagement to gather feedback on their students' learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2020). Teachers have various techniques to gather information about their student's abilities and knowledge, which can be either formal or informal and can be utilized for summative, formative, or a combination of both types of assessments. Furthermore, it is essential for teachers to use formative assessment approaches to gain insights into their student's learning needs and adapt their teaching strategies to assist them in achieving their objectives, as emphasized by Monteiro et al. (2021).

Numerous studies have been conducted to explore teachers' beliefs and practices related to assessment. One such study, conducted by Brown, Lake, and Matters (2011), examined the impact of policy priorities on teachers' assessment conceptions in Queensland using multi-group analysis. Their findings revealed that primary teachers believed assessment promoted teaching and learning more than secondary teachers did, while the latter group believed it held students accountable. Primary teachers also had a stronger correlation between the belief that assessment is irrelevant and the belief that it makes students accountable. These findings suggest that teachers' beliefs about assessment are influenced by the assessment practices used at their level of education. Furthermore, the study found small but statistically significant differences between using assessment to hold students accountable and using assessment to improve education, which is consistent with the idea that policies shape teachers' beliefs about assessment. In contrast, Duwairi (2013) conducted a study on assessment models in Jordanian secondary schools and found the assessment of learning was the predominant model used by mathematics teachers, while assessment for learning and assessment as learning were infrequently employed. The study also revealed that there were no significant differences in the assessment models utilized by mathematics teachers after receiving training. To obtain an insight into how Chinese teachers perceive the purpose and function of assessments, Brown & Gao (2015) conducted a study on their conceptions of assessment for and of learning. The researchers identified six key constructs that represented different perceptions of the nature and purpose of assessments among different groups of Chinese teachers. These constructs ranged from a positive view that assessments enhance students' personal traits and academic abilities to a negative perspective that assessments are used for school control and inspection. This research sheds light on the challenges policymakers may encounter when attempting to engage teachers in mitigating the adverse effects of high-stakes assessment systems. On the other hand, Azis, A. (2015), in his study about assessment's role in teaching and learning in various settings. He revealed that assessment is associated with learning development and supports the use of a variety of tactics and instruments in assessing students.

Moreover, a research study was conducted to explore the beliefs of New Zealand teachers about assessment and how school-based assessment for qualifications impacted their evaluation concepts. The study revealed that environmental factors had a significant impact on teachers' assessment beliefs and there was tension between formative and summative evaluation opinions, especially when teachers were responsible for evaluating national qualifications (Yates & Johnston, 2017). Brown & Remesal (2017) also conducted a study with 563 primary and secondary school teachers in Ecuador using two inventories, the Spanish QMCoA and the New Zealand TCoA, to analyze the impact of environmental factors on teachers' assessment beliefs. They found that both models fit the data with some modifications, and the improvement, caution, and societal control factors had the highest mean scores. The teaching, certifying, and accounting domains were moderately correlated with accountability and improvement purposes, while societal control was correlated with caution, and formative regulation was correlated with irrelevance based on inter-correlations between the Spain and New Zealand models. These results align with how teachers view assessment within a robust examination system.

In a study conducted by Shehzadi et al. (2021) on Classroom Assessment in Public High Schools in Punjab, Pakistan, the researchers examined how demographic variables such as gender, qualification, experience, teaching assignments, and assessment training influenced teachers' conceptions and practices of classroom assessment. However, the study did not find any significant effects. Thus, the researchers concluded that individual teacher characteristics do not play a role in the development of conceptions. He also concluded that teachers of different genders, qualifications, school locations,

experiences, and assessment training have similar concepts about assessment. Moreso, he also revealed that assessment practices have no effects on teachers with different levels of qualification, gender, school location, assessment training, teaching assignment, and experience. Additionally, teachers agreed with the concepts of improvement, school accountability, and student accountability in assessment but disagreed with the notion that "assessment is unimportant." The study found a correlation between assessment concepts, where formal assessments that evaluated surface-level cognitive processing were widely used by teachers, while informal assessments that required deep cognitive processing of material were less commonly used. However, the study also showed that assessment concepts and practices were not connected (Shehzadi et al., 2021).

Similarly, a study was carried out by Monteiro et al. (2021) using a multiple-case design approach to examine how primary school teachers and students perceive and execute assessments. They revealed that teachers mostly see assessment as a means of improving, whereas their assessment practices and students' perceptions are primarily concerned with school and student accountability. In addition, the way students view assessment is influenced by the assessments they undergo in the classroom. Monteiro et al. (2021) suggested that teachers may hold assessment beliefs that do not align with their actual practices in order to navigate limitations imposed by their social and environmental surroundings.

Ferretti et al. (2021) conducted qualitative content analysis to comprehend the basic aspects of teacher assessment and the challenges that must be faced in the context of long-distance learning (LDL). Ferretti et al. (2021) revealed that teachers did not identify valid LDL assessment methods during the lockdown, owing to a lack of control over the students. There needs to be clarity about the definition of formative assessment, along with a new awareness of the possibilities digital technologies offer for the individualization of didactics. The current scenario in distant learning, particularly in Italy, fluctuates depending on the individual teacher's process of adapting to the new circumstances. Some assessment views, particularly, are linked to assessment adaptation and overcoming hurdles. Simultaneously, major challenges arise in terms of evaluation, particularly summative evaluation. These issues stem in part from a need for more understanding of the technological capabilities available and, in part, from the sociopolitical framework in which the teacher operates.

