

Effectiveness of the Online Classes Implemented in The DWCL Graduate School of Business and Management During the Pandemic

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Abstract: The study determined the effectiveness of the online classes implemented in the Graduate School in Divine Word College of Legazpi. Effectiveness was determined based on the perspectives of the students who are the recipients of the online classes in the graduate school along content and structure; modalities implemented; online platforms used; discussion of topics online; class interaction; performance-related activities; and grading system used. The students enrolled during the 2nd Semester, SY 2020-2021 and 1st Semester, SY 2021-2022 were the respondents of the study. Their decision to enroll in the graduate program offering in DWCL is influenced by the quality of education, which the school is known for, the Divinian Mantra, and the GSBM Management. Other reasons given why they pursue graduate studies is for personal development and career advancement. The online platforms used in the online classes are Google Classroom, Google Meeting, Zoom Meetings, FB Messenger Chat Groups and the class modalities implemented by the majority is mixed mode or the combination of synchronous and asynchronous classes, and the majority of the classes are synchronously met by the faculty members every class meeting schedule. All the areas covered to measure the effectiveness of the GSBM online classes were rated "Very Effective" with an over-all general weighted mean of 3.64. The recommendations to further improve the online classes include: the conduct of more Webinars for supplemental learning, the use of Zoom instead of Google Meet, the use of innovative strategies for online meetings, online team building activities, and the possibility of limited face to face in the future if the situation so allowed.

Keywords: effectiveness, online classes, COVID-19 pandemic, graduate school

I. INTRODUCTION

The onset of the COVID-19 virus in the later part of 2019 alarmed everybody especially when it started to spread fast from across countries as a result of the movement of travelers entering and leaving one country. The virus seemed uncontrollable that it forced all countries across the globe to take measures on how to prevent it from even entering in their territories. But the COVID virus, if compared to a person is very intelligent. Even the health experts and scientists failed to determine its supposed actions. The last thing they know is that the virus is already present and in existence and they cannot shove it away that fast.

In March 2020, the first case in the Philippines was detected. The infected foreign national who was the carrier of said virus was kept in isolation and yet the virus still managed to escape

and travelled around infecting others. The government was forced to impose a national lockdown on March 15, 2020. That lockdown forced business establishments to close causing a lot of workers to lose their jobs especially those who are in the service business industry. The economy which was growing fast then was suddenly put to a halt. The 15 days lockdown was extended repeatedly, yet the spread of the virus never stopped. There were severe cases here and there, people are dying; families of those infected suffered much pain, much more of losing their loved ones to death and not paying them the last respects due to health protocols.

The school system was equally affected by the lockdown. The schools looked like a ghost town with no one around as restrictions mandated that all should stay home. For the first 15-30 days, no one was really reporting to work. The conduct of classes suddenly shifted to the online class modalities; school administrators allowed teachers to freely use the most familiar platform for them to stay connected with their students. Some schools even resorted to mass promotion.

While students generally responded positively to the transition, they were reluctant to continue learning online due to the added stress and workload experienced. (Lemay, et.al., 2021). Some students were even suggesting to HEI's and clamoring to implement mass promotion at the start.

The Commission on Higher Education issued several memorandum orders pertaining to the conduct of the online classes due to complains of students relative to workload assignments and deadlines. Hence, HEI's were requested to exercise utmost leniency among their students. HEI's were required to frame their Learning Continuity Plan (LCP), which will serve as guide for all faculty and students alike in the implementation and conduct of online classes.

Divine Word College of Legazpi, through the efforts of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, worked in teams to frame said Learning Continuity Plan, which was initially implemented the first Semester of School Year 2020-2021, August 2020 to May 2021. The same LCP was reviewed and evaluated again by the committee, where minor changes were done to suit to the needs of the new school year, 2021-2022.

