Teaching Social Studies Online: Pre-Service Teachers in Focus

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ABSTRACT

This study explored lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of pré-service teachers in adapting to the online teaching environment in the Division of Tagum City, Philippines. Employing a phenomenological research design and using a purposive sampling technique, 14 pré-service teacher social studies teachers participated in the in-depth interview and focus group discussion. The data gathered was analyzed through thematic analysis. The results revealed that early preparation and strategic lesson planning significantly impact engagement in an online setting. However, these efforts are often disrupted by connectivity issues, limited access to resources, and difficulties in navigating digital platforms and tools. Even so, pré-service teachers employed innovative teaching strategies such as gamification that encouraged engagement among students, provided clear instructions to the learners, and set up online board discussions to address these challenges. The findings reveal that appropriate technological support and integration of digital platforms into social studies ensure learning continuity, and it emphasizes that teacher training and professional development can be effectively conducted through an online modality. This highlights mutual benefits for both pré-service teachers and learners, and continuous support and training in navigating digital platforms can serve as powerful tools in transforming social studies education in the digital age.

Keywords: Education, Pré-Service Teachers, Social Studies, Online Teaching, Phenomenology, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Teaching internships played a vital role, enabling pré-service teachers to apply their theoretical knowledge and skills in an actual classroom setting (Cuayzon, 2024). In times of natural disasters, civil emergencies, and crises, it disrupted regular classes and posed a challenge in achieving goal no.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as mentioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (2025). With this, blended learning methods like online and module-based approaches offer academic resilience to mitigate disruptive circumstances, as demonstrated by Ramulumo and Mohapi's (2023) report on the use of blended learning following natural disasters in South Africa. However, Marte (2024) stated that due to pedagogical transitions, pré-service teachers encounter diverse challenges in the delivery of instructions and classroom management in an online setting.

Online learning, characterized as educational content delivered through digital devices to facilitate learning, is increasingly vital during times of global emergency, offering an opportunity to stay connected with teachers and students and enabling continued participation in educational activities (Brown, 2017).

In addition, while access to online education has created opportunities for forward-looking educators, barriers to its effectiveness include problems with technology, lack of experience with online platforms, and poor internet availability (Salifu & Owusu-Boateng, 2022).

In a global setting, the transition significantly affected teacher education programs, including the internship of pré-service teachers who had to embrace online modalities (Trust & Whalen, 2020). Many challenges have been observed in different countries, like Indonesia; as stated by Afriyanti and Riza (2022), Pré-service teachers encountered challenges in activating students' prior knowledge, delivering materials, and assessing students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Further, as noted by Kim (2020), online courses function as substitutes for face-to-face internships for pré-service teachers at a college level, and she further elaborated that pré-service teachers need to be provided opportunities to teach online and reflect on their teaching to improve their skills. Countries like Finland, South Korea, and Singapore have been proactive in embedding digital competence into teacher education, recognizing that online teaching is not a temporary solution but a long-term component of modern education (Redecker, 2017). Educators turned to digital platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Classroom to deliver instruction and engage learners in discussions about social studies (Choi & Cristol, 2021)

In the Philippines, it was shown that online programs for colleges and universities allowed a flexible approach to learning wherein institutions were given the autonomy to structure their teaching methods in alignment with the needs of various learners (Tarrayo & Anudin, 2021). Further, Ugalingan et al. (2021) explained how the instructors of pré-service teachers experienced challenges with teaching due to the shift to online education. In addition, pré-service teachers encountered diverse challenges in terms of handling and building connections during online teaching and technical difficulties. Moreover, due to limited resources available, teachers and students, particularly pré-service teachers, encountered many challenges in continuing academic engagement (Dayagbil et al., 2021).

On the other hand, the Department of Education has issued memorandum order no. 007, s. 2020 mandates the implementation of various distance learning modalities, such as Online Learning, which applies to all subjects, including Social Studies. Additionally, DepEd Order no. 162, s. 2020 provides strategies for implementing different learning modalities, offering guidance and feedback that can be adapted for teaching Social Studies Online. This directive aims to ensure learning continuity, in-service and pré-service teachers' readiness, and quality instruction amidst the transitions to online learning.

In the local setting, Cabual and Salibay (2021) stated that pré-service teachers in Northern and Southern Mindanao faced multiple barriers in adjusting to digital platforms. Similarly, Jaja and Parcon (2021) found that in provinces like Davao Del Norte and Bukidnon, many pré-service teachers relied solely on prepaid data to conduct online teaching. On the other hand, a study conducted in Tagum City explored the experiences of elementary pré-service teachers about embracing the pedagogical transitions wherein (Marte, 2024) highlighted the importance of knowing and being aware of the practice teaching experiences of pré-service teachers for strengthening the curriculum programs despite the disruption of classes.

Despite the various challenges encountered by pré-service teachers, according to Sepulveda-Escobar et al. (2020), online teaching practicum provided opportunities for pré-service teachers to ensure they were technologically skilled and proficient with the relevant technology, leading them to learn new software and tools, as well as how to maximize online platform utilization. Pré-service teachers referred to the online teaching practicum as a "once-in-a-lifetime" experience, which they believed would positively shape their formative teacher education and subsequent career pathways (Sepulveda-Escobar et al., 2020). By means of this practice, pré-service teachers will be better equipped for the real world, which requires

constant change and development. In the context of emergency, as noted by Sepulveda-Escobar et al. (2020), pré-service teaching provided an excellent opportunity for pré-service teachers to practice their skills to mold them further. During the teaching and learning process, pré-service teachers have the freedom to apply innovative teaching strategies to deliver instructions to the students, which increases learner involvement. Further, they learned together by actively participating and sharing feedback during the online internship (Kim, 2020).

Finally, online teaching internships have prompted pré-service teachers to examine deeply the sociocultural context surrounding school-aged children and their families during the pandemic and how these factors shape students' learning (Sepulveda-Escobar et al., 2020). This created a degree of empathy that guided inspiring teachers to weave students' identities and backgrounds into their lesson planning and delivery (Sepulveda-Escobar et al., 2020). Consequently, pré-service teachers demonstrated greater determination and willingness to confront the hurdles of online teaching and search for every opportunity to teach so that learners would gain rather than lose ground (Nurfaradilla et al., 2020).

Researchers have acknowledged the vital role of cooperating teachers in the teaching practicum, especially in the evaluation of pre-service teachers, as they provide essential guidance and feedback that help shape teaching competencies (Agangan & Cabansag, 2024). Through the course design, cooperating teachers are responsible for observing, assessing, and supporting pre-service teachers, including reflecting on their online lessons and instructional approaches. Grounded in Sanford's (1962) theory of "Challenge and Support," meaningful evaluation involves both setting appropriate expectations and providing necessary support to foster growth. Even amid challenges such as emergency teaching situations, the presence and guidance of cooperating teachers and platform facilitators allow pre-service teachers to be constructively evaluated and supported—ultimately promoting their development into more effective future educators. This research study is anchored on Reflective Practice Theory which highlights the importance of learning by thoughtful engagement with one's own experiences (Schon, 1983). This theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how these aspiring teachers can actively adapt during teaching (in-action) and critically analyze their practice afterward (on-action). It serves as a transformative tool that not only supports their development but also help them to become resilient and adaptable in a digitally evolving educational landscape.

