

Microsoft Teams versus Telegram for Asynchronous Group Discussions: Investigation of ESL Students' Learning Experience

Zulaikha Zulkflee^{1*}

¹ General Studies Department, Ungku Omar Polytechnic, Ipoh, Malaysia

* Corresponding Author: zzulaikha@puo.edu.my

Received: 15 December 2023 | Accepted: 10 February 2024 | Published: 1 March 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ajress.2024.6.1.15>

Abstract: *The process of teaching and learning has undergone a few changes due to several factors. High adoption of technology during the pandemic has exposed learners to the use of various online tools for the sustainability of their learning experience in post-pandemic classrooms. Thus, investigating the learners' experience in deciding which online tools to retain for teaching and learning in the post-pandemic classroom is imperative to continue improving the teaching and learning quality. Hence, this study investigates students' learning experiences using two different platforms; Microsoft Teams and Telegram during asynchronous group discussion activity in a Communicative English classroom. This study employed quantitative research design using an online survey method that was distributed to 50 polytechnic students and a semi-structured interview was conducted with five respondents. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Paired sample t-test was used to compare significant difference between the students' learning experience while using Microsoft Teams and Telegram. Descriptive analysis reported an overall positive perception of how both Microsoft Teams and Telegram are useful for accessing information and learning resources. However, Microsoft Teams was reported to be favoured for group discussion assessment, feedback as well as critical reflection and knowledge construction. On one hand, higher motivation and participation was identified via Telegram. Inferential statistics revealed there was a statistically significant difference in the learners' experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram in five out of seven construct items which are support and motivation, participation in course activities, assessment, feedback as well as critical reflection and knowledge construction. The results of this study are useful for educators in assisting them to decide which online learning tools that can support specific learning activities for better learning outcomes.*

Keywords: Microsoft Teams, Telegram, asynchronous group discussion, learning experience

1. Introduction

The nature of teaching has undergone continuous transformation as a result of advancements in numerous sectors, particularly in the field of technology. The education system in Malaysia is experiencing a significant transformation as a result of The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which has a profound impact on the education environment in the 21st century. Through a reform in the educational system in the country, Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) has outlined a set of skills and competencies that are aligned with the National Education Philosophy which hopefully would provide Malaysian students an internationally competitive edge. In order to prepare students with the essential knowledge and skills needed to succeed in

the globalised competitive industry in the 21st century, educational institutions are encouraged to leverage on the technology-enabled models to a more personalised learning experience for students (MoE, 2015). Over the years, the transformation has resulted in the growing popularity of blended learning, flipped learning and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) in Malaysian higher education institutions.

In the context of Malaysian polytechnics, blended learning approach has been incorporated in the teaching and learning process with the use of their own Learning Management System (LMS) known as Curriculum Information Document Online System (CIDOS). The primary objective of incorporating technology into education is to create a technology-enhanced environment facilitating the delivery of teaching and learning. Ideally, a technology-enhanced environment refers to a space that allows teachers to create effective and engaging learning experiences with the use of digital tools and pedagogical techniques to achieve the objectives of teaching and learning (Healy, 2018). In accordance with the transformation plan, lecturers at polytechnics in Malaysia are anticipated to use technology in their teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the integration of technology in has never been straightforward due to the perception of technology as means or tools rather than being extensively used in lessons, activities and assignments (Ramalingam, Yunus & Hashim, 2022). Therefore, even after almost ten years of its introduction, technology has not been completely integrated, and this was particularly evident during mandatory shifts in the teaching and learning caused by pandemic COVID-19 outbreak.

The pandemic has forced the closure of educational institutions, rendering traditional in-person teaching and learning impractical and substituted by virtual instruction. This change has sparked an outcry among educators particularly at polytechnics context. The primary cause of this frustration was from the limited time for preparing online activities and materials, as well as the lack of assistance and resources. Consequently, the predominant approach used was synchronous mono-directional online lectures using web conferencing tools such as Zoom and Google Meet. In addition, the problem was exacerbated by insufficient training, limited classroom experience in using technology and restricted access to equipment and online applications (Fabian, Gan & Yunus, 2021). The use of advanced technology in the teaching and learning process was anticipated to be seamless and effortless. However, the actual experience revealed that the transition was challenging, inconvenient, ineffective, time-consuming and energy consuming (Thumvichit, 2021).

