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## Research Article

### Learnings, Issues, and Challenges Encountered by Students and Faculty Members in the Implementation of Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs)

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## ABSTRACT

Consistent with the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) design of ISO 9001:2015, performance evaluation of policies pertaining to the University's main functions, i.e., instruction, research, and extension, should be pursued, especially for a newly implemented policy. Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs) at Bulacan State University were crafted, developed, and enhanced not only in compliance with the demands of continuing education but also to suit the standard of learning that is equal to classroom instruction catered physically. Whether these courses became effective and efficient within the duration of implementation remains to be determined. In the hope of having a fair and honest assessment that will lead towards relevant refinement of offering SPOCs, this mixed method of research undertaking aims to re-examine its efficiency and effectiveness, specifically, the learnings, issues and challenges encountered by the faculty members and students when using SPOC as modality. The survey questionnaire and interview questions were developed and validated and the interview among faculty members were face to face while the survey questionnaire for the SPOC students was through Google form for answering online, and the respondents were five thousand and eight students and twenty-five faculty members were interviewed. The findings indicate the factors that may impede the success of the implementation of SPOCs, aside from personal logistic challenges, the lack of discipline to manage time and sustain the interest in a given lesson are problems that require attention and further innovation. While connectivity can be identified as a personal logistic challenge, it can also be a challenge on the part of the University. The

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problem of connectivity may be seen as an opportunity for the University to create its own Learning Management System that can be customized to suit fit according to bandwidth, accessible and affordable to students. It can be concluded that SPOC is a promising learning platform in a world where hybrid interactions are highly relevant and can help save a lot of time and resources which brings in the recommendation to revisit, redesign, and recalibrate it for the ever-changing landscape of education.

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Education, Issues, Learnings, Small Private Online Course (SPOC)*

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## Introduction

Small Private Online Course (SPOC) is an online class implemented by Bulacan State University for students as the study of Istenic (2021) indicates that institutions of higher education are under pressure to rapidly transition to online education due to the pandemic. SPOCs supported educational programs and principles, including the use of flipped classrooms and blended learning, which integrate technology and online resources with personal interaction between instructors and students. The comprehensive evaluation of the conduct of SPOC is made to analyze the perceptions of the students with regard to the learnings, issues, and challenge they encountered during the SPOC. Because Small Private Online Courses (SPOC) are increasingly common in higher education and universities, course designers that offer excellent, individualized course activities must be aware of the student's learning status and characteristics in order to maximize the effectiveness of the course's instruction. However, more research has yet to be done on how different learning groups behave, including what indicators can indicate learner group behavior and the usual behavior traits of various learner groups.

Small Private Online Courses offer numerous benefits to students, including personalized learning, flexibility, and increased engagement. In this case, course content and learning objectives must be clear, organized, and well-planned. Visual instructional and teaching materials need to be functional, with clear audio, and easy to access so the students can hear and track what the instructor is

mentioning. With this, they can participate more actively and be engaged in the activities given. However, it was initially presumed that universities would routinely adopt online education given the digital tools already available to them, but this is not always the case (Carrasco-Hernández, Lozano-Reina, Lucas-Pérez, Madrid-Garre, and Sánchez-Marín, 2023).

SPOCs, or Small Private Online Courses, have gained popularity in recent years as an effective method of delivering education. With a focus on individualized learning, flexibility, and increased student engagement, SPOCs offer numerous benefits to college students. Five primary challenges in achieving deep learning in SPOCs were identified: 1) Alignment in educational activities, 2) Student insight, 3) Adaptability in teaching strategy, 4) Social cohesiveness, and 5) Creating discourse (Filius, Uijl, de Kleijn and Prins, 2018).

Evaluation is a key component of any quality management system. Consistent with the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) design of ISO 9001:2015, performance evaluation of policies pertaining to the University's main functions, i.e., instruction, research, and extension, should be pursued, especially for a newly implemented policy.

When the enhanced guidelines on the implementation of the Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs) at Bulacan State University were approved by the Board of Regents and subsequently implemented in the repertoire of instruction of the University, half of the battle to deliver quality education against the adversities in learning brought by COVID-19 was already accomplished, if not won.

SPOCs were crafted, developed, and enhanced not only in compliance with the demands of continuing education but also to suit the standard of learning that is equal to classroom instruction catered physically. Additionally, the study of Aldhahi et al. (2022) found that the pressing need to transform traditional face-to-face education to an online model prevented the proper planning required to do so correctly.

Using SPOCs comes with its own set of challenges. Whether these challenges were addressed, checked, and surmounted accordingly within the duration of implementation remains to be determined. In the hope of having a fair and honest assessment that will lead towards relevant refinement of offering SPOCs, this research undertaking aims to re-examine its efficiency and effectiveness guided by the following areas of concern. There are obstacles to the implementation of SPOCs in educational institutions. Since then, the application of online teaching strategies such as SPOC has been relevant (Gopal, Singh and Aggarwal, 2021).