Similar to other nations, the Philippines has been impacted by the unforeseeable transformations in education brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Without a doubt, the role of teachers is essential to the teaching and learning process in the new normal, regardless of the mode of instruction used. In contrast to a conventional classroom environment, this role has expanded. Even when working remotely, teachers must be accessible, around the clock in the new normal. Despite the fact that it may be time-consuming for educators, they must be accessible online at all times to respond to inquiries from pupils or parents, as asserted by Ancheta et al. (2020). As per Education Secretary Briones' statement, their primary obligation, in accordance with the President's orders, is to prioritize the safety, health, and well-being of the students, teachers, and personnel while also taking measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. At the same time, we want to make certain that learning is not disrupted. Our battle cry is learning must continue." Moreover, she also said they have come out with a menu of options that are diverse. They have internet, televisions, and radio. Online is not the sole answer; there is a lot of disagreement in the Philippines about how effective it is or whether it is a good way of teaching learners. If everything else fails, learning modules will be printed and distributed to various pick-up places for either parents or village officials to give to the students (Department of Education, 2020). Moreover, in order to address the issues of "congestion and overlaps" identified in the curriculum review, the Department of Education (DepEd) has introduced a redesigned curriculum for the academic year 2020-2021. The main focus of this new curriculum is the simplification of the K to 12 Curriculum into 5,689 MELCs, which represents a 60 percent reduction from the original 14,171. This initiative is a part of DepEd's Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) aimed at ensuring uninterrupted education during the pandemic (Hernando-Malipot, 2020).

Furthermore, Estrada (2020) stated that the existing system of student assessment was already questionable during the pre-pandemic period. It subjected students to constant assessment for the sake of assessment. This could be disastrous in the context of distance learning. In addition, to address this pressing concern about student assessment, the Alliance of Concerned Teachers petitioned the Department of Education to temporarily replace the numerical grading system with a pass/fail system. The latter quickly rejected the request, claiming that numerical grades would cause students to achieve expectations of "better performance not only for national assessments but also for international assessments."

Similarly, to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning while prioritizing the health, safety, and well-being of learners, teachers, and personnel, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued DepEd Order No. 012 s. 2020, also known as the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), for the academic year 2020-2021. Alongside this order, DepEd also released the Interim Guidelines for Assessment and Grading, also known as DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2020, to provide

guidance on the assessment and grading scheme adopted in the same academic year. The policy promotes the following principles: (a) holistic and authentic assessment that captures essential learning competencies; (b) assessment as integral in understanding students' learning and development; (c) the necessity of various assessment strategies, with formative assessment taking priority to promote growth and mastery; (d) assessment and feedback to be shared reasonably among learners and their families; and (e) assessment grading to have a positive impact on learning.

Furthermore, private schools, teaching and vocational institutions, state and local universities, and colleges offering K-12 can modify the policy according to their philosophy, vision, and mission, subject to the approval of their respective DepEd Regional Office. On the other hand, in accordance with the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533) and DepEd Order No. 8 s. 2015, which stipulates the Policy Guidelines in Classroom Assessment for the K-12 Basic Education Program, assessment should inform and improve classroom practices and promote learning outcomes. However, in distance or blended learning environments, alternative tools and strategies for assessing and supporting learning must be utilized to avoid undue pressure on teachers, learners, and their families. Despite facing criticism, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) implemented the flexible blended learning model to continue education amidst the threat of the virus. This model consists of various learning modes, including modular (printed), modular (digital), online, educational TV, radio-based instruction, homeschooling, and blended learning.

Anzaldo (2021) discussed the adoption of modular distance learning, which involves using teacher-made modules containing different tasks and learning activities based on essential learning competencies. Additionally, Anzaldo (2021) noted the use of two types of assessment in basic education when using the modular (printed) mode: summative assessment in the form of a quiz, called "written works," and performance assessment, referred to as "performance outputs." Consequently, there should be feedback on the results of student assessments based on their progress records. Teachers must make the most of the resources available to deliver timely, constructive, and relevant feedback. If a student fails to achieve the expectation and scores below the summative examination, the instructor must provide remediation to the student every fourth of the quarter to prevent failing at the end of the school year in line with DepEd Order No. 8 s 2015 (Department of Education, 2020).

Ancheta et al. (2020) stated that in basic education, the essential measures of effective teaching and learning are the students' learning outcomes, which encompass knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The assessment methods must align with the standards set by the Department of Education, and there must be a specified percentage assigned to each component, such as written work, performance tasks, and quarterly assessments, to ensure that the assessments are reliable and valid. Furthermore, in the midst of the COVID-19 upheaval, Lagat (2021) cited that one of an institution's core responsibilities is to equip its teaching members by providing relevant training to keep them up to date on new educational trends. During these challenging times, it is essential for educators to continuously enhance their teaching methodologies and techniques in order to maintain the standards of education. This requires a commitment to ongoing learning and professional development.

On the contrary, issues with resources, learner concerns, learning management system issues, and methodological assessment issues were among the key challenges of assessment (Ablao et al., 2021). Also, to increase learning outcomes, both the teacher and the student must have access to technology. Effective implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is crucial for successful educational reforms. Given resource limitations, educators, learners, and institutions are hindered by physical obstacles. Therefore, appropriate design and integration of ICT in the teaching-learning process are critical to overcome these challenges and achieve desired outcomes (Ablao et al., 2021).