The implementation of the online classes in DWCL across schools posed some challenges on the part of administration, faculty, and students. One major concern reported relates to internet connectivity, where poor signals were often

experienced resulting into the non-attendance of students in scheduled synchronous class meetings. Same concern seemed to be experienced, too, by other schools in the region. Alpon, et. al., and Condes, et. al, (2021) both found that internet connectivity was among the challenges experienced by the students of Calabanga Community College in the conduct of online classes. This problem on connectivity does not only happen in the Philippines. In a study conducted in Pakistan, (2020) where undergraduate and postgraduate students were surveyed to find their perspectives about online education, findings highlighted that online learning cannot produce desired results in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, where a vast majority of students are unable to access the internet due to technical as well as monetary issues. The lack of face-to-face interaction with the instructor, response time and absence of traditional classroom socializations, were among some other issues highlighted by higher education students.

Likewise, Baticulon, et. al, (2020) identified barriers to online learning from the perspective of medical students in a developing country. They reported and classified said barriers into five categories namely: technological, individual, domestic, institutional, and community barriers. Most frequently encountered were difficulty adjusting learning styles, having to perform responsibilities at home, and poor communication between educators and learners. Pasco, et., al., (2020) in their study about the effectiveness of the online learning from classroom learning from the usual classroom face to face learning involving 90 2nd year college students also reported some difficulties encountered by students in online learning, which include difficulty in adopting learning habits, needing to fulfill responsibilities at home, sleep deprivation, and lack of consistent guidance from professors. One major disadvantage found was related to their physical drain, which accordingly, depleted their energy.

Yang and Cornelius, (2004) also reported some negative experiences by students which were caused by delayed feedback from instructors, unavailable technical support from instructors, lack of self-regulation and self-motivation, the sense of isolation, monotonous instructional methods, and poorly designed course content. In addition, effects of online learning to mental health were likewise reported to wit: DOH, (2020), stated that health problems may be developed among online learners; long hours using gadgets, computers etc. for online learning may cause eye strain and sitting down for so long may have bad effects on a person's posture and individuals who are always using gadgets and/or over-using gadgets are likely to have depression and anxiety due to lack of time to socialize with others, (Harrison and Lucassen: 2019)

On the contrary, there are also articles that describe the advantages and benefits of online learning. The most benefits of online education are flexibility, flexible schedule, and environment; convenience; career advancement and hobbies; lower cost, self-discipline and responsibility; networking opportunities; documentation, increased instructor-student time, among others. A study conducted by Zeng, M. et al,

(2021) involving 482 pre-doctoral students in a U.S. dental school on the perceived effectiveness of online courses during the pandemic, found that most online courses were accepted by the students and 80% of them wanted to continue with the online instruction even in the post pandemic. They perceived that engagement with faculty and students during online classes were effective.

Girik Allo. MD, (2020), studied the case of EFL learners on online learning amidst the COVID 19 Pandemic. The study found that the learners' perceived online learning to be 'good' during COVID-19 pandemic and that it is very helpful in the middle of pandemic. The same study not only report that online learning is good in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic but also spotted the light on the availability of internet access, financial issue, and online learning implementation. At the learners' condition in terms of financial issue, they hoped that lecturers would make use of facilities such as free Messenger application in Online Learning System.

Paudel, P. (2021) investigated teachers' and learners' perspectives on online education in relation to its benefits, challenges, and strategies during and after COVID-19 in higher education, where 280 teachers and students from five universities of Nepal participated in the study. The results showed that the participants experienced online education beneficial primarily for promoting online research, connecting the practitioners to the global community, and getting huge and authentic resource of knowledge though they have found time-management skills, more freedom to the teachers and learners, and reliable internet at workplace as the extreme challenges. The research also revealed time management skills, technological preparedness and computer literacy are the basic qualities for the practitioners who want to have online education. The participants suggested that ICT policy should be clear, and courses should be designed accordingly.

Thi Tinh Thung Pham, Hoang Anh Le, Doan Trang Do, (2021) studied the factors affecting the online learning outcomes during the pandemic involving 404 conveniently sampled student respondents. They tested their hypotheses and reported the results that the learning outcomes of the respondents were affected by six factors—learner characteristics, perceived usefulness, course content, course design, ease of use, and faculty capacity.

