



Research Article

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Visual Literacy in the Lived Experiences of BSED Students in Utilizing Canva

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Abstract

In the 21st century education, the advent of highly developed technology resulted in integrating technological innovations such as software and applications that promote efficiency and productivity. An exemplification of this is the utilization of the graphic design platform Canva as a medium of instruction in the academe. This qualitative study aims to formulate a theory on understanding students' lived experiences of using Canva and its ability to improve visual literacy. The research uses a triadic coding procedure: open, axial, and selective coding and theory generation based on a grounded theory to uncover the significant impact of Canva on the student's visual literacy. After a thorough analysis of the lived experiences of the students on using the graphic design platform, four essential themes emerged under the core category, namely: (1) Assessing college students' familiarity with Canva; (2) Investigating the effectiveness of Canva as a visual communication tool; (3) The influence of visual design on learning outcomes; (4) Visual communication and its significance in the digital age. With further refinement of the essential themes, the study concludes with the emergence of Ritoca's Theory which explains the general influence of Canva. Ritoca's Theory can be divided into three parts: Familiarity, Efficiency, and Creativity, which follow a sequential pattern from being familiar with the graphic design platform to unveiling its efficiency and, lastly, discovering the ability to be creative.

Keywords: Visual Literacy; Graphic Design Platform Canva; Technology-Based Learning; Lived Experiences; pre-service teachers

1. Introduction

In these modern times, graphic design platforms, such as Canva, are being utilized as a medium for instruction because of their convenience. Its utilization, with regard to the rapid progression of modern technology, is deemed to potentially nurture visual literacy. Duchak (2014) defines visual literacy as the ability to both read and write visual information; the ability to learn visually; and the ability to comprehend and solve problems in the visual domain. This ability significantly enables students to interpret, discuss, cognitively interact, and derive meaning from data presented as images. Kedra and Žakevičiūtė (2019) elaborated that visual literacy fosters individual uniqueness via introspection and personal experiences, stresses the active building of information, and has an empowering effect. In a renowned university, students also utilize Canva, which allows them to widen their aspirations and competence as they show increased interest in technology (Ardies et al. 2015). In accordance with this, technology is becoming increasingly important, and programs that may be used to teach and study languages are essential to language practice (Motteram, 2013).

Lundy and Stephens (2015) expounded that for students and educators in the 21st century, visual literacy is essential. Hanci (2022) asserted that among disciplines at all educational levels, students interact with images and visual materials throughout their education. For instance, in the digital age, the utilization of visual aids is widely acknowledged as an effective teaching tool in education as they spark the interest of learners and make it easier for teachers to explain complex concepts (Shabiralyani et al., 2015). In particular, incorporating images, diagrams, infographics, and other visual materials into lessons helps students grasp complex concepts easily. Hence, it is credible to contend that visual literacy is an integral part of education, particularly visuals, and images, since they have the potential to become the primary means of communication in the everyday lives of the younger generations (Kedra & Žakevičiūtė, 2019). An example of the appropriation of graphic design platforms, Canva has brought light into the educational paradigms as a tool for academic purposes. Canva, according to Sinta (2022), offers a vast array of templates, images, and outlines for creating subject resumes, posters, infographics, PowerPoints, and lesson plans at no cost. It aids in the learning process, especially in the presentation of topics.

One can question how Canva, a graphic design platform can substantially suffice and indoctrinate visual literacy in general. Kedra and Žakevičiūtė (2019) elucidate that digital media literacies, multimodal literacy, digital competency, digital literacy, and even social media literacies are just a few of the constantly expanding categories of 21st-century literacies. Subsequently, the utilization of Canva as a medium or tool in teaching and delivering presentations may impose compelling conjectures of its efficacy, whether it be feasible or impractical. Schönborn and Anderson (2006) articulated that students concur that visuals are vital for understanding and researching. Lundy and Stephens (2015) claim that today's students are exposed to a constant barrage of images from various multimedia platforms, such as the Internet. Despite being global media consumers daily, they frequently lack the skills needed to become more than passive consumers of visual media messages.

In light of this, Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed a methodology that allowed the researcher to methodically produce a substantial theory based on empirical facts. The analyst codes all the data and uses a methodical analysis of these codes to confirm or disprove a hypothesis. In the second procedure, the analyst just looks at the data for characteristics of categories, creates theoretical concepts, and utilizes notes to chronicle the study. In Walker and Myric's (2006) views, "coding is an iterative, inductive, yet reductive process that organizes data, from which the researcher can then construct themes, essences, descriptions, and theories." Strauss and Corbin (1990) distinguished the three types of necessary coding procedures in accordance with grounded Theory: "open, axial, and selective coding". Open coding involves analysts delving deeply into the data by going line-by-line. The coding paradigm, which focuses on three aspects of the phenomenon—the conditions or situations in which it occurs, people's actions or interactions in response to those situations, and the outcomes or consequences of those actions or inactions—is used to achieve this connecting (Strauss

& Corbin, 1997). The analyst chooses a core category and then connects each of the other categories to the core to complete this last assignment. (Strauss & Corbin, 1997).