**Interaction and Engagement between Faculty members and Students.** With limited opportunities for interaction with instructors and fellow learners, students enrolled in SPOCs may have found themselves struggling to keep up with the necessary engagement and motivation required by a given course. Even in a typical classroom set-up, the coping struggles of students manifest likewise. Regardless of the platform and method offered, there will always be students who are lagging behind and unable to sustain motivation and attentiveness. However, these struggles are discernible but can be addressed adequately and immediately in a face-to-face interaction. The effectiveness of virtual engagements is yet to be determined. Although course contents in these engagements are reinforced by digital technology, a well-constructed set of modules, assessment, and feedback mechanisms, the participation of a student at the other end of the screen is crucial to the delivery of the lesson.

Most previous studies looked at students' preferences in specific courses or at the organizational degree. However, the present

study looks at what students choose to study in the following areas: science, business, hospitality, and the arts as well as technology. Research indicates that students favor conversations in small groups and when lectures are accessible online as recordings as opposed to regular lectures. Even if there weren't many differences. These choices were largely the same across disciplines among students from various academic domains. The results demonstrate that students favor fully online training over traditional on-campus learning, instruction and assessment (Berezina, Gill and Siti, 2021).

Since SPOCs were launched by BulSU at a time of global uncertainty due to COVID-19, the participation of students is largely influenced by what is happening in their proximate environment. How each faculty manages individual concerns of students is yet to be accounted for. It is expected that the birth pains of SPOCs are coinciding with issues brought on by the pandemic, but based on its ratio essendi, the implementation of SPOCs is meant to be carried through the post-pandemic. Problems concerning interaction and engagement needed to be noted and addressed right in these early stages of implementation in order to ensure that the desired goals placed in its inception are sustained and ready for the constantly changing landscape of education.

**Information Technology Skills and Technical Obstructions.** Using popular online tools such as Google Workspace (formerly G Suite) and Microsoft Teams can be advantageous in the implementation of SPOCs. Students may find it easy for them to become familiarized with these tools since instructions on how to use them are accessible on mainstream search platforms. On the part of the University, there is great confidence in repurposing these tools as the operational Learning Management System being tasked to widely carry forth the lessons and assessments prepared by the instructors. The three historical approaches to distant education or distance learning are reflected in the ideas of autonomy and independence, industrialization,

and contact and communication (Vitobina, Briones, Ramos Jr. and Enrico, 2023).

Along with this, subscribing to these commercial tools is beneficial in terms of the attached technical support to minimize or mitigate the problems encountered while they operate. It is undeniable, however, that some learners may face difficulties navigating online platforms or lack the necessary digital literacy skills to effectively participate in SPOCs. This brings us to the question of whether these concerns were properly noted and addressed. Were these selected official platforms brought convenience on the part of the learners? Or did digital literacy become another setback in the efficient and effective implementation of SPOCs?

In order to maximize teaching delivery and address a large number of students, Ronas, Arca, Padron, and Almonte (2023) suggest orienting students to ICT/multimedia equipment in order to maximize their participation in online lecture classes. The purpose of the action research was to ascertain the impact of interactive learning strategies in their online learning method of motivating learning.

Relative to these questions is the fact that in the two successive years of the SPOCs implementation, there was a shift in the delivery platform. Technical barriers emerged from the use of Microsoft Teams in the first year of its implementation to the use of Google in the succeeding year. This meant realigning course contents and assessment materials from the former platform into the system of the latter platform. Consequently, adjustments from both ends of the faculty and students have to be made. Instead of moving forward smoothly after the first year of settling on the platform, users found themselves drifting in a different direction and moving in unfamiliar territory, which demanded them to once again learn the technical language of the substitute platform. Whether this was foreseen during the planning stage of SPOCs is an entirely different story to tell and another research to pursue. Obviously, the effects of the abrupt change of platform are crucial to the envisioned practical and convenient advantage of SPOC participants/users.

**Connection and Availability.** Another technical barrier that needs to be evaluated is the uneven internet connection and availability issues experienced by the students in accessing course materials and participating fully in SPOCs, especially in areas with limited internet infrastructure. This is a real problem that is not exclusive to BulSU students accessing online learning. However, it is very important to determine what were the measures undertaken by the administration, the faculty, and students who have encountered this problem. It is equally important to determine if the extent of this problem has required the University to engage its existing partners and affiliate agencies in jointly seeking interventions, mitigations, and solutions.