Furthermore, secondary science teachers' assessment concepts were investigated with an emphasis on the facilitation of student learning (Tesorio, P.J. & Canizares, M.J.F., 2018). Tesorio, P. J., & Canizares, M. J. F. (2018) revealed in their study that secondary science teachers "highly" believe in assessment for improving student learning, diagnosing student abilities, and improving instruction, while they "mainly" believe in student accountability. Assessment can be used for more than summative goals, such as determining and advancing students' learning and improving teachers' education.

Cahapay (2020) conducted a study on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on assessment practices in a Teacher Education Institution (TEI) in the Philippines. The study found that assessment practices were significantly affected due to the suspension of classes, limited internet connectivity, and the need to maintain institutional quality standards. These challenges led to changes in the grading system, with a focus on student attendance and a shift to descriptive binary grading. Moreover, modifications were made to laboratory and research work requirements, and grades earned in the current semester were excluded from the computation of the grade point average.

Rural (2021), uncovered teachers' perspectives on assessment, which are used as the foundation for generating policy suggestions. He also used Brown's COA-III as well as a DepEd Assessment Policy-created researcher-made questionnaire. In his research, he discovered that teachers hold a favorable view of assessment as a means to ensure accountability for both students and schools. They also see it as a way to enhance the teaching and learning process and do not consider it irrelevant. Additionally, the study found that teachers prefer standards-based assessments for concept development, as well as formative and summative evaluations. Rural (2021) also observed a correlation between school accountability, student accountability, improvement, standards-based assessments, concept development, and formative and summative evaluations. Alonzo et al. (2021) utilized factor analysis to identify nine dimensions of teachers' assessment beliefs, which include assessment for professional learning, motivation, measurement, planning, engagement, learning, evaluation, norm-referencing, and instructional accountability. These findings are valuable to the field of educational assessment, as they contribute to a deeper understanding of teacher perspectives on assessment and facilitate the discussion on professional development in assessment for educators. Evidently, there are certain similarities and contrasts between the prior research that highlight the need for this investigation. All the studies cited here investigated conceptions and practices with different variables affecting assessment. Brown et al. (2011) conducted a study in Queensland to examine the differences between primary and secondary teachers with different assessment policies and the relationship between social context and teachers' conceptions. Similarly, Duwairi (2013) explored the relationship between the perceptions of Mathematics teachers regarding classroom assessment and assessment strategies. Additionally, Brown & Gao (2015) investigated the association between conceptions of assessment and the assessment policy context in the People's Republic of China.

Similarly, Azis, A. (2015) and Shehzadi et al. (2021) examined the relationship between teachers' conceptions of assessment and assessment practices in the Indonesian and Pakistani contexts, respectively. Yates & Johnston (2017) focused on the impact of school-based assessment programs on Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment. Brown & Remesal (2017) compared two inventories with Ecuadorian teachers to identify teachers' conceptions of assessment and determine the relationship between Brown's Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (TCoA) and the Qualitative Model of Conceptions of Assessment (QMCoA). Monteiro et al. (2021) explored the relationship between assessment conceptions and practices among primary school teachers and students. Similarly, Ferretti et al. (2021) investigated the assessment practices and beliefs of teachers through qualitative methods during long distance learning. Tesorio, P. J., & Canizares, M. J. F. (2018) examined the relationship between secondary science teachers' conceptions of assessment and the promotion of student learning. Moreover, Cahapay (2020) conducted a study to determine the reshaping of assessment practices at a Teacher Education Institution (TEI) in the Philippines during the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, Rural (2021)

examined the relationship between teachers' conceptions of assessment using Brown's Four-Factor Model and DepEd assessment policy. Furthermore, Alonzo et al. (2021) investigated the policy-driven dimensions of teacher beliefs about assessment. These studies contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between assessment policies, social context, and teacher conceptions of assessment. Moreover, they provide insights into the impact of assessment practices and beliefs on student learning and the promotion of professional development in assessment practices. The studies conducted in different contexts highlight the need for tailored assessment practices and policies that consider the unique needs of teachers and students in different settings.

The framework provided by Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) offers a valuable approach for the researcher to comprehend individuals' perceptions and behaviors. The theory suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control are significant factors that shape an individual's intentions towards a particular behavior. Actions and practices are influenced by cognitive self-regulation, and it is evident that the more powerful the thoughts, the more likely they are to impact behavior because people's acts can become so routine that it might be difficult to uncover the motivations or plans behind them. Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) offers a valuable framework that helps the researcher understand how individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control impact their intentions toward specific behaviors. The TPB has been effectively applied to numerous human activities due to its efficacy (Opoku et al., 2020).

The present study is connected to this theory as it establishes a correlation between teachers' assessment beliefs and their actual behavior, namely their assessment practices in the context of distance learning. As previously discussed, this theory consists of three crucial factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These factors may influence and determine the intentions of teachers when assessing their learners in distance learning. A teacher may be idealistic and have an understating of how to conduct their assessment, which may affect their practices in assessment under distance learning.