Polytechnics lecturers were also concerned about the limited options for students to actively engaged in a virtual English language classroom. This was attributed to the lack of attachment within the online community which was seen as less prevalent compared to conventional face-to-face teaching (Hasnan & Mohin, 2021). This is mostly due to the nature of Communicative English classes, in which students are required to complete communicative-based tasks by engaging in the exchange of ideas, either in pairs or small group discussions. Hence, modifications in lecturers' pedagogical approaches are inevitable since they play a crucial role in creating and maintaining a meaningful learning experience for students (Girardet & Berger, 2018) irrespective of the situation.

Despite the initial difficulties, both teachers and students have gained advantages from the constant exposure to various technology-based tools for communicative activities such as discussions, collaborative group works, individual works and assessments. Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guardia and Koole (2021), found that teachers exhibit more receptiveness to innovation, contributing to a more dynamic and carefully designed online teaching

environment called online distance learning. Following a two-year period of online instruction amidst the pandemic, teachers have developed more skills and competencies in using technology, creating opportunities for sustainable integration of technological tools to enrich the language classroom (Kohnke, 2021). Currently, in post-pandemic teaching and learning, the teaching and learning does not fully revert to traditional classroom instructions (Yusof et al., 2021) as teachers have seen the potential of benefits of combining elements from both traditional and modern approaches. Moreover, the educational setting is no longer bound to the physical confines of classroom due to the altered circumstances in the post-pandemic classroom. Assimilation of teachers' experience during the online teaching and learning into the face-to-face classroom instruction is expected to create an innovative instructional paradigm and approach, benefitting from the integration of technology to establish and sustain a meaningful learning environment for learners. Teachers must evaluate what is valuable to retain and what to discard to further enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the post-pandemic classroom. Thus, investigating the learners' experience in determining which online tools to be retained for the teaching and learning in the post-pandemic Communicative English classroom could provide an additional insight to lecturers not only in the polytechnic's context, but also in other relevant institutions.

Hence, this study was conducted to investigate polytechnics students' perceptions on their learning experience in using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for asynchronous group discussion activity in a Communicative English classroom. Based on the research objective, this study intends to answer the following research questions: i) How do students perceive their learning experience in using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for asynchronous group discussion activity in a Communicative English classroom?; ii) Is there any significant difference between students' learning experience using Microsoft Teams and Telegram?

2. Literature Review

This study is guided by the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework which was established by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (1999). As the technology and Internet are integrated in the English language classroom, the framework outlines three most important aspects in shaping the learners' experience particularly at the higher education level through computer-mediated communication (CMC). It includes both the teachers and students who are the key players in the teaching and learning process and the interaction between the three elements as depicted in Figure 1 which are cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence. These elements are important in a community of inquiry which help shape the learners' educational experience. According to Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2010), the cognitive presence is based on Dewey's notion of reflective thought which highlights the importance of critical thinking through the four-step Practical Inquiry model which includes triggering event, exploration, integration and resolution.

Meanwhile, social presence refers to the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project their own personal characteristics, making them visible as "real people" in front of the other participants (Garrison et al., 1999). This element focuses more on the affective aspects of the teaching and learning process which supports the cognitive presence element for a successful learning experience. The last element, teaching presence deals with the core responsibility of a teacher in selecting, organising, presenting as well as developing learning activities and assessments (Garrison et al, 1999). However, other students may also play a role in the teaching presence as this element facilitates the social and cognitive presence in achieving the learning outcomes. In the context of this study, CoI is established to ensure that

the learners can stay connected in a virtual environment with the use of digital tools such as Microsoft Teams and Telegram. The activities were prepared by the lecturer (teaching presence) and the students engaged in the asynchronous group discussion activities (social presence) which in turn helped students to develop critical thinking (cognitive presence) in completing the assessment. The interaction between these three elements is imperative in a virtual Communicative English classroom as indicators of a successful learning experience.



