

FEMALE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIAL
STUDIES IN SAUDI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled FEMALE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN SAUDI PUBLIC SCHOOLS by Ghada S. Busaeed, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



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Abstract

This study aims to obtain an understanding of Saudi teachers' perceptions on technology use in the classroom. In particular, it aims to answer the questions on what the teachers' perceptions are about the effects of technology on their teaching and what difficulties they encounter when using technology. A Likert-scale survey was used to collect data, with the questions divided into three sections, namely questions on the teachers' perceptions on the use of technology in their classes, its impact on the students and teachers, and the challenges that the teachers face with technology. The research involved 32 female teachers from public schools in Saudi Arabia. An analysis of the data through descriptive statistics showed the following mean score for the teachers' perception on technology use: 4.42 (Lessons are more interesting when teachers use technology)...etc. On the other hand, the following is the mean score for the impact of technology use: 4.13 (Able to reinforce and expand on content being taught)...etc. Finally, the following are the mean scores for the challenges that the teachers encountered when using technology: 4.09 (Inefficient time to prepare materials based on technology)...etc. These results imply that the participants have positive perceptions of technology use; that they believe technology use to have a positive impact on their teaching and on the students' learning; and that lack of support from their school administrators are their greatest challenges with using technology in the classroom.

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Introduction

Though there are many positive aspects of technology, it has been used and exploited in the educational system in all countries. Chapman & Mahlck (2004) clarified that educators virtually everywhere have long looked to the emerging technologies of their time to improve the delivery of instruction in the classroom and to help them reach students (and teachers) in remote locations. Due to the enormous amount of information stored and available for all, education technology has become inescapable. According to Donaldson (2009, as cited in Januszewski & Molenda, 2008), "Educational Technology is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources" (p.31). The common perception of the term technology is the use of computers and modern appliances, however this perception is limited. Computers are a *consequence* of technology, while *technology* is a way of thinking and problem solving. It is a way of thinking, or a means, that connects the individual to the desired results. It is a way of thinking - the use of knowledge, information, and skills in order to reach results.

Modern humans live in the information age and the enormous information technology revolution. There has been considerable development in scientific and technological realms, which is encouraging; since it took mankind hundreds of years to move from the era of agriculture to the industrial age, decades to move into the atomic age, and years to reach the space age. We see now tremendous amounts of sophisticated technology almost every hour in all parts of the globe. The history of technology began with the first tools that humans made to make their lives easier; technology education began primitively with teaching the usage of those tools to others. Technology education has begun to operate in a curricular framework (Yiğit, 2013). Educational technology has been added in educational courses in schools and universities. There are schools are presenting technology to their students through educational

laboratories which have many types of technology, such as computer, smart board, iPad, etc... that help students to be aware and familiar with utilizing of technology. Some schools have even had to dispense books and replace them with electronic panels for all course activities. Many times, technology has replaced many books with one device, making their school materials more portable. The result of Oyaid's (2010) study showed that students have positive attitudes towards computers and they think that they have a positive effect on their learning, and would like to learn more about them.

Statement of Problem

There is no doubt that technology greatly affects employees in all areas, and perhaps the most prominent of these areas is the educational field; Technology may contribute to the educational process dramatically if teachers invest their time and energy in programs and activities that will benefit the students and help them in the process of academic achievement; most important is that technology is not misused. Educational technology is a specific tool for the teacher, but not an alternative to traditional teaching. Whatever the case, with the recognition of the huge influence of the technology's role in the classroom, but at the same time it does not eliminate the role of the teacher in classrooms because teacher plays a significant role in the educational process. Utilizing technology in the classroom changes the role of the teacher to facilitator who teaches the students how to learn, as Chapman & Mahlck (2004) point out:

“..., these techniques shift more responsibility to the students to seek out information and interact with people at other locations. For the most part, they tend to encourage more student-centred learning. This, in turn, is putting pressure on teachers to modify their approach to classroom teaching” (p.23).

This requires the learner to have a good sense of self-motivation and responsibility that can transform him/her into an active seeker of information, not just a recipient.

On the part of the teacher, there are numerous elements that are seen as the catalysts and main reasons why these multimedia environments provide optimum results. The views of some scholars indicate that the competency of a teacher and his or her ability to use various software and computer products promote optimal results in using these technologies (Gardner, 2011). Confidence and result orientation on the part of the instructor are also vital in the success of using multimedia and technological tools in teaching (Shriner, Clark, Nail, & Schlee, 2010). It also enhances the relationship between teacher and student. Technology makes teaching and learning more meaningful and fun.

Socially, according to Yiğit, (2013, as cited in Whithworth and Berson, 2003), as both a method of instruction and a topic of instruction, the impact of computers and technology on social studies is immense. Technology-based learning has the potential to facilitate development of students' decision-making and problem solving skills (Yiğit, 2013). With the proliferation of technology and the many benefits that its use has on the various areas, especially with regards to what role teachers play in enabling students to make the most out of technology and its impact on student outcomes. This would be especially relevant to the Saudi school system where cultural, religious, and social barriers exist, which impede the learning, particularly of female students.

Purpose of Study

This study was designed to identify and determine:(1) What are Saudi teachers' perceptions, and the effects of educational technology on their teaching? (2) What are the difficulties that teachers may encounter when using technology in their classes? Indeed, this study intends to identify Saudi teachers' perceptions about the effects of educational technology on their school experiences by giving them a survey.

Review of the Literature

The Saudi School System and women

In the Saudi school system, religion is considered the foundation on which all educational decisions are made (Jamjoom, 2010). In this regard, the first general objective and strategic starting point of the country's Sixth Development Plan ensured that it prioritized the safeguarding of "Islamic values by duly observing, disseminating, and confirming Allah's Shariah (God's Divine Law)" (Jamjoom, 2010, p. 547). As asserted by Denman & Hilal (2011, as cited in Zia, 2010, p.261), "Islamic studies/sciences (Oloom Addin) are considered core components of school curricula across the Arab region". The private educational sector in Saudi provides quality Western-style education for those who can afford the high tuition fees. There are also state schools where the costs are lower.

Women in Saudi Arabia are excluded from some subjects in the University because they might need to intermingle with men, which is not allowed in the country. However, they can learn as many subjects as they want as long as they can maintain their distance from men. As described by Hamdan (2005), women's schooling at all levels was monitored under the Department of Religious Guidance, until 2002, to ensure that the education of women will not digress from its original purpose, and to prepare them as future mothers and good wives, as well as for acceptable jobs (Hamdan, 2005). Although women are accepted in schools and universities and are able to earn degrees, there is still a prevalence of subordination between men and women. However, during the reign of King Faisal, his wife Iffat established a school for girls, which helped women fulfill their duties not only in their homes, but even outside, as independent identities (Lacey, 1981 as cited in Hamdan, 2005). Today, Arabian women are being educated and the illiteracy rate has decreased (Hamdan, 2005). Technology has played a vital role too, in changing women's positions in Saudi society, since Internet access has allowed them to discover that their neighboring countries' women are enjoying more

opportunities than what they have (Hamdan, 2005). During the past decade, the Saudi government has become more aware of the needs of women and has since changed their education sector (Hamdan, 2005).

Types of Technology in Education and its impact in Promoting Learning

Some of the ways that teachers use technology in the classroom are for communicating with parents, creating study guides, accessing lesson plans, and recordkeeping (Judson, 2006). According to a 2000 National Center for Education Statistics survey (as cited in Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi, 2010), 39% of teachers used the Internet or computers for creating instructional materials; 3% for administrative record keeping; and 10% for accessing model lesson plans or for accessing research and novice practices (Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi, 2010). The survey also showed that novice teachers were more likely to use the Internet or computers for accomplishing their different teaching objectives (Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi, 2010). Moreover, teachers with about nine years of teaching experience were more likely to use the Internet or computers for reporting and communicating with their colleagues, in comparison to the teachers with 20 years of experience (Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi, 2010). In comparison, students use technology for performing research, communicating with experts, analyzing data, and composing reports.

Social media can be seen as tools for enhancing learning inside the classroom. Bull and Adams (2012) discovered that one of the social mediums used in the teaching and learning process is Twitter. It is used to supplement the lectures given by the teacher. The findings of this study revealed that Twitter promoted students' ingenuity, was fun, and engaged the students in meaningful learning activities in and outside the classroom. It was also found that it helped in promoting blended learning - the combination of different learning activities, which aids in the continuous learning of the students inside the class. According to Bull and Adams (2012), blended learning can provide the student with flexible learning time, which is

suitable in the use of Twitter. Furthermore, Bull and Adams (2012) said that there are a lot of advantages in using blended learning, such as decreased time for training, effortless access to training, and easy monitoring of participation of students. Ramsden and Jordan (2009, as cited in Bull and Adams, 2012) provided three uses of Twitter in teaching and learning, which mostly fall within the realm of communication between the teacher and students. Ramsden and Jordan (2009, as cited in Bull and Adams, 2012) gave the following uses of Twitter in the learning process inside the classroom:

(1) news updates, which is used for reminding and updating students about upcoming events and general information about the course;

(2) class back channel, which is utilized primarily by the student or teacher when there is a presentation, which helps the students to become engaged in project- based activities; and

(3) personal activity log, which is a student- centered activity designed by the teacher so that students can reflect on the passed activities and the themes they had.