Complementing this is Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the vital role of social interaction, cultural tools, and contextual learning in shaping an individual's cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of online teaching, this theory highlights how meaningful collaboration with mentors, peers, and students facilitated through digital platforms, can enhance the pedagogical growth of pre-service teachers. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens to explore and evaluate the evolving practices of future Social Studies educators in virtual environments

Numerous studies have broadly explored teachers' digital readiness and the general impact of online teaching, yet limited research specifically examines how pre-service teachers deliver subject-specific content like Social Studies in virtual settings. In regions such as Tagum City, Philippines, there remains a gap in studies that assess the pedagogical preparedness and evaluation of these future educators, particularly in addressing discipline-specific challenges. This study, therefore, seeks to explore and evaluate the experiences, strategies, and teaching performance of pre-service Social Studies teachers in online environments, with the goal of informing training programs that will better equip them for digital instruction. In this regard, this research aims to address several key research questions. First, the study aims to explore the lived experiences of pre-service teachers in teaching social studies online. Second, it

examines how the chosen participants perceive and discern teaching social studies online. Third, it investigates how the study participants construct and maintain effective teaching social studies online. Finally, the study aims to gather insights from pre-service teachers on how they envision the future of teaching social studies online and its impact to the field of social studies education.

On the other hand, this study can benefit stakeholders in the education sector. Pre-service teachers will gain the opportunity to critically reflect on their own teaching strategies, challenges encountered and their insights in delivering social studies through online platforms. The outcome of this study will provide educators with a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of pre-service teachers that will be used to strengthen practicum design and integrating pedagogical training specifically the subject – social studies. Furthermore, this research aligns with university's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which is the SDG 4: Quality Education which aims to promote equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all the learners. With the cooperation of all the stakeholders particularly, in-service and pre-service teachers, the continuity of learning will be possible despite the unforeseen events happen, these initiatives support the SDG 4 objectives particularly, the emphasis in providing quality education to diverse learners.

This study holds significant relevance at the local, national, and global levels. Locally, it addresses the challenges faced by pre-service Social Studies teachers in Tagum City during online learning, offering insights that can enhance teacher preparation programs. Nationally, it contributes to improving teacher education in the Philippines by informing the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in developing responsive, evidence-based policies and training programs aligned with digital teaching demands. Globally, the study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – Quality Education – by promoting inclusive and equitable quality education through the professional growth of future educators. The findings will benefit cooperating teachers and mentors by identifying the support systems needed to help pre-service teachers effectively deliver instruction and respond to diverse learner needs. It also offers valuable input for curriculum developers and policymakers to ensure that both pre-service and in-service teachers are well-equipped to navigate the evolving educational landscape.

Lastly, to the future researchers who will utilize this as a reference for further study. The insights gained from this study can serve as a valuable guide for the future scholar in framing their conceptual framework and research designs. Additionally, it is hoped that this research encourages them to focus on related studies within their field of preference.

METHOD

Study Participants

This qualitative study explored the lived experiences, perceptions, and practical strategies of pré-service Social Studies teachers in Tagum City who have taught online classes during emergencies such as earthquakes, floods, any weather conditions that can affect the health of the students, and even educational event such as City Meet, DAVRAA, and RSPC happened in Tagum City. There were six (6) selected participants for the individual in-depth interview (IDI) and eight (8) participants for the focus group discussion (FGD). Meanwhile, a study was conducted within the chosen colleges and universities in Tagum City, as the data from this school provided enough participants. Pré-service teachers teaching Social Studies (Araling Panlipunan) or any related Social Science subject from the school year 2020-2021 up to the present were selected. Chosen Participants must have been already deployed to the respective

cooperating school and facilitated online classes at least four (4) times. As indicated by Vasileiou (2018), phenomenological research could accommodate between 6 to 20 participants.

Furthermore, to ensure relevant insights, the researcher used purposive sampling to choose participants who had direct knowledge and lived experience related to the topic (Robinson, 2021). As Alase (2021) pointed out, this method focuses on individuals who can offer valuable perspectives, which helps ensure the overall quality of a qualitative study. Through this approach, the researcher was able to identify participants who had a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and could share about it in a relevant and informed way. Gentles et al. (2022) also supported this view, describing that purposive sampling allows researchers to explore rich and detailed cases, which in turn strengthens the study's credibility. All these views highlight how selecting and choosing the right participants is key to capturing the depth and trustworthiness that qualitative study demands.

Further, purposive sampling was utilized to identify participants who have both relevant knowledge and direct experience of the phenomenon being studied (Robinson, 2021). As noted by Alase (2021), this approach has great value in qualitative research because it focuses on the target participants who have firsthand experience with the topic. This approach further ensures that the views of those who know the problem well are considered. Gentles et al. (2022) added that purposive sampling helps researchers locate cases that offer rich and valuable information, stating that this highlights the quality of the research. These perspectives underscore the critical yet often overlooked influence that participant selection brings concerning rigor and richness within qualitative research.

Moreover, as cited by Nikolopoulou (2022), the investigation employed specific inclusion and exclusion criteria that specified the sample and scope of participants from the given population. Thus, the subjects included in this study were pré-service teachers enrolled in a teacher education program in Tagum City, where they completed internships teaching Social Studies online. Besides, a pre-survey was done to validate the intended participants. However, individuals were excluded from the study if they lacked a background in teaching Social Studies at the secondary level online. Furthermore, those holding or being in the teaching services as a licensed or an in-service teacher were already considered disqualified from participating in the study.

The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study without providing any reason at any time and without facing any repercussions, especially if they felt uncomfortable discussing any requested information. This assurance was essential given the sensitive nature of the study, as noted by Wilis (2021). The researcher prioritized the welfare of the participants, underscoring their right to refuse if they felt uncomfortable or if they believed the ethical integrity and standards of the study were being violated, as outlined by Bhandari (2022). Participation of the chosen participants was entirely voluntary.

Materials and Instrument

The researcher created interview guide questionnaires consisting of open-ended questions that encourage participants to elaborate their contextual answers or responses to achieve desired outcome. The data gathered was served as a factual basis of analyzing and drawing conclusions aligned with the research objectives.

