



Received: 13-05-2022

Accepted: 23-06-2022

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Investigating Students' Perspectives Towards Microsoft-Teams Platform in Covid-19

Eissa Mohammed Mohammed Alsayed

Department of English Language, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Qatar

Corresponding Author: Eissa Mohammed Mohammed Alsayed

Abstract

The current study was brought into existence when the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has changed the education system globally. Successive students' perspectives were noticed in Qatari schools through adopting Microsoft team app to sustain and make a progress in the learning process. Students' perspectives reported challenges through accessing the Microsoft team platform. Challenges are addressed in the study concerned with the effectiveness of the app, online motivation, students' perspectives and teacher-student interaction. Thus, successive training for both teachers and students to have adaptability on the virtual world is needed inevitably and instantly. This study employs the analytical research methodology by adopting a

questionnaire to collect data from preparatory school students to reach the results. The vast majority of respondents admit the positivity of the Microsoft teams and taking part significantly in their academic attainment. However, challenges are drawn through accessing the app and interact successfully. The study proposing strategies to create safe, supportive, and challenging learning environments. Moreover, innovating new policies concerning online motivation through the virtual world, engaging students and develop them as learners along with successive training for teachers concerning the issue of deficiency in watching video lessons.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Challenges of Online Learning, Distant Learning, Microsoft-Teams Platform, Online Motivation, Students' Perspectives, Teaching Online Classes

1. Introduction

Following the closure of all public and private schools and universities on March 10, 2020 to control the COVID-19 outbreak, the ministry of education and higher education -Qatar acted swiftly in designing an effective alternative to the physical classroom, ensuring that all students are able to continue their learning and not fall behind in their studies. The ministry of education and higher education launched a new online learning platform called "Mzeed". This platform offers digital and interactive resources prepared by a qualified team of teachers, early education mentors and curricula specialists. Students can find many resources on this platform including interactive books, textbooks in PDF format, video, audio and many other digital learning materials that enrich the student's education. Through this platform, the Ministry aims to boost the learning process of the students by providing explanation in an interesting and interactive way, without the constant need to connect to the internet. The Ministry also launched the platform of "Q-learning" facilitating and supporting all distance learning services. For students who did not have the equipment or access to e-learning, the Ministry, through its collaborations with the telecommunications networks in Qatar, has provided computers, tablets, laptops and hundreds of broadband devices for Internet access to students (MOEHE, 2020) ^[1].

The outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic has been affected considerably on public and private schools in the state of Qatar since the 10th of March 2020 up to now. The learning from school environment is alternated to the virtual world. However, challenges are drawn from schools' students' perspectives on investigating the role of Microsoft teams in distance learning at Qatari schools. To start with, both teachers and students have burdens to train on Microsoft Teams as well as having adaptability to cope with technological difficulties which may come up through accessing the app. Another challenge is, students complain successively on the issue of clarity and full explanation of video lessons. A great number of students find difficulty to understand the lesson videos and follow them efficiently. Further, a pedagogical issue which plays a crucial role in carrying out students' efforts to achieve academic attainment is "Motivation" through online learning and specifically via Microsoft teams platform. Online motivation could contribute positively in inspiring students to learn autonomously and do their weekly assignments on the platform instantly.

1.1 Study Questions

The study is an attempt to measure the effectiveness of Microsoft team's app for students' on-line learning. Also, to investigate students' perspectives towards the role of Microsoft teams in their academic attainment as well as providing a valuable reference and guided lines for the future researchers who have interests to conduct researches in the field of virtual world related to students' learning.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the paper is designed to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Do schools 'students have technological problems in accessing Microsoft teams platform efficiently?
2. Do students have deficiency to understand on-line video lessons across YouTube channels?
3. How far do schools' students gain knowledge and feel satisfied towards Microsoft teams in their learning?
4. To what extent, does Microsoft teams alternate the existence of direct teaching and teacher -student contact?

2. Distance Education

Distance education is an umbrella term that covers many terms and a variety of models, including distance learning, open learning, networked learning, online learning, and flexible learning and distributed learning in connected space (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2004) [2]. Moore and Kearsley (1996) [3] define distance education as:

"Planned learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching and as a result requires special techniques of course design, special instruction techniques, special methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements." (p.2).

Holmberg's (1989) [4] offers a definition that focuses on the concepts of learner, educational organization and communication:

"Distance education is a concept that covers the learning-teaching activities in the cognitive and/or psycho-motor and affective domains of an individual learner and a supporting organization. It is characterized by non-contiguous communication and can be carried out anywhere and at any time, which makes it attractive to adults with professional and social commitments (Holmberg, 1989 p. 168) [4]".

Distance education is a concept that covers the learning-teaching activities in the cognitive and/or psycho-motor and affective domains of an individual learner and a supporting organization. It is characterized by non-contiguous communication and can be carried out anywhere and at any time, which makes it attractive to adults with professional and social commitments (Holmberg, 1989 p. 168) [4].

According to Keegan (1980) [5] distance education is characterized by six major components: separation of teacher and learner, influence of an educational organization, use of media to link teacher and learner, two-way exchange of communication, learners as individuals rather than grouped, and education as an industrialized form. However, the advancement of communication technologies has altered our notion of distance education, which is more associated with internet technologies recently.