Figure 1: Elements of Educational Experience (Garrison et al., 1999)

When the shift to online virtual teaching and learning happened due to the pandemic COVID-19, the lecturers had no other choices but to quickly adapt to the unconventional teaching method. Regardless the long history of technology integration in education, studies on the use of technology has only been escalating in the past two years due to the closure of educational institutions during the pandemic. A study on the university students' preferences on e-learning in India by Khan, Vivek, Nabi, Khojah and Tahir (2020) revealed that students prefer e-learning as it allows them to connect with their teacher and fellow students as well as the ease of access to study materials. This is supported by findings from a study by Lam, Jusoh and Kamaruzaman (2021) on the polytechnic students' online learning experience during COVID-19 pandemic. They asserted that the students are generally satisfied with their online learning experience. However, their respondents were said to have problems understanding the content of the course and difficulty to stay focused during the teaching and learning sessions due to distractions.

In addition to studies examining students' perspectives on online learning or the use of online tools in general, several academics have conducted comparative studies investigating the use of specific online tools in the teaching and learning process amidst the pandemic. Sobaih, Salem, Hasanein and Elnasr (2021) conducted a study on the learning experience of Egyptian university students, focusing on the use of Microsoft Teams and social network sites (SNS) such as WhatsApp and Facebook. They reported that both Microsoft Teams and SNS provided students with relevant learning experience especially in helping them to access information and learning resources as well as for knowledge construction and critical reflection. Amin & Sundari (2020) conducted another comparison on the students' preferred digital platforms during emergency remote teaching. The university students in Indonesia showed positive perceptions on all three platforms. Specifically, the video conferencing tool (Cisco Webex) was preferred due to its authenticity and meaning focus while LMS (Google Classroom) was scored highest for language learning potential, meaning focus and authenticity. They also reported that messenger application (WhatsApp) was liked by the respondents for its meaning focus, learner fit, positive impact and practicality.

Other scholars have also conducted studies on the use of specific online tools in the teaching and learning process. Rojabi (2020) indicated that the university students in Indonesia perceived Microsoft Teams positively for online learning as it provided them with opportunities for interaction and increased their motivation to participate in the learning activities which helped them comprehend the learning materials easily. Yen & Nhi (2021) also shared the same notion in which their findings revealed that Microsoft Teams are useful as a platform to assess the students' achievement of learning outcomes and to provide feedback to students. Meanwhile, Aladsani's (2021) study on the use of Telegram among university students in Saudi Arabia revealed that it is useful for the enhancement of their course interaction. Another study by Ramamurthy, Shafien, Syamimie, Azlan and Rashid (2022) on undergraduate students in Malaysia revealed that Telegram is helpful for asynchronous self-learning time.

The review of past literature indicates a noticeable increase in research focusing on online teaching and learning. While there have been several studies on the use of various online tools for the teaching and learning, research specifically focusing on the application of these technologies in Communicative English courses is limited. Moreover, as to the researcher's knowledge, comparative studies on online tools to be integrated in the post-pandemic classrooms are scarcely available. Therefore, this present study aims to fill the gap by focusing on the learners' experience of using two different online tools for asynchronous group discussion activities in a Communicative English classroom.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted using a survey method. As stated by Braun, Clarke, Boulton, Davey & McEvoy (2020), surveys are the most predominant approach for collecting data in quantitative research and have been extensively used in various fields including education. 50 students who enrolled in a Communicative English course at a polytechnic in Perak were chosen using convenience sampling method. The students had the experience of using both Microsoft Teams and Telegram for asynchronous group discussion activities as part of the teaching and learning process. Due to limited time for practice in the classroom, asynchronous group discussions were conducted to provide more time for students to practice on their own, with the lecturer as facilitator. Convenience sampling was used as it allows the researcher to choose the respondents based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The data were collected using an online survey questionnaire adapted from Sobaih et al. (2021). The questionnaire comprised of 30 items encompassing seven variables that shape students' experience: access to information and learning resources (four items), support (four items), participation (four items), assessment (five items), feedback (four items), critical reflection (four items) and overall perceptions (five items). The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement to each item in the questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) for both Microsoft Teams and Telegram. The questionnaire was initially devised by Sobaih et al. (2021) by analysing past studies to investigate the students' learning experiences and responses to courses which incorporated both Microsoft Teams and social networking sites (SNS) for their online distance learning during the pandemic COVID-19. The questionnaire had a high reliability, as shown by Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.86 to 0.92. Two items on the respondents' background were included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered online through Google Form. Online survey questionnaire was chosen because it

