Get Ready To Be Techy: Struggles of Senior Citizen Teachers in the Utilization of Technology in the Classroom

Diana Marie D. Gamboa

DepEd San Carlos City

ABSTRACT: The study was conducted to determine the struggles of senior citizen teachers during the S.Y. 2021 - 2022. The descriptive qualitative method as research design was used and an in-depth interview was utilized in data collection.

The study reveals that majority of the respondents have no choice but to keep up with the use of technology in their teaching so that they will not be left behind. It this time of digital world we are now living in, it is important to use and integrate technology in teaching to catch the attention of the learners who are now called digitally natives. Research shows that integrating technology in the teaching-learning process will benefit learners and they will easily understand their lesson with the use of video lessons. The more senses they use, the better the comprehension and retention of their lessons. It will also lessen the time and effort of teachers in making instructional materials and it will make the discussion livelier.

There are also advantages and disadvantages of the utilization of technology inside the classroom. It has also its limits. Some identified struggles of senior citizen teachers were namely; lack of available gadgets, poor internet connection, sudden power interruption and lack of basic knowledge of the older teachers in the operation of such modern gadgets. But luckily enough, they have their supportive co-teachers and family members around them who are willing to assist them.

KEYWORDS: Senior Citizen Teachers, Technology Integration, Gadgets, Struggles

INTRODUCTION

Given that those born in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s did not grow up with microwaves, cell phones, cable television, or computers, technology has improved tremendously in the last 40 years. As technology advances, the baby boomers and subsequent generations may find it difficult to stay up. Older persons between the ages of 50 and 100 may have firsthand experience with this difficulty and may be scared by technology improvements [1].

Surprisingly, one of the topics that must be considered is senior citizens' struggles regarding utilization of technology in this new normal in education. With elderly people at higher risk of infection, it's unclear how the country's public schools would reopen if a third of the teaching workforce refuses to face those risks [2]. ICT integration is also one of the issues that senior citizen teachers face, as previously mentioned. Elderly teachers are forced to employ emergency online learning to stay on the job during the COVID-19 crisis. These Boomers II teachers, who were born between 1955 and 1964, use technology mostly for practical purposes and information search [3].

The delivery style suddenly shifted from face-to-face or in-person to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 epidemic and in attempts to give every learner with quality education (SDG4) [4]. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) decision to switch to online classrooms abruptly compelled academics to make the switch overnight [5]. This was especially true for senior teachers who were used to traditional teaching methods and had no choice but to follow the mandate regardless of their knowledge or experience with online learning. According to international studies, some teachers are considering changing careers, resigning, or retiring early due to the move to online programs [6].

Following the school closures and reopening delays caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, online learning became the academic world's lifeline [7]. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the terms "emergency" online learning/"emergency eLearning" [8], "emergency remote teaching", and "emergency remote education" were coined to describe how instruction is temporarily delivered virtually through digital or online platforms and alternative means [9].

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Within the context of the abovementioned premises, this study determined the struggles of the three Senior Citizen Teachers in utilizing technology in managing classroom activities of Quintong Elementary School in San Carlos City Division during the S.Y. 2021-2022.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
This study aimed to determine the struggles of senior citizen teachers during the S.Y. 2021 - 2022. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions.
1. To determine the importance of keeping up with technology as a senior citizen teacher in the academe.
2. To determine the struggles met in the utilization of technology in managing classroom activities.
3. To determine the coping mechanism of senior citizen teachers with these struggles encountered.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
The study used the descriptive qualitative method as research design. Under this method, responses were gathered from the in-depth interview dealing with the importance of keeping up with technology as Senior Citizen Teachers in the Academe. The analysis using themes was employed to capture or understand the data gathered. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts; such as interview transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly [10].

RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY
The respondents of the study were the three (3) Senior Citizen Teachers of Quintong Elementary School in the Division of San Carlos City. Using purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), respondents were purposively chosen because of the age range. Each respondent was assigned with a pseudonym to ensure the safety of their anonymity for their protection. Signing of informed consent was also facilitated.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT
The data gathered with the used of in-depth interview to identify the struggles of senior citizen teachers in the utilization of technology in the classroom. The following materials will be used in collecting the data from the interviewees; ball pen, interview guide question form and notebook. The interview session will be conducted in a conducive place wherein there is privacy and can freely talk one-on-one with the interviewer.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
This chapter presented the findings and discussion. The purpose of this study is to describe the struggles of the senior citizen teachers in the utilization of technology in the classroom at Quintong Elementary School in the Division of San Carlos City during the school year 2021-2022. It also determined the struggles of the respondents in terms of the importance of keeping up with technology as senior citizen teachers in the academe, the struggles they met in the utilization of technology in managing classroom activities, and the senior citizen teachers' coping mechanism with these struggles encountered. Based from the findings of the study, the researcher came up with a conclusion.

The researcher, in order to have an accurate findings and discussion of the data gathered about the struggles of the respondents, she had recorded the interviews conducted. Pseudonyms were used to withhold the identity of the respondents. The shared experiences of the senior citizen teachers were categorized into three themes. Further analysis of the transcripted interviews in each theme led the researcher to classify their responses into sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes of the experiences of the senior citizen teachers who were utilizing technology in managing classroom activities were presented in the next paragraph.

Theme 1 is "Technology in Education in the New Normal". It has two sub-themes, first is "Importance of Technology in Teaching" and "Benefit of Technology to Learners". The second theme is "My Struggles as a Senior Citizen Teacher" with sub-theme "My Weak Points." The third and last theme is "Getting through the Difficulties" with two sub-themes, "Enhancing my Skills in ICT and My Support System."

Theme 1: Technology in Education in the New Normal
The transcription and interpretation of the shared experiences of the senior citizen teachers led to the formulation of the first theme and its corresponding sub-themes. The first question answers the importance of keeping up with the technology even though they are already in their senior years and its use in the academe.

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The results of the interview revealed that they have no choice when it comes to keeping up with the use of technology in their teaching. It is because of this modern world we are now living in, having laptops and be able to print reports is a must for them to comply with their work and be able to get the attention of their learners who are digital natives. The following are the testimonies of the respondents.

Anecita:

"I don't want to be a burden to my colleagues kaya pinilit kong aralin ang computer, lalo na lahat encoded na dapat ngayon, desktop pa nga noon ang gamit ko. Nag-enroll talaga ako sa mga nagtuturo ng computer lesson kasi ayokong maging pabigat sa mga kasama ko sa trabaho." (I don't want to be a burden to my colleagues that is why I really insist on learning computer, especially all reports are now encoded, at first it was desktop. I even enrolled and took computer lessons because I don't want to be a burden to my co-teachers.)

Anecita took up computer lessons to keep up with the technology needed to integrate in her teaching career. She does not want to be a burden to her co-teachers that is why she persevered to learn the basic knowledge in using computer.

Josefa:

"Being a master teacher, sobrang dami kong trabaho. Ang dami kong reports na kailangang ipasa, dahil nagpandemic, umuso na ang pagpapasa ng report sa email, lahat encoded na dapat. Kaya importante talaga na sumabay sa kung ano ang ginagamit ngayon. "(Being a master teacher, I have so many works to do. I have so many reports that I need to pass, because of this pandemic, passing of reports now is through email, everything now should be encoded. That is the reason why I need to keep up with the technology.)

Given the position of being a master teacher, Josefa has corresponding workloads. Due to pandemic where personal submission of hard copies of reports were prohibited and sending through emails is now being used, like Anecita, she also tried to learn to send her reports through sending emails.

Salome:

"Hirap na hirap ako sa paggamit ng laptop ngayon sa totoo lang sa edad kong ito. Pinipilit kong aralin ang mag-encode sa laptop at magprint at gamitin ang printer. Ang trabaho kasi natin ngayon puro dapat naka-encode na at magpapasa ng report sa google drive kaya importante talaga na sumabay sa kung anong technology natin ngayon. Nahihiya na rin talaga ako na makiusap lagi sa ICT Coordinator namin." (I found it really hard to use laptop nowadays to be honest especially in my age. I am really trying so hard to learn how to encode in the laptop and to print and use the printer. Our work nowadays is purely reports that need to be encoded and send it to google drive that is why it is important to keep up with the technology today. I'm also really embarrassed to always ask our ICT Coordinator.)