Conversely, the platforms used in delivering SPOCs require evaluation not only in terms of user-friendliness but also in terms of data or bandwidth consumption. When the policy of SPOCs was conceived and subsequently laid down for implementation with its guidelines, it was highlighted that SPOCs could be a source of savings for the University. The basis of such a claim is the fusion of classes and sections to be handled by a lone faculty. It was not clear whether such a basis could truly result in what the policy and guidelines are claiming since it did not illustrate if these fusions of classes and sections have a significant impact on the consumption of internet usage, especially on the part of faculty who are handling SPOCs inside the University. It is not even clear if the delivery of SPOCs on an asynchronous basis gives significance to its claim of being a fiscal measure. Assuming but not conceding that SPOCs are a source of savings for the

University, will it render the same economic benefit to the faculty and students?

Since the pandemic, the asynchronous mode of learning has become the popular choice among students because a great number of them rely on prepaid data connectivity. This was also a factor considered when SPOCs were conceived. However, students enrolled in SPOCs are also enrolled in regular Non-SPOCs subjects, which require them to have internet connectivity. If SPOCs can also be a

source of savings for the students, this will be a great help to them since a number of these students enrolled in asynchronous learning are working students.

**Management of Time.** The flexibility of time in accomplishing academic tasks in SPOCs is noteworthy and can be both a benefit and a challenge. This is perhaps the best feature of SPOCs that embody the guiding principle of the University in all its pandemic response programs, "No one must be left behind." Students are allowed to work and submit their performance assessments at a pace that is well-guided but not time-pressured. This, however, does not dismiss the fact that some learners might still find it challenging to manage their time effectively and stay on track with the course schedules. Part of evaluating SPOCs is determining how committed students are to these courses and in submitting their requirements. Regardless of modality, all subjects must be given due dedication. The flexible feature in the time element of SPOCs was purposely designed in consideration of the documented and undocumented experiences of students confined in their homes doing virtual classes. Students are expected to give equal respect and diligence to their subjects, which include those offered on SPOCs. Should there be students having difficulty in coping with the time element of SPOCs, this should be noted, documented, and evaluated in order to seek the necessary student support and assistance.

**Design and Quality of Courses.** Course quality and design significantly impact students' learning experience. Whether these were reviewed, updated, and evaluated within the implementation of SPOCs remained to be determined. Accordingly, the designation of subjects into the SPOCs offers should likewise be given attention through a review, update, and evaluation process. Only some SPOCs are created equally; some may need proper pedagogical principles or well-structured content. With COVID-19 no longer considered a national health and emergency crisis, most subjects will be undertaken onsite. In relation to this, subjects offered on SPOCs should be

evaluated as to whether they should be retained or provided face-to-face instruction.

**Assessment and Reliability.** Ensuring reliable and fair evaluation in online environments can be challenging. Whether academic integrity is maintained and academic cheating is prevented are ongoing concerns that significantly require evaluation and monitoring. It is also fair to evaluate assessment tools and mechanisms used by a faculty not only for content enhancement purposes but also to ensure that cheating can be prevented or detected should a student persist in doing so.

**Attrition/Dropout Rates of Students.** Whether SPOCs experience higher dropout rates compared to traditional courses is something that requires attention. Keeping learners engaged throughout the course is a constant challenge in onsite/face-to-face instruction. The academic honesty among students enrolled in SPOCs should be assessed, including their determination to accomplish the course and their diligence in attending classes even when face cameras are turned off. It is equally important to find out the number of students dropping out of the course and the persisting reasons why they arrive at those decisions.

In addition, according to Pedro, Baniago and Sy (2023), there are two categories for course completion timeliness: on-time and delayed. A learner who completes their bachelor's degree on schedule often does so in four years. According to the graduation cohort research, it takes an average of 3.72 years, with a standard deviation of 1.09, for students to finish their individual academic programs. This means that a student can finish a certain degree in three to four years, with a potential one-year delay after starting the program. As a result, 84% of the 2019 cohort's graduates, 56% of the 2020 cohort's graduates, 71% of the 2021 cohort's graduates, and 91% of the 2022 cohort's graduates are on time. Based on the descriptive study, 79% of the graduates were able to finish their individual degree programs on time overall, while 21% were delayed. The calculated course completion rate is greater than the

reported figure of 49.80% among college graduates in the 21st century. This figure surpasses the 24.40% course completion rate recorded by the Philippine Business for Education (PBEd) for Filipino college graduates. On the one hand, the percentage of graduates who experienced delays was 21%, which is less than the 23.50% recorded.

**Support and Presence of Instructor.** Vital to the learner's journey is the support, guidance, and presence of the faculty. Infrequent face-to-face meetings and online consultations are part of the delivery of SPOCs. This does not automatically translate to the lack of guidance and support of the faculty. The infrequency of meetings and consultations may utterly mean giving more premium to independent learning. The question is whether this is fully realized in the implementation of SPOCs.