is one of the most used platforms for data collection since it is safe, convenient and feasible (Torrentira, 2020). The online questionnaire contained a statement of informed consent, all the respondents consented to participate in the study. The link to the questionnaire was shared directly by the researcher on both Microsoft Teams and Telegram. The data collection was conducted in the final week of the academic session.

Among the survey respondents, five students were chosen for semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth responses on their experiences of using both Microsoft Teams and Telegram for asynchronous group discussions in the Communicative English course. The interview sessions also examined the issues and challenges related to the use of Microsoft Teams and Telegram. Creswell & Creswell (2018) noted that semi-structured interviews provide more flexibility, efficiency and ease of comprehension. Thus, individual semi-structured interview sessions were conducted using the online video conferencing platform Google Meet. Each session lasted for approximately 15 minutes and all five respondents willingly agreed to participate in the interview. The interview sessions were scheduled promptly after the completion of quantitative data collection, taking place within the same week.

After gathering the data, the quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages were used for the respondents' background while mean scores and standard deviations were used to analyse the students' responses on their experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for the asynchronous group discussion activities. A paired sample *t*-test was also conducted to compare the students' experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram based on the seven variables included in the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the data from the interview sessions were selectively transcribed to explain the quantitative data. In order to uphold ethical standards, it is crucial to safeguard the anonymity of the participants while discussing the results of the interview (Adnan, Karim, Tahir, Kamal & Yusof, 2019). Hence, the five respondents were designated as S1 to S5 in this study.

4. Findings and Discussion

Background of the Respondents

The respondents who participated in this study were Semester 1 students who registered for a Communicative English course at a polytechnic in Perak. Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in this study based on gender and age. The respondents were almost divided by gender, with 48% (n=24) being male and 52% (n=26) being female. Meanwhile, among the 50 respondents, 52% (n=26) were aged 18 to 20, 42% (n=21) were 21 to 23 and the remaining 6% (n=3) were more than 23 years old. Throughout the semester, these students were introduced to the use of Telegram and Microsoft Teams for asynchronous group discussions.

Table 1: Respondents' Background

Item		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	24	48.0
	Female	26	52.0
Age	18-20 years	26	52.0
	21-23 years	21	42.0
	More than 23 years	3	6.0

Students' Learning Experience of Using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for Asynchronous Group Discussion Activity

Table 2 depicts the responses to the questionnaire items on the respondents' experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for asynchronous group discussion activity in the Communicative English class with the highest and lowest mean scores their respective standard deviations. The findings are presented according to the seven construct items which are: (1) Access to Information and Learning Resources, (2) Support and Motivation, (3) Participation in Course Activities, (4) Assessment, (5) Feedback, (6) Critical Reflection and Knowledge Construction and (7) Overall Perceptions.

Construct Item 1: Access to Information and Learning Resources

The findings indicated the respondents' positive feedback on how both Microsoft Teams and Telegram are useful to access the information and learning resources to be used in the asynchronous group discussion activity with a mean score of more than 4.00 for all the four items. The respondents perceived the design of the activity interesting as the highest on both Microsoft Teams ($M= 4.20$, $SD= 0.452$) and Telegram ($M=4.16$, $SD= 0.422$). Meanwhile, the item 'The activity facilitates discussions and assignments or project work' scored the lowest for both Microsoft Teams ($M= 4.06$, $SD= 0.373$) and Telegram ($M= 4.08$, $SD= 0.396$). Similar to Sobaih et al. (2021), the findings of this study suggested that students had easy access to the information and learning resources on both Microsoft Teams and Telegram. The interview findings also showed that all five respondents indicated that the learning resources were shared by the lecturer and they could easily download the materials at any time via both Microsoft Teams and Telegram.