Like Anecita and Josefa, Salome also persevered to learn the basic knowledge on how to use laptop like encoding and printing reports because of the pandemic where knowing how to send emails is really a must. Salome is also like Anecita where they do not want to always bother their co-teachers that is why they tried so hard to gradually learn the use of laptop. Keeping up with technology is very important because of the increased use of technology in schools, teachers should employ technology to enhance their instructional quality and thus enhance the learning experience of students (Cuban, 2001; Desimone, 2009; Maskit, 2011).

Sub-Theme 1: Importance of Technology in Teaching

Anecita:

"Malaking tulong talaga ang technology sa pagtuturo ko ngayon kasi dati drawing ako ng drawing, gupit ako ng gupit ng mga instructional materials. Gumugupit akong mga pictures sa libro 'tapos ipapa-enlarge ko iyon sa mga xerox'an sa bayan. Pinadali ng technology ang pagtuturo at paggawa ng IM's ko ngayon." (Technology is really a big help to me in terms of my teaching because in the past, I really spent time drawing and cutting pictures and then enlarge it to the photocopy machine in the urban area. It made my teaching and doing instructional materials very easy.)

Josefa:

"Bilang senior citizen na at teacher pa, ang hirap sumunod sa trend ngayon, lalo na sa mga modern gadgets na gamit natin ngayon sa pagtuturo. Ibang iba talaga dati. Chalk, blackboard at mga charts lang ang gamit namin noon. Pero ngayon may mga tv na sa bawat classrooms, may mga videos ng lessons sa youtube na pwedeng i-download at ipanood sa mga bata." (As a senior citizen already and as a teacher also, it is so hard for me to follow the trend today especially in using modern gadgets that we using right now in teaching. It is so different from the past where we only used chalk, blackboard and charts. But today, we have now television in every classroom, there are video lessons in the YouTube that we can download and let the learners watch it.)

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Salome:

"Malaki din ang naitulong ng technology sa akin bilang isang senior citizen teacher na lalo na sa paggawa ng instructional materials. Mas matrabaho kasi dati. Idrawing, gupitin, idikit, tpos ima-mount mo pa, tapos gupit ulit. Ganoon ang proseso, sobrang hirap. Kapag nabasa ay uulitin ulit yung prosesong iyon. Ngayon ay meron ng mada-download sa google na pictures tapos iprint at laminate nalang. Sobrang bilis lang ng proseso. May kamahalan nga lang ng laminating film pero mas ok na kasi pangmatagalan na kahit mabasa ay ok lang." (Technology helped me in some ways in my teaching especially in making instructional materials. In the past, the process is too long and exhausting. You need to draw, cut, paste it and mount it in a cardboard then cut it again. If water accidentally splash on it, it will be ruin then you need to repeat the long process again. But now, there are pictures that we can download in google, print it then just laminate it. Very easy and fast process. Even though the price of laminating films is quite expensive, it is worth the price because you can use it in a very long time because even if you splash water on it, it is water proof.)

Based on the testimonies of the three respondents, making instructional materials and even activity sheets are a lot easier today with the use of laptop, internet and printers than before. It Is because with just few clicks, they can search images online and then print and laminate it. Unlike before that it is time consuming and you'll drain your energy. Pamuk (2012) demonstrated that technology helps teachers develop innovative instructional methods. Responses to such technological and classroom advances have been described as not just favorable but also timely.