University students, and pre-service teachers, are anticipated to cultivate visual literacy. The notion will then bring us to the gap, in which the conjecture will constantly question Canva as an application that correlates with visual literacy, and should students utilize the application Canva as a medium in the academic context. Given these points, the significance of this study is to uncover the students' experiences in using Canva. The study will delve into the lived experiences of the BSED students who utilize the application Canva about its developmental concept of visual literacy. This illuminates the themes and central categories of the students' experiences in using Canva. By collecting and analyzing the stories and insights of the informants, this study aims to construct and formulate a grounded understanding of what it's like to use Canva in an educational context.

This study aims to generate a theory on understanding students' lived experiences of using the graphic design platform Canva and its ability to provide visual literacy, particularly to answer the following questions:

- What is your purpose for using the graphic design platform Canva?
- What are your general experiences in using Canva?
- Based on the findings, what emergent Theory can be generated?

2. Literature Review

Visual literacy has attracted much attention in modern educational environments as a multifaceted concept covering the capacity to understand, analyze, and produce visual representations. According to Kedra & Žakevičiūtė (2019), it fosters individual uniqueness via introspection and personal experiences, stresses the active building of information, and has an empowering effect. Along with technological advancement, the notion provides a variety of applications that educators may use to raise students' levels of literacy, particularly visual literacy. Canva is a prime example of a program used as a teaching tool, such as visual assistance. According to Ardies et al. (2015), students also utilize Canva, which allows them to widen their aspirations and competence as they show increased interest in technology.

Following this, according to Howell et al. (2022), Canva is a rapidly expanding web tool that connects careful interface design and creative presentation production, influencing how students create and distribute projects for class. Additionally, Canva provides templates that students can edit and modify and various fonts and images in the free version of the website (Korona & Hathaway, 2021). Hence, Canva is a feasible application that can be integrated to promote learning. In addition, providing facilities that provide a favorable learning environment, it may also influence students' focus, memory, and attitudes. (Anwar 2021).

Subsequently, the sole reason why the graphic design platform Canva is widely utilized is due to convenience, one of the primary aims that technology and innovation have offered. According to Kvavik's (2005) findings, using technology in the classroom has several advantages, including increasing productivity and making life more convenient.

According to Khan's (2020) investigation of the student's perception of utilizing technology or the internet, also known as E-learning, one of the main factors influencing students to opt for E-learning is the ease of access to study materials. The study implies the notion of convenience that technology provides, attracting students and the academe to profoundly utilize e-learning, specifically online tools such as graphic design platforms. This is due to the fact that knowledge and information are easily accessible through e-learning technology, which helps students develop positive attitudes about the notion (Khan 2020).

Similarly, Anwar (2021) also stated, "the function and benefit of Canva divided into two, namely as supplement and substitute." This implies that firstly, Canva's facilitation and assistance of teachers in making learning media and enhancing the online teaching-learning process explains the supplement function. Secondly, substitution elaborates on how the application enhances learning

media efficiently and how "easy" it is to give students access to Canva's learning media and assist with technological needs.

In addition, visual literacy is a prominent skill that is inherently correlated with the usage of Canva. Visual literacy, according to Stokes (2002), "is defined as the ability to interpret images as well as to generate images for communicating ideas and concepts." This implies that Canva is a great instrument that can significantly improve and enable visual literacy. Following this, Damyanov & Tsankov (2018) expound that visual images become the primary means of communication. Aside from being able to read and use visual language, visually literate students should also be able to effectively decode, understand, and evaluate visual communications and encode and construct meaningful visual communication.

For instance, infographics, which are conveniently available in Canva, can be a tool for achieving the next stage of literacy - visual literacy. This is because using information images, or infographics, as a modeling method can help develop cognitive skills like interpretation, analysis, assessment, conclusion, and explanation—all of which are part of the modeling process. Infographics are visual depictions of facts, expertise, or information. (Damyanov & Tsankov 2018).