Construct Item 2: Support and Motivation

Telegram was rated higher for support and motivation compared than Microsoft Teams. This can be seen through a high mean score of more than 4.00 for all the four items with regard to their use of Telegram, as compared to a low mean score of less than 2.60 for their perceived experience with Microsoft Teams. The respondents indicated strongest agreement that the activity helped them to communicate successfully with other students via Telegram ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.803$). Meanwhile, the respondents disagreed that the activity structure on Microsoft Teams improved their ability to attain the course learning outcomes, with the lowest mean score of 2.14 ($SD = 1.002$). The findings suggested that the respondents perceived Telegram as a better platform for support and motivation by interacting with their lecturer and peers. This is aligned with the findings by Sobaih et al. (2021) in which they reported a more favourable view of Telegram after receiving sufficient mentoring and apt support from peers. Three interviewees also said Telegram is useful for interaction, similar to Aladsani (2021). S1, S4 and S5 found Telegram easier to use for communication with group members and lecturer as they were able to receive notifications and respond quicker than Microsoft Teams. S4 also remarked that he had to re-login into Microsoft Teams to get notifications, which made it difficult to participate in the discussion on time and demotivated him.

Construct Item 3: Participation in Course Activities

Similarly, the research also found that respondents prefer Telegram over Microsoft Teams for course participation. The findings showed that Telegram had high mean scores for all the items, compared to Microsoft Teams, with low mean scores. Among the four items with high mean scores above 4.00, the respondents strongly agreed that the learning activities on Telegram encouraged them ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.815$). The interview findings indicated that four respondents (S1, S2, S4, S5) found Telegram more convenient and familiar than Microsoft Teams, leading to increased motivation to participate in the activities. In contrast, the lowest

mean score of 2.18 (SD = 1.119) indicates that respondents did not feel encouraged by the learning activities on Microsoft Teams. The findings are consistent with those of Sobaih et al. (2021) who found higher engagement in activities on Telegram compared to Microsoft Teams among their respondents.

Construct Item 4: Assessment

However, based on the findings, the respondents perceived their learning experience using Microsoft Teams for asynchronous group discussions more positively in terms of assessment compared to Telegram. This is similar to the findings of Sobaih et al. (2021) in which they found that students prefer using Microsoft Teams for online assignments. Among the questionnaire items with high mean scores above 4.00, the respondents strongly agreed that the group discussion assessment criteria were well explained to them on Microsoft Teams (M = 4.24, SD = 0.822). This is similar to Yen and Nhi (2021) who found Microsoft Teams practical to be used for students' assessments and feedback. During the interview, four respondents (S2, S3, S4, S5) indicated uncertainty about their performance in the group discussion assessment and emphasised the importance of lecturer's feedback. However, S1 mentioned that he was confident with his performance during the assessment as he believed that he had met all the requirements. Contrastively, four out of five items had a low mean score of between 2.18 to 2.60 for the assessment construct on Telegram. This study found that the respondents disagreed that the assessment items on Telegram were used to improve their learning with the lowest mean score of 2.18 (SD = 1.101).

Construct Item 5: Feedback

Meanwhile, the respondents agreed on all the items related to feedback on Microsoft Teams with mean scores of 4.12 and above. Conversely, the respondents disagreed on all four items related to feedback on Telegram, with low mean scores of 2.48 and below. The findings showed that most respondents agreed that they have been provided with feedback for the activities on Microsoft Teams (M = 4.26, SD = 0.803) and the least agreed that they used feedback to improve the quality of their assessment on Telegram (M = 2.22, SD = 1.182). All five interviewees also said they liked Microsoft Teams better because they received more thorough feedback than on Telegram and could make changes depending on the lecturer's specific feedback. This is similar to the findings of Sobaih et al. (2021) in which they reported students' preference of using Microsoft Teams to get feedback.

