

# Evaluating the Online Practicum Program of the Hospitality and Tourism Management Students at a Local College: Basis for Practicum Program Enhancement

John Vincent G. De La Cruz, Lizette Ann P. Sia, Mark Alvin V. Lazaro, Dante Sardina

Gordon College

**Abstract:** *The study was undertaken to evaluate the online practicum program of BSHM and BSTM in Gordon College - Olongapo City based on the claim that it is necessary to continuously assess the program's efficacy and to be constantly attentive to the demands of the students, particularly during this pandemic. The study employed a descriptive and quantitative research approach with a total of 79 respondents from BSHM and BSTM students who have experienced the online practicum program of the institution. The researchers used a non-parametric test to analyze the data gathered from the survey. Results show that the student-respondents were satisfied with the online practicum program offered to them in terms of communication, competence, linkages, and cooperating agency. However, findings showed that there are problems encountered by the students such as insufficiency of time to teach, inefficiency of training method, time conflicts, unavailability of facilities and equipment at home, and unclear instructions. This study implies that online practicum program is a successful alternative for onsite training and to attain the goals of the online practicum program, the chosen provider of each institution must be prepared to offer online learning to the students.*

**Keywords:** online practicum program, pandemic, communication, competence, linkages, cooperating agency, and problems encountered

## Introduction

OJT (on-the-job training) has been one of the strategies of higher education in the Philippines for building the required competences of its graduates. The goals and objectives of OJT served as guides in developing the abilities required for a given profession and transforming training into a useful working experience. (Ylagan, 2013). Traditionally, college internship programs have been in-person experiences, with students working at a local organization's office or even migrating to far locations (Jeske & Axtell, 2016). Taladtdad et al. (2010) discussed that on-the-job training, or practicum training, is the most efficient way to help students build their competence and abilities. Those who engage in quality OJT programs typically exhibit high levels of professionalism and productivity.

The pandemic disrupted the traditional practices of conducting onsite training for students. In order to stop the spread of COVID 19 during the current situation, online learning is strongly encouraged throughout every university (Lisa et al., 2021). As a result of the COVID-19 situation, an estimated 50% of undergraduate internships have been canceled in 2020, owing to the closure of many businesses across the country (McGregor, 2020; Nietzl, 2020). Companies and higher education institutions hurried to look for solutions to the tremendous disturbance in our daily lives, workplaces, universities, and student internship programs (Hora et al., 2021), thus, shift to online modality were considered by these institutions. This was also applied to students who underwent practicum program. The practicum programs for Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) and Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) aims to expose and immerse students into real-life situations that occur in the tourism industry. It is a vital component of the curricular programs and high desired by the industry as it provides the student with an avenue to practice their skill sets in a controlled environment under the guidance of their potential employers. The practicum requires a minimum of 600 hours contact time – 300 hours each for hotel phase and restaurant phase - with the accredited host company and should be properly monitored by Gordon College - College of Hospitality and Tourism Management (CHTM) based on the curricula as defend in CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 62, series of 2017, (CMO 18 s. 2021). Based on the CMO No. 18 s. 2021, practicum can now be done digitally or remotely with some in-person aspects in a rising number of cases where circumstances prevent an in-person experience, like as during the COVID-19 epidemic. At the same time, institutions, like Gordon College, can provide online practicum program for students with the help of third-party institutions.

Hora et al.m (2021) defined online internship as "... a work-based learning program conducted exclusively via digital or online technologies, but with important variations with respect to host organization, program duration, and compliance with experiential learning standards." There has been significant growth in the field of online internships in recent years, as firms experiment with various sorts of remote employment for college students, relying on advances in computing technologies and organizational skills in handling remote, team-based projects (Jeske & Axtell, 2016). To reap the benefits of practicum experience, the steps of planning, implementation, and assessment must be managed successfully (Ozmantar, 2021). According to the findings of his study, students who participated in their institution's online practicum program were not well-equipped to follow online courses since they were initially untrained in using Zoom and other digital platforms. These technical issues made it difficult to completely

profit from the practicum. There were also noted concerns over the mentor's expectations and schedules. Ozmantar (2021) went on to say that in the online practicum, the opportunities for sociability and professional communication were limited to the bounds of online lessons, after which their interactions frequently came to an end.