However, there are also disadvantages of social media, especially when the user is a first- timer. Ramsden and Jordan (2009, as cited in Bull and Adams, 2012) discovered that there were students who were overwhelmed when asked to absorb a voluminous amount of data from social media; hence, training students for this kind of social media integration is needed so that it can effectively aid in the learning process inside the classroom.

Faizi, Al Afia, and Chibeb (2015) found that social media have various benefits in promoting learning in the classroom. Examples of these social media are social networks, blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, media sharing, and RSS (Faizi et al., 2015). They enumerated the following benefits of social media for both the teachers and the students:

(1) these social media allow the teachers and students communicate easily in just a matter of seconds;

(2) students find it fascinating, especially those who complain that they are bored in school; it can also increase students' comfort levels because it does not involve extensive physical contact;

(3) students are able to voice their opinions freely in social media; and

(4) it cultivates teamwork among the students in the achievement of a common goal (Faizi et al., 2015).

Based on their findings, Faizi et al., (2015) strongly recommend that social media should be incorporated in the instruction of teachers.

Rachtham and Chen (2013) have a similar study about social media as a learning tool. In this study, the use of The Task Technology Fit (TTF) theory was utilized to measure the impact of case-based learning and the tasks the students had to carry out. The results of the study suggested that the TTF theory could be used to help understand not only the attitude of the user, but also the effectiveness of online social technology as a case-based learning tool (Rachtham and Chen, 2013). Moreover, Rachtham and Chen (2013) explained that case-based learners can achieve enhanced performance by including social technology into their learning.

Impact of Technology in Social Studies

Another study, which supports the claim of Bull and Adams is the study of Jurgen Combs (2010). The findings of the study showed that the use of technology is still restricted in the learning and teaching process of social studies (Combs, 2010). The teachers use it primarily for test making and for communicating with parents (Combs, 2010). As explained by White (1997, as cited in Combs, 2010), teachers of social studies very seldom use technology in teaching but their potential should not be misjudged. White also suggested that teachers can still utilize online encyclopedias, interactive CDs, or other software that can boost their learning of the content of the course (Combs, 2010). White added that writing reaction papers and assignments will become less strenuous on the part of the student with the

help of technology, particularly in tasks such as typing, web-surfing and researching (Combs, 2010).

Hofer and Harris (2009) elucidated that web-based archives of primary sources of data is a very big help for social studies teachers, as these archives are anchored in student-centered activities. The proper planning of technology integration in the different topics of social studies will positively impact technology integration in social studies (Hofer & Harris, 2009). Teachers should also consider the learning goals of the lesson so that they will be able to match the technology with the type of activity they will conduct (Hofer & Harris, 2009). . As explained by Hofer and Harris (2009), social studies teachers do not only use sole activities; rather, they tend to use one in combination with others. For instance, a teacher may let her class view an image and let the whole class have an interactive discussion about it as an opening activity, and from that activity, the teacher may start the presentation of the lesson (Hofer & Harris, 2009). By using virtual presentations, students will be able to perceive events in the past as something real. This will facilitate knowledge- building for social studies lessons (Hofer & Harris, 2009).

Acikalin (2010) found that teachers, commonly used the Internet and the software programs Microsoft Power Point, Excel, and Word, to augment their instruction inside the classroom (Acikalin, 2010). In the study, the participants found it useful to have Internet access for the students because it provided a wealth of sources, which provided students with multiples perspectives (Acikalin, 2010). The use of software is also seen as tools for making the lives of the students easier. The use of Word allows them to write their papers; Power Point makes their reports more engaging; and Excel, though seldom used by the students, is also useful because it helps the students make tables, databases, and charts for assignments and projects (Acikalin, 2010). However, Acikalin (2010) explained that the study could have

been better if the students were active participants and if the school supported these computer-enhanced teaching and learning process.

Lazaros's (2013) study on the inclusion of technology in teaching social studies also promotes engagement and stirs excitement in the students. Lazaros (2013) explained that elementary teachers can use free Internet resources to make historical lessons exciting and realistic. Through this interactive discussion inside the classrooms, students may get mesmerized with it and grow to love Science and Technology, as well as History (Lazaros, 2013).

According to Beck and Eno (2012) the pedagogical strategies of teachers play an important role in teaching social studies with the use of technology. Since there are varied approaches from pre-service training to actual teaching it is very important to see the congruence and suitability of the strategy and teaching goals (Beck & Eno, 2012). There are two branches of social studies pedagogy, which was explained by Shulman (2005, as cited in Beck & Eno, 2012). The first one is implicit structure, which is defined by Shulman as "a moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values and dispositions" (Beck & Eno, 2012, p. 75). The second one is deep structure and is defined by Shulman as a "set of assumptions about how to best impart a certain body of knowledge and know-how" (Beck & Eno, 2012, p. 75). In other words, implicit structure is the philosophical basis of a field while deep structure is the instructional philosophy of a teacher.

Beck and Eno (2012) explained the implication of implicit and deep structure in teaching social studies. The goals and objectives of a course often dictate the teacher's implicit structure (Beck & Eno, 2012). Whether goals are heavily weighted towards content or civic competence always depends on the teacher (Beck & Eno, 2012). In sum, the choice of pedagogy -- whether with the use of technology or not -- should always result in learning.

According to Debele and Pleyvak (2012) who examined the teacher-related, context-related, and project-related conditions with technology-integrated projects in social studies, there should be pedagogy- technology alignment. Moreover, the clear establishment of learning outcomes and the support of teacher educators, as well as the teacher who designs and implements the projects is important (Debele & Pleyvak, 2012). For teacher-related factors, Mishra and Koehler (2006, as cited in Debele and Pleyvak, 2012) said that for the successful inclusion of technology in the classroom, teachers should know how the emerging tools in teaching work and how they can use them creatively in a specific content area of the subject. The project-related factors are the distance of the school, resources, and current practices of the teachers (Debele & Pleyvak, 2012). On the other hand, the context-related factors are the technological, human, and organizational infrastructure (Debele & Pleyvak, 2012). The success of technology integration is defined as “to the degree instructional goals were met” (Debele & Pleyvak, 2012, p. 288). It is important for the researchers that the technology tools used will suit the content of the subject as well as meet the learning goals for the lesson. For instance, an example presented by Ackerman et al. (2009, as cited in Debele and Pleyvak, 2012) describes a history teacher who gave his students a multimedia presentation project where they could learn about the medieval time, tour the city, take on roles from various historical scenes, and/or present their re-enactment. This helped the students ensure the implementation of the project by authentically experiencing the narratives.

Another source of information for augmenting the learning process in the classroom is the digital archives. It is defined by Bolick (2006) as “collections of numerical data, texts, images, maps, videos, and audio files that are available though the internet” (as cited in Debele and Pleyvak, 2012, p. 290). Digital archives are used to increase the students' engagement in the lessons. Hence, to guarantee the success of technology integration in social

studies, the clarity of goals and the combined effort of other teachers, as well as the alignment of pedagogical practices will bring forth enhanced learning.

In connection to digital archives and other electronic instruments, Moore, Beshke and Bohan (2014) conducted a study that evaluated the use of election simulation games in Social Studies classrooms; they found that students gained learning from the practical use of the simulation since it was connected to real life situations (Moore et al., 2014). The teachers were able to get enough grounding to connect practice to theory and support it with the use of technology in social studies classrooms (Moore et al., 2014).

Through games and simulations, as stated in the study of Beshke and Bohan (2014), collaboration and teamwork arise. Francis and Davis (2013) studied digital collaboration to promote learning in Social Studies classes, and discussed the great impact of digital storytelling, collaborative wikis and blogs, cooperative learning using mobile devices, and questing and interactive polling. Digital collaboration is a significant factor to facilitate learning in the classroom.

Cooperative learning is one of the things often needed to attain learning goals in a class. According to Scheuerell (2010), collaborative learning can be the result of the construction of web pages by students of Social Studies in Warrensburg School. Furthermore, Scheurell (2010) underscored that teachers should consider the use of technology in the classroom, specifically if the students have to share their local history outside the four corners of the classroom, instead of becoming docile learners from the Internet. Moreover, there are a lot of benefits that students can get from collaborative learning regardless of the electronic medium used. It promotes interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and instantaneous participation of students (Scheurell, 2010).