Construct Item 6: Critical Reflection and Knowledge Construction

Besides that, the findings also revealed that the respondents had more positive experience for critical reflection and knowledge construction on Microsoft Teams compared to Telegram. The highest mean score of 4.20 (SD = 0.857), indicated that respondents felt more confident in articulating and presenting their ideas on Microsoft Teams. In contrast, they felt the opposite in building and strengthening online community on Telegram with the lowest mean score of 2.20 (SD = 1.125). This study differs from of Sobaih et al. (2021) as they reported almost similar mean scores for critical reflection knowledge construction on both platforms, indicating that both Microsoft Teams and Telegram improved their ability to articulate and present ideas with more confidence.

Construct Item 7: Overall Perceptions

Based on the findings, it can be said that respondents showed positive overall perceptions on the use of both Microsoft Teams and Telegram for the asynchronous group discussion activity. This is aligned with the findings by Sobaih et al. (2021) in which students view the use of both Microsoft Teams and SNS like Telegram positively in the teaching and learning. The

respondents of this study indicated a high level of agreement with a mean score of more than 4.00 for each item. With the highest mean score of 4.30 (SD = 0.463), the respondents strongly agreed that they felt a greater sense of community with their class peers while using Telegram. Meanwhile, the item with the highest mean score for Microsoft Teams was for the respondents' enjoyment of online group discussion activity because it helped them to understand the subject better (M = 4.26, SD = 0.487). In addition, the interview findings showed that students prefer having asynchronous group discussion activities regardless of the platforms used by the lecturer. Three respondents (S1, S3, S4) said that as they are in their first semester, the asynchronous group discussion activities helped them get to know each other better and faster, thus creating better understanding and opportunities for enhancement of their speaking skills.

Table 2: Responses on the Use of Microsoft Teams and Telegram for Asynchronous Group Discussion

Variables	Item	Item Statement	Platform	Mean	Standard Deviation
Access to Information and Learning Resources	2.	The activity facilitates discussions and assignments or project work.	MS Teams	4.06	0.373
			Telegram	4.08	0.396
	4.	I did find the design of the activity interesting.	MS Teams	4.20	0.452
			Telegram	4.16	0.422
Support and Motivation	7.	The activity structure enhanced my ability to successfully achieve the course outcome.	MS Teams	2.14	0.948
			Telegram	4.22	0.815
	8.	The activity has helped me to communicate successfully with other students.	MS Teams	2.34	1.002
			Telegram	4.26	0.803
Participation in Course Activities	10.	I felt encouraged by the learning activities provided.	MS Teams	2.18	1.119
			Telegram	4.22	0.815
Assessment	15.	Assessment items were used to improve my learning in this course.	MS Teams	4.08	0.944
			Telegram	2.18	1.101
Feedback	16.	The group discussion assessment criteria were clearly communicated to me.	MS Teams	4.24	0.822
			Telegram	2.20	1.125
	18.	I have been provided with feedback in this activity.	MS Teams	4.26	0.803
			Telegram	2.48	1.249
	21.	I used the feedback to improve the quality of my assessment.	MS Teams	4.12	0.799
			Telegram	2.22	1.183
Critical Reflection and Knowledge Construction	22.	I feel more confident in articulating and presenting my ideas.	MS Teams	4.20	0.857
			Telegram	2.28	1.161
Overall Perception	23.	I feel more confident to build and strengthen online community.	MS Teams	4.16	0.976
			Telegram	2.20	1.125
	26.	The online class interactions support my learning experience.	MS Teams	4.14	0.351
			Telegram	4.16	0.370
	27.	I feel a greater sense of community with my class peers.	MS Teams	4.24	0.431
			Telegram	4.30	0.463
	29.	I feel encouraged to learn more about the subject through the online group discussion activity.	MS Teams	4.22	0.507
			Telegram	4.10	0.544
	30.	I enjoyed the online group discussion activity because it helped me to understand the subject better.	MS Teams	4.26	0.487
			Telegram	4.24	0.476