As a foundation for their contributions to the improved internship program of one of the universities in the Philippines, An and Mauhay (2016) performed a survey on the interns' evaluations on partner organizations. The respondents of their study provided feedback on their industry partners in terms of collaboration and teamwork, communication, regard for people, decision making and empowerment, work ethics, and problems encountered. Moreover, it was discussed that communication is essential when it comes to modern online practicum programs. Internships, according to Megha (2013), can be a critical stepping stone in a communication career and a way to demonstrate to a future employer what skills one has acquired while working. Yu and Mercado (2016) evaluated many aspects of the on-the-job training Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Financial Management and Human Resource Development Management. According to the results, the respondents' feedback on the various OJT program components—including leadership, attitude toward work, competence and performance, linkage, cooperating firm, benefits and incentives, and training evaluation—was expressly positive and sufficient for the trainees. However, a thorough examination indicated that there were certain academic years when trainees had several troubles, issues, and challenges as part of their training program, which were comparatively not given much attention by the university administration. As such, the pandemic became a challenge as well to educational institutions.

The evaluation of internship partners and the success of internship programs can assist in identifying issues and problems with program execution (Nicolas et al., 2021). Thus, the current study was undertaken to evaluate the online practicum program of BSHM and BSTM in Gordon College - Olongapo City based on the claim that it is necessary to continuously assess the program's efficacy and to be constantly attentive to the demands of the students, particularly during this pandemic. This study analyzes the elements that affect the conducted online practicum/OJT program of BSHM and BSTM graduates as part of the ongoing measurement of the program's success amidst the pandemic. Additionally, the research will form the foundation for future improvements to the online practicum program.

Therefore, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 Sex
  - 1.2 Program
  - 1.3 Practicum final grade?
2. How may the students evaluate the online practicum program in terms of:
  - 2.1. Communication
  - 2.2. Competence
  - 2.3. Linkage
  - 2.4. Cooperating Agency
3. What are the problems encountered by the trainees during the online practicum program?
4. Is there a significant difference on the students' evaluation on online practicum program when grouped according to profile variables?
5. Is there a significant difference on the problems encountered by the trainees during the online practicum program when grouped according to profile variables?
6. Based on the findings of the study, what implication may be drawn for the practicum program enhancement?

### **Null Hypothesis**

H1: There is no significant difference between the evaluation of the students regarding their online practicum program and their profiles.

H2: There is no significant difference between the problems encountered by the trainees during the online practicum program and their profiles.

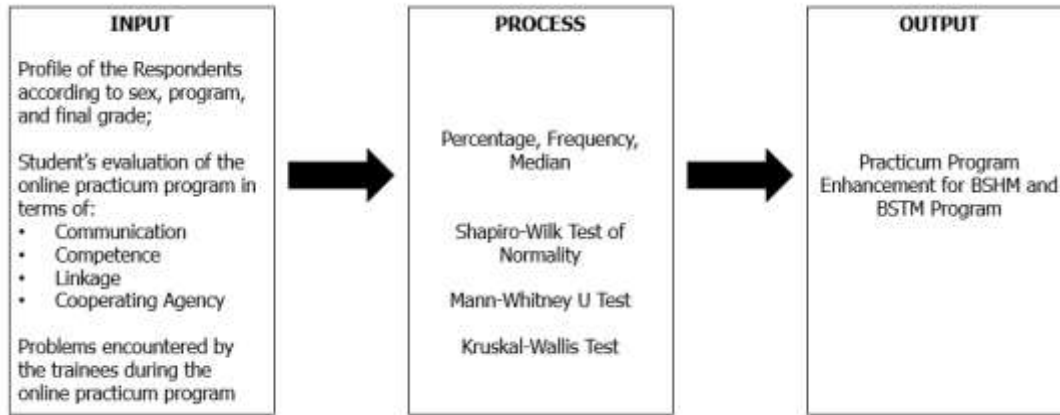


Fig. 1 Research Paradigm

**Methodology**

The study used a quantitative research process which focuses on collecting numerical data and using it to understand a specific event or generalize it across groups of individuals (Babbie, 2010). Without manipulating the data, Siedlecki (2020) claims that descriptive quantitative studies are utilized to characterize the subjects' people, places, and things. In this instance, the researcher gathered information centered on the respondents' demographics in order to ascertain how they assess the completed online practicum program for the BSHM and BSTM programs utilizing the input variables.