Tuladhar, S.L. et. al, (n.d.), on the other hand, in their study on the effectiveness of online classes for undergraduate medical and dental students of Gandaki Medical College during COVID 19 pandemic period in Nepal, found that 98% of the respondents were attending online classes and using SMART phone devices. It also reported that the internet connection was good and majority are satisfied with it, however, such was disturbed by sudden cut in electricity or brown outs. The respondents rated the online classes as interactive and not disturbing, however they said that the face to face classes is more effective compared to online classes.

A similar study conducted by Butnaru, G.I.; Nit, A, V.; Anichiti, A.; Brînz A.G., (2021) where they gathered data

from 784 respondents on their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of online education in a period when such type of education was the only available option. The results of their study indicated that students react differently to online education and that their reactions were based on their proficiency in using online tools, their ability to technically access online courses, and the instructors' manner in conducting learning activities.

Some students would say that there is no substitute for face-to-face classes, but with the present time when the world is battling with the deadly virus, schools do not have much of a choice except to embrace the new normal of educational and instruction delivery, which is the online classes.

DWCL, in its efforts to adhere to the times, entertained various providers of Learning Management Systems, which could be used by the institution. Of several providers that presented their products, the NEO-LMS was chosen. Alongside, orientations and training on the use of the same were done and continuously being done to help faculty members and students alike in mastering the details on its use for online classes. The implementation of the said NEO-LMS started first semester of this school year, 2021-2022. The graduate school faculty, however, was one in their decision not to implement yet the NEO-LMS due to lack of mastery on its use, which the institution so allowed.

DWCL Graduate School is not closing its doors to the possibility of using the NEO-LMS and/or other Learning Management System. However, before doing so, it is imperative that the present system being used be assessed involving the faculty and students as their opinions and experiences would matter and for them to feel that they are involved in the decision to change the existing platform being used in the Graduate School, if so warranted, hence, this study.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The study determined the level of effectiveness of the online classes implemented in the Divine Word College of Legazpi Graduate School of Business and Management, (DWCL-GSBM), during the pandemic. Specifically, it answered the following problems:

- 1.1.1 What are the reasons of the students for enrolling in the DWCL GSBM?
- 1.1.2 What platforms are utilized in the conduct of the GSBM online classes?
- 1.1.3 What is the perceived level of effectiveness of the online classes implemented in the graduate school along:
 - a. course content and structure;
 - b. modalities implemented;
 - c. online platforms used;
 - d. discussion of topics online;
 - e. class interaction/participation/engagement;
 - f. performance-related activities; and
 - g. grading system?

- 1.1.4 What recommendations may be advanced to further improve the implementation of the online classes in the GSBM?

Full implementation of the online classes in the graduate school started first semester of School Year 2020-2021. As such, the study involves all GSBM students enrolled for the 2nd semester of School Year 2020-2021 and 1st semester of SY 2021-2022 at which time the online classes were still implemented due to the pandemic. The faculty members who handled the subjects during said semesters were also involved in the study as key informants.

II. METHODS

The study utilized descriptive research design, where the level of effectiveness of the online classes implemented in the graduate school were measured and described based on the perceptions of the respondents on course content and structure, modalities implemented, online platforms used, discussions of topics, class interaction, performance-related activities, and grading system.

2.1. Participants

The participants in the study are the 95 students enrolled in the graduate school for the 2nd Semester, SY 2020-2021 and 1st Semester of SY 2021-2022 and 7 faculty members who handled the online classes. Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire, which were distributed to the student respondents online using Google forms. The link was shared to them after the GSBM Webinar held December 11, 2021. The data from the faculty members were gathered using a separate instrument after the results from the student respondents were already generated. The faculty members were asked to answer items that would validate the results of the students' perspectives.

2.2. Instrument

The research instrument used in the study is a self-developed questionnaire, which was validated to selected students who already graduated but were recipients of the initial online classes implemented by the graduate school. Part 1 is an open-ended area that sought answers on the respondents' reasons for choosing to enroll in the graduate programs of the institution. Part 2 contains questions relative to the platforms utilized in the conduct of online classes; Part 3 contains questions on the perceived effectiveness of the online classes, where a 5-point scale was used to measure the indicators for each identified area; and Part 4 generated recommendations for the further improvement of the online classes in particular and the operations of the graduate school unit in general. Inability of the respondents to complete the survey during the dry-run were noted due to some errors in the response validation setting of some specific items in the instrument.