Boon, Burke, Fore, and Burke (2006) looked at improving content knowledge in social studies classrooms through the use of technology- based cognitive organizers. This

research made a comparison between impacts of a computer-generated cognitive organizer and a traditional textbook on students' understanding of social studies content. According to Boon et al. (2006), the students who used the computer-generated cognitive organizers outperformed the students who just used textbooks in the classroom; hence, the use of computer-generated tools for teaching and learning has a possibility of improving content-area learning and achievement in inclusive social studies classrooms.

Mucherah (2003) examined climate in social studies classrooms and revealed six key factors: teacher support and structure, rule clarity and teacher control, involvement in teacher structured activities, involvement with computers, and competition with computers.

According to Mucherah (2003), there is an evident difference between teachers' and students' perceptions about the climate of the classroom. This has an effect on the learning process with the use of technology. Although there was a difference between the achievement of males and females in the use of technology, it still aided in the learning process inside the classroom (Mucherah, 2003).

Teachers' Roles in Using Technology

A study by Gardner (2011) showed that technology is being used more in the presentation of lessons and that this changes the role of the teacher in the classroom. However, his findings also showed that teachers need more training for the successful implementation of technology in providing instruction (Gardner, 2011). As shown by the findings of Wright and Wilson (2009), the teacher education program attended by the study's subjects where technology was seamlessly integrated into the social content and pedagogy of the program effectively enabled the said teachers to successfully integrate technology into their own classes. Similarly, the findings of Shriner, Clark, Nail et al. (2010) showed that workshops on the use of technology in social studies classrooms enhanced the teachers' perceived competence, confidence, and resultant content-specific self-efficacy with regards to

the use of various educational technologies in their classrooms (Shriner et al., 2010). As asserted by Zhao (2007, as cited in Shriner et al., 2010), “effective modeling of technology integration strategies can help . . . teachers develop positive attitudes towards technology and incorporate technology into . . . classrooms creatively and meaningfully” (p. 44). Zhao (2007, as cited in Shriner et al., 2010) went on to further state that “teachers’ technical expertise and professional experience in using technology is critical for students’ successful learning experiences with technology. Similarly, the findings of Waring (2010) showed that a teacher’s beliefs about technology use in the classroom manifested in the way that a teacher approached the seamless integration of technology and instruction into the curriculum. In turn, this implied that a teacher’s beliefs towards his or her students, instruction, and technology had a direct impact on the manner by which technology is used in the classroom (Waring, 2010).

Wright and Wilson (2009) indicated that in order for technology to be successfully employed in the classroom, school administrators must be able to provide teachers with consistent professional development opportunities and other sources that would allow them to grow. The school administrators should also provide the support and time that the teachers would need for participating in such endeavors (Wright & Wilson, 2009). Similarly, these school administrators should encourage lifelong learning. Still, such professional development opportunities should focus not only on educating teachers about how to integrate technology in their classes but should also provide conceptualization and opportunities for integrating technology in the teaching of content in the right context (Wright & Wilson, 2009). In this regard, teachers should actively seek opportunities for learning and should also continuously explore technology methods that would further enhance classroom management strategies. Moreover, teacher educators should serve as models for the best practice in integrating technology in the university classroom and in facilitating an understanding of the curriculum and the role that pedagogy and content play on technology (Wright & Wilson,

2009). Furthermore, teachers play an important role in promoting, encouraging, and supporting the use of technology in the classroom based on sound pedagogical and theoretical decision-making.

Gardner (2011) stressed that technology is only a tool and not a teacher. As such, teachers still have to be able to teach well (Gardner, 2011). The teachers in Gardner's (2011) study indicated that although technology augments the manner by which a teacher presents lessons to the class, it does not take over the role of the teacher. In this regard, a teacher who does not teach well will still not be able to teach well even if they use technology. More specifically, the teacher is still responsible for creating the teaching materials, although technology changes how these materials are presented. This makes the teacher a facilitator of knowledge (Gardner, 2011). In the same regard, the findings of Waring (2010) indicated that it is the teacher's responsibility to construct meaningful experiences that would enable students to become engaged in the learning process. He also stressed that before a teacher guides the students' learning, he or she must first explicitly teach the students about basic technological skills (Waring, 2010).

It should also be noted that even if teachers can effectively use technology for teaching, problems may arise when teachers give computer-related homework or projects since not all of the students would have access to computers at home (Gardner, 2011). Incidentally, not all schools or classrooms would have access to computers either.

Students' Outcomes

Studies show that the use of technology in instruction can lead to improved student outcomes. For example, the implementation of the Integrated Curriculum Project (ICP-3) led to significant changes in the teachers' and students' classroom behaviors, which included the time spent in small-group discussions and the quality and quantity of the questions asked (Thomas, Hassaram, Rieth et al., 2012). In particular, this project used multimedia

technology in providing instruction for an integrated language arts and social studies curriculum that aimed to improve critical thinking and literacy skills for at-risk adolescents, which included students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities. Similarly, a study by Waring (2010) showed that the use of technology enabled students to take charge of their own learning. The students were shown to constantly engage in meaningful activities that enabled them to acquire knowledge (Waring, 2010). It was also shown that these activities were directed by the students' personally motivated questions, as well as by their interests (Waring, 2010). In addition, the students developed the skills for cooperatively working with their peers (Waring, 2010). As asserted by Scheurell (2010), cooperative learning and the Internet can be leveraged together in the social studies classroom. Rather than having the students use the Internet in individual activities, Scheurell (2010) suggested that technology be used with cooperative learning structures in order to achieve a very effective social studies instruction. Furthermore, he suggested the use of Spencer Kagan's PIES (Positive interdependence; Individual accountability; Equal participation; Simultaneous interaction) structure for the integration of educational technology with cooperative learning activities (Schueller, 2010). As advocated by many school administrators, notions of traditional teaching should be put aside in favor of creating learning environments where the students can share ideas, defend divergent thinking, and mull over the meaning of new information (Judson, 2006). This in turn results in a type of student-active and student-centered learning, which is referred to as constructivism. In this regard, educational technology leaders support the idea of shifting from providing students with direct instruction to the creation of constructivist classrooms.

Further, the findings of Isman, Abanmy, & Hussein et al. (2012) showed that the use of interactive whiteboards in Saudi secondary schools resulted in the development of the learners' skills, particularly with regards to pedagogy, their learning, their level of interaction,

their behavior, attention, attitudes, perception, and motivations. It also enriched the learning community environment (Isman et al., 2012). Moreover, their findings indicated that the students would have a positive attitude towards technology if their teachers can use it in an effective manner (Isman et al., 2012).

On the other hand, Rambe (2012) considered the use of Facebook for cognitively scaffolding learners and democratizing student access to knowledgeable peers as an oxymoron in that it is both empowering and constraining. In particular, Facebook proved to be productive in instances where the students' historical and socio-cultural backgrounds, such as divergent interests, linguistic barriers, and racially imposed social distance, constrained face to face communication. Facebook also facilitated communication between teachers and students. Moreover, it served as an academic networking tool that bridged the various divides – digital, linguistic, and racial – that are imposed by differentiated academic histories (Rambe, 2012). Still, the study showed that the high school students who had access to Facebook were able to more easily transition from social to academic networking than their peers (Rambe, 2012). As well, the study showed that the students who were able to effectively use Facebook as an educational tool were more pragmatic in using peer-based networks and less likely to engage in off-task activities than their counterparts (Rambe, 2012). In sum, Facebook enhanced the students' cognitive scaffolding “through prompt questions, direct questions, fading, and provision of background materials during problem solving that recruited student on-task behavior” (Rambe, 2012, p. 1352). The researchers further added that the different Facebook rules (e.g. rules for creating an account, joining groups, posting on group forums, and others) were both constraining and enabling (Rambe, 2012). In this regard, the researchers contended that the benefit of Facebook as an educational tool is contingent on how well it is integrated into the pedagogical design of the curriculum, on the student's level of computer literacy, and on the student's level of academic maturity (Rambe, 2012).

On the other hand, Condy, Chigona, & Gachago et al. (2012) highlighted how the use of technology can also benefit teachers participating in a professional development course. In particular, this study investigated the effects of using digital stories on the learning of pre-service student teachers where the technology was used to enable the student teachers to reflect on their experiences with diversity in the classroom (Condy et al., 2012). The findings showed that the students who participated in the digital storytelling approach developed a better understanding of each other's socio-economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, which in turn enabled them to develop more respect for each other. Similarly, Elliot (2010, as cited in Condy et al., 2012) asserted that "communication technologies have enabled higher education providers including education programmes, to expand and enrich teaching and learning opportunities and pedagogies" (p. 284).