As a matter of fact, in other studies, Canva is also regarded as a tool or medium that enables other cognitive/macro skills. Rezkyana, D., and Agustini, S. (2022) found that Canva significantly enhances students' writing performance. It was revealed that students have favorable opinions about Canva, particularly in idea generation, writing context, and organization. One of the benefits of using Canva is that one has access to its thousands of features, including different styles of graphic organizers. Numerous studies have been conducted on using graphic organizers to raise students' writing skills. According to Tayib (2015) articulated that graphic organizers are effective tools to nurture students' skills in writing.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This paper employed the grounded theory approach, commonly utilized in educational research. Grounded Theory involves the development of a theory derived from systematically collected and analyzed data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). These approaches cover many coding methods that depend on the continuous comparison method, such as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

3.2 Informants

Purposive sampling was utilized to select the informants of the study. It is a technique in which qualities are established for a specific purpose relevant to the investigation (Chittaranjan, 2020). This method depends on the researcher's discretion in choosing study participants from the general community while taking the study's context and goals into account (Obilor, 2023). Using the aforesaid sampling technique, the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) class students of a state university in the Philippines who are subject to the usage of Canva are the informants of this study. Seven of them are female, while three of them are male, for a total of 10 informants. The data sources were picked according to their capability to provide the needed information.

3.3 Instruments

The main instrument for this study was the interview conducted in English or Cebuano, considering the comfortability of the informants. During the interview, the researchers used researcher-made questions to gather the informants' general experiences in using Canva. The research-made questions were reviewed and evaluated thoroughly by two experts to ensure the validity of the data that will be gathered.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

With the approval of the school officials of the university, permission to conduct the study was asked from the informants who were chosen through purposive sampling. They were given ample time to review their participation in the study. Before the interview, a disclaimer was stipulated to inform the informants about the intention of the researchers and the nature of the study, wherein anonymity is strictly imposed. In conducting the interview, the researchers facilitated the data gathering through the transcripts and responses on the experiences they have undergone utilizing the aforesaid graphic design platform, and the researchers would record the responses using devices capable of recording audio. After collecting all the data needed, data were coded following Strauss and Corbin's triadic coding procedure.

3.5 Treatment of Data

Kaiser and Presmeg (2019) elaborate that the gathered data undergo evaluation using various coding techniques as a central procedure. In Grounded Theory, coding involves abstracting concepts by assigning general ideas (codes) to specific occurrences in the data. In this context, coding and the constant comparative technique play vital roles in unearthing a grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). As described by Glaser & Strauss, the constant comparative technique encompasses four activities: (1) evaluating incidents similar to each category, (2) integrating categories and their characteristics, (3) defining and delimiting the emerging Theory, and (4) constructing the Theory. Through meticulous data comparison and analysis, a substantial theory is unveiled.

3.6 Open Coding

LaRossa (2015) emphasizes that employing this triadic coding procedure contributes to the depth of the grounded Theory. The initial step involves open coding, where a comprehensive data analysis occurs for conceptualization and categorization of the phenomena. The primary objective of open coding is to generate a wealth of codes to effectively represent the data until a saturation point is reached (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Table 1. Open Coding

Creativity	Collaboration	Composition	Academics
Visual learning	Learners' perception	Aesthetics	Critical interpretation
Computer-oriented	Availability	Effects of media	Learnings of the students
Internet/Connectivity	Accessible educational tool	Engaging the students' interest	Variety of graphic designs
Inadequacy of learning	Interactive	ICT literacy	Creating
Compatibility	Convenience	Integration of visual presentation	Student-friendly
Resources for learning	Content-based	Lay-outing	Challenging

3.7 Axial Coding

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), this second coding phase is necessary to examine and explore the links between and among categories and establish connections among them. Within this context, the researcher observes the emergence of novel concepts that encapsulate the diverse categories, contributing to developing a comprehensive narrative.

Table 2. Axial Coding

Academics Learners' perception Aesthetics Computer-oriented Creating Student-friendly	Assessing college students' familiarity with Canva
Challenging Compatibility Accessible educational tool Availability Engaging the students' interest Variety of graphic designs Interactive Convenience Content-based	Investigating the effectiveness of Canva as a visual communication tool
Visual learning Critical interpretation Learnings of the students Lay-outing Inadequacy of learning Integration of visual presentation Resources for learning	The influence of visual design on learning outcomes
Creativity Collaboration Composition Effects of media Internet/Connectivity ICT literacy	Visual communication and its significance in the digital age

3.8 Selective Coding

During this coding phase, categories undergo a process of consolidation and refinement as the core category becomes systematically linked to other categories (Strauss, 1987). During this coding phase, the researcher identifies the primary phenomenon of the study and can ultimately address the gap. In the end, the grounded Theory emerges due to the raw data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Vollstedt, 2015).