2.3. Procedures

The respondents were informed during the December 11, 2021 Webinar conducted by the graduate school of the purpose of the survey. Then the instrument link was sent to the chat box, where the participants answered but only of few of them

complied maybe due to the fact that they were already tired considering the whole day webinar activity. The same instrument was sent to the GSBM faculty group chat, where the faculty members were asked to require their students to answer the questionnaire. Still the turn out was not yet very fast. To achieve higher retrieval rate, the same questionnaire was sent to the personal accounts of the students with a private message requesting them to accomplish the same. Despite the best efforts exerted, though, the retrieval rate achieved was only 86 percent.

2.4. Statistical Tools

The results of the survey were interpreted using the statistical tools of frequency, percentage, rank, and weighted mean.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey conducted are presented in tables for easy reference among would be readers. Discussions on the meaning and implications of the results are also included in this part of the study.

3.1. Reasons Why Students Chose to Enroll in DWCL Graduate School

The data gathered to answer this particular problem was done via the survey using open-ended question where the respondents have the freedom to give their answers based on the personal experience. Their answers were accordingly grouped thematically and are presented in the table below. The detailed answers for each theme are found in Appendix A.

The reason why the students enroll in the graduate program offerings of DWCL is the quality of education, the Divinian Mantra, and the GSBM Management. This means that the graduate school is known as a provider of quality graduates in the industry. They say that the Dean and the faculty members are competent, proficient, efficient, committed, approachable and easy to relate with and that the graduate school continuously provide them with avenues for learning. Other reasons given were for personal development and career advancement and development. The latter findings corroborate with the GSBM tracer study findings, (Nacion & Jenkin, 2020) which reported that the reasons in pursuing higher education by the graduates were personal and professional growth and career advancement.

Table 1. Reasons for Enrolling in DWCL Graduate School

	Themes	Frequency	Rank
a.	Quality Education	23	1
b.	Personal Development	18	2
c.	Career advancement and development	15	3
d.	DIVINIAN Mantra	14	5
e.	Management of GSBM	10	6
f.	Recommended by a Friend	3	7
g.	Class Scheduling	2	8.5
h.	Accessibility	2	8.5
i.	Catholic School	1	10
j.	Scholarship	1	10

*See Appendix A for the details

3.1.2. Online Platforms and Modalities Implemented

Since the study is focused on the effectiveness of the online classes implemented in the graduate school, the respondents were asked what online platforms are used in their respective classes, the modalities implemented, and also the frequency of synchronous meetings.

Table 2 shows that all classes are using the Google Classroom and supplemented by the use of FB Messenger Group Chat, Google Meetings, and Zoom Meetings. In addition, personal consultation is also being done on a case to case basis. This means that the faculty members put into practice the so-called ‘flexible learning’ system by way of utilizing different platforms even to the point of personally meeting students who cannot cope up with their lessons online.

Table 2. Online Platforms Used in Respective Classes

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Google Classroom	82	1
FB Messenger Group Chat	58	2
Google Meetings	57	3
Zoom Meetings	43	5
Others (personal face to face consultation)	1	5

*Multiple responses

3.1.3. Online Class Modalities Implemented

On online class modalities implemented, 90%, (74 of 82) replied that they the mixed mode or the combination of both synchronous and asynchronous meetings were mostly done in their classes in the graduate school. Per experience, the mixed mode helps a lot especially in time when there are brown outs that fall during class days, if there are activities in school that require the attendance of the faculty, and if majority of the students cannot attend real-time due to conflict in their work activities, at which time the class resorts to asynchronous mode, where assignments, readings, and/or activities or tasks are posted in the Google Classroom for the students to perform at their available time.

3.1.4. Frequency of Synchronous Class Meetings

Almost 66% (54 of 82) of the respondents said that they meet synchronously every class meeting schedule. This means that even if the classes are conducted online, the students have the strong chance to get to know their classmates and their professors as well since they see each other every week for two hours even if it is just on screen. Other faculty members, though, would schedule the synchronous class meetings only as the need arise according to 27 of the 82 respondents.