Differences in the Learners' Experience of Using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for Asynchronous Group Discussion

To compare the learners' asynchronous group discussion experience with Microsoft Teams and Telegram, a paired sample *t*-test was used. Table 3 presents the paired sample *t*-test findings for the seven variables that help shape students' experience. Based on the results, it can be seen

that there is a statistically significant difference in the learners' experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for the asynchronous group discussion in five out of seven variables. Significant differences are identified for the variables support and motivation ($t = 18.997, p < 0.01$), participation in course activities ($t = 17.097, p < 0.01$), assessment ($t = -15.658, p < 0.01$), feedback ($t = -16.243, p < 0.01$) as well as critical reflection and knowledge construction ($t = -15.981, p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, there is no significant difference between the respondents' learning experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for the asynchronous group discussion activity in terms of access to information and learning resources and their overall perceptions with a p value of more than 0.05 respectively.

Table 3: Results of Paired Sample t -test on the Learners' Experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram for Asynchronous Group Discussion

Variables	Platforms	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	p
Access to Information and Learning Resources	MS Teams	4.13	0.332	-1.661	0.103
	Telegram	4.11	0.320		
Support and Motivation	MS Teams	2.27	1.018	18.997	0.000
	Telegram	4.19	0.804		
Participation in Course Activities	MS Teams	2.35	1.118	17.097	0.000
	Telegram	4.12	0.821		
Assessment	MS Teams	4.01	0.855	-15.658	0.000
	Telegram	2.40	1.162		
Feedback	MS Teams	4.19	0.777	-16.243	0.000
	Telegram	2.35	1.192		
Critical Reflection and Knowledge Construction	MS Teams	4.13	0.853	-15.981	0.000
	Telegram	2.32	1.188		
Overall Perception	MS Teams	4.21	0.432	-.444	0.659
	Telegram	4.21	0.435		

5. Conclusion

This study examined students' experiences utilising Microsoft Teams and Telegram for asynchronous group discussion activities in the Communicative English classroom. The study found out that students have positive overall perceptions on the use of both Microsoft Teams and Telegram for the activities and how they are useful to access the information and learning resources. However, the results also showed that the students perceive Microsoft Teams more positively for group discussion assessment, feedback as well as critical reflection and knowledge construction. Meanwhile, the students have better perceptions on Telegram for motivation and participation in the asynchronous group discussion activities. The findings also showed a statistically significant difference between the students' experience of using Microsoft Teams and Telegram in five out of seven variables, including support and motivation, participation in course activities, assessment, feedback as well as critical reflection and knowledge construction.

Due to the study's small sample size from a particular institution, the findings cannot be generalised to a bigger population. It is recommended for other studies to include a larger number of respondents from several institutions for a more thorough comparison. In addition to that, this study only focuses on the use of two online tools which are Microsoft Teams and Telegram for asynchronous group discussion activities. Hence, future studies might want to investigate the use of other online communicative tools or other communicative-based

activities in the English teaching and learning. Furthermore, the results indicate that the online tools might be useful for specific purposes. Thus, it is suggested that future research explore the diverse range of tools meant for specific purposes in the teaching and learning such as individualised learning, collaborative group work, project-based learning or assessments.

The findings of this study may be useful for English language educators in selecting an appropriate tool to optimise students' learning experience in an online communicative-based activity. The use of appropriate technologies may greatly contribute to creating possibilities for students to improve their learning experience and facilitate the attainment of course learning outcomes. Policymakers and other stakeholders may also develop integrative teaching and learning modules for the communicative classroom to fully use the enhanced technology expertise of educators and active involvement of students in the teaching and learning of English.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Ungku Omar Polytechnic for providing the supports for this study.