Significantly, the findings of the related studies revealed that most of them were conducted in a classroom setting prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, and distance learning is being implemented specifically in the Philippine context. Moreso, the method and results of the previous study on the perceptions and practices of assessment in distance learning were more qualitative in nature or vice versa. Likewise, teachers in cluster 3 were experiencing challenges in terms of assessment under distance learning. Such challenges in assessment faced by the teachers in cluster 3 include issues related to the availability of learning resources, distribution of learning materials for assessment, technical know-how or the use of different assessment online/offline platforms, methodological assessment, the reliability and authenticity of learners' assessment output, and academic dishonesty. To address these challenges, schools under cluster 3 participated in different webinars about the assessment of learning in distance learning setups from international down to national and local webinars conducted either by the private sector or/and the Department of Education. Furthermore, schools within cluster 3 organized webinars to guide teachers on student assessment during distance learning in adherence to DepEd Order No. 031, S: 2020. This order requires a reevaluation of assessment and grading procedures that can effectively aid learners' growth and adapt to evolving situations, thus ensuring continuity of education. The researcher's goal in this study is to learn about secondary public school teachers' assessment conceptions and practices, as well as the activities that are carried out in the day-to-day teaching-learning process during this time of the pandemic, specifically how they assess learners, their challenges in assessment and the teachers undertaking in order to achieve a favorable and lifelong impact on the learners.

Consequently, the researcher focused on the Public Secondary School Teachers' Conceptions and Practices of Assessment in Distance Learning in Cluster 3, Division of Pampanga, during the school year 2021-2022. Also, the study sought to contribute to the existing research, more specifically in the Philippine context, on the teacher's conceptions and practices of assessment, particularly in the distance learning environment. Another way the study aimed to add to the current literature was by examining the essentials of assessment conceptions and practices in the new environment as they relate to the delivery of learning and students' progress toward their learning outcomes. Nonetheless, unlike prior research, this study focused primarily on public secondary school teachers who have experience assessing learner outcomes not only in face-to-face classroom assessment but in distance learning assessment as well, and how it affects their conceptions of assessment practices in a distance learning setting. Such tracer research complies with the K-12 Law and the Department of Education's requirements for tracking learners' progress, particularly in distance learning, amidst the pandemic.

### **Conceptual/Theoretical Framework**

The input frame presented the different indicators to be measured in both quantitative data analysis and the qualitative collection and data analysis to elaborate further on the quantitative result. For the inputs, the researcher described the profile of the respondents, which can be described in terms of (1) age, (2) sex, (3) highest educational attainment, (4) teaching position, (5) area of specialization, (6) number of years in teaching, (7) number of years in teaching the subject area, (8) and training in educational assessment for the past three years. Furthermore, the researcher described the respondent's conceptions and practices of assessment in distance learning in terms of (1) school accountability, (2) improvement of teaching and learning, and (3) roles and responsibilities of a.) teachers, b.) learners, and c.) parents and guardians. Additionally, the researcher also described the respondents' assessment practices in distance learning in terms of (1) planning the assessment; (2) conducting assessment remotely; (3) the role of technology; (4) feedback and remediation; and (5) grading and promotion. Moreso, the researcher uncovered challenges in the concept and practices of teacher assessment. Likewise, the researcher identified a significant relationship between the respondents' profile, conception, and practices of assessments, as well as a significant relationship between the respondents' profile, conception, and practices of assessment. Lastly, the researcher also identified the implications of the findings on teachers' conceptions and practices of assessment in distance learning. And for the processes, to allow inputs to be converted into outputs, the researcher conducted the following procedures: (1) tallied the data; (2) utilized SPSS statistical analysis software to compute the frequency, percentage, mean, and descriptive analysis; (3) utilized a t-test, specifically a t-test of two independent groups, and an ANOVA to determine the significant difference in the conceptions and practices of the respondents when grouped according to their profile and the significant relationship between the respondents' conceptions and practices of assessments; (4) conducted a focused group discussion; (5) transcription and coding of the data; and (6) interpretation of the data.

The Outputs Frame indicated the public secondary school teachers' conceptions and practices of assessment in distance learning. The researcher wanted that the findings of the study will be used to improve the conceptions and practices of assessment among secondary teachers.

Statement of the Problem

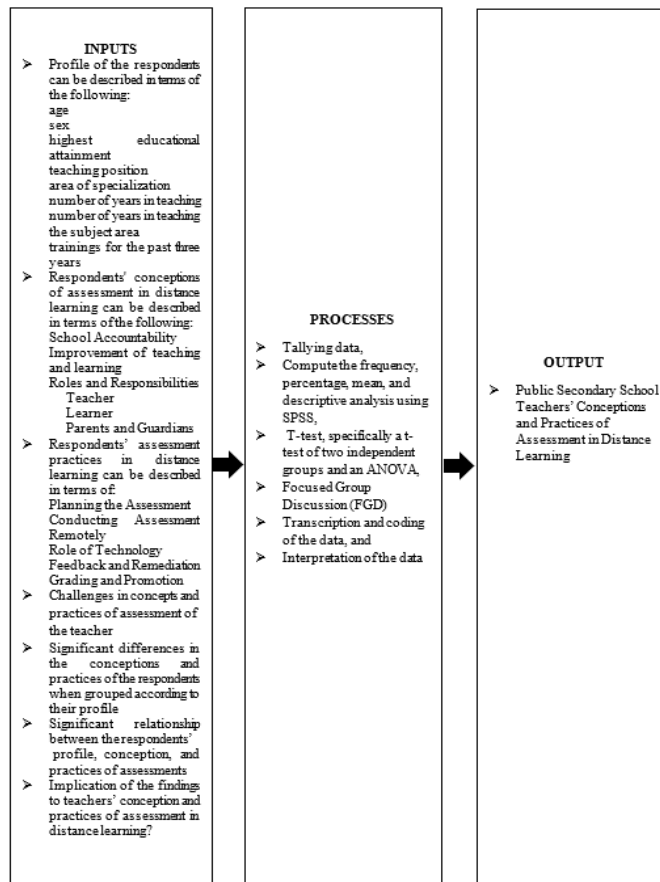


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the study

The researcher aims to determine the Public Secondary School Teachers' Conceptions and Practices of Assessment in Distance Learning Modality in Cluster 3, Division of Pampanga, during the School Year 2021-2022.