4. Results and Discussion

After the interview and thorough analysis, a core category that emerged and is prevalent based on the responses is the overall influence of Canva. Four essential themes are derived under the core category, namely:

- Theme 1: Assessing college students' familiarity with Canva
- Theme 2: Investigating the effectiveness of Canva as a visual communication tool
- Theme 3: The influence of visual design on learning outcomes
- Theme 4: Visual communication and its significance in the digital age

Theme 1: Assessing College Student's Familiarity with Canva

All of the informants express their familiarity with Canva. Although they have different reasons for utilizing the application, most of them use it for academic purposes.

Informant A "I mainly use Canva for academic purposes, particularly presentations."

Informant D "Academic since mostly samong requirements kay mag need jud ug kanang, like mag

need ug requirement na kanang magbuhat ug mga timeline, and Canva kay dali rajud kayu siya ma access kay nanay template daan and walay pakoy reason na gamiton sha other than academic."

(Academic since most of our requirements need (or) like it needs a requirement that makes a timeline, and Canva is very accessible because there are templates already, and I don't have a reason yet to use it other than for academics.)

Informant I "I used it for academic purposes, especially in making presentations, organizer and stuff that are relevant to my field..."

Informant H "I used Canva for academic purposes because it is very efficient and effective in crafting school works"

Most of the informants answered that Canva has been a huge help in accomplishing their academic assignments and projects. However, a number of Informants also claimed that their familiarity with Canva is rooted in the reason that they have been using it for aesthetic purposes.

Informant F "I use Canva for aesthetic purposes because of the templates available in the application."

Informant B "I use Canva to make new wallpapers for my phone."

Informant G "Sometimes I use Canva when I edit my post to greet my friends and family."

Based on the interview conducted, most of the BSED students are familiar with Canva because they are using it for academic purposes. At the same time, some of them are familiar with the application because they are using it for aesthetic purposes. Few also mentioned that they utilize Canva for both academic and aesthetic purposes.

Informant E "Actually, I use Canva for both school and aesthetics. I've said earlier for school because it's convenient for us, students, because of educational presentation. Also, for aesthetics, because I am an online seller and I use Canva for putting my goods or the things that I sell."

Informant B "I use Canva for both purposes. For academic purposes, I use it for my education, as I've said earlier, to make presentations and for aesthetic purposes."

The information gathered signifies the exceptional familiarity of the Informants with the application Canva. It was also found that the most dominant reason for this is its significance in accomplishing academic requirements. According to Howell et al. (2022) in their study entitled "Improving the Education Experience in a Design History Course Using Canva, Instagram and LinkedIn", Canva, a growing online application, bridges the gap between creative presentation creation and a thoughtful interface, thus influencing the way students create and disseminate class assignments. This justifies that Canva is deemed useful for students for both academic and aesthetic purposes, given that it contains a myriad of elements for creative designs and presentations.

Theme 2: Investigating the Effectiveness of Canva as a Visual Communication Tool

Nolin & Olson (2016) stated that the fruition of producing such technology requires the identification of human endeavors in need of alleviation or provision of convenience. This implies the sole idea and intention of the innovation of graphic design platforms that are made available on the web. Due to this notion, graphic design platforms such as Canva are deemed to produce the utmost efficiency and provide an accessible platform that is effective for such purpose, hence, alleviating inconvenience. Furthermore, Anwar's (2021) findings about Canva's convenience concluded that Canva has two (2) functions and substitution being one. The substitution function of Canva elucidates how the application enhances learning media efficiently and how "easy" it is to give students access to Canva's learning media and assist with technological needs. Following this, the majority of the informants reflected that they use Canva because it is easy to navigate and is very convenient.

Informant A "To put it simply, I use Canva because it is convenient for me and it gives less stress."

Informant B "Canva is very efficient and it's like a dumb proof bitaw. Like bisag ogobs kaau kog techie

kay nagamit jud nako ang Canva it's very easy to use..."(Canva is very efficient, and it's like a dumb proof application. Despite the fact that I am not very fond of technology, I was able to manipulate Canva, and it's very easy to use.)

"...it makes my work as a student very, it's not so time-consuming since sayon ra kaau siya gamiton. Kuan sad siya very fun to use because of all the tools and features that it provides." (It makes my work as a student very [easy], It's not so time-consuming since it's easy to use. In addition, (Canva) is very fun to use because of all the tools and features that it provides.)

Informant D "Since nana man shay template daan, nana shay design daan, so, di sha mu take ug time na magbutang pako ani, magbutang pako ana kay nana man shay nabutang." (Since it has a template already, it has a design already, so it won't take time for me to put these and that since it has a design already.)

Informant G "For me, using Canva depend on what will I do to this platform. For example, if I create a graphic organizer, I can easily navigate it because of the template that was provided."

