

## AN EXPLORATION OF THE INTEGRATION OF ICT IN MATHEMATICS LESSONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has brought about significant transformations in teaching and learning processes. In a mathematics classroom, ICT offers unique opportunities to enhance students' engagement, promote critical thinking, and foster conceptual understanding. This study explores strategies employed by mathematics teachers in integrating ICT into their lessons. The research design was a descriptive survey. The study was informed by the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The target population consisted of 18 public secondary schools located in Garissa County. A sample of 267 mathematics students was selected using simple random sampling, while purposive sampling was used to select 18 mathematics teachers and 10 school principals from the ten selected schools. Data were collected through interviews with school principals, classroom observations, and surveys given to Mathematics teachers and students. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Bar graphs were used to present the results. Findings revealed that projectors, printers, and smart televisions were the main ICT tools available for teaching mathematics, while GeoGebra was the most commonly used software by mathematics teachers. PowerPoint presentations and whiteboard displays were commonly used by teachers during mathematics lessons. Based on the findings, one conclusion is drawn: the scarcity of ICT resources hindered effective mathematics instruction. The study recommended the acquisition of more ICT resources for teaching and learning Mathematics. The study's findings can inform policymakers and education stakeholders to efficiently utilize ICT in the mathematics classroom and enhance students' mathematics performance.

**Keywords:** *ICT Integration, Teaching strategies, Mathematics education, ICT tools and resources, educational technology.*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into education has resulted in substantial changes within instructional and learning methods. Within the realm of mathematics education, ICT presents distinctive prospects for amplifying student engagement, stimulating critical reasoning, and cultivating conceptual comprehension (Omondi, Odera, & Odhiambo, 2020). ICT, including computers, smartphones, and projectors (Kaware & Sain, 2015), has become an indispensable part of modern life, and its integration into classrooms is crucial for optimizing learning outcomes and facilitating effective teacher-student interactions

(Patel & Mukwa, 1993). However, challenges remain in providing adequate ICT resources and training for teachers.

Despite the prevalence of digital technology and national objectives for enhancing students' digital competence, educators' utilization of technology within classrooms remains constrained, often revolving around teacher-centered approaches (Blikstad-Balas & Klette, 2020). The constrained implementation of engaging pedagogical techniques and students' restricted use of technology for educational purposes underscore the pressing necessity for comprehensive teacher training and robust digital infrastructure (Khamidovich, 2020). Research indicates that the accessibility of ICT resources at home is inversely linked to academic achievement, whereas the incorporation of ICT resources within classrooms positively impacts students' academic advancement (Hu, Gong, Lai, & Leung, 2018; Kristiawan & Muhaimin, 2019). In light of these observations, it becomes clear that there exists a critical gap between the potential benefits of ICT integration in education and the current state of its implementation in many educational settings. Closing this gap requires a concerted effort to align teaching practices with the evolving digital landscape and equip educators with the necessary skills to harness the full potential of technology-enhanced learning environments.

In Africa, the integration of ICT in education is steadily gaining traction as numerous countries recognize its potential to enhance both educational quality and accessibility (Tella, Ayeni, & Popoola, 2017; Kimutai & Changeiywo, 2018). Despite this momentum, persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited technology access, and insufficient teacher training continue to impede progress (Asoro, 2021). Nevertheless, the research underscores that the integration of ICT yields positive impacts on student learning outcomes within the region, especially in subjects like mathematics and science (Mwathi, Gachago, & Keengwe, 2020; Omondi, Odera, & Odhiambo, 2020). Recognizing these dynamics, it is evident that while promising strides are being made, concerted efforts are still required to address the existing barriers and unlock the full potential of ICT in education across the African context.

In Kenya, the government's Digital Literacy Program (DLP) has a primary objective of bolstering ICT integration within schools in line with Kenya National ICT Strategy, Government of Kenya, 2006. While this initiative holds the potential to enhance student engagement and academic accomplishments, persisting challenges such as insufficient infrastructure and restricted technology availability persist (Macharia & Wachira, 2019). Nonetheless, the incorporation of ICT within Mathematics classrooms has showcased encouraging effects on student academic performance, notably within subjects like mathematics (Machuki, 2018). Amid these efforts, it is evident that the trajectory toward seamless ICT integration in education in Kenya necessitates a multifaceted approach that addresses both the promising outcomes and the lingering obstacles.