3.2. Perceived Effectiveness of the Online Classes Implemented in the GSBM

Effectiveness in this study pertains to the usefulness of the online classes as perceived by the respondents, which is measured along course content and structure, modalities implemented, platforms used, discussions of topics, class

interaction/participation/engagement, performance-related activities, and grading system.

3.2.1. Course Content and Structure

Table 3 presents the students’ perceptions on the effectiveness of their online classes along course content and structure, where all the listed indicators were perceived to be “Very Effective,” at a general average weighted mean of 3.60. This means that the faculty members provide them with accurate information related to the course by clearly and regularly posting announcements, providing them with appropriate and logical reading materials, as well as details on their assigned tasks and submission of outputs.

Table 3. Perceived Effectiveness of Course Content and Structure

Indicators	WM	VI
Clear and regularly posted announcements	3.68	Very Effective
Completeness of course information	3.68	Very Effective
Accurate professor’s information	3.66	Very Effective
Materials posted are appropriate and logical	3.71	Very Effective
Schedules for synchronous meetings are announced and posted	3.72	Very Effective
Submission details of assigned tasks and activities are posted	3.74	Very Effective
General Weighted Average	3.60	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective; 2.50-3.49 Effective; 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

3.2.2. Online Modalities Implemented

All the modalities implemented in the online classes are likewise rated “Very Effective,” with the blended modality getting the highest rating at 3.77 as revealed in Table 4 below. Although for some authors, (Bonk, Graham, and Means: 2013), “blended” could mean combination of online and face-to-face, in this study blended is limited to the combination of synchronous and asynchronous class sessions only, given the fact that during the time the survey was conducted, strict protocols of the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) prevented people from gathering and schools from having face-to-face classes.

Table 4. Perceived Effectiveness of Modalities Implemented

Indicators	WM	VI
Synchronous sessions	3.51	Very Effective
Asynchronous sessions	3.50	Very Effective
Combination of both/blended	3.77	Very Effective
General Weighted Average	3.59	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective 2.50-3.49 Effective 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

3.2.3. Online Platforms Used

Table 5 presents the perceived effectiveness of the online platforms used in the GSBM online classes. As shown, all platforms used, Google Classroom, Google Meetings, Zoom

meetings, and FB Messenger Group Chats are all rated, “Very Effective” by the respondents. This means that they were able to receive their expectations from the subjects they enrolled even if the delivery of classes were purely done online.

Table 5. Perceived Effectiveness of Online Platforms Used

Indicators	WM	VI
Google classrooms	3.78	Very Effective
Google meetings	3.71	Very Effective
Zoom Meetings	3.61	Very Effective
FB Messenger Group Chat	3.60	Very Effective
General Weighted Average	3.68	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective 2.50-3.49 Effective 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

3.2.4. Online Discussions

The students in the graduate program all already considered professionals and independently earning a living for themselves and in the cases of those married, for their families. As such, they are trained to become key officers in their respective organizations. Along said training, they are required to be resource speakers of particular topics assigned to them, which is part and parcel of the course coverage. Table 6 presents their perceived effectiveness of the online discussions of topics, where all indicators are again rated, “Very Effective,” with a general weighted mean of 3.63. This means that they are contented with the topics included in the course and those assigned to them to discuss in class including the provision of further readings as well as the assigned tasks to be done in relation to the topic at hand.

Table 6. Perceived Effectiveness of Online Discussion of Topics

Indicators	WM	VI
Topics for discussion included in the course	3.68	Very Effective
Assignment of discussants per topic	3.67	Very Effective
Provision of further readings for the topic	3.55	Very Effective
Assigned tasks and activities related to the topic	3.62	Very Effective
General Weighted Average	3.63	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective 2.50-3.49 Effective 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

3.2.5. Online Class Interaction

Class interaction in online classes is one indicator that learning is taking place. Table 7 shows that class interaction during online classes is perceived by the students to be “Very Effective,” with a general weighted mean of 3.63. This means that the policies for class interaction set by the faculty are clear, the flow of interaction is properly moderated, and everybody is given a chance to interact by way of sharing their experiences on matters related to the topic at hand. Some faculty members shared that part of the challenges they encounter in the conduct of online classes is sustaining students’ attention and promoting interactive participation and that they address those challenges

by communicating with them privately and encouraging them to participate. Indeed it takes a lot of effort on the part of the teacher to motivate the students to participate. Havwini, (2019), reported that teachers play a dominant role in online class interactions and that he should ask questions that will elicit genuine response from his students. Simply put, online classes, even in the graduate program should still be moderated by the faculty in charge.