In this study, the research instrument was validated by a panel of experts, including four (4) internal validators from the University of Mindanao and one (1) external validator. Their feedback focused on improving the content clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Based on their evaluation, the instrument was refined and deemed appropriate for data collection, consistent with current qualitative research practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Bengtsson, 2022). Ethical standards set by the

University of Mindanao were strictly followed. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and given the right to voluntarily participate or withdraw at any time without penalty (Alase, 2021; Tracy, 2020).

Throughout the interview proper, the researcher provided an open-ended question that aim to create a meaningful and interactive interview experience. This approach aimed to explore the lived experiences, personal insights and perceptions of the participants concerning the teaching of Social Studies in an online environment, with particular emphasis on the challenges they encountered, effective strategies they employed, and their envisioned future for teaching Social Studies education through digital setting.

Moreover, the interview guide questionnaire of this research instrument featured four (4) main research questions accompanied by probing questions to gather in-depth data from the study participants. The same set of open-ended questions was used during both the individual in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD) to ensure consistency and encourage detailed, qualitative responses, allowing participants to share their insights freely without being limited to one-word or predetermined answers.

Design and Procedure

In this case, the approach to the study was a qualitative one, utilizing a phenomenological inquiry that facilitated the exploration of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and the coping strategies they used in response to the event, circumstance, or phenomenon under investigation. Phenomenology was defined as the inquiry and description of phenomena in terms of the people's experience of undergoing them. This approach was best suited because it allowed the researcher to assess the experiences of pré-service teachers concerning their Social Studies teaching in the context of emergencies (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Additionally, the researcher formulated and submitted a research proposal to the Professional Schools' Research Committee for assessment and approval. After approval was granted, interview guides were developed and vetted by expert validators to ensure the questions were appropriate for the data that was going to be collected. Prior to data collection, an official endorsement letter was obtained from the office of the Dean of the Professional Schools. In addition, the researcher prepared formal request letters addressed to universities and colleges and liaised with their deans for approval. After obtaining consent, the researcher briefed the participants on the objectives of the study, provided them with informed consent documents, and ensured that their participation was voluntary. Interviews were conducted by the participants' schedules and preferences while also respecting CHED regulations, which forbid classes from being interrupted. During this entire process, the researcher employed a systematic method in an organized manner to maintain the quality of the data collected. All costs were incurred by the researcher, who, as an expression of gratitude, offered a token of appreciation for the participation provided by the respondents. In qualitative research methods, interviews were concentrated on obtaining relevant information on a particular subject (George, 2022). The researcher employed in-depth interviews (IDI) to capture participants' commentaries, which were relevant to the study's phenomenological framework. Ochieng (2021) in his study noted that in-depth interview techniques gave opportunity to participants to give detailed descriptions, which exposed the researcher to the understanding of the lived experiences. The researcher designed an interview guide, which was pre-evaluated by experts to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research. All interviews were conducted face-to-face as individual sessions, depending on the participants' schedules and preferences. As noted by Nyumba et al. (2022), in-depth interviews maintained their prominence as a method in qualitative research for the generation of meaningful data, credibility, and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Furthermore, focus group discussions (FGD) were used as an additional procedure for collecting data to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and effective teaching practices of Social Studies in an online format. FGDs, as highlighted by Pourhoseingholi and Ashtan (2021), are pivotal in qualitative research as they help to foster deep interactions and discussions, which are necessary to extract meanings relevant to the participants' interactions and contexts. The researcher formed groups with similar backgrounds to facilitate greater openness and ease of communication. Also, a semi-structured interview guide, validated by internal and external experts of the teacher education program, was used to ensure that the objectives of the study aligned with its instruments and procedures. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and group interactions and dynamics were recorded across all sessions.

Moreover, the researcher performed essential multifaceted roles such as interviewer, ethical observer, moderator, recorder, transcriber, and translator, which enriched and shaped the rigor of the research (Ulz, 2022). Research questions and their corresponding sub-questions guided the collection of data, facilitating stimulating dialogues for reflection and deeper analysis. The researcher demonstrated rapport by being friendly, polite, approachable, and genuinely interested in fostering a positive environment. Ethical obligations of informed consent, anonymity of participants, and secure data collection were granted in correspondence with outlined norms by Bhandari (2021). The researcher properly recorded all interviews with consent and ensured that data accessibility was limited to authorized personnel only. As a transcriber, the researcher audiotaped the interviews, transcribed them word for word, and reviewed them to ensure they met quality standards, as suggested by Saldana (2021). Lastly, the researcher translated responses to English for wider dissemination but permitted participants to respond in their preferred dialect, ensuring their full engagement More (2019).

On the other hand, the researcher employed thematic analysis to examine the collected data and draw meaningful conclusion from the participants' responses. This method involved categorizing segments of text based on recurring themes, allowing for the systematic organization of data into structured thematic ideas (Khokhar et al., 2020). As stated by Villegas (2023), through searching for patterns and evaluating the underlying meaning of the data gathered, the researcher was able to identify relevant themes that reflected the participants' knowledge, experiences and values. Coding was used to highlight key ideas and determine the most frequently mentioned responses across the data set. As mentioned by Crosley (2021), coding enabled the summarization of essential points from interview transcripts. After the transcription process, the researcher proceeded to analyze the data, ensuring each instrument used in the study was systematically tallied and accurately documented. The analysis process was instrumental in organizing raw data into a coherent narrative that could be interpreted and utilized to generate meaningful insights for the study

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, several strategies were employed during data collection and analysis. Triangulation was applied by using multiple sources and methods, such as individual in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD), to validate the consistency of the data. Member checking was also conducted by allowing participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the transcribed responses. In addition, saturation was observed, ensuring that themes and patterns were fully developed before concluding data collection. A systematic coding process was used to maintain consistency and dependability across all responses. These strategies helped confirm that the findings were credible, dependable, and grounded in the actual experiences of the participants (Ilyana, 2022).

In conducting this study, the researcher abided the ethical research standards and procedures of the University of Mindanao Ethics and Review Committee to protect the safety, dignity, and welfare of the

study participants. All sources of information including authors obtained from various sites were properly acknowledged and cited to avoid plagiarism. This approach ensures the researcher conformed the intellectual act property; the rights given to person over the creations of their minds. The researcher received UMERC Protocol No.2024-331. This protocol included specific guidelines that were meant to be followed to conduct the study effectively with honesty and integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of qualitative interviews conducted with pré-service teachers in teaching Social Studies in an online context. The interviews focused on the experiences, perceptions, strategies, and reflections of pré-service teachers who participated in online teaching during exigent circumstances. From the data collected, several key themes emerged, illuminating the multifaceted challenges and opportunities presented by teaching Social Studies in an online format.