Specifically, the researcher sought to answer the following.

1. How may the profile of the respondents be described in terms of:
  - 1.1. age;
  - 1.2. sex;
  - 1.3 highest educational attainment;
  - 1.4. teaching position;
  - 1.5. area of specialization;
  - 1.6. number of years in teaching;
  - 1.7. number of years in teaching the subject area; and
  - 1.8. training in educational assessment for the past three years?
2. How may the respondents' conceptions of assessment in distance learning be described in terms of:
  - 2.1. school accountability;
  - 2.2. improvement of teaching and learning; and
  - 2.3. roles and responsibilities;



- 2.3.1. teacher;
  - 2.3.2. learner; and
  - 2.3.3. parents and guardians?
3. How may the respondents' assessment practices in distance learning be described in terms of:
    - 3.1. planning the assessment;
    - 3.2. conducting assessment remotely;
    - 3.3. Role of technology;
    - 3.4. feedback and remediation; and
    - 3.5. grading and promotion?
  4. How may the challenges in the concepts and practices of assessment of teachers be described?
  5. Is there a significant difference in the conceptions and practices of the respondents when grouped according to their profiles?
  6. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' profile, conception, and practices of assessments?
  7. What is the implication of the findings for teachers' conception and practices of assessment in distance learning?

### **Research Design**

This study assessed the public secondary school teachers' conceptions and practices of assessment during distance learning. To achieve this objective, the researcher employed a mixed-method research design, specifically a sequential explanatory approach. This approach involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative data, with qualitative data used to provide further clarification and insights into the interpretation of quantitative data analysis results, as noted by Edmonds and Kennedy (2019).

The quantitative part of the study utilized a survey questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The survey questions were designed to gather information about the Conception and Practices of Assessment in distance learning among the respondents. The primary technique of collecting quantitative data was in the form of a Likert-scale checklist. In addition to the survey questionnaire, qualitative data was collected through a focused group discussion via Google Meet. The aim of this was to provide further support and validation to the results obtained from the quantitative data.

By engaging grade 7-10 teachers, the study was able to gather research evidence (both quantitative and qualitative data) about the importance of teacher perceptions and practices in assessment during distance learning. After data collection, the researcher conducted an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the findings.

The qualitative data gathered from the focused group discussion was transcribed and utilized to provide a more comprehensive and detailed explanation of the results obtained from the survey questionnaire. The mixed-method approach employed in this study helped to provide a more complete understanding of the research question and allowed for a more robust analysis of the data.

### **Respondents/Participants**

The sampling method used in this study was purposive, which allowed the researcher to intentionally choose respondents/participants who have direct experience with the central phenomenon or key concept being investigated. Specifically, the respondents of this study were public school teachers at Secondary High Schools categorized as "Mega Schools" who currently teach Araling Panlipunan to Grades 7 to 10, have at least one (1) year of teaching experience under distance learning, and are part of Cluster 3, Division of Pampanga during the School Year of 2021-2022.

Meanwhile, the participants in the focus group discussion were selected from Teacher I-III, Master Teacher I-IV, and Head Teacher I-IV who were actively teaching during the study. The survey questionnaire was administered to 58 respondents from nine (9) Public Schools in Cluster III, Division of Pampanga, for the school year 2021-2022.

To further analyze the general picture of the teachers' conception and practices of assessment, one (1) respondent per school, representing the grade 7-10 teacher as participants, participated in the focus group discussion. In total, there were nine (9) participants in the study.

Table 1

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents/Participants in Cluster III, Division of Pampanga*

School	Respondents (Survey Questionnaire)		Participants (Focus Group Discussion)	
	Araling Panlipunan Teachers	Percentage	Araling Panlipunan Teachers	Percentage
A	8	0.14	1	0.11
B	7	0.12	1	0.11
C	9	0.16	1	0.11
D	8	0.14	1	0.11
E	8	0.14	1	0.11
F	6	0.10	1	0.11
G	4	0.07	1	0.11
H	4	0.07	1	0.11
I	4	0.07	1	0.11
Total	58	100	9	100

## I. Instruments

In this study, the primary data sources were survey questionnaires a.) Conception of Assessment Survey Questionnaire (CASQ) b.) Assessment Practices Survey Questionnaire (APSQ) and c.) Interview Guide Questionnaire. The researcher utilized predetermined response choices in presenting survey questionnaires to teacher-respondents, resembling the way in which teachers might be queried about their conceptions and practices regarding distance learning assessment. To construct the Conception of Assessment Survey Questionnaire (CASQ) and Assessment Practices Survey Questionnaire (APSQ), the researcher drew on the DepEd Order no. 31 series of 2020, which outlines guidelines for grading and assessment in the context of the basic education learning continuity plan, as well as relevant literature and research.

To determine the reliability and validity of the research instruments utilized in the study, the researcher consulted experts from the field of education and research to evaluate the content validity of the survey questionnaires, as depicted in Table 2. All expert validators rated all the items of the instrument to be highly relevant in terms of content. This indicated that the instrument passed the content validity test having a content validity index of 1.00.