The increasing implementation of blended and online learning methodologies has made provisions for the development of Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs) as an alternative to traditional classroom-based education. SPOCs offer flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning opportunities that make them an appealing option for students seeking to enhance their academic journey. However, the implementation of SPOC brings into view several learnings, issues, and challenges for both students and faculty members. This study aims to explore these aspects, providing a comprehensive analysis of the related factors and possible resolutions.

SPOC focuses on a smaller group of participants in online education and offers a more modified learning experience. The implementation of SPOC allows students to engage in self-paced learning, which can be highly beneficial for students who often have busy schedules. With SPOC, students have the flexibility to access course materials and lectures at their own convenience. This self-paced learning enables students to manage their time effectively and study according to their individual preferences. They can review challenging concepts or go through course materials multiple times until they fully grasp the content. This personalized learning experience helps students deepen their

understanding of the subject matter and encourages independent thinking.

However, the implementation of SPOC also presents challenges for students.

Unlike traditional classroom settings, SPOC requires a high level of self-discipline and motivation. Students need to proactively engage with the course materials and participate in online discussions to enhance their learning experience. Additionally, the lack of face-to-face interaction with peers and faculty members can be isolating for some students. They may miss the opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions and experience the sense of community that a traditional classroom offers. SPOCs require students to take more responsibility for their learning, fostering the development of self-regulation skills, such as time management, goal setting, and reflection. SPOCs offer an interactive digital environment that enables students to engage with course content in innovative ways. Students can access resources, participate in discussion forums, and collaborate with peers and faculty members beyond time and space constraints. SPOCs provide opportunities for personalized learning experiences, catering to students' diverse needs, interests, and learning styles. The ability to customize course content and pace allows students to delve deeper into subjects of their choice.

For faculty members, the implementation of SPOC brings about its own set of challenges. Creating and designing online courses that are engaging, interactive, and academically rigorous requires significant effort and expertise. Faculty members need to adapt their teaching methods to the digital environment, ensuring that course materials are accessible and tailored to the needs of students. Furthermore, faculty members need to provide timely feedback and support to students in order to foster a sense of academic progress and motivation.

Ensuring reliable internet connectivity and adequate technical support is crucial for the successful implementation of SPOCs. Lack of access to technology and technical expertise may hinder students' ability to engage with course materials fully. Designing effective

pedagogical strategies for SPOCs requires careful consideration of various factors. Faculty members must strike a balance between fostering interactive discussions, providing individual feedback, and maintaining academic rigor. The absence of physical presence and peer interaction may lead to decreased learner engagement and motivation in SPOCs.

Maintaining a sense of community and incorporating interactive activities can help mitigate this challenge. Assessing students' progress and evaluating their work in SPOCs require innovative assessment methods that go beyond traditional exams and papers. Ensuring the authenticity and integrity of assessments while capturing students' deep understanding of the subject matter poses a challenge.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The general problem of the study is "What are the learnings, issues, and challenges that the faculty members and students encountered in the Implementation of SPOC in selected courses?"

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of students about the learnings, issues, and challenges encountered in the implementation of SPOC?
2. What are the learnings, issues, and challenges the faculty members encounter while teaching using SPOC as the modality?
3. What recommendations may be proposed based on the results of the study?

### **Methods**

The study used the descriptive research design focusing on the faculty and students' learnings, issues and challenges encountered in the implementation of SPOC in selected courses. It utilized the mixed methods of research to analyze the experiences and perceptions of the faculty and students in its implementation. The interview questions and survey questionnaires were developed by the researchers and evaluated by educational researchers in Bulacan State University. There were five thousand and eight (5008) students

who responded and twenty-five (25) selected faculty members who handled the SPOC as participants. The data gathered from the survey questionnaires floated through the Google form were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using the quantitative analysis. The qualitative data were gathered through unstructured questions and interviews with the faculty members handling SPOCs

There are twenty-five (25) courses, namely: Guidance and Counseling, Teacher and the School Curriculum, Mathematics in the Modern World, STS, Psychology of Exercise and Sports, Applied Sports and Wellness Management, Theoretical Foundation in Nursing, Pharmacology, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH 122), Materials Technology Management (MTM 301), Pagsasalin sa Iba't Ibang Disiplina, Great Books, Risk and Management as Applied to Safety Security and Sanitation, Macro Perspectives in Tourism, Life and Works of Rizal, Fundamentals of Accounting, Entrepreneurial Mind, Architectural Correlation, Theory of Architecture I, Database Management, Social and Professional Issues, CVE 102: Civil Engineering Orientation, ECE 102: Electronics Engineering Orientation, Theories and Causes of Crime, Statutory Construction. Faculty members handled these subjects using the SPOC modality. Fifty (50) percent of the students enrolled in these subjects last academic year 2022-2023 are the respondents of this study and considered the faculty members who handled the SPOC as the participants in the interview.