Experiences of the Pré-service Teachers in Teaching Social Studies Online

Focus Group Discussions and In-Depth Interviews were fundamental in collecting participants' responses as they discussed their experiences with online Social Studies instruction. The participants in both IDI and FGD had ambivalent attitudes concerning their use of online tools. Responses were scrutinized, and the subsequent themes were derived: *Preparation and Planning are essential; Connectivity Issues: Challenges due to Technological Knowledge.*

Table 1. Themes on the experiences of pré-service teachers in teaching social studies online

Themes	Significant Statement
Preparation and Planning are essential	reviewing my lesson plan to be aware or to know what are the things that should be taught (IDI-2)
	I prepared lesson plan that is suitable to the topic that I am going to teach, and of course uhhm checking my internet connection (IDI-5)
	you need to review and finalize your lesson plan, and also you have to plan out activities (FGD-1)
Connectivity Issues	not joining is because there is no load, no connection (IDI-4)
	challenging in terms of the connectivity because sometimes it tends to interrupt our classroom management (FGD-6)
	challenging due to technical issue (FGD-7)
Experiencing challenges due technological knowledge	I'm not really into technology. I'm not very familiar with how to use the platforms needed for teaching (FGD-5)
	I need to do some research and more innovation in order to please our students (FGD-4)
	Not very tech-savvy when it comes to technology, as there are still things I don't know — like how to join an online class (FGD-6)

Preparation and Planning are essential. As the first theme, the participants in the in-depth interview and FGD highlighted that careful preparation and Planning were critical for successful online teaching, which was supported in the study of Wiyanarti and Holilah (2020). They described how online teaching required them to rethink the structure of their lessons and spend time organizing content into smaller and more

manageable segments to maintain learners' attention spans during online learning. A participant explicitly emphasized the importance of thoroughly reviewing the lesson plan as she shared,

"In my day-to-day experience in teaching Social Studies online, the first thing I did was review my lesson plan para ma aware ko or to know what are the things that should be taught to my students in that particular day ug naga check pd sa ko sa uban butang na magamit during the class especially the technology like the laptop and able to interact with diverse learners without meeting them physically." IDI-2

> (In my day-to-day experience in teaching Social Studies online, the first thing I did was review my lesson plan to be aware or to know what are the things that should be taught to my students on that day. Also, I am checking the things to be utilized during the class, especially the technology like the laptop, and being able to interact with diverse learners without meeting them physically.)

Further, one participant shared that preparing a lesson plan must be aligned with the topic given,

> "So, in teaching online by Social Studies, I prepared a lesson plan that is suitable to the topic that I am going to teach, and of course, checking my internet connection para hindi siya ma delay yung pag teach." IDI-5
>
> (In teaching Social Studies online, I prepared a lesson plan that was suitable for the topic I was going to teach. I also made sure to check my internet connection beforehand to avoid any delays during the lesson.)

In addition, one participant from FGD mentioned the importance of planning out activities in advance to ensure a more organized and engaging online discussion,

> "With my experience, I think pretty similarly to face-to-face teaching in terms of preparation because, with your lesson plan, you need to review and finalize your lesson plan, ug tapos kailangan pd nimo sya i-plan out activities that you are going to do with your class." FGD-1
>
> (In my experience, it is like face-to-face teaching in terms of preparation. You still need to review and finalize your lesson plan, and you also must plan out the activities you are going to do with your class.)

Careful preparation and Planning have always been noted as important factors in the success of online education. Moreover, Cutri et al. (2020) noted that pré-service teachers' readiness, specifically the creation of digital content and teaching plans, is a significant determinant in online education. Equally, Hodges et al. (2020) pointed out that quality online education is not solely dependent on technology; it also depends on purposeful Planning of instruction and scheduled interactions between the educator and learners. This illustrates that preparation and Planning are not merely ancillary functions but foundational actions in teaching Social Studies in an online environment.

Connectivity issues. One of the significant challenges encountered by pré-service teachers in teaching Social Studies online was the persistent problem of connectivity issues. Mostly, the participants articulated their frustration with the mobile data or Wi-Fi connections, noting that "unstable" internet access often disrupted lessons and complicated classroom management. One participant expressed,

> "I felt excitement, of course, and it was quite challenging due to technical issues because kailangan mong, of course, there are many barriers like the internet connection and handling the students, so kailangan mong makuha ang attention ng mga estudyante and dapat naay strategies and techniques na ma implement." – IDI-4.

(I felt excited, of course, but it was also quite challenging due to technical issues. There were many barriers, such as unstable internet connection and the difficulty of managing students online. As a pré-service teacher, you need to capture your students' attention, which requires implementing effective strategies and techniques.)

One participant from FGD similarly noted,

"Agree jud ko sa ilang mga statement that in teaching online it is challenging tungod kasagaran jud sa students kay naay problem with internet connectivity, so as a pré-service teacher need jud nako making resourceful on how to deal with that problem." FGD-6

(I agree with their statements — teaching online is challenging because most of the students are having problems with internet connectivity. That is why, as a pré-service teacher, you must be resourceful in finding ways to deal with that issue.)

On the other hand, another participant expressed empathy for students, which raised concerns about educational equity in terms of digital learning,

"Dili tanan makaacces. Not all the students have the capacity to open their cameras. Not all students have access to an internet connection, so with that accessibility sa mga bata dili tanan, not all." IDI-6

(Not all students have access. Some cannot turn on their cameras, and many lack a stable internet connection. Because of that, student accessibility is minimal — not everyone has equal access.)

Connectivity hindered both the instructors and learners from fully engaging in the online learning approach. This aligns with the work of Lowenthal and Lomellini (2022), which demonstrated the impact of connectivity concern on the effectiveness of learning for both educators and learners. On the other hand, during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, participants reported a wide range of experiences and emotions concerning these challenges. It was revealed that students do not have equal access to internet connections, which discourages them from participating in online learning, as supported by the study of Siat (2023), which provides evidence that technological barriers hinder both the delivery of lessons and student ability to engage meaningfully with the discussions.

Experiencing challenges due to technological knowledge. Lack of technological knowledge was a barrier for pré-service teachers navigating the demands of online education. For this theme, the participants of the interview session openly expressed their reactions in relation to navigating new technologies such as multimedia presentation software and video conferencing applications. A participant shared that she was not well-versed in technology but expressed a strong willingness to learn and adapt,

"Personally, I am not into technology, di ako masyadong marunong gumamit ng mga platforms na ginagamit para makapagturo sa mga students kaya nakaka struggle sya sometimes, however, I find it interesting too because it opens a door to new opportunities and discoveries especially that I need to explore more in the internet so I think marami akong learning din at the same time." FGD-5

(I am not very into technology — I am not that familiar with the platforms used for teaching students online, and sometimes, it was a struggle for me. However, I also find it interesting because it opens the door to new opportunities and discoveries. It pushes me to explore more on the internet, and I believe I am also gaining much learning in the process.)