Sub-Theme 2: Benefit of Technology to Learners
Anecita

"Madaling kunin ang atensyon ng mga bata ngayon kapag may nakikita silang gumagalaw or nagsasalita sa tv. Mas madali nilang maintindihan ang aralin namin kapag may napapanood silang sample video ng lesson naming lalo na sa science." (It is very easy to get the attention of children today when I am using technology, especially when they are seeing things that are moving or speaking in the television. It is easy for them to understand our lesson especially when they watch sample videos in our lesson in Science.)

Josefa:

"Gustong gusto ng mga bata kapag nakakapanood sila ng video lessons. Mas gusto talaga nila yung may napapanood kesa sa ikaw na teacher lang ang nagsasalita. Mas tumatatak sa isip nila yung napanood nila kesa sa ineexplain kong lesson. Siguro dahil matanda na ako kaya ayaw na nila akong tignan. Hehe Pansin ko lang talaga na kapag ginamitan mo ng technology ang pagtuturo mo tulad ng mga powerpoint lessons mo na may mga gumagalaw na pictures ay gustong gusto nila at talagang nakikinig sila. Buti nalang may anak ako na gumagawa ng mga iyon." (Children really want to have something that they can watch like the video lessons. They really prefer to watch video lessons in the television than just listening to me. There is a high percentage that they remember something about what they had watched than retain something from me explaining the lesson. Maybe because I am old enough that is why they don't want to see me. (Laugh) I just noticed that if you integrate technology in your teaching like using powerpoint presentation with GIF's, they really pay attention to you. Thanks to my daughter who's always doing my presentation.

Salome:

"Ang mga bata ngayon ay mahilig na sa mga paggamit ng computers. Kahit mga maliliit na bata alam na gumamit ng cellphone. Kaya sa pagtuturo maganda rin na gumamit ng tv na pwede silang manood ng halimbawa ng mga babasahin na abakada. Mas mag-eenjoy ang mga bata at the same time ay hindi ganoong kapagod magturo ang teacher." (Children nowadays are fond of using computers. Even though young children already know how to use cellphone. That is why it is very good to integrate technology or use television in teaching like reading abakada in the TV. The learners will surely enjoy reading and at the same time the teacher will not be that exhausted.)

According to the three respondents, the use of technology in the teaching-learning process is very effective in terms of catching the attention of the learners while discussing their lessons. Every classroom nowadays has television where learners can watch educational videos regarding their lesson. With this, learners can expand their imagination while watching instead of just imagining the things that their teacher is just explaining. In one study, students and teachers were interviewed at a Taiwanese institution to find out how they felt about web and cloud-based implementations in the classroom (Lin & Jou, 2013). The study found that not only did technological integration help students' learning in the classroom, but it also improved support after class via networking.

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Theme 2: My Struggles as a Senior Citizen Teacher

The second theme describes the struggles that the senior citizen teachers encountered regarding utilization of technology in managing classroom activities. The results of the interview disclosed many struggles that they have encountered while utilizing technology like poor internet connection, lack of available gadgets and even sudden power interruption in their area.

Anecita:

"Nahihirapan ako kapag mahina ang internet connection sa school. Hindi ako makapagdownload ng mga videos lessons ko lalo na sa science subject." (It's very hard to have a poor internet connection here in school. I can't download video lessons especially in science subject.)

Josefa:

"Struggle ko talaga ang pag-integrate ng technology sa pagtuturo ko. Hindi ko matandaan kung ano ba ang pipindutin ko sa laptop o kaya sa TV. Natatakot akong pindutin baka mali mapindot ko at masira laptop ko." (I am really struggling on how to integrate technology in my teaching. I don't remember what to click in the laptop or in the TV. I'm afraid to just click because maybe my laptop will malfunction.)

Salome:

"Dati hirap na hirap talaga ako kasi hindi ko alam kung paano gamitin ang laptop. Hindi ko alam kung ano iki-click ko. Nakikita ko yung ibang grades na may video lessons sila na pinapanood. Nakiki-copy lang ako ng mga videos sa flash drive. Ang problema ngayon ay kung paano ko ilalagay sa TV. Lagi lang ako nakikiusap sa katabi kong teacher na i-set up yung video sa TV at isang click lang para madali kong matandaan." (In the past, I am really struggling because I don't know how to use laptop. I don't know what to click. I can see other grades that they play video lessons. I just copy it in my flash drive. My problem now is on how to play it on the TV. I always ask favor to my next-door co-teacher to set-up the video in the TV for me to just click it and I will easily remember.)