<b>Likert-Scale Description</b>	<b>Likert-Scale</b>	<b>Likert Scale Intervals</b>
Strongly disagree	1	1.00-1.79
Disagree	2	1.80-2.59
Neutral / Uncertain	3	2.60-3.39
Agree	4	3.40-4.19
Strongly agree	5	4.20-5.00

The data were gathered and tabulated to answer the research questions using the 5-point Likert scale. The statistical tools used are frequency counts, weighted mean and verbal interpretation.

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive Measures of SPOC Implementation in terms of Learnings**

LEARNINGS	FREQUENCY					Weighted Mean:	Verbal Interpretation
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Course content and learning objectives were clear, organized and well planned.	1008	1718	1638	452	192	3.58	Agree
2. The lectures and presentations motivated me to understand the course.	755	1488	1725	745	295	3.33	Neutral
3. Visual instructional materials encouraged me to be interested in the lecture.	789	1500	1766	670	283	3.37	Neutral
4. The learning and video materials are functional, have clear audio, and easy to access.	1130	1739	1401	496	242	3.60	Agree
5. I find it easy to finish and complete my SPOCs activities and quizzes.	893	1509	1562	680	364	3.38	Neutral
7. I can clearly hear and track what the instructor say and mention	758	1536	1813	664	237	3.38	Neutral
8. I can take part individually in dialogues about feedback.	569	1432	2161	638	208	3.30	Neutral
9. I value the teaching style because it allows for more flexibility in learning.	1104	1549	1518	556	281	3.53	Agree
10. I am engaged to answer the given activities by myself.	1286	1647	1446	438	191	3.68	Agree
						3.43	

**Perceived learnings.** It may be perused in Table 1 that the extent of learning of the students with the current SPOCs design is bordering high at 3.43 with a verbal interpretation of Agree as shown by the mean of the following items: *Item 1 Course content and learning objectives were clear, organized and well planned* (3.58), item 4, *The learning and video materials are functional, have clear audio, and easy to access* (3.60), and item 10. *I am engaged to answer the given activities by myself*. (3.33)

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that 6 out of the 10 questions under perceived learning had registered a Neutral verbal interpretation, with the lowest being item 6. *I feel confident and contented in my learnings from the recorded SPOC lectures* (3.17), followed by item 8. *I can take part individually in dialogues about feedback*. (3.30), and item 2. *The lectures and presentations motivated me to understand the course*. (3.33)

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Measures of SPOC Implementation in terms of Issues**

ISSUES	FREQUENCY					Weighted Mean:	Verbal Interpretation
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. The instructor communicate clearly with the students	897	1346	1347	769	649	3.21	Neutral
2. The instructor conducts a subject consultation on a regular basis	818	1316	1465	781	628	3.18	Neutral
3. The instructor provides the links, course syllabus, quizzes/activities, reading materials in a timely manner	1372	1177	919	592	948	3.29	Neutral
4. The instructor provides sufficient time to complete our required activities	1916	1479	1049	354	210	3.91	Agree
5. The instructor has adequate knowledge and experience to teach this class.	1626	1648	1264	302	168	3.85	Agree
6. The instructor was an effective lecturer/demonstrator	1189	1632	1548	441	198	3.63	Agree
7. The instructor stimulated student interest	884	1536	1794	551	243	3.45	Agree

8. The instructor effectively used time during class periods	1287	1581	1456	455	229	3.65	Agree	4. I experienced power interruptions (electricity).	361	942	1749	1076	880	2.77	Neutral
9. The instructor was available and helpful	1236	1588	1554	416	214	3.64	Agree	5. I experienced noise disturbance.	1578	1495	1362	397	176	3.78	Agree
10. Grading was prompt and had useful feedback	1012	1544	1892	383	177	3.57	Agree	6. SPOC schedule is a hindrance to attend succeeding face-to-face classes	615	820	1748	774	1051	2.84	Neutral
						3.54	Agree								
								7. SPOC schedule conflicts with work schedule.	325	530	1354	780	2019	2.27	Disagree
								8. Good working relationship between instructor and students.	2429	1290	1111	126	52	4.18	Agree
								9. Flexibility in teaching methods.	2464	1312	1069	122	41	4.21	Strongly agree
								10. Active engagement in the virtual learning environment.	2150	1410	1237	162	49	4.09	Agree
														3.61	Agree

**Encountered Issues.** As provided in Table 2 the respondents have encountered minimal of issues with the execution of the instructor of the SPOCs content administered by the university for the past 2 academic years. As highlighted, some items point out a degree of acceptability on the efforts of the instructors to implement the program, particularly the following items: 4. *The instructor provides sufficient time to complete our required activities* (3.91), 5. *The instructor has adequate knowledge and experience to teach this class* (3.85), and 8. *The instructor effectively used time during class periods* (3.65).

