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Pedagogical integration of information and communication technology in higher education: a case study of initial teacher education programmes in Eswatini

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ABSTRACT

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have encroached in education systems and have become an integral part of the educational ecosystem. The ubiquitous access to ICT tools in higher education institutions (HEIs) impacts teaching and learning, and ICT is now a fundamental part of the knowledge society and the education system. This has resulted in new ways of teaching and learning in a complex digital environment. The issue of pedagogical integration of ICTs into teaching and learning has been debated internationally with the aim to offer guidance to teachers on how to effectively use these digital tools in the classroom.

This study sought to explore the pedagogical ICT integration practices among teacher educators in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes at Eswatini HEIs. The technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK) framework, the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology model (UTAUT), and social constructionism theories were used to examine the ICT integration practices of teacher educators in ITE programmes.

The research was done following a case study design and three HEIs in Eswatini were part of the study. The data collection methods were survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations. Teacher educators filled a survey with Likert-scale-type questionnaire. Heads of departments were interviewed and two teacher educators were observed in the three HEIs. The study followed a mixed methods approach by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative and qualitative data were independently analysed and merged at the interpretation stage by triangulating the results. Key themes were identified and continuous comparison was executed to analyse the questionnaire data and the interview data.

Major findings revealed the teacher educators' practices in ITE programmes in the HEIs and how curriculum structures affect the technological practices of teacher educators. The findings also revealed the barriers to ICT integration in HEIs and the perceptions of teacher educators on the educational value of ICT. The findings further revealed how teacher education institutions create an enabling environment for the pedagogical integration of ICT.

Key words: ICT pedagogical integration, ICT affordances, TPACK framework, UTAUT