To achieve the study's objectives, the researchers collected responses from 79 students from the BSHM and BSTM programs who were enrolled in the practicum program. The respondent must be a bona fide student of the local college involved in the study, enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022 and have attended the department's online practicum program, have a stable internet connection, and be willing to engage in the said online survey.

A self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) is one that has been specifically developed to be completed by a respondent without the intervention of the researchers collecting the data (Lavrakas, 2008). The variables on the survey questionnaire was adopted from various scale authors (see Table 1). The first section includes the respondents' demographic profile. This will provide information about their age, sex, course, and their online practicum program provider. The study framework provided in the second section includes four variables, which serve as word intermediaries for each research phenomenon. The study's variables namely communication, competence, linkages, and cooperating agency, were measured using a 5-point Likert scale: 1 – Not at all satisfied, 2 – Slightly Satisfied, 3 – Moderately Satisfied, 4 – Very Satisfied, and 5 – Completely Satisfied. For the problems encountered, it was measured using a 5-point frequency scale: 1 – Never, 2 – Rarely, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often, and 5 – Always. Table 1.1 shows the indicators for each constructs along with its source.

**Table 1.** Variables' Items and its Source

Construct	Source
<i>Communication</i>	
CM1	An and Mauhay (2016)
CM2	
CM3	
CM4	
CM5	
<i>Competence</i>	
CP1	Samala et al., (2020)
CP2	
CP3	

CP4	I cooperate throughout the duration of the online practicum program.	
AR3	I am being resourceful especially when doing assigned tasks.	
<i>Linkages</i>		
LK1	There is a direct linkage of the school and the office or industries where you conduct the online practicum program.	
LK2	The online practicum program of the school is open to the industry or company.	
LK3	There is an orientation given to students conducted by the cooperating agencies.	Samala et al., (2020)
LK4	There is a practicum coordinator to serve the link between the school and the cooperating agency.	
LK5	The practicum coordinator gave orientation to the trainees regarding the nature of the online practicum program and guidelines were given.	
<i>Cooperating Agency</i>		
CA1	The training method of the agency is efficient.	
CA2	Tasks given are related to the course.	
CA3	The trainer has a good working relationship with the trainees.	Samala et al., (2020)
CA4	The trainer sets a positive example to follow.	
CA5	The trainees are free to ask questions whenever necessary.	
<i>Problems Encountered</i>		
PE1	The trainer may not have enough time to teach and supervise the trainee.	
PE2	The training method is inefficient.	
PE3	There is a time conflict between the classes and the online practicum schedule.	An and Mauhay (2016)
PE4	The facilities and equipment at home is not suitable for the assigned tasks.	
PE5	Instructions are not clearly defined.	

## Data Collection

The purpose of the survey instrument was to collect data from the respondents. The researchers sent the Google Form link to the BSHM and BSTM students, who were enrolled in the online practicum program in the second semester of 2021–2022. Respondents were asked to read the cover letter outlining the survey's objective and have agreed to the terms and conditions stipulated on the front of the survey. The researcher's contact detail was also provided. Before examining the tabulated data in aggregate form, the survey link was removed.

## Data Analysis

The researchers used descriptive statistics to analyze the gathered data and achieve the objective of the study. Also, the study employed a non-parametric test since the other groups in the result of the study are not normally distributed.

## Result and Discussion

Based on the result of the study with a total of 79 respondents, majority were female with 65.8 percent (n=52) and the rest were male respondents with 34.2 percent (n=27). Respondents from the BSHM program accumulated a total of 60 respondents (75.9%) while the respondents from the BSTM were only 19 (24.1%).

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondent's profile as to practicum's final grade. It shows that most of the respondents garnered a final grade within 90-94 (49.4%; n=39). This indicates that the most of the students had performed well during their practicum and none of the respondents failed the said program.

**Table 2.** *Distribution on Respondent's Profile According to Practicum' Final Grade*

Final Grade	Frequency	Percent
80-84	1	1.3
85-89	13	16.5
90-94	39	49.4
95-99	26	32.9
<b>Total</b>	79	100.0

It can be gleaned on the table 3 how the students evaluate the online practicum program in terms of communication. The constructs, "I had access to the information I needed.", "I understood what was expected of me.", and "Communication was clear with no hidden meanings" all had a median of 5 which is interpreted as "completely satisfied". The remaining two constructs for the factor "Communication" got a median of 4 (very satisfied). The result indicates that the online practicum provider established a clear communication with the students. Communication skills are essential in the lives of professionals (Mahajan, n.d.) According to Adu-Oppong (2014), the relevance of communication in the workplace includes job satisfaction, less conflicts, increased productivity, connection creation, and proper resource usage. Interns in Abdelkader's prior study (n.d.) perceived communication as a crucial prerequisite for their internship. Thus, the students who have experienced the online practicum program have rationalized how important is communication towards the success of the said program.