However, it is to be noted that 3 items namely *item 1. The instructor communicates clearly with the students* (3.21), *item 2. The instructor conducts a subject consultation on a regular basis* (3.18), *item 3. The instructor provides the links, course syllabus, quizzes/activities, reading materials in a timely manner* (3.29), registered a Neutral score, emphasizing lack of commitment of the respondents to identify whether the faculty members' efforts are sufficient or lacking on the aforesaid situations.

**Table 3**  
**Descriptive Measures of SPOC Implementation in terms of Challenges**

CHALLENGES	FREQUENCY					Weighted Mean:	Verbal Interpretation
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Having computer or laptop with accessories.	2740	1139	838	179	112	4.24	Strongly agree
2. Having headset with noise cancellation.	2169	1265	1087	303	184	3.98	Agree
3. I experienced interrupted internet connection.	1317	1648	1462	398	183	3.70	Agree

**Experienced Challenges.** The following challenges are the most common experienced by the students during the implementation of the SPOCs program as presented in table 3: *item 9. Flexibility in teaching methods.* (4.21) *item 1. Having computer or laptop with accessories.* (4.24), *item 2. Having headset with noise cancellation.* (3.98), and *item 5. I experienced noise disturbance.* (3.78). However, it is noteworthy that two items *6. SPOC schedule is a hindrance to attend succeeding face-to-face classes* and *item 7. SPOC schedule conflicts with work schedule.* (2.84), registered the lowest score amongst all items which connotes that the implementation of the SPOCs program alongside the full face to face learning design had not imposed additional challenges for the respondents.

**Table 4**  
**Summary of the Findings on SPOC Implementation**

Summary of findings	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Perceived Learnings Encountered	3.43	Agree
Issues Experienced	3.54	Agree
Challenges	3.61	Agree

The perceptions of the students towards the imposed by the current SPOCs design are varying in extent based on the assessed and recorded score coming from various aspects of perceived learnings (3.43), issued encountered (3.54), and perceived challenges (3.61).

#### **Students appreciation on the implementation of SPOC and their personal views/comments towards SPOC instruction**

#### **Interaction and Engagement between Faculty members and Students**

Given the limited time and irregular online meetings, some students find it hard to understand the subject as there are no opportunities to discuss it. The engagements of students depend heavily on the professor's ability to teach and keep the student's attention.

Other students appreciate the instructor's efforts in the class, even if they are having difficulties in terms of internet connections or interruptions and other matters, the hard work their instructors put into the subjects, and the patience they have all throughout the session.

#### **Information Technology Skills and Technical Obstructions**

There are difficulties encountered in the schedule of SPOC as students still have a schedule of face-to-face classes after SPOC, which makes it challenging and inconvenient for them. Since there is a conflict in schedule, it is tough for students to have access to mobile data and find a suitable location while on campus, given the short time frame given to them.

#### **Management of Time**

It's convenient for both student and teacher schedules because it saves time, money, and energy in traveling from home to the campus. Students, especially working students, deemed it effective as it provided a flexible learning environment that allowed them to participate in discussions and access course materials at their own pace and convenience.

#### **Connection and Availability**

Lessons that can be viewed repeatedly anytime and recordings that can be played at students' most convenient time are an advantage. Unstable and poor internet connection and noisy background during meetings are the most common issues that students and instructors encounter.

#### **Design and Quality of Courses**

The teacher can use a variety of teaching resources to support the discussion during online setup. However, students prefer face-to-face classes to SPOC implementation for subjects like math due to the complexity and computation involved.

#### **Assessment and Reliability**

It provides a more flexible strategy with videos, more information, examples, and websites. The challenge of self-studying was appreciated by some students. However, some students do not prefer to learn on their own as they want to be taught in person, especially for students who have short attention spans and find it difficult to keep up studying individually. Some also suggested having certain subjects in a face-to-face class if it need application.

#### **Attrition/Dropout Rates of Students**

Students appreciate the effort and goal of SPOC, but based on experience, it only increases their stress because the discussions are not engaging compared to normal setups, and the tasks given are too much and too frequent. Some students' learning techniques are not what SPOC offers. Thus, they find the SPOC ineffective.

### **Support and Presence of Instructor**

There are some who think SPOC is less effective because of a lack of engagement with the instructor in the class. They don't receive enough motivation to learn the subject as the module was just given at first without good enough instructions, and more often than not, they were shocked to see the activities posted in bulk, not knowing it was supposed to be done that week.