To further elaborate the notion of convenience, the informants also expounded that utilizing Canva is convenient because of its efficiency.

Informant B "Kuan ah the elements, elements one gihapon kanang naa kay itype na word and then mugawas ang mga sticker like pictures kay para mas maka add man gud siyag flavor sa kuan presentation or sa picture" (The elements, still element one is very feasible. You can search a word, and then the stickers like pictures come out, which adds flavor to the overall presentation or the picture.)

Informant E "The last project we had that I use Canva is our final project for STS and my topic is all about biodiversity. I searched 'biodiversity' template and nigawas didto ang green jud nya nay mga animals and plants that is really connected to my topic. That's one that Canva is really good because it has advantage." (The last project we had that I used Canva is our final project for STS, and my topic is all about biodiversity. I searched the 'biodiversity' template, and it prompted designs of green complemented with animal and plant elements that are really connected to my topic. That's one that Canva is really good at because it has an advantage.)

Informant F "Yes, because there are lots of elements I can use. I can only search keywords, and those elements are available. I can search for, like, specific people or like artworks and other materials that are available."

Informant H "I used this feature in particular because I can save my time by searching a keyword, so I used this as efficiency."

The abovementioned answers of the informants stated that Canva is convenient since everything is available just by searching it in the graphic design platform. The informants also based the convenience of utilizing Canva because of its availability. According to Korona & Hathaway (2021), in the free edition of the website, Canva offers a variety of fonts and pictures along with editable templates for students to utilize, which gives users flexibility with no service fee involved. This implies Canva's effectiveness due to its availability, in which Canva is free and ready for immediate use for those who can access it online, allowing the students to do something within a particular timeframe.

Informant A "one of the advantages that Canva can provide is the fact that its designs its tools can be accessed whether or not you are a premium subscriber."

However, there is only a certain amount of features that a user can use. This is called a limitation, in which, to use the graphic design platform at its full potential, a user must be subscribed to its "Pro" or premium version.

Informant B "Most of the features or tools na maka enhance sa akong projects or presentations kay naa sa Canva Pro. But since di man ko maka access so I have to kuan nalang settle." (Most of the features or tools that can enhance my projects or presentations are in Canva Pro. But since I can't access it, I have to settle.)

Informant C "So I think the disadvantage is that I am not subscribed to the premium, which greatly

limits my... when choosing a template, for example."

Informant G "Yes, my account is not premium, so I navigate Canva in a limited way. Like choosing high-quality photos, I cannot access or use them because I am not a premium user."

Lastly, one of the benefits of using the mobile application Canva is that you have access to its thousands of features, including different styles of graphic designs. According to Tayib (2015), graphic designs are effective tools to nurture students. This especially includes the macro skills that are to be inculcated to the students. Thus, the notion implies the efficiency of Canva, wherein students can access a variety of graphic designs.

Informant C "I mean, it's a perfect tool for creating these graphic images, these graphic images practicing graphic ideas."

Informant G "One of the main reasons why I choose to use Canva is there were times that we have activities or tasks such as graphic organizer. Canva can be a very big help because it has so many features that I can use"

Informant I "For an instance, whenever I need to make a graphic organizer, Canva is my first choice in editing."

Theme 3: The Influence of Visual Design on Learning Outcomes

The advancement of mobile device technology has significantly evolved and transformed in an integrated way (Mengorio, T. M., 2019). This progress has given rise to educational applications that empower students to enhance their overall skills. One application is Canva which offers a vast array of templates, images, and outlines for creating subject resumes, posters, infographics, PowerPoints, and lesson plans at no cost (Sinta, R., 2022). Canva offers numerous visual designs that provide diverse effects, particularly towards users' learning outcomes. Most of the Informants agreed to the idea that visual designs and presentations from the application Canva provide an effective way for students to learn.

Informant E "For educational presentations, in school, we need to make a PowerPoint presentation, and Canva has this certain tool or element that is convenient for us."

Informant I "As an education student, reporting and teaching demonstration is always part of our daily routine. The feature I always use is the PowerPoint Presentation and organizers to convey the information through my presentation visually."

Informant H "One particular experience is our teaching demonstration. I created my PowerPoint presentation using Canva, and layout printed materials as my instructional materials. I can say that Canva helps me convey my lesson thoroughly."

Following this, a majority of the informants responded that the integration of visual presentation affects their visual literacy in a positive way.

Informant A "It (Canva) has actually affected my visual literacy in a positive light because of the fact that I am somebody who finds it hard to visualize something, but through Canva, I get to express myself more because of how easy it is to look for what you want or how you want to express yourself with just a simple search."