**Table 3.** *Evaluating Online Practicum Program in terms of Communication*

Indicators	Median	Descriptive Interpretation
I had access to the information I needed.	5	Completely Satisfied
I understood what was expected of me.	5	Completely Satisfied
People gave feedback about my work.	4	Very Satisfied
People enjoy me in constructive discussions/dialogue.	4	Very Satisfied
Communication was clear with no hidden meanings.	5	Very Satisfied

Table 4 shows the student's evaluation of online practicum program in terms of competence. The constructs for the factor competence, "I cooperate throughout the duration of the online practicum program" and "I am being resourceful especially when doing assigned tasks" had a median of 5 and interpreted as "Completely Satisfied" which indicates that the students were able to participate proactively and have been resourceful during the online practicum program. The remaining constructs appeared to have

a median score of 4 and interpreted as “Very Satisfied”. The result implies that the students were satisfied with the online practicum programs’ competence, both of themselves and the online practicum provider.

**Table 4.** *Evaluating Online Practicum Program in terms of Competence*

Indicators	Median	Descriptive Interpretation
I understand the instructions easily.	4	Very Satisfied
I perform assigned tasks with minimum supervision.	4	Very Satisfied
I willingly accept work assignments and responsibilities given during online sessions.	4	Very Satisfied
I cooperate throughout the duration of the online practicum program.	5	Completely Satisfied
I am being resourceful especially when doing assigned tasks.	5	Completely Satisfied

As shown on the table 5, students evaluated the online practicum program in terms of linkages. Results show that the constructs, “There is an orientation given to students conducted by the cooperating agencies”, “There is a practicum coordinator to serve the link between the school and the cooperating agency”, and “The practicum coordinator gave orientation to the trainees regarding the nature of the online practicum program, and guidelines were given.”, all had a median of 5 which means they are completely satisfied. The remaining constructs had a median of 4. The results imply that there is an excellent coordination between the practicum coordinator and the partner agency. Narayanan et al. (n.d.) stated that the more explicitly internships are connected with academic courses, the more students will benefit from the total experience. According to Delelis (2016), a relationship between the school and the industry throughout the practicum program is essential to bring out trained and competent workforce, and it is cooperation between the two entities that makes the goals of developing and strengthening trainees feasible.

**Table 5.** *Evaluating Online Practicum Program in terms of Linkage*

Indicators	Median	Descriptive Interpretation
There is a direct linkage of the school and the office or industries where you conduct the online practicum program.	4	Very Satisfied
The online practicum program of the school is open to the industry or company.	4	Very Satisfied
There is an orientation given to students conducted by the cooperating agencies.	5	Completely Satisfied
There is a practicum coordinator to serve the link between the school and the cooperating agency.	5	Completely Satisfied
The practicum coordinator gave orientation to the trainees regarding the nature of the online practicum program, and guidelines were given.	5	Completely Satisfied

Table 6 shows the student's evaluation on the online practicum program in terms of cooperating agency. The construct, "The online training method of the agency is efficient" had a median of 4 (very satisfied) while the rest of the constructs got a median of 5 (completely satisfied) which implies that the students have high regards towards the online practicum provider. Because industry plays a crucial role in the practicum program, it is critical to engage with industry partners to establish what is required to enable their involvement and contribution to work-integrated learning (Ferns et al., 2016).