Research findings emphasize the critical importance of comprehensive teacher preparation and robust ICT infrastructure to effectively integrate technology into classroom education (Ng'eno, 2013). The positive relationship between academic success and the integration of technology in mathematics instruction underscores the vital role of significant investments in advanced ICT infrastructure and supportive policies (Keengwe & Onchwari, 2008). In modern educational contexts, educators' roles as facilitators of technology-driven learning experiences are paramount. Adequate teacher preparation ensures that educators possess both the pedagogical skills and technical competence necessary to effectively utilize digital tools in instruction (Ondigi, Makira, & Kimemia, 2015). As technological advances continue to reshape

traditional educational paradigms, educators need not only to understand the tools but also to seamlessly integrate them into their teaching methods (Lei, Zhao, Liu, & Tan, 2021).

The integration of ICT in education presents both opportunities and challenges (Nketiah-Amponsah, Asamoah, Allassani, & Aziale, 2017). While ICT has the potential to improve learning outcomes and facilitate effective teaching, addressing infrastructure limitations and providing proper teacher training remain crucial for its successful implementation. Governments and educational institutions need to invest in ICT resources and policies to support the efficient integration of technology into classrooms (Güven, Cakiroglu, & Akkan, 2009). Ultimately, the use of ICT in education holds the promise of enhancing educational quality and access for students in Africa and beyond.

### **1.1 Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was to establish the ways teachers are integrating ICT in the teaching of Mathematics.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has become increasingly important, as it aids in achieving better learning outcomes and encourages innovation in pedagogy (Buliva, 2022). Studies have shown that regular use of digital resources by teachers is crucial for students' learning (Baker, Goodboy, Bowman, & Wright, 2018), and the use of technology can improve engagement and visualization of mathematical concepts in mathematics instruction (Shao & Purzer, 2021). Digital games and online collaboration platforms have also been found to enhance students' mathematical learning experiences (Chan & Leung, 2020; Fan et al., 2020).

The studies conducted in Ethiopia by Tadesse and Mulatu (2021) shed light on the transformative potential of integrating mobile technology into mathematics instruction. Through the utilization of mobile applications encompassing mathematics games, virtual manipulatives, and concept tutorials, educators were able to provide personalized learning experiences that resonated with each student's pace and learning style. This approach not only fostered a sense of self-directed learning but also encouraged active participation among students. By seamlessly blending technology into the classroom, these applications opened avenues for students to engage with mathematical concepts in dynamic and interactive ways. Despite these promising outcomes, the integration of technology encountered its share of challenges. Limited access to ICT resources, a common concern across regions, was among the foremost issues. Moreover, the lack of proper training for teachers in effectively incorporating ICT into their pedagogical approach presented an obstacle. Additionally, the resistance to veer away from traditional teaching methods also posed a hurdle in fully harnessing the potential of technology.

In South Africa, Chigona and Chigona (2018) explored how teachers were leveraging ICT tools to enrich mathematics instruction. The integration of interactive whiteboards, graphing calculators, and online platforms played a pivotal role in creating a dynamic learning environment. The interactive whiteboards breathed life into lessons, infusing them with visually engaging elements that captured students' attention. Meanwhile, graphing calculators not only facilitated a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts through graphical representation but also empowered students to analyze these concepts more comprehensively. The collaborative potential of online platforms allowed students to engage in joint problem-solving activities, granting them access to supplementary resources that enriched their learning experience. However, the challenges identified in this study echoed those seen elsewhere:

inadequate access to ICT resources, insufficient teacher training, and a lingering reluctance to deviate from traditional teaching methods.

A parallel study conducted by Suleman and Shaba (2023) in Ghana presented a nuanced perspective on the challenges and opportunities of ICT integration in mathematics education. The educators in this study acknowledged the transformative potential of ICT, particularly its ability to cater to differentiated instruction. The technology's prowess in enhancing visualization of intricate mathematical concepts and honing students' problem-solving skills was apparent. However, challenges persisted, primarily arising from inadequate access to ICT infrastructure and the lack of professional development opportunities for teachers. These obstacles underscored the need for comprehensive strategies that address infrastructural gaps while simultaneously empowering educators with the knowledge and confidence to integrate technology seamlessly into their teaching methods.