Table 7. Perceived Effectiveness of Online Class Interaction

Indicators	WM	VI
Policy for class interaction	3.64	Very Effective
Flow of interaction as moderated by the professor	3.68	Very Effective
Everybody is given a chance to interact	3.60	Very Effective
Sharing of experiences related to the topic	3.61	Very Effective
General Weighted Average	3.63	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective 2.50-3.49 Effective 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

3.2.6. Performance-related Activities

Table 8 presents the perceived effectiveness of the performance-related activities assigned to students by their respective faculty members. Again, this area is rated, ‘Very Effective,’ by the student respondents with a general weighted mean of 3.54, which signifies that the assigned activities given to them are appropriate and enhances their learning abilities, they are given reasonable time to comply, and they are provided with feedback on their submitted outputs with which they can monitor their progress in class.

Table 8. Perceived Effectiveness of Online Performance-related Activities

Indicators	WM	VI
Appropriateness of assigned activities	3.52	Very Effective
Assigned activities enhance the learning of the students	3.55	Very Effective
Submitted outputs are assessed and graded	3.57	Very Effective
Deadline set for submission are reasonable	3.54	Very Effective
General Weighted Average	3.54	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective 2.50-3.49 Effective 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

3.2.7. Online Grading System

Table 9 presents the indicators to measure the effectiveness of the grading system used in the GSBM online classes, which are all rated ‘Very Effective,’ at a general weighted mean of 3.65. It can be gleaned that with this finding, that the GSBM utilizes fair and reasonable grading system, which is based on the performance of the students, considering the rubrics set for each assigned task or activity.

Table 9. Perceived Effectiveness of Online Grading System

Indicators	WM	VI
Grading method is fair and reasonable	3.66	Very Effective
Manner of grading is based on performance	3.66	Very Effective
Criteria/rubrics set for grading	3.63	Very Effective
General Weighted Average	3.65	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective 2.50-3.49 Effective 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

A summary of all the areas covered to measure the effectiveness of the online classes implemented in the GSBM is shown in Table 10 below. As reflected in the table, all areas are rated ‘Very Effective,’ by the student respondents. Said findings was supported by majority of the faculty, 4 out of 6, who also rated the online classes implemented in the graduate school as ‘Very Effective.’

Table 10. Summary Table

Areas	WM	VI
Course content and structure	3.60	Very Effective
Modalities implemented	3.68	Very Effective
Discussion of topics at hand	3.63	Very Effective
Class interaction/participation/engagement	3.63	Very Effective
Performance-related activities	3.64	Very Effective
Grading system	3.65	Very Effective
General Weighted Mean	3.64	Very Effective

Legend: 1.0-1.49- Ineffective 1.50-2.49-Moderately Effective 2.50-3.49 Effective 3.50-4.0 Very Effective

3.3. Comments and Suggestions, and Recommendations

To shell out qualitative data from the respondents, they were first asked if they are satisfied with the online class implemented in the graduate school. Three options were given as choices, Yes, No, and Sort of. All options need to be supported with reasons why. Of the 82 student respondents, 74 or 90% said ‘YES’; 1 or 1% said ‘NO’; and 7 or 9% said, ‘SORT OF.’ This was done to elicit their comments in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the online classes implemented. The identified strengths will support the quantitative findings on the effectiveness and therefore need to be sustained, while the weaknesses will be the basis for recommending measures to further improve the same. Among the reasons given of those who answered ‘YES’ were the following:

1. We were able to meet regularly although there are some power interruptions.
2. Online class is best suited during pandemic. Students can do and participate in the class at the comfort of their home.
3. Teachers are very responsible to meet with us weekly and to connect with us.