**Table 6.** *Evaluating Online Practicum Program in terms of Cooperating Agency*

Indicators	Median	Descriptive Interpretation
The online training method of the agency is efficient.	4	Very Satisfied
Online tasks given are related to the course.	5	Completely Satisfied
The trainer has a good working relationship with the trainees.	5	Completely Satisfied
The trainer sets a positive example to follow.	5	Completely Satisfied
The trainees are free to ask questions whenever necessary.	5	Completely Satisfied

About the problem encountered by the trainees during the online practicum program, table 7 shows that the construct "The trainer may not have enough time to teach and supervise the trainee" got a median score of 4 which means "often". The rest of the constructs had a median score of 3 which means that the problems were encountered at some point in time during their online practicum sessions. The result implies that the time allotment of the trainers during the online practicum program's teaching sessions were not enough as perceived by the trainees. Also, the inefficiency of the training method became a problem at some point since this is the first time that the students were doing a practicum program using online modality and adjustments would really take place on their end. The results are consistent with the findings of Bahasoan et al. (2020), who discovered that online learning is effective but inefficient. They believe that online learning will be effective as a response to the pandemic's urgency, but that there will be limitations and gaps in the students' learning. The time conflict between classes and the online practicum schedule was also mentioned as a problem by the students; however, the practicum program was only available to fourth-year students after they completed the academic subjects required for their course. Thus, the students' time schedule was only allotted to their online practicum courses. Available facilities of the students at home was also noted as a problem by the respondents. This implies that some of the activities that the students need to do requires specific facilities and/or equipment that could not be found or is not available at home. This is consistent with the findings of Khalil et al. (2020), who reported that technical issues such as internet connectivity and poor tool utilization are among the challenges of online learning. Lastly, it was also noted that instructions are not clearly defined as perceived by some of the respondents. Online learning is still new and contested among students, according to Adnan and Anwar (2020) and Hazwani et al. (2020). As a result, taking instructions may be difficult for some students, especially if they are given online.

**Table 7.** *Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program*

Indicators	Median	Descriptive Interpretation
The trainer may not have enough time to teach and supervise the trainee.	4	Often
The training method is inefficient.	3	Sometimes
There is a time conflict between the classes and the online practicum schedule.	3	Sometimes

The facilities and equipment at home is not suitable for the assigned online tasks.	3	Sometimes
Instructions are not clearly defined.	3	Sometimes

The table 8 and 9 shows the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality respectively. For the Evaluating Online Practicum Program by sex-group, Male [W(27) = .779, p = .000], and Female [W(52) = .859, p = .000] and by program-group, BSTM [W(19) = .805, p = .001], and BSHM [W(60) = .853, p = .000] are not normally distributed since the p-values of all groups are less than the significance level of 0.05. For the Evaluating Online Practicum Program by practicum-final-grade-group, 80 – 84 is constant, 85 – 89 [W(13) = .857, p = .036] and 95 – 99 [W(26) = .636, p = .000] are not normally distributed contrary to group 90 – 94 [W(39) = .945, p = .055] where it is approximately normally distributed since is greater than the level of significance of 0.05.

For the Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program by sex-group, Male [W(27) = .889, p = .008], and Female [W(52) = .942, p = .014] are not normally distributed. By program-group, BSTM [W(19) = .919, p = .108] is approximately normally distributed differing to BSHM [W(60) = .937, p = .004] which is not normally distributed. By practicum-final-grade-group, 80 – 84 is constant, 85 – 89 [W(13) = .899, p = .130] and 90 – 94 [W(39) = .956, p = .135] are approximately normally distributed since the p values are greater than the significance level of 0.05 while group 95 – 99 [W(26) = .866, p = .003] is not normally distributed.

Since the other groups were not normally distributed, the statistical treatment used for analysis was a non-parametric test.

**Table 8.** Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality on Evaluating Online Practicum Program by Demographic Profile

Profile	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Decision
Sex	Male	.779	27	.000	Not Normally Distributed
	Female	.859	52	.000	Not Normally Distributed
Program	BSTM	.805	19	.001	Not Normally Distributed
	BSHM	.853	60	.000	Not Normally Distributed
Practicum Final Grade	80-84				Constant
	85-89	.857	13	.036	Not Normally Distributed
	90-94	.945	39	.055	Normally Distributed
	95-99	.636	26	.000	Not Normally Distributed

**Table 9.** Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality on Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program by Demographic Profile

Profile	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Decision
Sex	Male	.889	27	.008	Not Normally Distributed
	Female	.942	52	.014	Not Normally Distributed
Program	BSTM	.919	19	.108	Normally Distributed
	BSHM	.937	60	.004	Not Normally Distributed



Practicum Grade	Final	80-84	Constant			
		85-89	.899	13	.130	Normally Distributed
		90-94	.956	39	.135	Normally Distributed
		95-99	.866	26	.003	Not Normally Distributed

Table 10 shows A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there is a no significant difference on the Students' Evaluation on Online Practicum Program between sexes for Male (M =4.58) and Female (M =4.50), U = 688.500, z = -.140, p = .889 which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that the student's gender does not play any role on how students evaluate the online practicum program provided to them. Both male and female has that same viewpoint when it comes to the said program.