Nigeria, too, witnessed endeavors to incorporate ICT into mathematics education, as highlighted by the study by Adeyemi and Adu (2021). The positive impact of ICT tools such as interactive whiteboards, educational software, and online platforms on enhancing learning experiences and bolstering student engagement was undeniable. This integrated approach not only motivated students but also deepened their conceptual understanding and sharpened their problem-solving acumen. Nonetheless, the barriers to effective ICT integration remained consistent, featuring limited access to infrastructure, insufficient training for educators, and the challenge of steering pedagogical approaches away from conventional norms.

Makina and Sibanda (2021) delved into Zimbabwean secondary schools, where educators were integrating ICT tools like interactive whiteboards, educational software, and online resources into their mathematics instruction. These tools enriched the educational landscape by making complex concepts more tangible through interactive visualizations and providing students with digital avenues for exploration. Nonetheless, the prevalent obstacles of limited ICT access and inadequate teacher training hindered the full realization of the benefits that technology could bring to mathematics education.

Amidst these challenges and opportunities, the significance of teachers' ICT skills and confidence, as revealed in studies like Wainaina (2016), stands out. Equipping educators with the requisite knowledge and tools is imperative to harness the full potential of technology in transforming pedagogical approaches, especially in STEM subjects. As researchers refine their methodologies, Hatlevik and Hatlevik (2018) rightly pointed out the need for comprehensive studies that go beyond isolated cases and surveys. A holistic investigation into how technology seamlessly integrates into regular lessons and how both teachers and students engage in digital literacy activities would provide deeper insights. Such insights can guide policymakers and educators in crafting strategies that foster effective ICT use in education. Dockendorff and Solar (2018) emphasize the pivotal role that well-prepared educators play in orchestrating the symbiotic relationship between technology and learning outcomes.

The use of ICT in education, particularly in mathematics instruction, holds great potential for improving student learning outcomes. To realize its benefits, teachers must receive adequate support, training, and resources to effectively incorporate technology into their teaching practices. By addressing challenges and promoting collaborative efforts, technology can become a powerful tool to enhance education and prepare students for the digital age (Walker, Mbari-Kirika, & Miheso-O'Connor, 2017). Furthermore, the availability of trained teachers proficient in utilizing ICT tools for effective mathematics instruction is essential but often lacking. Professional development programs focusing on ICT integration and pedagogical

approaches are necessary to equip teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to leverage technology effectively.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