References

- Adnan, A. H. M., Karim, R. A., Tahir, M. H. M., Kamal, N. N. M & Yusof, A. M. (2019). Education 4.0 technologies, Industry 4.0 skills and the teaching of English in Malaysian tertiary education. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 10(4), 330-343. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no4.24>
- Aladsani, H. K. (2021). University students' use and perceptions of Telegram to promote effective educational interactions: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 16(9), 182-197. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v16i09.19281>
- Amin, F. M. & Sundari, H. (2020). EFL students' preferences on digital platforms during emergency remote teaching: Video conference, LMS, or messenger application? *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7(2), 362-378. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24815/siele.v7i2.16929>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Boulton, E., Davey, L. & McEvoy, C. (2020). The online survey as a qualitative research tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 24(6), 641-654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1805550>
- Creswell, J. C. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th Ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Fabian, S. R., Gan, P. X. & Yunus, M. M. (2021). All set? ESL online teaching among polytechnic lecturers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education and Society*, 3(3), 1-15.
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T. & Archer, W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3), 87-105. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516\(00\)00016-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6)
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T. & Archer, W. (2010). The first decade of the community of inquiry framework: A retrospective. *Internet and Higher Education*, 13(2010), 5-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2009.10.003>
- Girardet, C. & Berger, J. (2018). Factors influencing the evolution of vocational teachers' beliefs and practices related to classroom management during teacher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 138-158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n4.8>

- Healey, D. (2018). Technology enhanced learning environments. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0437>
- Khan, M. A., Vivek, Nabi, M. K., Khojah, M. & Tahir, M. (2020). Perception towards e-learning during COVID-19 pandemic in India: An empirical study. *Sustainability*, 2021, 13(1), 57. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010057>
- Lam, K. W., Jusoh, N. & Kamaruzaman, N. (2021). Online learning experience during Covid-19 pandemic: An online survey among Malaysian polytechnic students. In N. F. Habidin, S. Y. Y. Ong, U. A. Muhamad & Chik, T. W. T. (Eds.). *Research and Innovation: Education, Technology and Performance Management* (pp. 173-179). Tanjung Malim: Kaizenrenovation Sdn. Bhd.
- Ministry of Education. (2015). *Executive Summary: Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Higher Education.
- Ramamurthi, L., Shafien, S., Nawati, N. S. M., Azlan, M. A. K. & Rashid, R. A. (2022). Students' feedback on using Telegram in speaking practice during self learning time. *International Online Journal of Language, Communication, and Humanities*, 5(I), 1-15.
- Rapanta, C., Botturi, L., Goodyear, P., Guardia, L. & Koole, M. Balancing technology, pedagogy and the new normal: Post-pandemic challenges for higher education. *Postdigital Science and Education* (2021), 3, 715-742. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-021-00249-1>
- Rojabi, A. R. (2020). Exploring EFL students' perception of online learning via Microsoft Teams: University level in Indonesia. *English Language Teaching Education Journal*, 3(2), 163-173.
- Sobaih, A. E. E., Salem, A. E., Hasanein, A. M. & Elnasr, A. E. A. (2021). Responses to COVID-19 in higher education: Students' learning experience using Microsoft Teams versus social network sites. *Sustainability* 2021, 13(18), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810036>
- Thumvichit, A. (2021). English language teaching in times of crisis: Teacher agency in response to the pandemic-forced online education. *Teaching English with Technology*, 27(2), 14-37.
- Torrentira, M. C. J. (2020). Online data collection as adaptation in conducting quantitative and qualitative research during the COVID-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 7(11), 78-87. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v7i11.3336>
- Yen, T. V. M. Y. & Nhi, N. T. U. (2021). The practice of online English teaching and learning with Microsoft Teams: From students' view. *AsiaCALL Online Journal*, 12(2), 51-57.
- Yusof, F. H. M., Bakar, S. Z. S. A., Amat, D. W., Othman D., Sumery, Z., Sarijari, H. & Qomariyah, A. (2021). ESL teaching: Preferences on the use of e-learning apps in maximising effective teaching and learning experiences for open and distance learning (ODL). *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(6), 1123-1139. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i6/10025>