Table 2

*Validity Test of the Instrument*

Number of raters	Grand Mean Item Assessment	Content Validity Index	Remarks
7	1.00	7 out of 7 raters rated each item in terms of content and language on a scale of 3 or 4.	Excellent Content Validity

Furthermore, the instrument is highly recommendable in terms of internal consistency, as shown in Table 3. Thus, statistical analysis reveals a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.974 for the conception of assessment and 0.942 for assessment practices, with an overall average of 0.974. These values are greater than 0.70, which means these instruments are measuring the construct they are intended to measure.

Table 3

*Scale: Internal Consistency of the Survey Questionnaire*

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
School Accountability	.928	8
Improvement for Teaching & Learning	.943	6
Roles & Responsibilities	.961	11
Conception of Assessment	.974	25
Planning the Assessment	.914	8
Conducting Assessment Remotely	.804	2
Role of Technology	.526	3
Feedback and Remediation	.871	3
Grading and Promotion	.869	5
Assessment Practices	.942	21
Overall	.974	46

The instrument for the conception of assessment is divided into two parts: Part I, the profile of the respondents, which was described in terms of (a) age; (b) sex, (c) highest educational attainment, (d) teaching position; (e) area of specialization; (f) number of years in teaching; (g) the number of years in teaching the subject area; (h) training for the past three years in educational assessment. Part II of the questionnaire is divided into three variables with twenty-five total variable items, these include: (1) school accountability with eight variable items, (2) improvement for teaching & learning with six variable items, and (3) roles & responsibilities of a.) teacher, with five variable items b.) learner, with four variable items and c.) parents and guardians with two variable items. On the other hand, the second instrument, assessment practices, aimed to measure the practices of assessment of secondary school public teachers. It is also divided into five variables with a total of twenty-one variable items: a.) planning the assessment with eight variable items, b.) conducting the assessment remotely with two variable items, c.) role of technology with three variable items, d.) feedback and remediation with three variable items, and f.) grading and promotion with five variable items. The respondents were asked to assess their conception and practices of assessment in distance learning utilizing the subsequent rating scale and selected the response that comes closest to describing their opinions which were: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. Furthermore, to carry out the qualitative component of the study, the researcher prepared an interview guide questionnaire utilized during the focused group discussion which was validated by the experts in the fields of education and research. The questionnaire was designed to elicit thoughtful responses from the participants about their perceptions and experiences related to assessment practices during distance learning. By using a validated questionnaire, the study ensured that the questions were clear, relevant, and would gather the necessary data to address the research questions. The participants were able to provide insightful responses that were then transcribed and analyzed to support and complement the quantitative findings of the study.

## II. DATA COLLECTION

In order to ensure an organized and systematic approach to data collection, the researcher obtained permission from the University President and the Dean of the State University's Graduate School. The Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Pampanga and School Heads were also approached for authorization to carry out the research. To comply with pandemic-related health protocols and to accommodate the respondents' availability, the researcher scheduled the survey questionnaire distribution in advance.

Prior to administering the survey questionnaire, the researcher obtained consent from the respondents via email and messenger, emphasizing their right to withdraw from the data-gathering process at any point. The questionnaires were disseminated through online platforms using the Google survey form with a total of fifty-eight (58) respondents in the study.

The researcher obtained the consent of the nine (9) participants through email and messenger before conducting the focused group discussion by utilizing interview guide questionnaires, and they were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time during the discussion. The discussion was conducted through Google Meet, and the conversations were recorded using the platform's recorder and other devices to assist in transcribing the responses. During the focused group discussion, the researcher and participants engaged in constructive dialogue to gain a detailed understanding of the research questions and elicit comprehensive information about the teachers' perceptions and practices of assessment in distance learning. The interviews served as a valuable tool for the researcher to identify any challenges encountered by the participants during the assessment process. The participants were given the opportunity to express their opinions, share their experiences, and provide valuable insights into the topic under investigation. It is important to note that both the quantitative

and qualitative data collected in the study will be destroyed after one year from the survey and focused group discussion date, in accordance with research ethics guidelines.

### Ethical Considerations

To achieve the objective of the study, the researcher adhered to ethical standards by observing a set of guidelines that aimed: a.) to demonstrate respect and sincerity, a permission letter was obtained from the University President, the Dean of the State University's Graduate School, Division Superintendent, and School Heads, b.) to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, by ensuring that all information gathered during the study would only be accessed by the researcher and other concerned parties, c.) to attest anonymity, the participants' identities remained private.

### Statistical Treatment of Data/Data Analysis

The researcher utilized percentage and frequency distribution as a statistical method to analyze the collected data. This technique, as defined by Lavracas (2008), involves plotting the percentage of observations for each data point or collection of data points in a graph. In order to measure the variability among the respondents' demographic profiles, the range will be utilized, which helps to identify a good indicator of distribution variability without considering extreme values. In conjunction with measures of central tendencies, such as mean, median, and mode, the range can provide insights into the distribution's span (Bhandari, 2020).

The Likert Scale for Conception of Assessment Survey Questionnaire (CASQ) & Assessment Practices Survey Questionnaire (APSQ) presents the different interpretations of the scores. The scores range from 0.01 to 5.00, with Strongly Agree having the highest score and Strongly Disagree having the lowest score. The range of scores for each interpretation is also provided, allowing for an easy understanding of the respondents' conception of assessment in distance learning which can be described in terms of school accountability, improvement for teaching & learning, and roles & responsibilities.