Another participant added that online learning is challenging due to the unfamiliarity with technology,

"So for me, it is very challenging, though I am a college student and a Pré-service teacher, so since bago lang kami nagkaroon ng technology na computer at syaka laptop hindi pa ako masyadong teki in terms of technology so challenging sya and napaka struggle." FGD-6

(For me, it was very challenging. Even though I am a college student and a pré-service teacher, we only recently gained access to technology like computers and laptops. I am not very tech-savvy yet, so dealing with technology was difficult and a struggle for me.)

However, one participant expressed excitement about navigating technology, viewing it as an opportunity to explore new tools,

"Since it is my first time using the online tool in teaching Social Studies, I felt excited, and as a PST teacher, I need to do some research and more innovation in order to please our students during online teaching. I need to do my best to have perfect activities that will be aligned with their learning." FGD-4

(Since it was my first time using online tools to teach Social Studies, I felt excited. As a pré-service teacher, I realized the importance of doing research and being more innovative to engage students during online classes. I needed to give my best in preparing meaningful activities that aligned with their learning needs.)

Many pré-service teachers reported their struggles in managing the classroom online. In the study of Bawa and Reddy (2020), many pré-service teachers experience initial problems venturing into digital learning without proper training and limited engagement with digital technologies. As supported by the study of Qiqieh and Dukmak (2024), a lack of familiarity with digital tools and platforms can stall deeper levels of learning and hinder their ability to apply concepts effectively in online learning. The findings of this study support these claims, revealing the need for targeted digital literacy seminars and training among pré-service teachers. While unfamiliarity with digital tools often presents a challenge for teachers, several studies highlight contrasting narratives; in line with the study of Tondeur et al. (2021), many teachers exhibit an intense excitement and willingness to explore educational technologies despite limited exposure to digital tools. Similarly, Heitink et al. (2019) added that even when pré-service teachers lacked confidence in navigating the digital tools, their willingness to learn outweighed their fears of making mistakes. These findings are shown in the present study, where participants share not only unfamiliarity but also a sense of responsibility as they embrace digital tools in delivering Social Studies instruction.

Perception and Discernment in Teaching Social Studies Online

Table 2. Themes on how pré-service teachers perceive and discern teaching Social Studies online

Themes	Significant Statement
Online engagement is challenging	how to encourage students to participate or build connections (IDI-2)
	It's important to capture the students' attention so they can focus and listen to the lesson being discussed (IDI-4)
	building connection to the students, classroom management (IDI-6)
	really difficult to build connection to the students (FGD-2)
	I struggled sometimes in my classroom management online, the interaction of some students (FGD-6)

Technological glitches hamper delivery of lesson	encounter problem during your online class, especially the connection, or the students and the devices (IDI-3)
	technological barriers like the internet connection and the thing that can we use during the online learning like the laptop (IDI-4)
	challenges are technical barriers (IDI-6)
	challenging siya in terms of technological barriers, so they are many technological issues (FGD-6)
Limited access to resources	some students in public school cannot afford to have internet connection, or some do not have devices (FGD-2)
	I do not have enough resources to use; I don't have a good-quality laptop (FGD-5)
	It's difficult when students don't have gadgets. (FGD-4)
	It's expensive to find or provide resources (FGD-7)

During the interview, pré-service teachers from Tagum City who were enrolled in various universities and colleges assigned to public schools shared their perceptions of teaching Social Studies online. This section outlines three themes identified by the participants. The following was drawn from their actual responses: *online engagement is challenging, technological glitches hamper the delivery of lessons, and limited access to resources.*

Online engagement is challenging. While observing participants during the interview, it was evident that they were committed during the on-the-job training as they were determined to provide quality education to the students despite the absence of a physical environment. Notably, one participant emphasized the essence of capturing students' attention in the discussion to foster engagement and practical learning.

> "Building the connection to the students as I said earlier kailangan mong makuha yung attention ng mga estudyante para maki-para sila ay makikinig sa i-didiscuss or i-coconduct mo na lesson sa kanila." IDI-4

> (Building a connection with students online is challenging. As I mentioned earlier, it is essential to capture their attention so they will listen and engage with the lesson I am discussing.)

The participants from FGD similarly added,

> "I agree that as a Pré-service teacher of Grade 10 students, my perception is that it is tough to build a connection with the students. So that happened, this a challenge for me to deliver my lesson well. In case na okay ang device and internet connection, my challenge is to build a connection to them and make them stay focused, kasi they can just turn off their mic and their camera.

> (As a Pré-Service Teacher handling Grade 10 students, I find it particularly challenging to build connections with my learners. This becomes a significant challenge for me in delivering my lessons effectively. Even when devices and internet access are available, another issue arises—maintaining student engagement. It is difficult to connect with students who can easily turn off their microphones and cameras.)

On the other hand, participants highlighted opportunities offered in online learning:

> "It offers distinct challenges as well as unique opportunities, so the challenges are technical barriers, building a connection to the students, classroom management, and also there is an opportunity which is I will be flexible, and it helps me to enhance access and also learn become innovative in teaching methods." IDI-6
>
> (Online learning offers distinct challenges as well as unique opportunities. Some of the challenges include technical barriers, building connections with students, and managing the virtual classroom. However, it also presents valuable opportunities, such as increased flexibility, enhanced accessibility, and the chance to become more innovative in teaching methods.)

The first theme derived from the viewpoint of the participants about the challenge of building meaningful connections as the primary concern in online learning, as supported in the study by Debbag and Fidan (2022). Maintaining student engagement in online education has proven to be a primary challenge, particularly for pré-service teachers who are still honing their skills. As stated by Martin and Bolliger (2018), a learner's engagement in an online setting is greatly influenced by the teacher's presence, good relationships, and communication skills, yet many beginning teachers, particularly, replicate the dynamics of face-to-face teaching in an online classroom. Further, students' online disengagement is due to technical interruption (Al-Samarraie et al., 2020). These studies align with the findings of the current research, where participants shared their struggles in engaging learners in teaching Social Studies online.

Technological glitches hamper the delivery of lessons. Technological glitches have been noted as a significant hindrance in the delivery of online instructions. Several pré-service teachers reported that technological glitches greatly impacted their delivery of online lessons. Common problems included unstable internet connection, malfunctioning devices, and unresponsive learning platforms from both the teacher and students. These glitches led to interruptions during online sessions, delays in lesson pacing, and difficulties in maintaining students' attention, which was supported by the study of Tarman et al. (2019).

As expressed by one of the participants,

> "It is quite challenging for me because perhaps we will encounter problems during your online class, especially the connection, or the students and the devices they use." IDI-3
>
> (It is challenging for me because we often encounter problems during online classes, especially issues with internet connection. Sometimes, the students also face difficulties due to the devices they are using, which may not be reliable or suitable for online learning.)