4. Limit exposure to the public to avoid infection from the COVID 19 virus
5. Safety and convenience of both teacher and students since the pandemic is not yet over.
6. Accessible and easy to navigate platforms used (6x)
7. We are only having synchronous meetings every Saturdays and class activities per subject can sometimes be submitted asynchronously
8. Safe, convenient, and flexible (14x)
9. It is very flexible especially to students who are already working. I find it easy accomplishing the academic requirements because of online submissions.
10. Because of safety protocols
11. We are still able to meet every class schedule
12. Time Element: Education beyond Challenges. The scheme that the school had implemented helped us to catch up on our subject requirements, as it provides us ample time and considerations to cope up with the scheduled lessons.
13. Safety Learning: Learning is enhanced even in this unpredictable time.
14. In many ways we learned a lot from DWCL strategy of refiguring the path of knowledge.
15. Interactive and Safe
16. Safer alternative during this pandemic situation (3x).
17. High caliber professors
18. Greater student engagement, advanced quality of education
19. We are able to attend class while at home and we feel safer considering that we are still in a pandemic, and with the threat of new variants of COVID-19
20. Online class allows me to attend classes even if I am at work or at home, even when on travel (4x)
21. Online classes prevent the spread of COVID virus (2x)
22. professors are highly qualified, diverse learning shared and teachings
23. It really helps me because i was reassigned at dpwh-cebu 7th deo. Still i can attend my classes because of the online program of the graduate school
24. Professors are as active as if it the classes are physically set up or face-to-face
25. Less stress going to school (2x)
26. The academic professors were so helpful and considerate in all aspects.
27. Professors provide good modules
28. For me it's effective and convenient. Effective because more than ever and even more so than face to face classes, classwork or individual class outputs is required in order to complete a subjects requirements which in turn ensures that the student will learn. Convenient (and safe from COVID) also in the sense that we are in the comfort of our homes and families, as most of the students have their own families already it is indeed convenient to learn

while being together and watching over one's family especially those who have little children who otherwise without online classes will not even consider enrolling to the course.

29. It helps me in time management both with my graduate school and my work.
30. More time to accomplish the assignments and at the same time, we study while staying at the comfort of our home.
31. Can access and join the class anywhere, anytime
32. Faculty members are very kind to their students
33. Can do multi-tasking while attending online class.
34. Professors are accommodating
35. I can attend my class without conflict to my work schedule
36. Saves time and money, since we don't need to go to school to attend class (4x)

One respondent, who answered, 'NO,' narrated that there are some topics that might need actual collaborations between students and faculty and that at times discussions would stop due to poor internet connectivity.

Those who answered, 'SORT OF,' gave the following measures which could be done for the further improvement of the online classes in the graduate school:

1. The mixed mode (both online and face-to-face) of classes is still preferred
2. Maybe fast internet connectivity will be a plus factor and Electric power interruptions should be lessened
3. For some subjects, online class is applicable however some subjects are better when face to face, especially those with computation (statistics)
4. Perhaps when conditions permit, actual minimal face to face could be scheduled even in one or few session in a trimestral period.
5. Webinars and online team building activities.
6. Ideas gathered are different compared to face to face lesson
7. Give the CP number of the Profs to the students for the personal message reserved just for them.
8. Give additional webinars to help the students.
9. Use the Zoom App instead of Google Meet
10. Upgrade to an online system that maybe useful both for the faculty and students.
11. Use innovative strategies for online meetings
12. Have more consideration with the deadline set in submitting assigned tasks

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Gleaned from the multitude of positive reasons provided by the respondents, it can indeed be construed that the online classes implemented in the graduate school is generally "Very Effective." The students embraced it as a strategic action of the school to continue its graduate school operation during the pandemic. They see it as beneficial to them—safe, convenient, flexible, accessible, economical, allows them to multi-task, among others. They feel that despite being

online, they still get the expected learning outcomes from their classes with the help of seasoned faculty members who are active, competent, efficient, considerate, committed, approachable, and accommodating.