Teachers' Perceptions of Using Technology

In the present day world dominated by ever evolving modern technologies, schools are challenged with incorporating new technologies into teaching paradigms. Research studies suggest that technologies can not only help make students' learning tasks easier, but they can also help them develop better critical thinking skills, understanding, and analysis (Roschelle et al., 2000).

Factors Affecting Teachers' Perceptions of Using Technology

While the perceptions of teachers about the use of technology and being adept at it are the key factors in technology integration in school curriculum and practices, there are many other outside factors which influence their beliefs in technology. Li and Choi (2013) measured teachers' perceptions about the use of technology through using the constructivist approach to discover how technology, as a tool, can accelerate learning. The results showed the following:

(1) the social capital of school had a strong direct effect on teachers' self-perceived changes in their classroom instruction;

(2) teachers' receptiveness in technology use had a direct effect on their perceived effectiveness of professional development, but there was an insubstantial effect on fostering changes in their teaching with the use of technology; and

(3) the social capital of the school had a direct effect on teachers' receptiveness towards technology and their belief of its usefulness in their professional growth.

As Li and Choi (2013) explain, social capital is the capacity of the school management to make other stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents) trust in the integration of technology, and their ability to get access to new information, which will be supplemental sources of data for teachers; hence, social capital should be used to bring about change and organizational learning.

Environmental factors in Teacher Opinions and Perceptions

Kaya (2012) studied the opinions of teachers and focused on the environment factors, such as social and physical environment, , and the use of electronic, graphical, three-dimensional, visual, and printed materials, in social studies. Findings indicated that a majority of social studies teachers felt that it was important to make the classroom conducive to using new methods and learning through experience (Kaya, 2012). The teachers added that the classrooms should be well-lit. Furthermore, the teachers stated that there is a need for computers, CDs and DVDs, projectors, and internet access (Kaya, 2012). The teachers emphasized that the use of electronic instructional materials, together with graphical and visual materials, is indispensable in both the teaching and the learning process in social studies classrooms (Kaya, 2012). Thus, teachers believe that the combination of elements

conducive to cooperative learning, along with visual, graphical and electronic materials is important to making learning social studies less complicated and more enjoyable.

Interactive Tools in Teacher Opinions and Perceptions

Interactive Whiteboards are currently used in most classrooms to increase student participation in lessons. In the study of Isman, Abanny, Hussein and Al Saadany (2012), it was found that teachers have a positive attitude towards using Interactive Whiteboards in their instructions, but most of them utilized them ineffectively (Isman et al., 2012). The results demonstrate that teachers need more training on the use of Interactive Whiteboards so it can assist them inside the classroom (Isman et al., 2012). Furthermore, the study discovered that students have a positive perception about the Interactive Whiteboards if they are used properly and effectively by the teachers (Isman, et al., 2012). Lastly, the study results revealed that there is a need to alter the nature of the school and the teachers' pedagogy to reinforce technological advancements of learning inside the classrooms (Isman et al., 2012).

Role of Competency in Technologies in Teacher Perceptions

Al Bataineh and Anderson (2015) conducted a study aimed to determine the perception of Jordanian teachers about the competencies needed for implementing technology in the Social Studies classrooms. The results showed that the female teachers who are thirty or below and male teachers who are thirty-one to thirty-nine scored the highest mean of positive perception about competency toward implementing technology in classrooms. Teachers who are forty or older scored the lowest positive perception about the competency (Al Bataineh & Anderson, 2015). Female teachers with the least teaching experience are more favorable to the implementation of technology in the classrooms compared to the female teachers who are experienced and older. The latter group had a lower positive perception about technology and its implementation (Al Bataineh & Anderson, 2015). These results

provide valuable information to social studies teachers, professional development leaders, and national policy makers interested to address the factors that influence the use of technology in the classrooms (Al Bataineh & Anderson, 2015). The research shows that younger teachers are more adept in technology than the older teachers.

Experiences of the outside World

Learning is not confined only to the four corners of the classroom. Thus, exploring the outside world in connection to lessons taught in the class will be a great experience for students and most teachers believe it is essential for student learning. According to a research study on the views of Social Studies teachers on learning outside the classroom (Cengelci (2013), most teachers deem it suitable for the students be able to experience the outside world and consider it a training for them to be an active member of the society. The teachers believe that the contents of Social Studies course are highly appropriate for learning outside the classrooms (Cengelci, 2013). Outside learning activities are typified as planning trips, going to the cinema, interviewing with experts in on a certain subject, and resource persons who could be invited in schools (Cengelci, 2013). Overall, outside learning experience fosters more engagement with students.

Pre-service Teacher Perceptions of Technologies

Service teachers are not the only ones who have a say and voice their opinions regarding technology as a part of student teaching. Pre-service teachers prefer various ways of assessing, learning, and teaching inside the classrooms. In the study of Hamdan (2013), pre-service teachers preferred group assignments comprising a written report and an oral presentation instead of individual assignments. The former helped them break out of the boundaries of facing an audience and promoted them to exchange knowledge with their counterparts (Hamdan, 2013). The study results of Hamdan (2013) suggest that a majority of

the pre-service teachers believe that group assignments help in engaging students with each other and it promotes collaborative learning.

Teachers' Perceptions of Technology in their own Professional Development

It should be noted that the use of technology in education not only leads to improved student outcomes, but it can also result in improvements in various aspects of the teachers' professional development as well. As asserted by Shriner et al. (2010), teachers are motivated to participate in professional development initiatives if they believe that these will enable them to expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and make them more effective with their students. The assertion is affirmed by the results of their study (Shriner et al. (2010) which showed that teachers who participated in workshops that focused on the use of technology in social studies classrooms gained increased competence and confidence in their ability to use different types of educational technologies in their classrooms. The findings also showed that most teachers perceived experiencing these improvements within a short span of time (Shriner et al., 2010). The results of the research imply that professional development will allow teachers to better implement technological applications in the classrooms.

The findings of Shriner et al (2010) are contradictory to those of other researchers. For example, the findings of Koc and Bakir (2010) showed that although the pre-service teachers who participated in the study expressed neutrality with regards to their readiness in using technology in their teaching, a majority of them indicated that they still needed more training on the implementation of computer technologies for the enhancement of their learning (Koc & Bakir, 2010). They also indicated that, without support, technology was frustrating to use (Koc & Bakir, 2010). More specifically, although the majority of the pre-service teacher participants indicated that they knew how to use word processing, presentation, and web design tools, they expressed being uncomfortable with using spreadsheets, WebQuest,

databases, video editing, simulation, hypermedia, and concept mapping tools. Similar findings were obtained in a study conducted by Isman et al. (2012), which showed that while the Saudi secondary school teachers who participated in the study had positive attitudes towards the use of interactive whiteboards in the classrooms, few of them indicated that they used it effectively in the classrooms (Isman et al., 2012). The research results point to the need for teachers to undergo a professional development program where they can learn more about interactive whiteboards. The professional development programs can enable them to improve their teaching skills as well as the students' learning. Furthermore, it implied that a change in school culture and classroom pedagogy was needed, specifically to one that supports enthusiasm and innovation in learning and teaching. This is affirmed by the findings of Kiper and Tercan (2012), which showed that among the primary school teachers who received in-service trainings on information technologies and who use these technologies in their classes, those who were satisfied with the in-service trainings were more likely to use technology in their classes than those who were not. The study also indicated that some of the problems that the teachers encountered in the use of technology consisted of problems with the educational software, the Internet connection, and the equipment (Kiper & Tercan, 2012).

Short duration trainings: In this regard, it may have helped that the teacher participants in study of Shriner et al (2010) were provided with a relatively brief, but focused professional development workshop. In the same manner, the students of Masters of Teaching who participated in a study by Redman and Trapani (2012) initially showed that although they had a positive outlook on the use of technology in their future platforms, they still could not quite articulate an educational vision for this technology. However, their perceptions would change after participating in lectures and workshops where they focused on two social media tools, namely Twitter and Edmodo (Redmond & Trapani, 2012). More specifically, these learning opportunities enabled them to identify learning spaces that involved creative

and collaboration opportunities (Redmond & Trapani, 2012). They also considered the opportunity as a motivation for both their students' learning and their own teaching. Overall, these findings imply high effectiveness of shorter and more focused trainings.