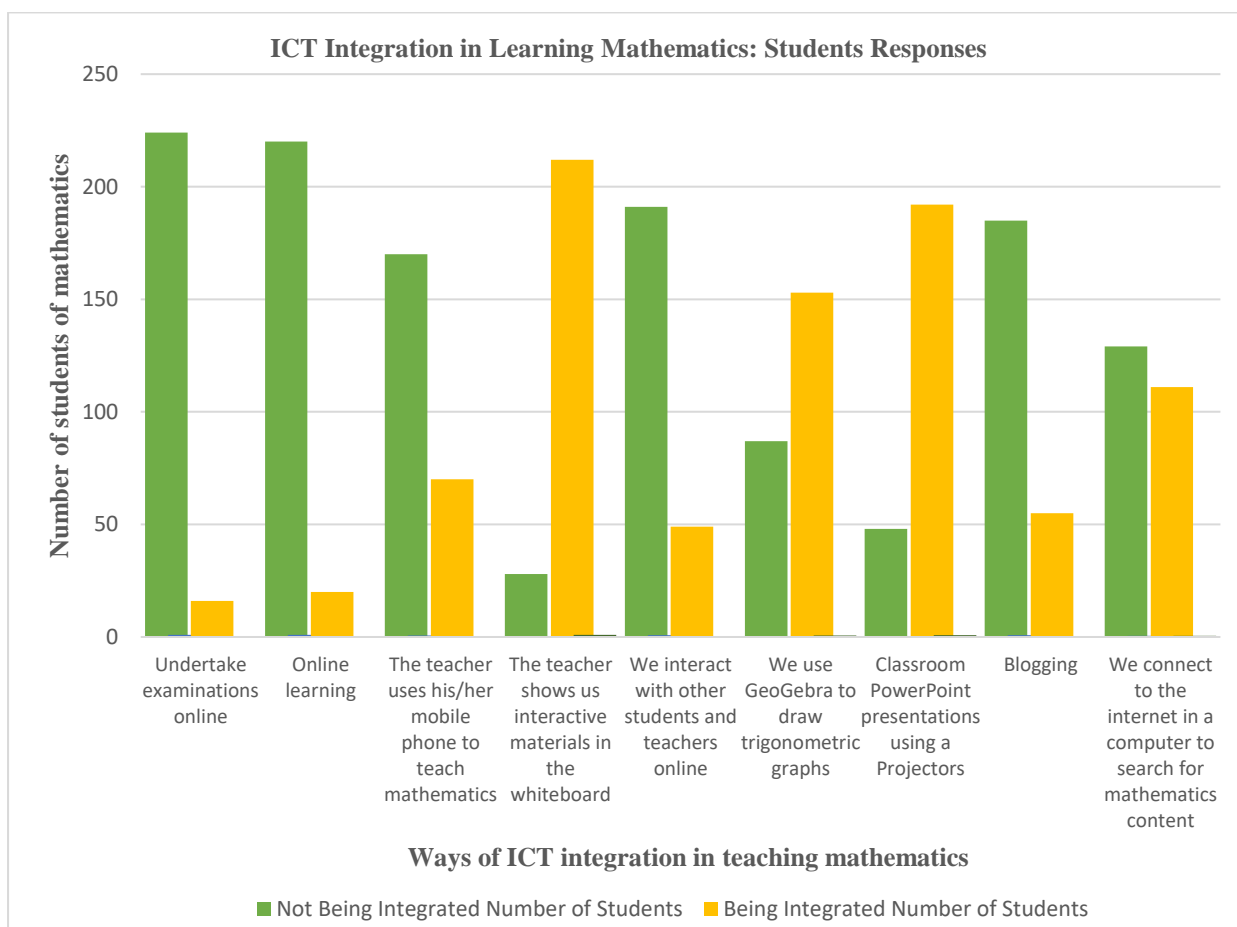
The study was based on a descriptive survey design and utilized an approach to research using mixed methods that blend quantitative and qualitative techniques to address the research question. The research was conducted in Garissa County, located in the northeast of Kenya, and shares a border with Somalia. The sample for this study included 267 form three and four students, 10 secondary school principals, and 18 mathematics teachers from the 10 selected secondary schools.

To gather data in the field students' questionnaires, questionnaires for mathematics teachers, classroom observations, and interview schedules for secondary school principals were used. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17.0, was used to examine the quantitative data. Frequencies, percentages, averages, and standard deviations were used to illustrate the study's conclusions. The qualitative data, on the other hand, was coded and entered into a computer for analysis. Additionally, means, frequencies, and percentages were employed to describe the findings.

### **4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Information on ways of integrating ICT tools and resources in teaching of mathematics was obtained from the students' questionnaire, mathematics teachers' questionnaire, classroom observation, and interview schedules for school principals. The researcher sought students' responses on the ways of integrating ICT tools and resources in the teaching of mathematics. The results are summarized in Figure 1.