Similarly, participants pointed out that,

> "Though the challenges are the technological barriers like the internet connection and the thing that can we use during the online learning like the laptop." IDI-4

One of the main challenges is technological barriers, such as poor internet connection and the lack of proper devices like laptops that are needed for online learning. Another participant from FGD also acknowledged the struggle with classroom management due to technological barriers,

> "Challenging siya in terms of technological barriers, so there are many technological issues, so sa akoa and to my students as well, there are times talaga na mahina yung internet and from that I struggled sometimes in my classroom management online." FGD-6
>
> (It is challenging in terms of technological barriers, as there are many technical issues affecting both me and my students. There are times when the internet connection is weak, and because of that, I sometimes struggle with managing my online classroom effectively.)

According to Coman et al. (2020), technical issues such as unstable video conferencing platforms and system crashes have negatively impacted teacher's ability to deliver coherent and seamless online lessons. Further, pré-service teachers in the formative stages of their classroom management and remote teaching competencies may experience a dip in confidence because of technological interruptions (Trust & Whalen, 2020). These observations are consistent with the current study, in which participants report difficulties in lesson delivery owing to frequent platform failures, thereby complicating the management of Social Studies lessons conducted online.

Limited access to resources. In the research, the participating pré-service teachers frequently indicated how the restricted resources undermined the quality of instruction provided during the online sessions. A significant number of them pointed out that the student's access to basic resources like laptops, necessary software, and even reliable internet was glaringly absent.

The participant mentioned specifically that:

> "Some students in public school cannot afford to have an internet connection, or some do not have devices on their own. So that happened, this a challenge for me to deliver my lesson well." FGD-2
>
> (Some students in public schools cannot afford an internet connection, and others do not have their own devices. Because of this, it becomes a challenge for me to deliver my lessons effectively.)

Further, a participant from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) added,

> "Hirap po talaga pag walang gadget ang students kasi di sila lahat makapasok sa online sessions naming at merong iba na mamiss ang mga activities." FGD-4
>
> (It is difficult when students do not have gadgets because not all of them can attend our online sessions, and some end up missing activities.)

On the other hand, a participant from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) expressed her concern about not having enough resources of her own to teach effectively.

> "As a PST, I do not have enough resources na gagamitin, wala akong Magandang laptop kumbaga na gagamitin ko in teaching as well as wala pa akong masyadong magandang cellphone." FGD-5
>
> (As a Pré-service teacher, I do not have enough resources to use. I do not have a good-quality laptop for teaching, and I also do not have a reliable cellphone.)

Limited access to educational resources has remained a barrier to effective online education, particularly in developing countries like the Philippines. According to Cahapay (2020), pré-service teachers, particularly from marginalized areas, encountered challenges in securing devices such as laptops and tablets, which were essential in online teaching. In addition, Almazan (2020) highlighted that the lack of support for teacher education programs affected the preparedness and delivery of instructions in online settings. This finding is consistent with the experiences shared by participants in the present study.

Effective Strategies in Teaching Social Studies Online

Table 3. Themes on how pré-service teachers construct and maintain effective teaching Social Studies through online

THEMES	SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT
Gamification helps encourage	I have incorporated games related to out topic, so when it comes to quizzes (IDI-1)

engagement among students	I employ online interaction through games (IDI-3)
	Students listen more when there are games to answer (FGD-5)
	They are excited with click or drag activities online (FGD-6)
Innovative teaching strategies is a must	incorporating collaboration, making videos (IDI-5)
	set up a discussion online board for the students (IDI-6)
	online tools and break-out room uhmm interactive activities and quizzes (IDI-4)
	incorporate various personalized learning experiences (FGD-2)
Providing clear instructions is crucial	Not everyone understands in one instruction only (IDI-2)
	Students tend to be asking questions about instructions (IDI-4)
	They want more and more instructions; they can't get it immediately (IDI-5)
	Students must learn to listen effectively especially with online instructions (FGD-4)

Despite the struggles posed by limited resources and unstable internet connections, many made efforts to adjust their teaching strategies to ensure successful learning. The participants emphasized the significant role of innovative teaching strategies in the absence of a physical setting. These are the following themes: gamification helps encourage engagement among students, innovative teaching strategies are a must, and providing clear instructions is crucial.

Gamification helps encourage engagement among students. Gamification has been recognized as an effective way to ensure student engagement in online settings. Incorporating game-based elements in the teaching-learning process can foster participation, motivation, and active learning. Pré-service teachers in the study identified gamification as an effective strategy to enhance student engagement in online sessions. A participant shared experiences of using tools such as Quizizz and other interactive online games to make learning more participatory, as she noted,

> "When it comes to strategies, I have incorporated games related to our topic, so when it comes to quizzes, I make it competitions by group to engage them even more, and sometimes I give them rewards like cash or load or ballpen. IDI-1"

The participant shared the same experience,

> "I agree with IDI-1, in my case, pirme nako gina employ ang games para masigurado nako ang positive and enjoyable interaction and participation sakong mga bata." IDI-3
>
> (I agree with IDI-1. In my case, I always use games to ensure positive and enjoyable interaction and participation from my students.)

Similarly, a participant from FGD was enthusiastic about expressing as she further added,

> In my class, activities are done through games such as Kahoot and other online games. FGD-3

On the other hand, one participant shared the excitement of students in terms of gamification, as she added,

> "My Grade 7 students were very excited during the activity because they got to use the mouse to click and drag pictures onto the online map." FGD-5

Gamified activities were found to break the dullness of online classes and motivate students to participate and engage in the discussion, which aligns with the study of Yanes et al. (2024). Similarly, as stated by

Nah et al. (2021), gamification makes a more enjoyable learning and interactive experience, which can help students focus and reduce absences in digital settings. This study highlighted that gamification can really transform abstract concepts into concrete experiences and make learning more interactive and engaging for the learners. Overall, the participants in this study displayed a strong feeling of optimism and satisfaction with gamification in online learning that will lead the discussions to be more interactive, engaging, and participatory and connect with today's 21st-century learners.

Innovative teaching strategies are a must. The demand for innovative teaching strategies has become urgent in the shift to online learning, specifically in subjects like Social Studies that require interaction, contextual understanding, and critical thinking. Online learning can sometimes be boring and disengaging; thus, innovative teaching strategies are essential to deliver the lessons in an online learning environment effectively. One participant stated,

> "Integrating I chose teaching strategies that students can relate to and enjoy, such as incorporating collaboration, making videos, and uhhm marerelate nila sa sa teaching na aming dinidiscuss. That is all, ma'am." IDI-5

> "I chose teaching strategies that students can relate to and enjoy, such as incorporating collaboration, creating videos, and connecting the activities to the lesson we are discussing." IDI-1

Another participant highlighted the value of freedom to express,

> "We have a set discussion online board for the students wherein they will be free to express their ideas and learnings and have a balance of asynchronous, synchronous, and active learning—techniques like online tools and break-out room - interactive activities and quizzes and course, incorporate a regular formative assessment. IDI-4"

Further, a participant from FGD shared the importance of personalized learning experiences in the teaching-learning process, as he noted,

> In my class, I do acknowledge the essence of incorporating various personalized learning experiences of my students for them to be interested in engaging in the discussion given. FGD-2

In the context of teacher education, Mangkhang et al. (2022) emphasized that teaching innovation must be distinctive in the learning process, integrating digital technology appropriately and focusing on students as active makers throughout the session. Furthermore, a study by Getenet et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of integrating digital technologies with innovative teaching strategies to enhance collaboration and student engagement. This is echoed in the findings of the current study, where participants emphasized the essence of employing innovative strategies to have a learner-centered approach in the teaching and learning process.