Promoting use of technology: On the other hand, Swan and Hicks (2007) posit that in order to promote the use of technology in social studies classrooms, teachers should be educated on how technology can be used as a tool for fostering "critical thinking as part of the vital mission of educating for citizenship" (p. 165). It is recommended that framing both pre-service and in-service discipline-specific technology courses around the question of to what extent technology can help create better communities and build strong citizens will allow teachers "to purposefully re-conceptualize their own understandings of using technology within the social studies" (Swan & Hicks, 2007, p. 165)

Integrating technology into the curriculum: A study by Waring (2010) indicated that most instructional technology coordinators' perceptions and beliefs are that technology should be used as a tool and it should be integrated seamlessly into the curriculum (Waring, 2010). Another belief is that the teachers should use meaningful experiences to enable students to become interested and focused in the learning processes. However, it was stressed that the students should be taught the basic technological skills before they are led into the learning process. In addition, there is the belief that all students are capable, at some level, of learning and of critical thinking, as well as of engaging in independent problem solving (Waring, 2010). These results imply that the type of learning environment that a teacher creates and fosters is influenced by beliefs. More specifically, a teacher's beliefs about instruction, technology, and their students can have an impact on the way technology is used in the classrooms. This would be consistent with other research findings, which indicate that "teachers who readily integrate technology into their instruction are more likely to possess constructivist teaching styles" (Judson, 2006, p. 581). To illustrate this point, Judson (2006)

asserts that a teacher who strongly believes that informative teacher-delivered lectures are the best way for students to learn will not give much importance to the use of technology in student learning. In the same manner, a teacher who believes that exploratory learning is the most effective will most likely not advocate for the use of drill and practice software. On the other hand, it may also be true that teachers who have a poor attitudes towards technology or who fear the use of technology would implement lessons that differ from their non-technology lessons (Judson, 2006).

However, the same study conducted by Judson (2006), addressing how teacher beliefs about instruction relate to the practice of integrating technology and how teacher attitudes toward technology relate to the practice of integrating technology, showed that there was neither a significant correlation between teaching philosophy and teacher practices nor between teacher practices and the teachers' attitude towards technology (Judson, 2006).

As with Koc and Bakir's (2010) assertion that "incorporating technology into method courses and training programs could transform views of technology and epistemological beliefs to constructivist orientations including active learning, problem solving, critical thinking, and discovery" (p. 14), Judson (2006) also suggests that professional development be geared towards the integration of technology in a constructivist manner. In this regard, Koc and Bakir (2010) suggest that to enable teachers to teach with a constructivist model of technology use, they should be taught with a similar model of technology use during their pre-service education. The suggestions are supported by the findings of Wright and Wilson (2006), which showed that among social studies pre-service teachers, the processes and skills learned were transferred through time and that the participants "were more likely to emulate what they were taught than to apply individual creative technology integration plans" (p. 49). All in all, the findings also implied the need for enhanced teacher education programs, which include diverse technology experiences and creative ideas that will address the barriers to

technology use in the classrooms. In turn, this will help improve the teachers' abilities to try something new (Wright & Wilson, 2009).

A study of teachers' perceptions of technology integration in United Arab Emirates (UAE) classrooms showed that both the male and female teachers at UAE model schools had high self perceptions of their competencies and abilities for successfully integrating technology in their teaching and that despite the various barriers, they were able to integrate technology in their classes with different degrees and effectiveness (Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi, 2010). They also provided the following recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of technology integration: 1.) Regular development workshops; 2.) Increased autonomy for the teachers' coverage and selection of curriculum materials; 3.) Increased collaboration between schools across the country; and 4.) Enhanced curriculum with technology-enhanced materials such as videos and CDs (Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi, 2010).

Similar findings were obtained by Robertson and Al-Zahrani (2012) where Saudi pre-service teachers were shown to exhibit generally high levels of self-efficacy with computer tasks and whose perceptions of self-efficacy as university teachers increased with computer qualifications and computer experience. As with the other studies, these findings imply that increasing Saudi pre-service training, teacher access, and exposure to ICTs and computers would contribute to effectively improving the pre-service teachers' computing habits, motivation, and self-efficacy (Robertson & Al-Zahrani, 2012).

In conclusion, the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards utilizing modern technologies in the present day classrooms are important. Various factors such as teachers' age, attitudes towards technology, training in technology, personal experiences, and school management play key roles in their adaptation and implementation of technology in schools. Overall, the results of most studies presented herein suggest that teacher's perceptions of

using technology in public schools, in particular the study of social studies, play a key role in their adaptation in most schools.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the perceptions of teachers and their personal perspectives regarding the use of technology in their classes, as well as its impacts for both teachers and students, and the challenges they may face. In order to achieve a good understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the teachers, a quantitative approach will be used. A Likert-type scale will be used for the purpose of allowing the participants to express both the direction and the strength of their opinions about their use of technology in social studies.

Participants and sitting

The study was conducted with a sample of 23 first, second, and third grade, female social studies (History and Geography) teachers in public high schools for levels 1,2 and 3. Each of the 23 teachers has been teaching more than 5 years and their ages range between 30 - 50 years. The study was being a culturally homogeneous sample, because the employment system in Saudi Arabia does not accept foreigner teachers; teachers from different regions of Saudi Arabia will be included in the sample. Teachers have been given proper training in methods of teaching during their fourth term in the college.

The six randomly selected schools are located in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The schools consist of three floors and contain large classrooms (about 36 students per class). Each school has five to six classes for the first level while second and third levels each have three to four classes. The research was conducted during the winter session of 2014, within the schools setting.

Instrument

A Likert-type scale will be used to measure teachers' perceptions and attitudes about technology use in social studies classrooms. According to McLeod (2008, Simply Psychology) "the Likert Scale is a five (or seven) point scale which is used to allow the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement"

According to Croasmun & Ostrom (as cited in Jamieson, 2004), there are 5 categories of responses ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree with a 3 = neutral type of response.

The survey contained 32 questions. The questions in the survey are divided into three sections. The questions from 1 to 12 are about teachers' perceptions about the utilizing of technology. The questions from 13 to 20 are on the impact of the utilizing of technology in the classroom. The questions from 21 to 32 are about the difficulties teachers faced in the utilizing of technology in the classroom. The survey translated to Arabic language to ensure their understanding of the questions clearly, taking into account that the participants may not speak English language well enough to understand the questions. I visited six different schools. These questions are taken from pervious studies. The word "computers" has been changed to "technology" in order to suit this research for questions number 4, 5, 7, and 8.

Data Collection

After I received the informed acceptance and consent from the ministry of Education and the schools' principals and teachers, I met the participants face-to-face twice, first meeting with teachers of History, then teachers of Geography as their schedules allow. They informed that the data is collected for research purpose only and voluntary. I described the survey to them, including information about the time needed to complete the survey and the various sections of the survey. It was a paper-and-pencil survey that I will collect at a later date.

Data Analysis

After collecting the surveys, data were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics. The answers recorded on the scale, and they were given a point value based on a pre-defined point value on the scale from 1 to 5. On the scale, 5 shows a strong positive view of technology, and 1 shows a strong negative view of technology. Unanswered questions or a question with two will not be accounted or considered as a part of the calculation. The data will be put into tables to display the results, as well to clarify the mean score and the standard deviation.

Findings

This study aimed to obtain the answers to the questions: (1) What are Saudi teachers' perceptions about the effects of educational technology on their teaching? (2) What are the difficulties that teachers may encounter when using technology in their classes? and (3) What are Saudi teachers' perceptions on the effects of educational technology on their school experiences?

To gather data, a survey that used a Likert-type scale was used. The participants were 32 female public school social studies (particularly History and Geography) teachers from the first to third grades. The gathered data was analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics.

The survey included 32 questions, which were divided into three sections: teachers' perceptions about the use of technology; the impact of using technology in the classroom; and the difficulties that teachers faced when using technology in the classroom.

Teachers' Perceptions about the Use of Technology in the Classroom

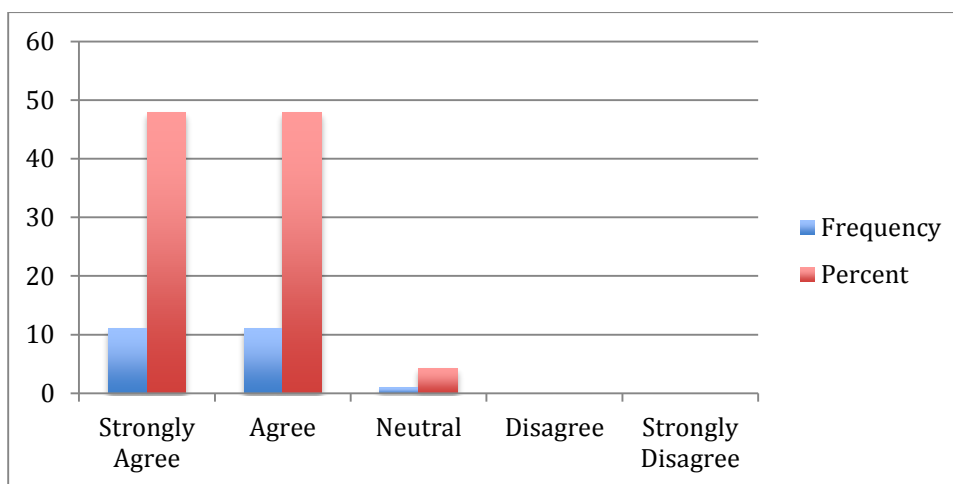
To determine the teachers' perceptions on the use of technology in the classroom, participants were asked whether they thought that lessons were more interesting when taught with the use of technology; whether they thought that using technology was a dull activity;

and whether they believe that the kids of today are digital natives and that our classrooms should embrace a 21st century curriculum.

