



# Lived Experiences of Teachers in Utilizing Information and Communication Technology in Teaching

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## Abstract

This qualitative-phenomenological study aimed to determine the lived experiences, challenges encountered, and coping mechanisms of teachers in relation to utilizing information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching for school year 2022-2023. Data gathering for this study was conducted from September to November 2022 with seven (7) teachers as participants of the study. To get the precise conclusions of this study, all data from the responses were evaluated by looking for response patterns and connecting them. Participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of their responses. As to lived experiences, the research revealed three themes relating to the use of ICT in the classroom, which include the need to put forth extra effort to advance their ICT knowledge, unequal access to the school's ICT resources, the speed and ease with which ICT facilitates teachers' work, and the rise in student motivation for and engagement with their assignments. Regarding the difficulties teachers faced using ICT in the classroom, four themes emerged: the need for minimal competency, a lack of ICT-focused professional development in the classroom, student safety, and additional costs/expenses. In terms of coping mechanisms teachers used to address challenges pertaining to the use of ICT in the classroom, structured ICT training, positive attitudes towards modern technology, strategic time management, and peer collaboration/mentoring were the prevailing themes.

**Keywords:** *Lived Experiences, Challenges, Coping Mechanism, ICT Integration*

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## Introduction

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2019) information and communications technology (ICT) in education improves engagement and knowledge retention; when ICT is integrated into lessons, students become more engaged in their work. This is because technology provides different opportunities to make it more fun and enjoyable in terms of teaching the same things in different ways.

The thematic reality about lack of access to specialized knowledge and support for the use and integration of ICT is a problem that prevails in many classrooms of developing countries. Studies revealed that the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic paved the way to the extensive use and development of new technologies. These technological tools are used today in a very vertiginous way due to the pressing need to transmit information; therefore, there has been an increase in the use of virtual platforms and social networks. Still, the fact remains that not all students have the necessary equipment or hardware (PC, laptop, or cell phone), software, or even access to the internet (Katz, 2018).

In the Philippines, the sudden shift in learning modalities impacted both basic and higher education institutions. The implementation of the distance online learning system requires teachers to integrate educational technology in the preparation of lessons, choosing teaching strategies, designing assessment and evaluation, and improving class management. In delivering content using online platforms, it is required to migrate the lesson, assessment tools, and audio-visual materials in an acceptable format needed by a software application. The efficient use of technology in lesson delivery also signifies the success of the teaching and learning process. Designing and creating online content are not easy; both require expertise and a deep understanding of how to curate the digital content available on the internet (Ramos, et. al., 2020).

The justification of the present research was to reveal the existing gap in this field, as presented above, at a time when the so-called new normal in education was adopted by the Department of Education, where schools, including San Pedro National High School (SPNHS), opted for the modular distance learning modality during which the integration of ICT was highly encouraged. The researcher was particularly interested in looking into the experiences that SPNHS teachers had in the use of ICT in teaching, the challenges that confronted them, and how they coped with the same, during the new normal, hence, this study.

## Methodology

This study used the qualitative type (answering how and why) of research employing the phenomenological method. Phenomenological study provides textural and structural descriptions leading to the “essence” of the experience. According to Creswell (2015), phenomenology aims to provide description of the basic lived experiences and simultaneously dig out the meaning of the said experiences without the need of giving explanations which are causal or generalizations which are interpretive. Further, this phenomenological study will follow a transcendental approach which does not only provide a clear structure for data analysis, but also recommends the process of theming out one’s own experiences in order to view the phenomenon under study from a fresh viewpoint (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

Creswell (2015) further suggests that a qualitative study is more appropriate when the researcher is seeking to empower participants’ stories, hear their voices and balance the researcher’s power within the study. Methodologically, the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach was based on the need of a deeper exploration and explanation of the nature of distance learning. Important literature has been identified in chapter two; however, this type of exploration necessitated an in-depth descriptive qualitative study. A study where struggling pupils shared their lived experiences and rich information about distance learning modalities.

Of the various types of qualitative research approaches, the researcher chose to adopt the phenomenological tradition. A phenomenological study reports the common lived experiences of a heterogeneous group of individuals rather than categorizing, simplifying, and reducing a phenomenon. The basic characteristic of a phenomenological study is to describe the universal essence or essences of meanings mutually shared about a phenomenon. These underlying descriptions consists of what individuals experienced and how individuals experienced it – a composite description of the essence (Creswell, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). A phenomenology study aligns well for this undertaking as the researcher intends to explore the essence of the use of ICT in classroom contexts.

The foregoing research design and methodology is appropriate to the present undertaking as it obtained the personal experiences of the participants, who are all teachers attempting at integrating ICT in their classes, the challenges and problems they have encountered as well as the coping mechanisms they employed to deal with such challenges and problems.

## Findings

The phenomenological analysis revealed several prevailing themes related to the topics covered by the investigations. The study found out that:

The lived experiences of teachers in utilizing ICT in teaching revolved around the themes of exerting additional efforts to improve ICT skills, inequity in the use of available ICT resources of the school, ICT makes teachers' work faster and easier, and increased students' motivation towards, and engagement in, their tasks.

As for the challenges encountered by teachers in utilizing ICT in teaching, the themes deduced were that of minimum competency, lack of ICT-focused professional development in school, students' safety, and added costs/expenses.

As for coping mechanisms employed by teachers relative to the use of ICT in teaching, the prevailing themes were institutionalized ICT training, positive attitudes towards modern technology, strategic time management, and peer collaboration/mentoring.

## Conclusion

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The lived experiences of teachers in utilizing ICT in teaching is a combination of both positive and negative points. These experiences affect them personally particularly in the different aspects of the teaching-learning process as well as the students, as the use of ICT redound to higher motivation towards their engagement in and accomplishment of, their learning tasks;

2. The challenges encountered by teachers in utilizing ICT in teaching are manifestations of their own feelings for, and capabilities to adapt with, current trends in the teaching profession as well as their concerns on the downsides of ICT use on the part of the students, particularly on the unfavourable influence of certain contents that can be accessed through the internet;

3. Teachers are able to cope with challenges pertaining to the use of ICT in teaching in several ways by embracing positive attitudes, as well as by the help of existing school culture and practices. The coping mechanisms that they employ affirm their willingness to further maximize the use of the said educational technology in their teaching, regardless of their fields of specializations;

4. The programs proposed by the researcher to address the challenges that come with utilizing ICT in teaching are centered on the up-skilling teachers so that ICT integration inside and outside the classroom is maximized, provide safety nets to minimize if not eradicate the dangers that ICT use can cause to students and enjoining the school to identify programs that will prioritize the development of its ICT infrastructure that will be integrated in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) so that regular funds can be allocated for the same.

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