Providing clear instructions is crucial. Pré-service teachers emphasized that providing precise and detailed instructions is essential for adequate online Social Studies teaching, In the absence of physical interaction, students rely heavily on well-structured guidance to complete tasks and stay engaged.

As the participant expressed,

> "Not everyone understands one instruction only." IDI-2

Another participant added,

> "Sa akong klase ma'am, ang mga student nako pirme jud gapangutana about sa instructions, magbalik-balik jud ko pirme remind sa instructions nila aron dili sila magpataka sa ilang buhatunon." IDI-4

(In my class, ma'am, my students always ask about the instructions, so I constantly have to repeat and remind them to make sure they do not just do the tasks incorrectly.)

Further, participants emphasized the importance of listening, as she shared,

"Students must learn to listen effectively, especially with online instructions, to be guided in the learning process." FGD-4

In the absence of physical interaction, students rely heavily on well-structured guidance to complete tasks and stay engaged as supported in the study of Liang (2023). As noted in a 2025 publication from the National Council for the Social Studies, "All it takes is a slow broadband connection or a broken link for us to realize the fragility of distance learning". This vulnerability makes clear instructions even more essential, as they help students navigate technical challenges and maintain engagement despite potential disruptions. In the Philippines, pre-service teachers shared that giving clear instructions was important to avoid miscommunication, queries, and disengagement during online learning (Orcales & Gonzales, 2021). This finding aligns with the present study in which participants emphasized the importance of carefully planning and delivering instructions to ensure the clarity of the task during online learning.

Future Visions in Teaching Social Studies Online

Table 4. Themes on how pré-service teachers envision the future of teaching Social Studies online and its impact on the field of Social Studies Education

THEMES	SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT
Optimization of digital platform in teaching social studies is potentially possible	teaching Social Studies online will likely feature interactive multimedia rich content that foster engagement and critical thinking (IDI-1)
	obtain specialized knowledge and ability that will help them up skills or skill (IDI-2)
	sa digital platform so mangyayari parang virtual augmented reality (IDI-3)
	students, can have an immersive experience in which they will virtually visit historical sites (IDI-4)
Teacher Training for professional development can just be done online	Teachers just need more trainings which can also be done online (IDI-2)
	If only teachers are sent to training enhancements for professional development to online teaching (FGD-5)
	Social studies can just be effectively taught online with proper training among teachers (IDI-6)
Online teaching of social studies can be beneficial to both students and teachers	More places to visit virtually, as examples to historical lessons
	Teaching Social studies can be more interactive of done online due to online resources like videos
	anytime and anywhere ang teaching and learning, anytime ang teaching and learning. (FGD3-RQ4-PQ3)
	Online teaching can effectively deliver Social Studies content through multimedia resources
	also there is inclusive education which is maka join ang lagyong lugar na naa sila sa layo nagpuyo.

	(IDI6_RQ4_PQ3)

Pré-service teachers shared forward-looking perspectives on how online teaching is shaping the future of Social Studies education. Many recognized that while the shift to online learning was initially a response to necessity, it has opened new possibilities for delivering content in more interactive, flexible, and accessible ways. These are the following themes: optimization of digital platforms in teaching Social Studies is potentially possible, teacher training for professional development can just be done online, and online teaching of Social Studies can be beneficial to both students and teachers.

Optimization of digital platforms in teaching Social Studies is potentially possible. Pré-service teachers in the study recognized that the optimization of digital platforms for teaching Social Studies is not only possible but increasingly necessary. Participants shared experiences of exploring and utilizing platforms such as Google Classroom, Padlet, Canva, and Edmodo to create engaging, interactive, and accessible learning environments.

One participant noted,

> "The future of teaching Social Studies online will likely feature interactive multimedia-rich content that fosters engagement and critical thinking." IDI-1

Another participant added,

> "Online learning is a great way for students and teachers to obtain specialized knowledge and abilities that will help them up skills or skills." IDI-2

One participant shared the value of digital learning in the session,

> "So I see the future in teaching Social Studies since may experience na tayo sa digital platform so mangyayari parang virtual, augmented reality so the students are immersed in their experience especially they can visit historical sites yung mga hindi pa nila nalalaman is they can expand their knowledge, they can go back kanang yung mga nangyayari yung historical and then yung experience especially the events sympre hindi nila na experience so based sa the technology so they can now visit the sites or what the events na nangyayari noon, so maybe they can say "ahh ganito pala kaya ganito tayo ngayon". IDI-3
>
> (So, I see a future in teaching Social Studies because we already have experience using digital platforms, and it will evolve into something like virtual or augmented reality, where students can be fully immersed in their learning. They will be able to visit historical sites and explore things they have not learned yet, which will help expand their knowledge. They can go back and understand what happened in history, and through that experience—especially events they could never witness firsthand—they can better grasp why things are the way they are today.)

Similarly added by another participant,

> "In virtual reality that can, students can have an immersive experience in which they will virtually visit historical sites and historical figures and experience din yung events na historical as if they were there." IDI-4

Despite some limitations, such as internet connectivity and lack of student devices, pré-service teachers expressed optimism that with the proper training and adaptation, digital tools can be optimized to fit diverse classroom contexts. Additionally, Pré-service teachers view digital platform optimization as a key factor in modernizing Social Studies education. This aligns with the study of Trust and Whalen (2020)

that digital platforms enable more personalized, flexible, and connected learning experiences, especially when educators are equipped with the skills to navigate and integrate them effectively. Similarly, Valtonen et al. (2021) argue that teacher preparedness in using digital learning environments is a key factor in maximizing student engagement and learning outcomes.