Table 1 Teachers Attitudes or perceptions Towards the Use of Technology

Statements	N	Mean
S1. Lessons are more interesting when teachers use technology.	23	4.42
S5. Using technology is a dull activity.	23	1.96
S11. Kids today are digital natives; we need our classrooms to embrace a 21st century curriculum.	23	4.52

Figure 1. S1. Lessons are more interesting when teachers use technology.



As illustrated in Figure 1, 11 teachers “strongly agreed”, and 11 teachers “agreed” that using technology makes their lessons more interesting. Only 1 teacher was neutral in her position.

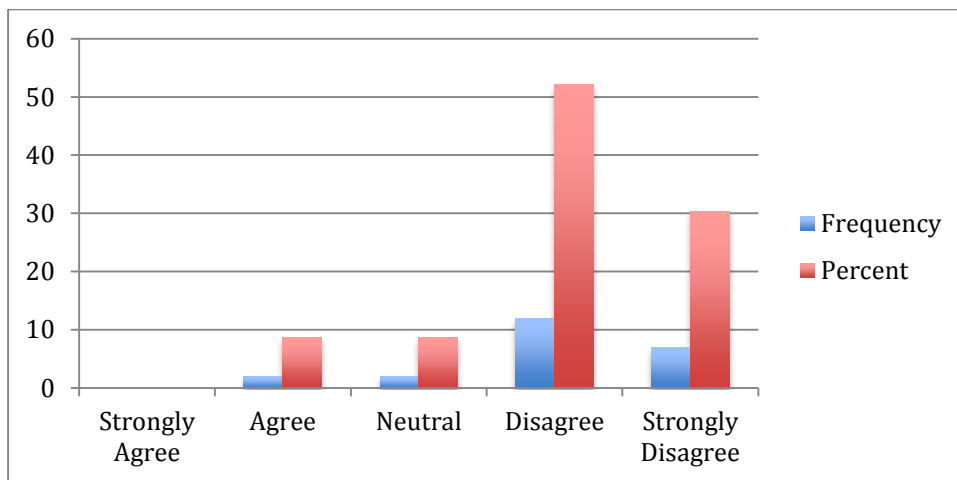
Figure 2. S5. Using technology is a dull activity.

Figure 2 shows that 7 teachers “strongly disagreed” that using technology is a dull activity in their classes, and 12 teachers “disagreed”. In contrast, 2 teachers “agreed” that they feel it is boring to use technology in class, and 2 teachers were “neutral”.

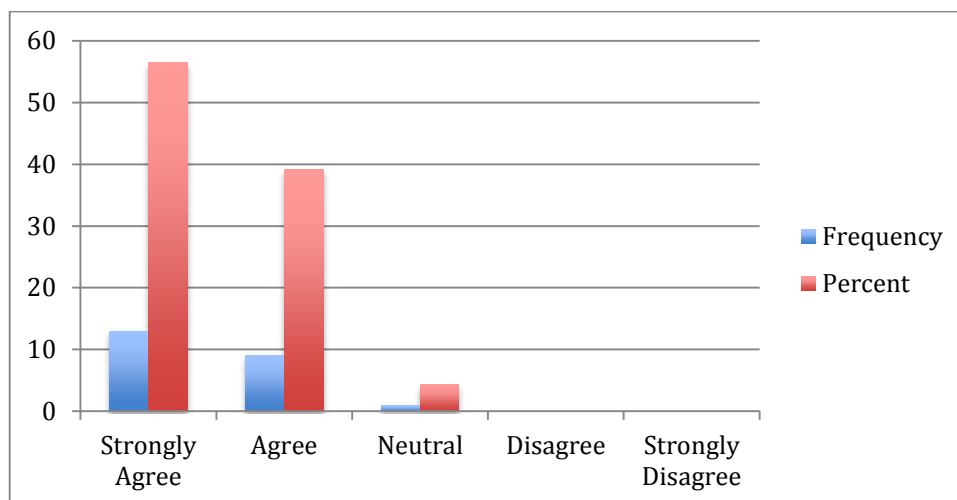
Figure 3. S11. Kids today are digital natives; we need our classrooms to embrace a 21st century curriculum.

Figure 3 shows 13 teachers “strongly agreed” that the kids tend to become digital natives, 9 teachers “agreed”, while 1 teacher was “neutral”.

As shown in Table 1, the mean score for question S1, which stated that teaching lessons using technology was more interesting, was 4.42. This coincides with the number of participants who responded that the classrooms of today should be adapted to the 21st century trends and that the students of today are digital natives. For this question, the mean score was 4.62. The results for both these questions indicate that the participants had a positive perception of using technology in the classroom. This interpretation is further validated by the result for the question on whether the use of technology was a dull activity. For this question, the mean score was 1.96, which means that the participants did not think technology use was a dull activity. This further reinforces the findings that the participants had a positive perception on using technology in the classroom.

Impact of Using Technology in the Classroom

To determine the impact of using technology in the classroom, the participants were asked whether the use of technology enabled them to reinforce and expand on the content being taught; whether it motivated the students to learn more; and whether it enabled the them to teach about and discuss current events and breaking news with their students.

Table 2 Benefits or Effects Realized Due to Use of Technology

Statements	N	Mean
S13. Able to reinforce and expand on content being taught.	23	4.13
S14. Able to increase student motivation to learn.	22	3.95
S20. Able to teach current events and breaking news.	23	4.52

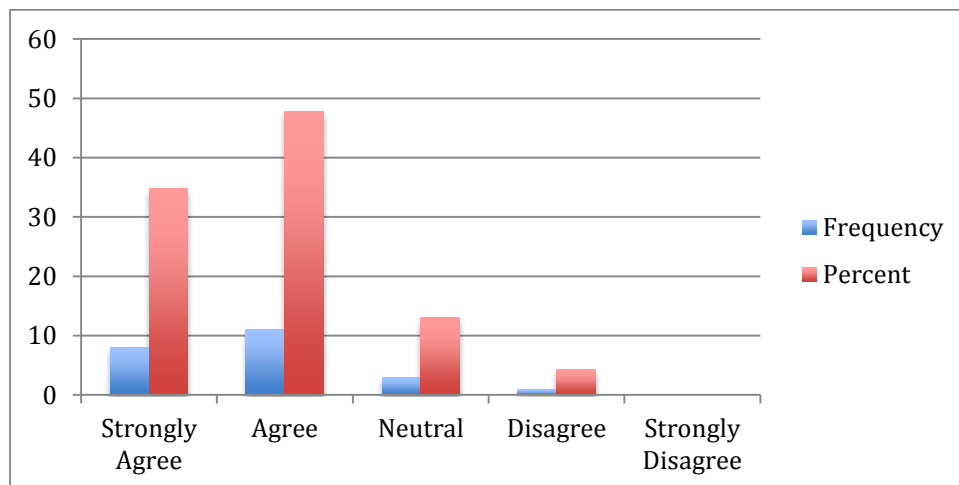
Figure 4.S13. Able to reinforce and expand on content being taught.

Figure 4 shows 8 teachers “strongly agreed”, and 11 teachers “agreed” that they are able to expand on content being taught; While 3 teachers were “neutral”, and 1 teacher “disagreed”.