Indeed in times of adversaries, organizations will thrive if all members collaborate and work together towards overcoming the challenges that come their way. The GSBM family was able to combat the challenges during the pandemic. It sustained its operations and even managed to increase enrolment. The workable recommendations mentioned by the respondents should be considered to further improve the conduct of online classes in the future like the conduct of more Webinars for supplemental learning, use of Zoom instead of Google Meet, use innovative strategies for online meetings, online team building activities, and the possibility of limited face to face as the need arises.

V. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The study was funded by DWCL as the author was given a 3-unit de-loading to compensate the work. The same manuscript (in the format originally submitted to IJRISS) was beforehand submitted to DWCL Research Office, to be subjected to peer review for publication in the next issue of the institution's research journal. DWCL however, encourages and supports faculty members' initiatives to submit works for publication in reputable research journals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author acknowledges the DWCL Administration, through the Research Office, for continuously encouraging faculty members to conduct researches and for approving the budgetary requirement of the study.

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APPENDIX A

Recorded Answers for Table 1

Themes		Recorded Answers	Frequency
a.	Quality Education and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provides quality education (4x) ➤ It has a good quality education. ➤ Quality of education (4x) ➤ The education is quality ➤ High quality of education, service and facilities ➤ Proficient and efficient faculty (2x) ➤ Professors have wide actual experiences on the subjects they handled ➤ professors are approachable, dedicated, with high standards, very professional and with good values ➤ The professors are very intelligent, efficient, and helpful in sharing their knowledge for our development. ➤ The quality of teaching and resource information ➤ Very good and reliable faculty of GSBM ➤ Quality of Education and good interaction of professors to students ➤ Competent Dean and faculty ➤ The graduate school faculty continually provides avenues for learning of the students; ➤ DWCL provides quality education and services ➤ Quality of education and experienced faculty members 	23
b.	Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For personal development (2x) ➤ I want to gain further studies ➤ to have a mastery in the field of public administration ➤ to gain more knowledge and insights for the betterment of myself as an individual ➤ Gain more knowledge on grad school and peer influence ➤ to gain more knowledge and insights ➤ To enhance my cognition, gain more knowledge ➤ To gain an additional knowledge ➤ To increase knowledge and learnings ➤ to continue my education ➤ For learning development ➤ To finish my MA, since I am a returning student. ➤ I wanted to experience some of the advantages of an online education, since it can help me to still pursue a Graduate school course during this pandemic... ➤ To enhance and widen my knowledge ➤ For higher level of education ➤ Grad school- Additional credentials ➤ to finish what I started 5 years ago 	18
c.	Career advancement and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For career growth ➤ Career advancement ➤ For career development (2x) ➤ For personal and professional development (3x) ➤ to be promoted in our organization ➤ to qualify for higher positions in my work in order to provide a better life for my family ➤ attain advancement in my professional career. ➤ Continues development ➤ For my promotion ➤ Promotion and additional Learning ➤ For my professional skills ➤ To help me gain knowledge on my field of work 	15
d.	DIVINIAN Mantra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Because DWCL is my alma matter ➤ I earned my college degree in DWCL and will always choose DWCL ➤ Because I graduated my Bachelor's Degree in DWCL. ➤ Because of its holistic formation ➤ It's my alma mater. ➤ Proud to be Divinian. ➤ My alma Matter (7x) ➤ I chose to enroll at DWCL GS due to the reason that both of my parents are a graduate of DWCL 	14

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I love being a Divinian ➤ I love DWCL. It made me a CPA. ➤ For being a prestigious graduate school in Legazpi ➤ Divinian culture of excellence 	
e.	Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School Management Flexibility ➤ The Graduate School Program/Course offerings ➤ Our/The Dean is the best and very accommodating and approachable (4x) ➤ Accommodating faculty and professors, effective learning ➤ The good accommodation and facilitation to us as the students. ➤ Dean Nacion for being courteous and cool ➤ Because people are accommodating 	10
f	Recommended by a Friend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Friend's recommendation and it is one of the most prestigious schools in Legazpi. ➤ Referred by a friend (2x) 	3
g	Class Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Classes are only scheduled on weekends ➤ Schedule of classes are suited to working individuals like us 	2
h.	Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The school is very accessible ➤ Convenient location 	2
i.	Catholic School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I was always enrolled in a catholic school since I was a child 	1
j	Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scholarship grant 	1