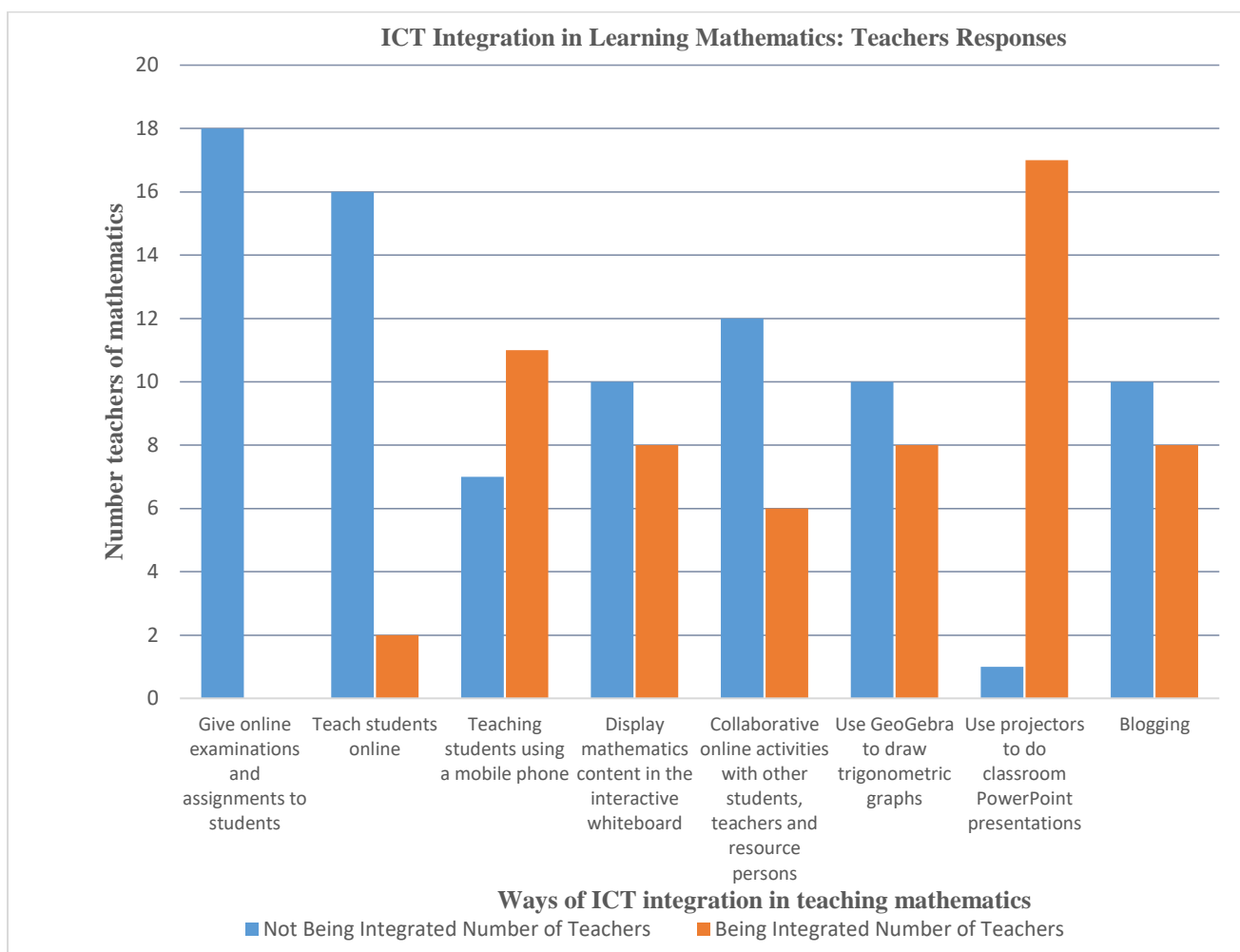
**Figure 1. ICT Integration in Learning Mathematics: Students Responses**

Figure 1 presents the various ways of ICT integration in teaching and learning mathematics in Garissa County. The study revealed that the most common methods of ICT integration were the use of PowerPoint presentations and showing interactive materials on the whiteboard. Specifically, 192 students reported their teachers making classroom PowerPoint presentations using projectors, and 212 students acknowledged that their teachers showed them interactive materials on the whiteboard. Additionally, 153 students mentioned using GeoGebra to draw trigonometric graphs.

On the other hand, the least utilized methods of ICT integration in teaching mathematics were online examinations, online learning, interaction with others online, blogging, teachers using mobile phones for teaching mathematics, and internet use for searching mathematics content.

These findings highlight the need for increased ICT integration in mathematics teaching, considering the presence of basic ICT resources like computers and internet connections. The limited adoption of ICT in the classroom could have negative implications for students' mathematics learning outcomes. Although some ICT resources are available, this study confirms that their integration into teaching and learning is not yet fully realized (Hatlevik & Hatlevik, 2018).