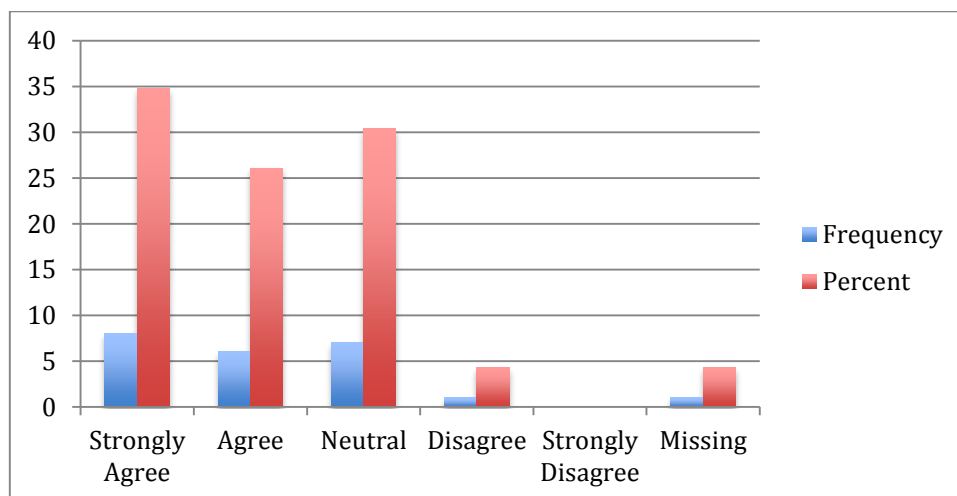
Figure 5.S14. Able to increase student motivation to learn.

Figure 5 shows 8 teachers “strongly agreed”, and 6 teachers “agreed” that using technology increases the motivation of students to learn. In addition, 7 teachers indicated neutrality and only 1 teacher “disagreed”.

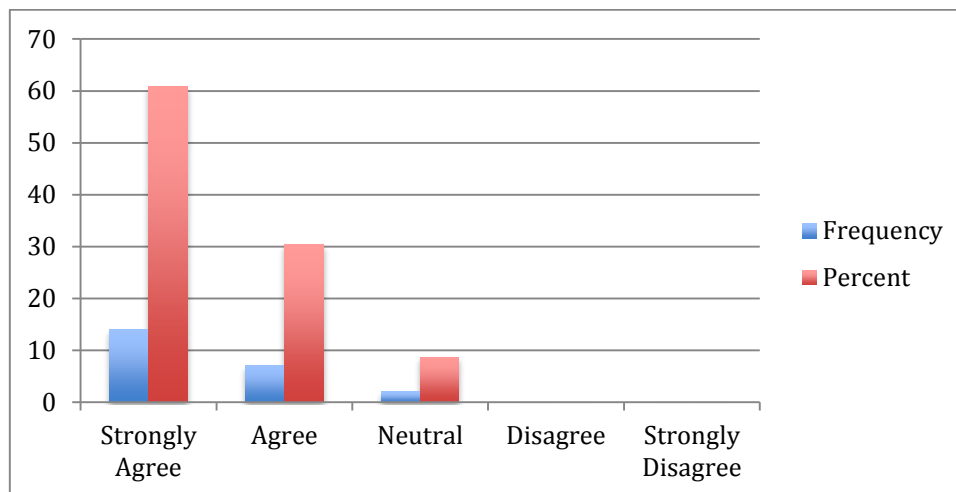
Figure 6. S20. Able to teach current events and breaking news.

Figure 6 shows 14 teachers “strongly agreed”, and 7 teachers “agreed” that using technology is helpful in teaching current events and breaking news; While 2 teachers were “neutral”.

Difficulties of Using Technology in the Classroom

Table 3 Barriers or Difficulties to Technology Usage

Statements	N	Mean
S21. Inefficient time to prepare materials based on technology.	23	4.09
S23. Problems about accessibility to existing hardware (computer, overhead projector etc.).	23	4.0
S32. Inadequacy of the courses of technology offered to teachers.	23	3.87

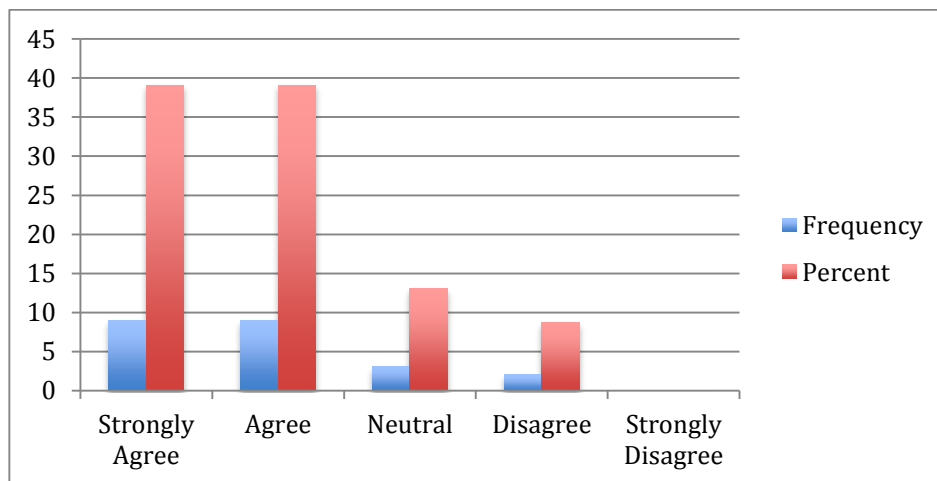
Figure 7. S21. Inefficient time to prepare materials based on technology.

Figure 7 shows 9 teachers “strongly agreed”, 9 teachers “agreed” that they do not have enough time to prepare materials based on technology. 3 teachers were “neutral”, and 2 teachers “disagreed”.

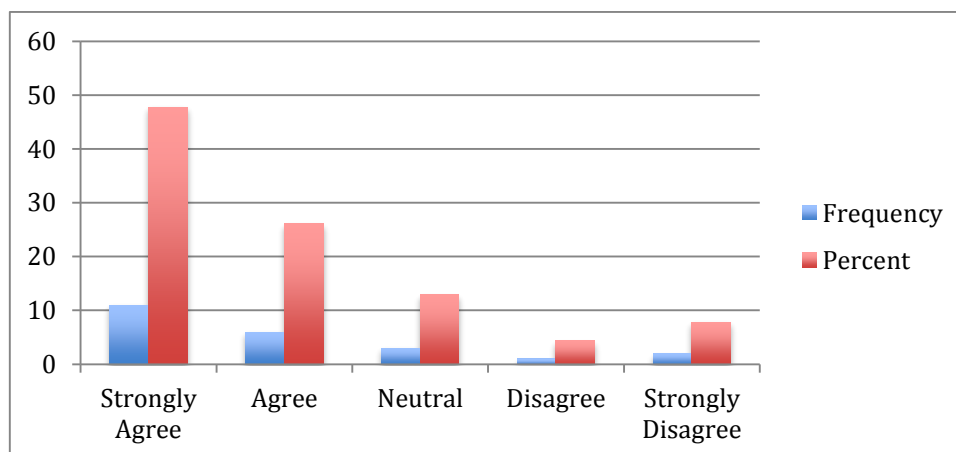
Figure 8. S23. Problems about accessibility to existing hardware (computer, overhead projector etc.).

Figure 8 shows 11 teachers “strongly agreed”, and 6 teachers “agreed” that having problems about accessibility to existing hardware, while 3 teachers were “neutral”. Also, it shows 1 teacher “disagreed”, and 2 teachers “strongly disagreed”.

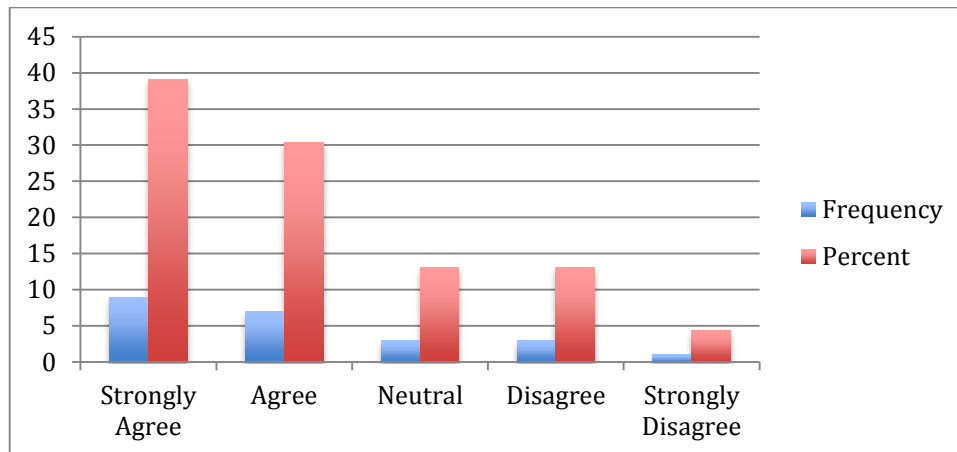
Figure 9. S32. Inadequacy of the courses of technology offered to teachers.

Figure 9 shows 9 teachers “strongly agreed”, and 7 teachers “agreed” that they need to courses of technology offer to them. Also, it shows 3 teachers were “neutral”, 3 teachers “disagreed”, and only 1 teacher “strongly disagreed”.