Informant F "Well, it did affect me positively because it improves my color scheme, this color scheme that matches this color, and something like that. It contributes like my critique on this, the relationship between elements and colors."

Informant I "It affects me in a positive way because various artist, with their presentation, allows me to see a wider perspective of designing and creating innovatively."

These responses justify that there is a clear connection between visual design and learning outcomes and that visual design, such as visual presentations, is capable of influencing students' learning outcomes. According to Fitria (2022), in her study entitled "Using Canva as Media for English Language Teaching (ELT): Developing Creativity for Informatic Students", the application

Canva is used to design and create various graphic designs online. It is an online tool employed for creating a wide range of graphic designs wherein it offers an extensive selection of templates for designing greeting cards, book covers, product labels, business cards, posters, brochures, invitations, and presentations (Fitria, 2022). These designs and templates allow students to convey ideas and information effectively while improving their ability to evaluate, apply, or create conceptual visual representations at the same time.

Informant A "As I have been using Canva for quite a while, I think that the more I use it the more I get to learn more about different things, new information everyday including about myself. It also contributes to my learning experience."

Informant G "As a visual learner, I like to see the presentation with my eyes. I believe seeing the presentation in a more amazing way, I can learn easily."

The study concluded that Canva could be a means to bring out and develop students' creativity in the field of technology by designing their designs, adding text, adding images, or adding photos (Fitria, 2022). Thus, it helps them hone their ability to learn through graphic design.

Theme 4: Visual Communication and its Significance in the Digital Stage

Every individual has different or even the same experiences in using the platform Canva. This section discusses the dominant experiences and significance of using Canva for Visual communication on digital platforms. The informants emphasized how Canva helps them hone their creativity, and composition skills on their task in creating a good quality output and the effect of connectivity to the students in creating a better presentation.

Informant A "It has actually affected my visual literacy in a positive light because of the fact that I am somebody who finds it hard to visualize something, but through Canva, I get to express myself more because of how easy it is to look for what you want or how you want to express yourself with just a simple search."

Informant B "Positively because as much as I don't like using technology kay lag very dumb-dumb kaa ko ana nga part. It gave me an insight on what people can do when they are given the means to conjure or make something from their minds in a way that they cannot be kuan di sila maglisud kay lage ang Canva sayon ra kaa siya gamiton. So yes, I think it has a positive effect. Not only as a student but also as an artist at heart." (Positively because as much as I don't like using technology since I'm very dumb (not fond) of that part. It gave me an insight into what people can do when they are given the means to conjure or make something from their minds in a way that they don't struggle with because Canva is easy to use. So yes, I think it has a positive effect. Not only as a student but also as an artist at heart.)

Informant D "Transitions kay mas nice imong presentation if naay kanang animation and like kanang stickers, aesthetic stickers and good stickers na mu add ug element sa imong presentation." (Transitions because your presentation would be nicer if there's an animation and like stickers, aesthetic stickers, and good stickers that will add elements to the presentation.)

All the informants mentioned above claimed that Canva helped them improve and develop their Creativity.

Informant A "Okay, so in our English (ENGL) 122 Language, Culture, and Society course. There was; I was assigned a topic to discuss. It was about the Philippine sociolinguistics, and I was using this presentation that encompass or express how I wanted the presentation to be absorbed or to be assimilated by my peers. I actually used a design that is somehow traditional yet is also preferred by my peers. After I finished my discussion, I actually impressed a lot of my peers because of the fact that it is convenient, it is simple, yet it also doesn't complicate things or complicate the topic itself."

Informant D "Last design hearing namo kay mag need man jud na shag presentation. So, amo jung siguro na formal among presentation and ang colors would not, kay dili gani mag bangga sa usag-usa. I think that's one of the like recent lang jud na naka realize me nga Canva would really help and would make your life as a student way better and easier." (Our last design hearing, it really needs a presentation. So, we really assured that our presentation was formal and that the colors would complement each other. I think that's one of the recent activities that allows us to realize that Canva

would really help and would make your life as a student way better and easier.)
Informant I "One particular experience is our teaching demonstration. I created my PowerPoint presentation using Canva, layout printed materials as my instructional materials. I can say that Canva really helps me convey my lesson thoroughly."

However, it was unveiled that the digital age and its innovations have its limitations. These limitations have hindered visual communication to an extent, which also potentially disturbed the development of visual literacy.

Informant A "The biggest disadvantage that I have encountered when using Canva is the fact that it consumes a lot of data. So when you have a weak connection, a weak internet connection, then chances are you will have a hard time making your presentations, making your infographics, and other types of things."

The particular limitation that was evident in the response is connectivity or having a slow internet connection delays the process.