## **II. Faculty members' learnings, issues, and challenges encountered while teaching using SPOC as the modality.**

### **Results of the Interviews among Faculty members handling SPOC about their Learnings, Issues, and Challenges encountered on SPOC Implementation.**

#### **1. The learnings acquired in implementing the Small Private Online Course (SPOC)**

Faculty A. SPOCs support blended learning, which combines online resources and technology with personal engagement between faculty and students. Students get a place where they can discuss course concepts and answer each other questions, as well as collaborate on assignments.

Faculty B. In using SPOC as a modality, the students' schedules become looser. They are given the chance to utilize their time more in accomplishing their given activities and quizzes. Students learned to accept a self-paced learning style where they can access the materials at any time that is convenient to them. In subjects that have a pure lecture and no computations, the efficacy is effective.

Faculty C. Despite having a more relaxed schedule for the subjects, many students still prefer having a traditional setup since they are more comfortable learning when a teacher teaches them face-to-face rather than through online consultation or recorded discussion. Also, not every student encountered understands the guidelines of SPOC despite telling them about the guidelines all the time.

Faculty D. Some students are not hard-working because they must be reminded often, and they don't usually attend the meeting.

They have to manage their time and organize their tasks. The AOL modality's advantage on the side of the faculty is they can focus more on other subjects, tasks/jobs, like research and extension projects.

Faculty E. There should be less number of students for the class to be manageable since it's tough to monitor and accommodate a large number of students on an online platform.

#### **2. The issues that arise in the implementation of SPOC**

Faculty A. The modality is not widely accepted by students. Some still prefer face-to-face learning. Poor internet connection is another issue encountered. The differing situations of students in SPOC are important factors to consider. Students don't have equal opportunities in terms of gadgets, internet connection, and other important learning concerns. Students coming from a meager income group found it difficult to load their gadgets for fifty Pesos consumable for three days only. Intermittent internet connection is also a problem.

Faculty B. Another issue is the conflict in the schedule; either the SPOC class is scheduled between face-to-face classes or a face-to-face class is scheduled before or after a SPOC subject, and students don't have time to go home, minding the travel time. They need to have a data connection or connect to available Wi-Fi in order to attend SPOC classes. However, issues in the online meeting can still be managed since sending instructions via chat, text, or post is still effective.

Faculty C. Though the first orientation meeting supposedly intended to make them well-guided on SPOC, others preferred not to attend, eventually leading to a wrong notion of AOL learning. They did not understand that SPOC is purely online and the virtual meeting is only for consultation. In addition to this, not all students may have developed good study habits, and worse, some of them do not have the reading habits or culture. Chances are, due to a lack of understanding of the nature of SPOC, teachers would likely wrongly be evaluated as inefficient in using the instrument for evaluation identical to face-to-face classes. Some noted comments

include a request for them to be given hard copies of handouts. In fact, all the instructional materials were already made available for them only if they would only learn to be diligent in having access to the net and browse the instructional materials during their AOL time, reducing AOL time as their free time available for them to do otherwise. Some students have not realized their counterparts' share of responsibility for making SPOC a platform of learning would work to their advantage.

Faculty D. Even though the modules, learning activities, and classwork were uploaded and announced, they did not spend time opening their virtual classroom and folders. They wanted the instructor to feed everything. Faculty E. There is no organized pattern on the topic/video presentation delivery. Also, lack of visual instructional materials. Limited activities were given to the students—difficulties in facilitating activities aside from its large number of students.

### **3. The challenges encountered in the implementation of SPOC**

Faculty A. The challenge that faculty members have encountered is to ensure that the students understand and learn the lessons, as there is limited coordination between the students and the professors; learners only learn based on the students' perspectives.

Faculty B. Some subjects are not ideal for implementing SPOC, especially those needing personal interactions. The instrument used for evaluation purposes is not aligned with the SPOC mode of learning. More school funding must be required to develop, produce, and update quality modules. Traditional learners' evaluation methods do not easily apply to the SPOC modality. The role of the instructor varies due to the sheer volume of students in one class.

Faculty C. SPOC is good, but it doesn't feel like the usual learning we are all used to. The students need to be trained to have good study habits, for instance, time management, planning, and organizing their tasks.

Faculty D. One of the challenges encountered during SPOC implementation is the student's behavior. They did not understand that SPOC is an online class. Thus, students are

requesting face-to-face classes for a better understanding of the lessons.

Faculty E. Financial difficulties, personal concerns, technological concerns, peer pressures, health concerns, and legal issues were cited as reasons for learner's modular distance learning challenges.