As illustrated in Table 3, the participants agree that their difficulties in using technology in the classroom involved the lack of time for preparing technology-related materials for the classroom; problems with accessibility to computer hardware; and the lack of technology courses for teachers. The first two items have almost the same weight or ranking in that they have mean scores of 4.09 and 4.0, respectively. Although having a lower mean score of 3.87, the inadequacy of technology courses for teachers is also one of the many barriers that the participants experience in using technology in the classroom.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore and obtain an understanding of teachers' perceptions about the use of technology in their classes, its impact on both the students and teachers, and the challenges they face in using technology.

Upon analysis of the data, the results show that the participants find that using technology makes the lessons more interesting and that it is not a dull activity. This would be consistent to the findings of Lazaros (2013) who claimed that the use of technology increased the students' engagement in their classes and made them more excited about them. As Shriner et al. (2010) also asserted, technology use made learning more meaningful and fun.

Among the questions for determining the teachers' perceptions on technology use in the classroom, the ones that got the highest mean score are those that pertained to students being digital natives and the need for adapting to 21st century curriculum. This shows that the participants recognized the students' technology savvy and that technology is a big part of their students' lives. As such, it can be inferred that they acknowledge that the best way for them to reach their students and to get their attention would be to adapt to their world. Social media, in particular, is something that the students of today can relate to. As such, the result for this question implies that the participants are open to incorporating tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs into their classroom curriculum. In addition, it can be inferred that with the conservative culture that Saudi Arabia has, especially among the women, it is possible that the participants recognize technology as a means for empowering women in their country and as a means of connecting to the other parts of the world. These are things that are impossible or very difficult to achieve through the traditional methods of teaching. Moreover, as Faizi et al (2015) asserted, the use of technology limits the need for physical contact, which may make the female Saudi Arabian students more comfortable in learning and expressing their ideas.

With regards to the impact of using technology in the classroom, it is shown that the participants do believe that using technology in the classroom will enable them to better expound on the subjects that they teach and that it enables them to provide their students with a richer learning experience. As Ackerman et al. (2009, as cited in Debele and Pleyvak, 2012) asserted, technology can be used to allow the students to get virtual experiences of the things that they learn about, which not only helps the students gain a better understanding of what they are learning about but also makes the learning experience fun and interesting for them.

Although the mean score for using technology to increase motivation to learn is slightly lower than the other two categories, this can be attributed to the fact that this pertains to the students' experience rather than on the teachers' or participants' experiences. It is understandable that some teachers may be uncomfortable with answering this question or with assessing the answer to this question when they have no concrete basis for it. Their perceptions on this matter would be based mostly on their observations of and interactions with their students. However, some of the participants may even have incorrect interpretations of their observations. Nevertheless, its mean score is still quite at par with the mean scores of the other two items in this category, which means that a majority of the participants believe technology use to be helpful in increasing the students' motivation for learning.

It is quite surprising, though, that the highest mean score in this category was for the question that dealt with using technology in teaching about current events and breaking news. This shows the great interest that the participants – and possibly their students – have in connecting to the outside world - that is, to the other countries. This is understandable given the restrictive lifestyle that women in Saudi Arabia have. With technology they are able to exercise more freedom, especially in their communication with others. It can be presumed that through current events and breaking news, the participants and their students are able to gain other types of perspectives –from other cultures, nationalities, religions, and

backgrounds – that they would otherwise have no access to. Moreover, with technology, such information and perspectives are not exclusively available to the rich, but accessible to all. Moreover, with technology – images, videos, and others – the participants would find it easier to discuss such information in class, in that it will enable their students to more easily understand the said information in the proper context.

As for the difficulties that the participants experience in using technology in the classroom, the items with the highest mean score dealt with the lack of time to prepare technology-based course materials and the problems with access to computer hardware. These are not new findings, as these are the common problems that schools encounter, especially when they first start integrating technology use in their curricula as mentioned by Kiper and Tercan (2012). These imply a number of different problems, which include the lack of policies, funding, government support, and others. In this regard support of the school's administrators becomes very important in ensuring the success of these technology initiatives. As asserted by Wright and Wilson (2009), the successful implementation of technology use in the classroom relies on the school administrators' support for such initiatives. This includes providing the teachers with adequate time for participating in these initiatives, the resources they need, and the professional development opportunities they would need to stay abreast of the changes in technology and to gain more confidence in using it in their classrooms. Although question that dealt with the inadequacy of technology courses offered to teachers had the lowest mean score in this category, this can possibly be attributed to the fact that many of the participants are in their 30s and 40s, which means that majority of the participants may already be using technology in their everyday lives. As such, they may feel that they already have enough basic knowledge on technology use and that they are comfortable enough to use these technologies in their classroom. However, with a mean score of 3.87, it is not that much lower than the mean scores of the other items in this category,

which means that many of the participants still feel the need for more training on technology use, especially in the classroom setting. At any rate, regardless of the teachers' existing knowledge and comfort level with using technology, it is still important for schools to continuously offer their teachers with technology courses and professional development opportunities to ensure that all of the teachers are on the same footing with regards to using technology in the classroom. Moreover, with technology advancements being rapidly developed and with the academic landscape constantly changing, it is important for teachers to constantly have their knowledge and skills updated and improved. This is especially since the students can learn only as much as the teacher knows.

Recommendations

Inflict teachers to courses train in the use of technical means in education. Also, educate teachers about the need to train their students in the use of technical means of learning, and educate teachers about the benefits of the principle of self-learning and the importance of the integration of students in the educational process and to involve them in its activities.

Limitations

Despite careful planning of this research, there were limitations. First, the research was conducted in six public high schools. These six schools are not enough to generalize findings about teachers' attitudes towards utilizing technology in their classes. It would be better if it could be done in more schools. Second, the means of the information collection was a self-report questionnaire, which might result in dishonest or incorrect information.

Conclusion

The use of technology in the classroom is becoming more prevalent due to its benefits in improving the attitudes of teachers and student outcomes, both in their academic performance and academic behaviors. However, it is clear that teachers play a big role in

facilitating the use of technology in the classroom so that such may lead to productive results. It must also be stressed that technology is only a tool and does not compensate for any teacher's incompetence. As such, it is still important for teachers to be able to teach well and for them to undergo continuous professional development. This will not only help them improve in their use of traditional teaching strategies, but will also enable them to effectively integrate technology use in their classrooms.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

“Female Teachers’ Perception of Utilizing Technology in Social Studies in Saudi Public”

Ghada Busaeed, a graduate student within the College of Education at SUNY Fredonia is conducting this study as a part of the Master’s Thesis Project. The study is being conducted to identify the Saudi teachers' perceptions about the effects of educational technology on their teaching and difficulties that teachers may encounter when using technology. Any data collected from this study will be used as a part of the Master’s Thesis Project and the results will be used only as data support for the Master’s Thesis Project.

Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. Sign the statement at the bottom of the page, which says I grant my consent to participate in this survey, you will be asked to complete the survey. The survey should take approximately ESTIMATE minutes to complete.

All information collected will be kept confidential. No names will be requested on the survey. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Also, you are free to skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the Principal Investigator at Ghada Busaeed busa7826@fredonia.edu or my faculty sponsor at Carrie.Fitzgerald@fredonia.edu (716 673-4652). You may also contact SUNY Fredonia’s **Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Sponsored Research and Faculty Development**, Judith Horowitz at (716) 673-3335 or Judith.horowitz@fredonia.edu if you have questions or concerns about the study.

There are not any risks associated with this study and the survey items should not cause any distress or discomfort. The results of the study will be shared with Education Programs at SUNY Fredonia.

I have read and understand the consent form in its entirety, and I willingly give consent to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

Appendix B

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Normal	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Lessons are more interesting when teachers use technology.					
2. Modern teaching methods are more beneficial for students.					
3. Having access to the Internet helps the quality of my work.					
4. I feel frustrated when using technology.					
5. Using technology is a dull activity.					
6. Computers and the Internet should become part of the curriculum.					
7. Students should use technology in their learning.					
8. There is too much emphasis by teachers on using technology.					
9. The technology today allows teachers to do much more than ever before.					
10. Technology is a new and exciting way of communicating with and motivating students.					
11. Kids today are digital natives; we need our classrooms to embrace a 21st century curriculum.					
12. Technology requires too much planning/maintenance.					
13. Able to reinforce and expand on content being taught.					
14. Able to increase student motivation to learn.					
15. Able to respond to a variety of learning styles.					
16. Able to demonstrate something I can't show any other way.					
17. Able to make students more technology-literate.					
18. Able to provide additional practice to struggling learners/students.					