**Table 10.** Differences on The Students' Evaluation on Online Practicum Program by Sex

Sex	n	Median	Mann-Whitney U	z	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Male	27	4.58	688.500	-.140	.889	Not Significant
Female	52	4.50				

Table 11 shows A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there is a significant difference on the Students' Evaluation on Online Practicum Program between programs for BSTM (M = 4.79) and BSHM (M = 4.39), U = 381.000, z = -2.177, p = .029 which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This suggests that the student's program or course is significant when it comes to the evaluation of the online practicum program. This is owing to the fact that the two programs were given distinct modules and practicum plans by the online practicum provider.

**Table 11.** Differences on The Students' Evaluation on Online Practicum Program by Program

Program	n	Median	Mann-Whitney U	z	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
BSTM	19	4.79	381.000	-2.177	.029	Significant
BSHM	60	4.39				

Table 12 shows the evaluation of the differences across four grade-groups for the Students' Evaluation on Online Practicum Program was tested using the Kruskal – Wallis Test. The test revealed a statistically significant difference across grade-groups [H(3) = 7.865, p = .049), with a median value of 4.37 for 80-84, 4.53 for 85-89, 4.37 for 90-94 and 4.87 for 95-99 grades, since the p value of .049 is less than the significance level of 0.05. This means that there is a significant difference in student's evaluation when they are grouped according to the final grade they received from the online practicum program.

**Table 12.** Differences on The Students' Evaluation on Online Practicum Program by Practicum' Final Grade

Practicum' Final Grade	n	Median	H	df	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
80-84	1	4.37	7.865	3	.049	Significant
85-89	13	4.53				
90-94	39	4.37				
95-99	26	4.87				

The table 13 shows the Kruskal-Wallis of compare distribution across groups, there is a significant difference between grade-groups 90-94 and 95 -99 since the probability value of their pairwise comparison is .048 which is less than significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the result shows that these two groups are significantly different from each other.

**Table 13.** *Post Hoc Test Pairwise Comparisons of Practicum Final Grade with respect to the Students' Evaluation on Online Practicum Program*

Practicum Final Grade		Test Statistic	Adj. Sig.	Decision
Group 1	Group 2			
<b>80-84</b>	90-94	-1.949	1.000	Not Significant
<b>80-84</b>	85-89	-2.115	1.000	Not Significant
<b>80-84</b>	95-99	-17.288	1.000	Not Significant
<b>90-94</b>	85-89	.167	1.000	Not Significant
<b>90-94</b>	95-99	-15.340	.048	Significant
<b>85-89</b>	95-99	-15.173	.304	Not Significant

Table 14 shows A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there is a significant difference on the Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum between sexes for Male (M = 4.00) and Female (M = 2.60), U = 422.500, z = -2.898, p = .004 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that the sex of the respondents plays a role on which problem they have encountered throughout the duration of online practicum program.

**Table 14.** *Differences on Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program by Sex*

Sex	n	Median	Mann-Whitney U	z	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
<b>Male</b>	27	4.00	422.500	-2.898	.004	<b>Significant</b>
<b>Female</b>	52	2.60				

Table 15 shows A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there is no significant difference on the Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program between programs for BSTM (M = 2.20) and BSHM (M = 3.20), U = 446.000, z = -1.427, p = .154 which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that the students' course had no bearing on the issues they encountered throughout the online practicum program.

**Table 15.** *Differences on Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program by Program*

Program	n	Median	Mann-Whitney U	z	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
<b>BSTM</b>	19	2.20	446.000	-1.427	.154	<b>Not Significant</b>
<b>BSHM</b>	60	3.20				

Table 16 shows the evaluation of the differences across four grade-groups for the Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program was tested using the Kruskal – Wallis Test. The test revealed a statistically no significant difference across grade-groups [H(3) = 3.125, p = .373], with a median value of 4.20 for 80-84, 3.00 for 85-89, 3.60 for 90-94 and 2.20 for 95-99 grades, since the p value of .373 is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This means that the students encountered difficulties regardless of their final grades.