### **IV. Measures that may be proposed to improve the implementation of the SPOCs**

1. A review of the policy of combining classes with a large student population is advised. Recommending subjects for SPOC implementation like Management and other subjects that are pure discussion, lecture, and non-computation subjects.
2. A faster internet connection is needed inside the university so that they can meet their SPOC classes without interruption and with no hassle if there is a subject before and after their SPOC subjects.
3. As much as possible, proper scheduling of SPOC classes must be implemented so that it would not interfere with students' face-to-face classes.
4. The instrument to be used must be in accordance with the student's mode of learning and different from the same instrument being implemented for the usual student evaluation.
5. Lessen class size so that instructors can be more hands-on in engaging the students and monitoring their classes. Incorporate assessments and quizzes at the end of every lesson or module.
6. SPOCs should be offered to working students rather than to regular students. Students should be required to attend orientation meetings on the first day to ensure that they are well-informed with regard to the SPOC modality.

### **7. Interaction and Engagement between Faculty members and Students**

There needs to be more coordination between the students and the professors. Instructors must learn how to plan the length of course time so that the students will absorb maximum learning. The most

engaging amount of time in teaching could lead to a successful discussion of lessons.

#### **8. Information Technology Skills and Technical Obstructions**

The SPOC implementation will enhance technical literacy, and since interactions rely heavily on the use of digital platforms, both instructors and learners learned to explore the latest mobile learning apps and technology tools to be able to perform effectively and efficiently. Lack of focus on the part of the students due to several distractions encountered in their respective houses, the connection of the internet, noise within the premises of their surroundings, and other matters.

#### **9. Management of Time**

Students learned how to pace themselves in studying the materials. They have their own time to manage every output that needs to be accomplished every week. Being self-driven and independent is one of the things they have learned in SPOC. There should be university-wide information for colleges to be informed about the proper placement of SPOC classes during days that will not coincide with students' face-to-face class schedules so they can manage their time and attend SPOC classes.

#### **10. Connection and Availability**

Students were obliged to work at their own pace. They can access the instructional materials as these are already given. There must be a provision of free internet access to students who are still on campus during the conduct of their SPOC classes.

#### **11. Design and Quality of Courses**

Small Private Online Course (SPOC) helps students develop their skills in comprehensive reading by keeping the content relevant to the learner's objective. The SPOC also gives them a way to learn to balance their work ethics and practices.

#### **12. Assessment and Reliability**

Successful online learning using SPOC as a modality may be achieved if students give their full control over their own learning, exert effort in reading and understanding the lesson, and take the chance to ask the instructor for consultation if something needs to be clarified. Students must learn to accept a self-paced learning style where they can access the materials at any time convenient.

#### **13. Attrition/Dropout Rates of Students**

The student's short attention span during meetings varies due to distractions in their surroundings and slow internet connection. With this, it was hard to encourage/stimulate students to participate. Some students also have a hard time catching up with lessons. Whether SPOCs experience higher dropout rates compared to traditional courses is something that requires attention. Keeping learners engaged throughout the course is a constant challenge in onsite/face-to-face instruction. The academic honesty among students enrolled in SPOCs should be assessed, including their determination to accomplish the course and their diligence in attending classes even when face cameras are turned off. It is equally important to find out the number of students dropping out of the course and the persisting reasons why they arrive at those decisions.

#### **14. Support and Presence of Instructor**

Encourage the SPOC teachers to regularly update and enhance learning materials and perhaps use the time in extension and research workload. Instructors should be more involved in engaging students and monitoring their classes.

### **Conclusions**

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study:

1. SPOC implementation has been helpful as it provides a flexible learning environment and a best practice for working students.

They can access course materials repeatedly, read their lessons, and participate in discussions at their own pace whenever they are free. However, the engagements of some students depend heavily on the professor's ability to teach and keep the student's attention. Successful online learning using SPOC as a modality may be achieved if students give their full control over their own learning, exert effort in reading and understanding the lesson, and take the chance to ask the instructor for consultation if something needs to be clarified. Students must learn to accept a self-paced learning style where they can access the materials at any time convenient.

2. Instructors and students are expected to rely heavily on the use of digital platforms and should explore learning apps and technology tools to perform and learn effectively and efficiently. With this, an internet connection is an important matter when trying to access the course materials.
3. Some students appreciate SPOC as they are more comfortable attending classes online to save time and energy on traveling and transportation fees. However, there are students who complain whenever their SPOC class is scheduled on the same day as their face-to-face class.
4. Instructors find it hard to monitor and properly accommodate many students in the SPOC modality. There should be less number of students for the class to be manageable since it is tough to monitor and accommodate a large number of students on an online platform.
5. Not all subjects can be implemented with SPOC, especially those subjects that include computation or need to have an actual demonstration.

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