Informant A "There was this time I think I was making infographics for our MMW our Mathematics in the Modern World, and then during that certain instance it was raining so it was, I was having a weak internet connection, and thus the page the app itself was continuously refreshing on its own. And I, the result was I finished it; I couldn't finish it in such a short time."

Informant B "One circumstance is when I was tasked to make a PowerPoint presentation for our *unsa to oy nga class*, sa among TEM The Entrepreneurial Mind I think. Nag kuan man mi ato kanang nag business proposal and then akua man ang PPT na part so naghimu kog PPT sa Canva. Tapos it was late at night I think and my connection was not very stable so nag sige siyag ka wala-wala nag sige siyag ka pawng-pawng lagot kaau ko ato argh. Pero at the end is na okay na nahuman ra nako akong PPT." (One circumstance is when I was tasked to make a PowerPoint presentation for our class TEM, The Entrepreneurial Mind, I think. At the time, we were making a business proposal, and then I was assigned to create the PowerPoint presentation in which I used Canva. I was doing it late at night, I think, and my connection was not very stable. Due to this, the website (Canva) was having episodes of malfunction and lagging which really frustrated me. But in the end, it all turned out okay since I eventually finished my presentation.)

Students have a variety of experiences. They unanimously agree that Canva is an excellent tool for enhancing their composition skills. (Damyanov and Tsankov 2018), visual images have become the means of communication. Students must possess literacy, which entails understanding and utilizing language decoding interpreting visual messages, and creating meaningful visual communication. Thus, delving into the world of infographics can significantly assist students in their tasks and modeling aptitude. The research paper investigates six categories of tasks in education while examining their correlation with the approved standards for visual literacy competence set by the Association of College & Research Libraries. Furthermore, it compares infographic tools and discusses the suitability of available templates. These findings underscore the importance of students acquiring proficiency in language to enhance their communication skills well as reading comprehension, and analytical abilities. Visual imagery undeniably plays a role in nurturing students' visual literacy prowess while simultaneously developing their capabilities.

5. Theory Generation

After the interview and thorough analysis of the students' lived experiences with using the graphic design platform Canva, a core category that emerged and is prevalent is its overall influence. It was revealed in the interview responses that the overall influence of Canva in the academe is substantial, especially in the visual literacy of the students. Initially, the notion includes how the graphic design platform has influenced academics holistically and the general convenience it provides. The graphic design platform's impact has also affected a certain level of the students' visual literacy, a vital aspect

that aided their visual learning, creativity, layout, and composition. In adherence to the notion of visual literacy, the students' responses inferred that visual presentations created through Canva provide more comprehensible input. However, a setback that potentially hinders the progress is the internet connectivity which is required to fully access the graphic design platform via the web, which means a slow connectivity delays the creation of an output that accommodates visual literacy. Subsequently, analyzing the students' experiences with using Canva can be described as follows: The application, Canva, is generally recognized for its relevance in accomplishing academic requirements that are inclined to the notion of visual literacy wherein students create visual presentations to disseminate a more comprehensible output. **(Theme 1)**. Students utilize the aforementioned graphic design platform primarily because they find it very convenient and easy to navigate, wherein they define it as everything, including different templates, elements, and designs, to be one click away. Essentially, the convenience Canva offers to the students is what makes Canva an effective visual communication tool. **(Theme 2)**. Aside from the fact that it has been used frequently in creating PowerPoint presentations for assignments and class reportings, students acknowledge Canva as an effective way to learn effectively. The graphic design platform provides an interesting learning experience for every student as it contains various features that are exceptionally amusing and pleasing to the eyes. These features have a relevant impact on students' visual literacy, which allows them to improve their ability to absorb lessons effortlessly **(Theme 3)**. When creating presentations, like PowerPoint presentations, infographics, videos, and posters, the students find this graphic design platform beneficial for honing their creativity and composition skills. This helps students to explore a variety of features that they can use in their future tasks. Informants emphasize Canva's positive impact on their visual literacy and ability to express themselves creatively, in which visual literacy enhances their composition skills and improves the quality of their work through Canva's design features and templates. It is revealed how Canva-related issues will affect the learners' performance on creating a better quality performance **(Theme 4)**.