**Table 17.** Differences on Problems Encountered by the Trainees During the Online Practicum Program by Practicum' Final Grade

Practicum' Final Grade	n	Median	H	df	Asymp. Sig	Decision
<b>80-84</b>	1	4.20	3.125	3	.373	<b>Not Significant</b>
<b>85-89</b>	13	3.00				
<b>90-94</b>	39	3.60				
<b>95-99</b>	26	2.20				

### Conclusion

Providing ongoing quality education is a challenge for all educational institutions during this COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, one of the most difficult aspects of achieving quality in tertiary education was the adoption of practicum programs during these times. However, the resiliency of colleges and universities was proven by conducting classes and even practicum program through online modalities. Gordon College BSHM and BSTM students were given the opportunity to enroll in an online practicum program, and they evaluated the cooperating firm favorably. The online practicum provider provided a clear and intelligible stream of communication with the students. In terms of competency, students cooperated and engaged well throughout online sessions, and they were highly resourceful despite having limited resources at home. Students have seen adequate cooperation between the school and the partner agency for the linkages, as evidenced by their survey responses. The students were able to evaluate the collaborating agency, and the results showed an excellent evaluation, particularly in terms of the training method's efficiency, tasks assigned, trainer-trainee interaction, trainers as a positive role model, and trainers' responsiveness to queries. The student-respondents reported that there are problems encountered during their online practicum program and often times, it is about the insufficient time of the trainer to supervise or teach the trainees. It was also reported in the results that inefficiency of training method, time conflicts, unavailability of facilities and equipment at home, and unclear instructions were some of the issues they encountered. The study used a non-parametric test since some of the groups were not normally distributed. A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there is a no significant difference on the students' evaluation on online practicum program between sexes. The said test also revealed that there is a significant difference on the students' evaluation on online practicum program between programs for BSTM and BSHM. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a statistically significant difference across grade-groups, specifically, there is a significant difference between grade-groups 90-94 and 95 -99. A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there is a significant difference on the problems encountered by the trainees during the online practicum between sexes for male and female. Also, the test revealed that there is no significant difference on the problems encountered by the trainees during the online practicum program between programs for BSTM and BSHM. Lastly, Kruskal – Wallis test revealed a statistically no significant difference across grade-groups. According to the findings of this study, an online practicum program is a viable alternative to on-site training, and each institution's chosen provider must be prepared to provide students with online learning opportunities.

### Recommendations

Based on the results and discussion of the study together with the conclusion, the researchers now recommend the following:

1. Strengthen the department's partnership with the current online practicum provider, as the majority of students were highly satisfied with the outcome of the online practicum program, with only minor issues encountered.
2. Address student problems by: a) ensuring that there is enough time allotted for each session to cover the topic of each module, b) revisiting the training method used by the practicum service provider and looking for areas for improvement, c) ensuring that practicum session time schedules do not conflict with other classes, d) orienting students ahead of time on the needed facilities and/or equipment for online tasks, and e) ensuring that the instructions will be drafted in an understandable manner and aligned to the objectives and goals of the program.
3. An online practicum program is a viable option for students who are unable to attend or participate in on-site training, particularly because digitalization allows students to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained, which is a requirement for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The experience and knowledge gained through the traditional practicum program, on the other hand, could not be taken for granted.
4. If the COVID-19 cases remain low and the IATF protocols allow, the institution could still offer an online practicum program to students with a combination of in-person training in light of the upcoming academic year's gradual transition to the new-normal. Thus, the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management of Gordon College could allot 50% for online

practicum program, and the other 50% for on-site training. This is to meet the needs and demands of both the students, the institution, and the industry.