Further, it was also used in the respondents' assessment practices in distance learning which can be described in terms of planning the assessment, conducting the assessment remotely, the role of technology, feedback and remediation, and grading and promotion. The respondents were asked to express their agreement with a specific statement using an ordinal scale, as described below:

Nominal Scale	Descriptive Interpretation	Range of Scores
5	Strongly Agree (SA)	4.01-5.00
4	Agree (A)	3.01-4.00
3	Neutral (N)	2.01-3.00
2	Disagree (D)	1.01-2.00
1	Strongly Disagree (SD)	0.01-1.00

Strongly Agree indicates complete concurrence with the statement.

Agree denotes substantial concurrence with the statement.

Neutral signifies having no strong inclination either way.

Disagree implies substantial non-concurrence with the statement.

Strongly Disagree conveys complete non-concurrence with the statement.

To determine if there are significant differences in the conceptions and practices of the respondents when grouped according to their profile and to establish if there is a significant relationship between the respondents' profile, conceptions, and practices of assessment. After a few days, when all the required data had been collected, the researcher retrieved the questionnaires, encoded them, tabulated, and summarized the scores and other pertinent data, which was then handed over to the statistician for data treatment and interpretation. A T-test of two independent groups and ANOVA were employed by utilizing the SPSS statistical analysis software.

In addition, the study employed qualitative data analysis as part of the research process. The data was meticulously scrutinized and transcribed in detail by the researcher for analysis. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify and categorize meaningful units of information into functional and analytical components. The researcher performed "Key point Coding"

during the extensive evaluation of text sections to assign significant terms to the issues related to the conception and evaluation practices discussed by the participating teachers. Coding qualitative data made the analysis more systematic and rigorous. It also provides transparency and reflexivity to both researcher and others. It also increases the validity of the analysis, decreases potential biases in how data is analyzed, accurately represents participants, and enables transparency to review analysis methodically and systematically (Illinois Library, 2023)

### **III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The following is a summary of the findings of the study:

#### **1. Profile of the Respondents**

##### **1.1 Age**

Out of the total of 58 teachers who participated in the study, 18 of them or 31.03% are aged between 29-36 years old, which is categorized as the late young adult group. Meanwhile, six of the respondents, or 10.34%, are between 53-60 years old, which is considered the early older adult age group.

##### **1.2 Sex**

Out of 58 respondents, thirty-eight (38), or 65.52 percent of the respondents, were female.

##### **1.3 Highest Educational Attainment**

Thirty-one (31), or 53.45 percent of the respondents, have bachelor's degrees.

##### **1.4 Teaching Position**

Fifty-two (52) or 89.66 percent of the respondents belonged to teaching positions from teacher I to teacher III.

##### **1.5 Areas of Specialization**

Fifty-eight (58), or 100 percent of the respondents are teaching Araling Panlipunan.

##### **1.6 Number of Years in Teaching**

There were twenty (20) or 34.48 percent of respondents for both the 1-5 and 6-10 years of teaching.

##### **1.7 Number of Years in Teaching the Subject Area**

Twenty-two (22) or 37.93 percent of the respondents teaching the subject are from between 1 to 5 years.

##### **1.8 Training in Educational Assessment for the Past Three Years**

Twenty (20) or 34.48 percent of the respondents have had school-level training for the past three years.

#### **2. Conceptions of Assessment in Distance Learning**

##### **2.1 School Accountability**

The findings revealed that teachers "strongly agreed" with their conception of assessment in distance learning in terms of school accountability, with a general weighted mean of 4.65, which is the lowest among the variables under the conception of assessment.

##### **2.2 Improvements for Teaching and Learning**

Teachers' conception of assessment in distance learning in terms of improvement for teaching and learning has the highest general weighted mean of 4.75, with a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing among the variables under the conception of assessment.

##### **2.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

###### **2.3.1 Teacher**

Teachers' assessment in distance learning as to the roles and responsibilities of the teacher has a general weighted mean of 4.70 and a descriptive interpretation of strongly agree as the conception of the respondents. The high weighted mean and consensus among respondents in the "strongly agree" category signify the significant impact and effectiveness of teachers' assessment practices in facilitating successful distance learning experiences.

### **2.3.2 Learners**

Teachers' assessment in distance learning as to the roles and responsibilities of the learner has a general weighted mean of 4.72 and a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing as the conception of the respondents.

### **2.3.3 Parents and Guardians**

Teachers' assessment in distance learning as to the roles and responsibilities of the parents and guardians has a general weighted mean of 4.73 and a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing as the conception of the respondents.

## **3. Assessment Practices in Distance Learning**

### **3.1 Planning the Assessment**

Teacher's assessment in distance learning in terms of planning assessment has a general weighted mean of 4.72 and a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing as the result of the practices of the respondents.

### **3.2 Conducting Assessments Remotely**

Teachers' assessment of distance learning in terms of conducting assessment remotely has the highest general weighted mean of 4.81, with a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing as the result of the practices of the respondents.

### **3.3 Role of Technology**

Teachers' assessment of distance learning as to the role of technology has the lowest general weighted mean of 4.54, with a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing as the result of the practices of the respondents. Despite the lower general weighted mean, the respondents' strong agreement with the role of technology in distance learning assessment emphasizes its crucial importance and potential for further enhancement in the educational process.

### **3.4 Feedback and Remediation**

Teacher's assessment in distance learning in terms of feedback and remediation has a general weighted mean of 4.72 and a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing as the result of the practices of the respondents.