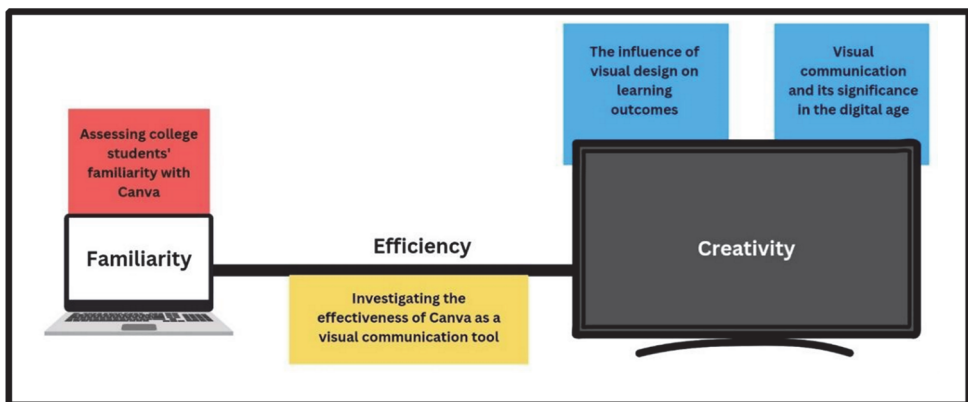


Figure 2. Ritoca's Theory
Source: Original photo

6. The Overall Influence of Canva Theory

Ritoca's Theory defines the overall influence of Canva and can be divided into three parts. Familiarity, Efficiency, and Creativity are considered constituents of the overall influence of the graphic design platform Canva. The model follows a linear transformative framework that exhibits an evident progression and development of visual literacy, which pertains to the students who utilize the graphic design platform, Canva.

Firstly, Familiarity is defined as how students become acquainted with Canva. It determines why students recognize the graphic design platform, wherein it can be associated with its dominant purpose, which is for academics. Students' immense familiarity with Canva acknowledges its relevance in accomplishing tasks and requirements, given that Canva provides a student-friendly platform for academic and aesthetic purposes. Secondly, Efficiency answers the question as to why students frequently utilize the graphic design platform Canva, wherein its underlying theme can define it; convenience. Subsequently, its accessibility and availability, its tendency to be easily navigated, its ability to contain everything one click away, and the general concept of convenience Canva provide brands with the graphic design platform the aspect of efficiency. Simply put, Canva allows students to work efficiently.

Lastly, Creativity defines the fruition of visual literacy among the students. The notion can be divided into two (2) perspectives. Firstly, students can nurture their visual literacy through the integration of visual presentations using the aforementioned graphic design platform, wherein they create an output of quality (lay-outing and composition) that contains comprehensible content, well-organized designs, and appropriate templates, which enables the students to convey information thoroughly. Secondly, visual presentations are equivalent to positive learning outcomes, wherein their acquired visual literacy allows the students to perform critical interpretations and receive a better understanding of the subject. Overall, the aforementioned notions justify the utilization and composition of visual presentations as a feature in Canva supplements and enhance the students' visual literacy to a greater extent.

Ritoca's Theory offers a useful framework for comprehending the influence of visual aids on learning processes. It explains how students utilize Canva in an increasingly comfortable, effective, and creative way. As far as educational practice is concerned, it is feasible for curriculum development to assist teachers in planning lessons that gradually increase students' visual literacy. For instance, first jobs can concentrate on acquainting students with Canva and its fundamental functions, whilst subsequent assignments may emphasize the effectiveness of using the tool for certain objectives, leading to innovative projects that demand unique design and intricate visual storytelling. Assessment strategies can provide guidance for creating assessment rubrics that gauge how well learners are moving through these phases. For example, first tests could gauge students' comprehension and proficiency using Canva, while later assessments might concentrate on the effectiveness of the tool's use as well as the creativity and uniqueness of the visual material produced. Differentiated instructions, teachers can adapt their education to fit each student's needs by taking into account the possibility that learners will move through the stages at various rates. This may entail giving learners who are having trouble adjusting to new situations more help or presenting more difficult tasks to those who are prepared to work on artistic visual projects. Furthermore, it is also considerable to provide teacher training, to properly include visual aids like Canva into their teaching procedures which allows educators to be adept at using them. Hence, Ritoca's Theory has the ability to inform the design of professional development programs, preparing teachers to mentor learners as they move through.

7. Conclusion

In a capsule, Ritoca's Theory can provide a framework or a model of reference for educational leaders, academic institutions, instructors, and all other qualified teachers for them to perceive, understand, and take into account the employment of the graphic design platform Canva as an educational tool. This is because the Theory defines and exhibits the significance of visual literacy, which is evidently acquired through the utilization and integration of the graphic design platform, Canva. Furthermore, the overall notion of the Theory highlights the learners' perception of using the aforementioned graphic design platform in the academe, wherein it exhibited their familiarity with Canva, awareness of its efficiency, and acquisition of the profound inherent skill of creativity. The researchers recommend studying the students' experiences using Canva in correlation with other skills and literacies.

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