According to the testimonies of the respondents, the lack of fundamental expertise in setting up the laptop and playing video lectures on the television is the cause of the majority of the respondents' struggles when it comes to using technology to manage classroom activities. One struggle they have encountered is a lack of available gadgets for the students to use. In addition, in their barrio, where their school is located, a lack of good internet connection or no signal at all is a major issue. Additionally, Backhouse (2003) proposed that the problems of technology integration was mainly that many schools focused too much on the construction of technological equipment and networks but not on instructing teachers how to apply the technology to enhance the effectiveness of their instruction.

Sub-theme: My Weak Points

Anecita:

"Ang masasabi kong weak points ko sa paggamit ng technology in teaching-learning process ay pagdating sa mga layouting. Pero I can say na sa mga kasama kong senior citizen na rin ay masasabi ko talagang mas lamang ako kesa sa kanila pagdating sa computer. Kung basic knowledge lang naman ay marami ako alam. Mag-encode, magprint, at kahit gumamit ng Microsoft excel." (I can say that my weak points in using technology in teaching-learning process is when it comes to layouting. But I can say that among my co-teachers who are also senior citizen, I can say that I am more capable than them when it comes to the use of computer. If it is basic knowledge then I can encode, I can print and even use Microsoft excel.)

Josefa:

"Aminado akong hindi talaga ako marunong sa paggamit ng laptop. Humihingi ako lagi ng tulong sa anak ko pagdating sa mga reports ko. Kung ako pa mag-eencode ng reports ko aabutin pako ng siyam-siyam." (I admit that I don't really know how to use laptop. I just asked favor to my daughter in doing my reports. If I am the one who will encode my reports, it will take me forever to finish.)

Salome:

"My weak points ay yung nasabi ko na kanina. Dahil senior citizen nako, hirap nakong maka-absorb ng new learnings lalo na sa laptop. Hindi ko na talaga matandaan sa dami ng iki-click." (My weak points are what I just said earlier. Because of being senior citizen already, I can't absorb too much information now especially when it comes to laptop. I can't remember what to click.)

Due to old age, the three respondents said that their weak point is obviously their poor memory where they cannot absorb too much information. Complicated apps and software information in the laptop is too much information that they cannot process and retain in their memory. Only the basics like opening the laptop and encoding in the document file is what they know.

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Theme 3: Getting Through the Difficulties

This third and last theme discovered the people behind the scenes who are supporting and guiding the senior citizen teachers to be able to cope up with their struggles in utilizing technology. The results of the interview exposed that their children and co-teachers especially their ICT Coordinator is really a big help for them to adjust to the new normal set-up in education.

Anecita:

"Pinilit ko talagang pag-aralan ang laptop. Desktop pa noon ang gamit ko nung nag-aral ako. Talagang nagtake ako ng computer lessons. Kasi sabi ko nga kanina, hate ko talaga yung umaasa sa iba." (I really tried to learn how to use the laptop. In the past, it was desktop. I really took time to enroll in computer lessons. As I said earlier, I really hate the fact that I am just depending on other people.)

Josefa:

"Thankful pa rin talaga ako sa mga kasama natin dito sa school kasi kahit papano ay tinutulungan nila ako sa pagsend ng reports ko at sa kung paano magsearch, magdownload at magprint ng instructional materials." (I am thankful with my co-teachers here in our school because they help me in sending my reports and to search, download and print my instructional materials.)

Salome:

"Pasalamat ako at mabait yung ICT Coordinator naming sa school. Bukod sa anak ko ay sya talaga ang tumutulong sa akin sa pag-edit, pag-format at pagprint ng mga instructional materials at reports ko." (I'm thankful that our ICT Coordinator in school is kind. Aside from my daughter, she is really the one who's helping me out in editing, formatting and printing of my instructional materials and my reports.)