Teacher Training for Professional development can just be done online. Participants emphasized that attending webinars, enrolling in MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and joining online learning communities allowed them to enhance their pedagogical skills, digital literacy, and mastery of content knowledge at their own pace. One participant stated the essence of training and seminars for professional development,

> "Collaborate globally, which is cultural interaction continuing professional development naman helps teachers to develop professionally through engaging online courses, trainings, and virtual conferences." IDI-2

Another participant expressed that Social Studies as a subject can just be taught online,

> Social Studies can be effectively taught online with proper training among teachers. IDI-6

Lastly, a participant from FGD added,

> Teaching and training can be done online, but only teachers are sent and supported by the government for training and enhancements for professional development to online teaching. FGD-5

In conclusion, the study supports the idea that online teacher training is not only possible but also highly beneficial, particularly when focused on equipping future Social Studies educators with relevant digital skills and innovative strategies. Trust et al. (2018) highlight that digital professional learning networks (PLNs) provide ongoing, personalized development and foster collaboration among educators across different contexts. Additionally, as mentioned by Konig et al. (2020), teachers who participated in online professional development during the COVID-19 pandemic reported improvements in online teaching and a higher level of self-efficacy. With this, teacher education programs and institutions must continue to integrate quality online professional development opportunities to prepare pré-service teachers for the evolving demands of 21st-century education.

Online Teaching of Social Studies can be beneficial to both students and teachers. Pré-service teachers in the study emphasized that despite the challenges, online teaching of Social Studies offers significant benefits for both students and educators. Participants highlighted that the digital environment allowed for greater flexibility in instruction, broader access to resources, and the opportunity to integrate multimedia tools such as videos, interactive maps, and virtual museum tours to make lessons more engaging. One participant mentioned, Online teaching can effectively deliver Social Studies content through multimedia resources – we have virtual discussions and interactive platforms.

> "Through online teaching, I was able to use different materials and digital tools that made the lessons more interactive and interesting for my students." IDI-1

Another participant concurred with the essence of inclusive education,

> "Yes, because anytime and anywhere in teaching, ang teaching and learning are naa siya, and also there is inclusive education, which is maka join ang lagyong lugar na naa sila sa layo nagpuyo." IDI-6
>
> (Yes, because teaching and learning can happen anytime and anywhere, and it also promotes inclusive education by allowing students from remote areas to participate.)

Participants from FGD noted,

"Anytime and anywhere ang teaching and learning, so as a PST, miskag asa man ko basta naa lang internet connection maka studio jud ko, and it also allowed me to develop more skills and strategies sa new environment, which is the online environment." FGD-3

"Anytime and anywhere ang teaching and learning, so as a PST, miskag asa man ko basta naa lang internet connection maka studio jud ko, and it also allowed me to develop more skills and strategies sa new environment, which is the online environment." FGD-3

On the students' side, online learning provides opportunities for self-paced learning, access to diverse content, and the ability to join anytime and anywhere. Students who were shy in face-to-face settings reportedly became more active in online discussions or chat-based platforms. These observations align with Means et al. (2014), who found that students in well-designed online environments often demonstrate higher levels of engagement and achievement when given interactive and student-centered learning opportunities. From the teacher's perspective, the online format also allowed for the development of professional and technological skills, including lesson planning using digital tools, managing online platforms, and exploring innovative instructional strategies. Many pré-service teachers noted that these skills are not only practical for current online instruction but will be increasingly valuable in the future, especially as blended learning becomes more common. To maximize these benefits, teacher education programs must continue to provide training in effective online pedagogy, content adaptation, and the meaningful use of digital tools to ensure that both pré-service teachers and their students thrive in virtual learning environments.

IMPLICATION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This final section brings together those insights and discusses how they can contribute to teacher training programs, curriculum designing and Planning, and educational policies. It also offers some essential thoughts on why preparing aspiring teachers for digital-based instruction is more vital than ever. These reflections aim to inform future efforts in education in terms of research and practice.

Implication for Practice

This section outlines the implications drawn on the significant outcomes of the research. The interviews were conducted to capture the lived experiences, challenges, and insights of pré-service teachers in the context of teaching social studies via online instruction. In addition, further recommendations are provided. Lastly, the researcher offers personal insights and reflections in the concluding remarks.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of developing a digital pedagogy specialized for online Social Studies instruction for teacher education colleges. It is not enough for pré-service teachers to possess content knowledge; they must also have the requisite technological skills, a strong framework for instructional design, and innovative engagement strategies that promote learning, whether in-person or online. Additionally, pré-service training courses should focus on the fundamentals of good communication, inclusion tailored to wide-ranging educational levels, and interactive education that integrates gaming elements. Moreover, alongside instruction, thoughtfully designed courses with elements of reflective practice and responsive design must be part of sustained teaching training offered to pré-service teachers to build their confidence in meeting the challenges of rapid change in online teaching environments. These practices will foster effective teaching, instilling in confident and resourceful future educators trained in Social Studies instruction for blended or fully online modalities.

Moreover, this is pertinent as the Department of Education stresses the importance of innovative teaching that fulfills contemporary educational requirements. Through training and seminars, teaching challenges

can be mitigated and managed more effectively, improving pré-service teachers' overall teaching effectiveness. Hence, this study aims to cultivate a more vibrant and holistic learning atmosphere that nurtures every student's multifaceted needs across different subjects.

Implication for Future Research

The effects of online teaching experience on professional identity and practice in pré-service teachers have yet to be explored in depth. Research studies regarding pré-service teachers may reveal how their digital teaching skills change over time. Additionally, the use of Social Studies digital curriculum materials like gamified lessons and virtual field trips might support innovative curriculum design. Inquiry into the views of learners themselves could enhance understanding of participatory engagement and overall learning results in online Social Studies courses. Further, research in the areas of scarce or remote regions considering the inclusivity and accessibility of online teaching resources would significantly impact the development of fair digital education frameworks.

Concluding Remarks

As I conducted this research, I, the researcher, observed that pré-service teachers, despite the limited resources and absence of a physical classroom, remain dedicated and committed to delivering quality education. They adapt, innovate, and build connections with learners in every possible way to ensure learning continues without borders. Additionally, understanding the experiences of pré-service teachers during the online practicum through this research has broadened my understanding. Their stories of perseverance, creativity, and adaptation revealed the complexity of teaching Social Studies online; I have heard their sentiments about limited resources and various technical challenges, and despite that, future educator remained committed to providing meaningful and engaging learning experiences for their students.

Furthermore, this research reminded me of the importance of innovation, empathy, and flexibility in education—values that are now more relevant than ever in the digital age. I hope that the insights shared in this study contribute to improving teacher training programs, informing educational policies, and inspiring more support for pré-service teachers navigating online instruction.

Moreover, the excitement and interest of the pré-service teachers in the integration of gamification, clear instructional communication, and the use of interactive digital platforms emerged as key strategies to enhance student engagement. These insights underscore the importance of equipping future educators with digital literacy, flexible pedagogical tools, and inclusive teaching practices. As online and blended learning environments continue to shape the future of education, empowering pré-service teachers to navigate these modalities effectively is not only timely but essential. Hence, the study highlights the need for teacher education programs to evolve in response to these demands, ensuring that future Social Studies educators are prepared for the dynamic and digitally driven landscape of modern education.

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