#### References:

- A. M. Abdelkader, R. Abundo, and G. Baratas, "Perceived Level of Preparation for Nursing Internship," *International Journal of Nursing Education*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 258–264, 2020, doi: 10.37506/ijone.v12i4.11260.
- Adnan, M., & Anwar, K. (2020). Online learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic: Students' perspectives. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology*, 2(1), 45-51. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPSP.2020261309>
- Adu-Oppong, A. A. (2014). Communication in the workplace: Guidelines for improving effectiveness. *Global Journal of Commerce and Management Perspective*. Vol 3(5): 208-213.
- An, I. L., & Mauhay, R. C. (2016, April 20). Interns' feedback on industry partners: Inputs for an enhanced internship program. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts, and Sciences Vol. 03(2)* 74-81.
- Babbie, Earl R. *The Practice of Social Research*. 12th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage, 2010; Muijs, Daniel. *Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE Publications, 2010.
- Bahasoan, A. N., Wulan Ayuandiani, Muhammad Mukhram, & Aswar Rahmat. (2020). Effectiveness of Online Learning In Pandemic Covid-19. *International Journal of Science, Technology & Management*, 1(2), 100-106. <https://doi.org/10.46729/ijstm.v1i2.30>
- Bernardo, A. C., Landicho, A., & Laguador, J. M. (2014). On-the-Job Training Performance of Students from AB Paralegal Studies for SY 2013- 2014. *Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(4), 122-129.
- Delelis, M. G. (2016). Factors affecting the on-the-job training performance of accountancy practicumers of Cagayan State University Andrews Campus. *International Journal of Advanced Research in management and Social Sciences*. ISSN: 2278-6236
- Ferns, S., Russell, L., and Kay, J. (2016). Enhancing industry engagement with work-integrated learning: Capacity building for industry partners. *Asia Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*. ISSN 1175-2882.
- Hazwani Mohd N., Noor Raudhiah Abu B. and Norziah O. (2020). E-Pembelajaran Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Di Sebuah Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Selangor. Selangor. Malaysian atas talian. *Journal of Education*.
- Jeske, D. & Axtell, C.M. (2016), How to run successful e-internships: A case for organizational learning. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, 30 (2), 18–21. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-09-2015-0073>
- Khalil, R., Mansour, A. E., Fadda, W. A., Almisnid, K., Aldamegh, M., Al-Nafeesah, A., & Al-Wutayd, O. (2020). The sudden transition to synchronized online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia: A qualitative study exploring medical students' perspectives. *BMC Medical Education*, 20(1), 1–10.
- Lisa, U. F., Andriani, F., and Ahzaliza, D. (2021). The effectiveness of online learning on student practicum skills. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 5 p. 240-243
- McGregor, J. (2020, June 8). Corporate America is taking the internship online this summer: Some experiences can't be replaced. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/06/08/corporate-america-is-taking-internship-online-this-summer-some-experiences-cant-be-replaced/>
- Nicolas, H. J., Manalastas, H. G., & Capalad, R. A. Feedback of students on internship program in an agricultural course. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 11(2), 573. <https://doi.org/10.11591/IJERE.V11I2.21936>
- Nietzel, M.T. (2020). COVID-19 and the lost college internship. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelt Nietzel/2020/07/06/COVID-19-and-the-lost-college-internship/?sh=2386ca6c1a4d>
- Ozmantar, Z. K. (2021). Practicum experience in the era of new-normal: A phenomenological study. *Educational Planning Summer*. Vol. 28(3).
- Parsons, V. L. (2017, February 15). Stratified sampling. *Wiley Online Library*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118445112.stat05999.pub2>
-

- R. Mahajan, "The key role of communication skills in the life of professionals," *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 20, no. 12, pp. 36–39, 2015, doi: 10.9790/0837-201223639.
- Samala, H. DR., Goyenechea, M. O., & Samala, J. E. M. (2020, November). On-the-job training and academic performance among high school students in the Philippines. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*. Vol. 24(08).
- Siedlecki, S. L. (2020). Understanding descriptive research design and methods. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, 34(1), 8-12.
- Taladtad, Sunjay G., Bala, Maria Katrina R., Rodelas, Manilyn, and Teope, Rodolfo John. (2010). Factors that Affect the On-the-Job Training of BSBA Practicumers of the University of Manila: An Assessment.
- V. Narayanan, P. Olk, and C. Fukami, "Determinants of internship effectiveness: An exploratory model," *Academy of Management 2006 Annual Meeting: Knowledge, Action and the Public Concern*, AOM, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 61–80, 2006, doi: 10.5465/ambpp.2006.22898555.
- Yamane T. *Statistics: an introduction analysis*. Harper & Row. 1973.
- Ylagan, A., (2013). Effectiveness of practicum program of tourism students in Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*. Vol. 10 No. 1. 10-18
- Yu, M. & Mercado, J. (2016). Assessment of on the job training of bachelor of science in business administration program of Surigao Del Sur State university-Cantilan campus. *Journal of Scientific Research and Development*. Vol. 3 No. 7., 1-7