### **3.5 Grading and Promotion**

Teachers' assessment of distance learning in terms of grading and promotion has a general weighted mean of 4.62 and a descriptive interpretation of strongly agreeing as the result of the practices of the respondents.

## **4. Challenges of Secondary Teachers in Assessment Under Distance Learning**

The challenges of secondary teachers in assessment under distance learning were arranged in accordance with transcribed from qualitative data through focused group discussion. The researcher was able to create initial themes, categories, sub-themes, and final themes regarding the difficulties faced by the teacher in the assessment of distance learning. The last four themes are: a.) effective learning delivery; b.) student attitude; c.) intrusion of different entities; and d.) parent's involvement.

## **5. Differences in the Conceptions and Practices of Assessment in Distance Learning of the Respondents When Grouped According to Their Profile**

There were no significant differences found in the conceptions and practices of assessment in distance learning among secondary public-school teachers when grouped according to age, highest educational attainment, teaching position, number of years in teaching, number of years in teaching in the subject area, and educational training for the past three years. The study did not yield statistically significant p-values greater than 0.05 for the following aspects: school accountability (conception), improvement for teaching and learning (conception), roles and responsibilities (conception), planning the assessment (practices), conducting assessment remotely (practices), the role of technology (practices), feedback and remediation (practices), and grading and promotion (practices).

On the contrary, the statistical analysis did not show any significant difference in the conceptions and practices of assessment in distance learning between male and female teachers, except for a few aspects. Improvement in teaching and learning had a p-value of 0.29 ( $t=-2.242$ ), while roles and responsibilities had a p-value of 0.045 ( $t=-2.389$ ), indicating a statistically significant difference. On the other hand, the p-value of school accountability was 0.074 ( $t=-1.822$ ), which was not significant at the accepted level of 0.05. In terms of assessment practices, planning the assessment had a p-value of

0.020 ( $t=-2.389$ ), conducting assessment remotely had a p-value of 0.028 ( $t=-2.249$ ), the role of technology had a p-value of 0.040 ( $t=-2.103$ ), feedback and remediation had a p-value of 0.027 ( $t=-2.278$ ), and grading and promotion had a p-value of 0.023 ( $t=2.339$ ). These results suggest that there are differences in the practices of assessment in distance learning between male and female teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

#### **6. Relationship Between the Respondents' Profile, Conception, and Practices of Assessments in Distance Learning**

Significant relationships were found between respondents' sex, assessment conception, and assessment practices during distance learning. The null hypothesis was rejected for assessment conception, as indicated by a P-value of .265 and sig. value of 0.044. The null hypothesis was rejected for assessment practices as well, with a P-value of .309 and sig. value of .018. Additionally, the relationship between assessment conception and practices was found to be statistically significant, with a P-value of .933 and a significant value of .000.

#### **7. Implication of the Findings to Teachers' Conception and Practices of Assessment in Distance Learning**

DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 outlines assessment guidelines for K-12 education to promote learning outcomes and inform classroom practices. However, alternative tools and strategies should be used in distance or blended learning to ease the strain on teachers, learners, and families. Improving assessment practices in distance learning can enhance evaluation and understanding, promoting learning continuity in accordance with DepEd Order 31, s. 2020. Academic integrity should be emphasized through teacher training programs, and policy guidelines for assessment and grading should be transparent to reduce competition pressure.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are hereby presented:

1. The majority of the respondents belong to the age bracket 35-44 under the late young adult category and were female. Most of them had only earned bachelor's degrees and specialized Araling Panlipunan, holding TI-TIII positions, and rendered between 1-5 and 6-10 years in service of teaching the subject area; and most had their educational training assessment at the school level.
2. The teachers' conception of assessment strongly agreed that assessment can be used to enhance both teaching and learning. Moreover, they also have a positive perception of the roles and responsibilities of parents, guardians, and students in the assessment process. Consequently, the teachers' perception of school accountability for assessment in distance learning is marginally less favorable.
3. The study revealed that teachers strongly agreed with the ways in which assessments were conducted remotely. The second-highest scores were given to the assessment procedures related to planning, feedback, and remediation. Although to a slightly lesser extent, assessment procedures related to grading and promotion were viewed favorably. Nevertheless, the assessment practices related to the role of technology received the lowest scores among all the assessment practices evaluated.
4. The study revealed that teachers encountered various difficulties when assessing students in distance learning, identified based on their assessment methods, which were affected by the following: a.) effective learning delivery; b.) student attitude; c.) intrusion of different entities; and d.) parents' involvement.
5. Significant differences were observed in the assessment conceptions and practices of public secondary teachers based on sex, with the exception of their view on assessment for school accountability. However, there were no significant differences based on age, educational attainment, teaching position, area of specialization, years of teaching, years of teaching the subject area, or educational training for the past three years in the assessment.
6. The study found a significant relationship between the respondents' sex and their assessment conception, as well as their assessment practices. Additionally, there was a significant relationship observed between the respondents' assessment conceptions and practices.
7. The study highlights the significant role of assessment in distance learning and emphasizes the need for teachers to continuously evaluate and improve their assessment practices to ensure effective teaching and learning outcomes. The findings suggest that teachers need to improve their understanding of school accountability in distance learning assessments, utilize medium technology assessment activities, and be equipped with the skills and knowledge to manage the challenges of assessing learners under these circumstances. Academic integrity should also be emphasized, and policy guidelines on assessment and grading systems should be made more transparent. By addressing these issues, teachers, parents, and school administrators can work together to promote meaningful learning outcomes for students through distance learning.

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