Furthermore, the study aimed to compare the responses of mathematics teachers with those of students regarding ICT integration. The results are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. ICT Integration in Teaching Mathematics: Teachers Responses**

From Figure 2, on the responses from participating teachers, the most commonly used methods of ICT integration among teachers included using projectors for classroom PowerPoint presentations, with 17 teachers (94.4%) adopting this approach. Additionally, 16 teachers (88.9%) reported connecting to the internet to search for mathematics content during lesson preparation, while 11 teachers (61.1%) utilized their mobile phones to teach students.

Conversely, the study revealed that interactive and hands-on approaches to ICT integration were less commonly employed by teachers. Only 6 teachers (33.3%) engaged in collaborative online activities with students, fellow teachers, and resource persons. Moreover, only 8 teachers (44.4%) used GeoGebra to draw trigonometric graphs for interactive learning experiences. Interestingly, none of the teachers (0.0%) reported giving online exams and assignments to students, while only 2 teachers (11.1%) mentioned occasional online teaching. Additionally, 8 teachers (44.4%) reported using interactive whiteboards to display mathematics content.

This finding aligns with Perienen's (2020) observation that only a small number of teachers were using technology to teach interactively, relying more on displays rather than engaging students in hands-on activities and discovery-based learning.

The thematic analysis of classroom observations and interviews with principals revealed that 60% of mathematics teachers mainly used projectors and laptops to display mathematics

content on whiteboards. While GeoGebra software resources were available, they were primarily used for demonstrations and not effectively integrated into student learning, limiting the student's ability to independently draw trigonometric graphs using the resource. Additionally, the study observed that 90% of schools had internet connections, students were unable to access it for downloading mathematics content, accessing educational resources online, interacting with peers, or participating in blogging. This lack of access restricted the potential benefits of ICT in student learning, despite the availability of adequate resources in most schools. These findings support Khosravi's (2016) argument that internet and ICT usage enhances communication and social interactions, providing opportunities for remote learning and interaction through various networking platforms.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The study on ICT integration in teaching mathematics revealed that the most common ways of using technology were through PowerPoint presentations and showing interactive materials on the whiteboard. A significant majority of respondents acknowledged the use of interactive whiteboard materials (88.37%) and PowerPoint presentations with projectors (80.0%) in mathematics instruction. However, the use of GeoGebra for drawing trigonometric graphs was reported by only 51.4% of respondents.

On the other hand, several ICT integration methods were found to be less prevalent, including undertaking online examinations (6.9%), online learning/teaching (8.6%), interaction with others online (20.4%), blogging (22.9%), using teachers' mobile phones in instruction (28.1%), and searching for mathematics content on the internet using computers (44.3%).

The study also identified that a minority of teachers (33.33%) utilized technology in interactive ways for teaching, with most relying on display-based methods. Students were not actively involved in the selection and use of ICT resources during lessons, hindering their hands-on learning experiences.

Classroom observation and interviews with principals revealed that many mathematics teachers (60%) predominantly used projectors and laptops to display content on the whiteboard. While GeoGebra was used, it was mainly as a demonstration tool, limiting its effectiveness as a hands-on learning resource for students to draw trigonometric graphs independently. Furthermore, though internet access was available in most schools (90%), students were not fully able to leverage it for accessing mathematics content, educational resources, and interactive learning opportunities.

The study highlights the need for more interactive and student-centered ICT integration in mathematics education to enhance engagement and promote hands-on learning experiences. It also emphasizes the importance of actively involving students in the use of technology during lessons to maximize its impact on their learning outcomes.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's findings on ICT integration in teaching and learning mathematics suggest several key recommendations. Firstly, institutions should invest in projector facilities for PowerPoint presentations to enhance visual aids in classrooms. Secondly, reliable internet access is crucial to support teachers in searching for relevant mathematics content online. Thirdly, professional development programs should focus on training teachers in interactive and collaborative ICT methods, like GeoGebra, to promote engaging learning experiences. Implementing these recommendations will create a more effective and engaging learning environment, benefiting both students and teachers.



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