The collected testimonies from the three respondents were that they were able to cope with technology because of their co-teachers and knowledgeable people around and guide them.

Sub-theme 1: Enhancing my Skills in ICT

Anecita:

"Useful talaga yung pagkakaroon ng Youtube ngayon. Doon ako nanonood ng mga Do's and Don'ts. Doon ako natututo sa mga video tutorials. Lahat ng bagay pwede ng pag-aralan sa youtube." (It is very useful to have Youtube nowadays. That is where I watch the Do's and don't's. I am learning in the video tutorials there. Everything can be learned now through Youtube.)

Josefa:

"Pinag-aaralan ko one by one at tinutulungan ako ng anak ko during her free time. May notebook ako kung saan dun ko pinapasulat yung mga steps kung paano magprint at kung ano ang iki-click." (I am continue learning one by one and my daughter is helping me in her free time. I have a notebook and my daughter write all the steps on how to print for me to know what to click.)

Salome:

"Basta practice lang ako ng practice. Trying hard talaga akong matuto kasi syempre paano kapag wala yung ICT Coordinator namin or kung busy sya, ayoko naman syang lagging iniistorbo." (I am always practicing. I am trying really hard to learn because of course what if our ICT Coordinator is not around or what if she is busy, I don't want to bother her always.)

They were able to gradually comprehend and get the hang of technology integration in their teaching by practicing every day and exploring their laptops. There is now YouTube where we can search for everything we need to know. They will quickly be able to manipulate laptops on their own if they have frequent hands-on activities with their laptop and are coached by their co-teachers or youngsters.

Sub-theme 2: My Support System

Anecita:

"At first nung hindi ko pa talaga alam gamitin ang computer, may mga anak ako na marurunong. Sa kanila ako nagpapatulong ng mga instructional materials ko na computerized. But now ako na lahat. Kaya ko na magsearch, magdownload at magprint mag-isa." (At first, when I still don't know to use computer, I have my children that I can ask for help. It is them whom I ask favor to do my instructional materials that is computerized. But now it is only me who do all the work. I can already search, download and print on my own.)

Josefa:

"Yung anak ko talaga tumutulong sakin at yung isang co-teacher ko na kasama ko sa grade 2. Sila ang laging tumutulong sakin sa pagpi-print ng mga instructional materials at mga activity sheets ko. Sila nagtuturo talaga sakin sa mga gawain na involve ang paggamit ng laptop." (My daughter and my partner in grade 2 are the ones who are helping me. They are the one who help me in printing my instructional materials and activity sheets. They are the one who's teaching me everything that laptop is involve.)

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Salome:

"Our ICT Coodinator. Sya talaga ang nakakapagsalba sakin kapag may urgent report na kailangan gawin. Sa kanya ako laging nakikiusap. Nagpapaturo din ako sa kanya sa vacant time nya. Pinapasulat ko yung steps sa kung paano magprint, magdownload ng videos at kung anu-ano pa." (Our ICT Coordinator. She is really the one who's saving me from those urgent reports that need to be done. I am always asking favor to her. I am asking for her help during her vacant time. I asked her to write the steps on how to print, to download videos at a lot more.)

The majority of respondents said that their family members, particularly their children (daughter, son, and grandchildren), were their go-to people for operating e-mails, encoding, and printing. They are fortunate to be guided by their younger coworkers who are also eager to teach them. In general, effective teachers are quick and positive in adapting to online learning according to study of Dolonen et al. (2020) and Tartavulea et al. (2020).

CONCLUSIONS

1. The importance of keeping up with technology is underscored by the fact that teachers should use it to improve the quality of their instruction and, in turn, the learning experiences of their students.

2. The fundamental issue with technology integration was that too many schools concentrated on building technological infrastructure and networks rather than training teachers to use technology to improve the effectiveness of their instruction.

3. Providing assistance and words of encouragement from co-teachers and family members will truly boost the confidence of senior citizen teachers to continue learning despite their old age.

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