2.1 Distance learning and Motivation

Paris and Turner (1994) [6] describe motivation as the 'engine' of learning. Motivation can influence what we learn, how we learn and when we choose to learn (Schunk & Usher, 2012) [7]. Research shows that motivated learners are more likely to undertake challenging activities, be actively engaged, enjoy and adopt a deep approach to learning and exhibit enhanced performance, persistence and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Given the important reciprocal relationship between motivation and learning (Brophy, 2010) [9], it is not surprising that motivation has been actively researched across a wide range of traditional educational setting. Despite this, studies that explore motivation to learn in online contexts are limited in both number and scope, as others have noted (Bekele, 2010) [10]. However, higher dropout rates associated with online courses compared to similar face-to-face ones (Park & Choi, 2009) [11] lend support to the view that motivation is more complex than the above studies suggest. Therefore, student motivation is considered a crucial factor for success in online learning environments (Artino, 2008; Keller, 2008) and is a primary reason for the current study. Collectively, these factors point to the need to reconsider motivation to learn in technology-rich environments. But before turning our attention to motivation it is important to start by defining what is meant by online learning.

2.2 Perceptions of Online EFL Instruction

COVID-19 caught many EFL teachers unprepared for electronic learning, and they subsequently faced many obstacles to using online platforms, applying appropriate methods, and assessing student performance. Mseleku (2020) [13] reviewed the recent literature on challenges and opportunities of electronic learning during the pandemic. Most teachers and students' challenges were due to insufficient time with and knowledge of information technology, poor Internet service, inconvenient physical space, mental problems, lack of essential needs, and lack of teaching and learning resources (Alhuwaydi, A. 2021) [14].

2.3 Microsoft Teams Synopsis

Microsoft Teams is a cloud app digital hub that brings conversations, meetings, files and apps together in a single Learning Management System (LMS) (Microsoft, 2018) [15]. An app is short for application, which is synonymous with a software program. While an app may refer to a program for any hardware platform, it is most often used to describe programs for mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets (Techterms.com, 2019) [16]. Microsoft also uses the term bot in its literature about Teams; Christenson (2019) [17] defined a bot - short for robot - as an automated program that runs over the Internet. Some bots run automatically, while others only execute commands when they receive specific input. A tutor can type "schedule meeting" into a chat, and the bot will gather information and then schedule the meeting and invite other staff members of students (Microsoft, 2018) [15]. Tsai (2018) [18] explained that real-time chat applications that work across multiple operating systems and devices are now ubiquitous. He claimed that some collaborative chat apps such as Teams offer functionality that email cannot, including chat rooms, video conferencing and features that replicate popular social media. Pretorius (2018) [19] discussed how tutors can post assignments to individuals, small groups, or the full class

using the assignment function in Teams.

2.4 Self-determination theory and studying online motivation

Arguably one of the more well-known theories of motivation is intrinsic–extrinsic motivation. An influential theory that explains this motivation concept is self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985) [20]. Self-determination theory is a contemporary theory of situated motivation that is built on the fundamental premise of learner autonomy. SDT argues that all humans have an intrinsic need to be self-determining or autonomous, as well as competent and connected, in relation to their environment.

2.5 Challenges of Teaching -learning Online classes

Many empirical studies have been conducted to examine issues in delivering online courses; however, few have synthesized prior studies and provided an overview on issues in online courses. There is some sort of challenges such as:

2.5.1 Asynchronous and Synchronous E-Learning

An ongoing debate addresses the usefulness of asynchronous versus synchronous e-learning. Asynchronous e-learning, commonly facilitated by media such as e-mail and discussion boards, supports work relations among learners and with teachers, even when participants cannot be online at the same time. It is thus a key component of flexible e-learning. Asynchronous e-learning makes it possible for learners to log on to an e-learning environment at any time and download documents or send messages to teachers or peers. Students may spend more time refining their contributions, which are generally considered more thoughtful compared to synchronous communication (Hrastinski, 2008) [21].

2.5.2 Self-regulation and motivation factors

Self-regulation and motivation have been identified as two critical factors for determining success in online courses. Self-regulation can be defined as the “ability of students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own behavior, cognition and learning strategies” (Matuga, 2009, p. 5) [22]. Self-regulation alone is not enough for success, students must be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to use self-regulatory strategies effectively in order to succeed in the academic realm of online courses (Matuga, 2009) [22].

3. Methods

3.1 Research design and Sample

This study adopted the analytical research methodology by using SPSS program to analyze data collected using a questionnaire that was distributed to 128 students who are in grades seven, eight and nine. All the respondents study at Khalid bin Ahmed preparatory school for boys in the state of Qatar. As a reference, 128 students were involved in blended learning. Each class was divided into two classes (A&B). They have a weekly rotation. The class [A] should attend the whole week at school while the class [B] should attend live sessions of subjects and do the required assignments which are submitted daily on Microsoft teams platform. Following weekly rotation for class [B] to attend the school in turns and class [A] should be at home working

on teams. Measures were taken to reduce the infectious of COVID-19 among the students at all public schools in the state.

3.2 Instrument

The data collection instrument was a fifteen-item questionnaire that was administered by the researcher. The aim of the instrument was to analyze the effectiveness, readiness of Microsoft teams in the distant learning for schools’ students at preparatory stage. Further, to investigate the dysfunctions of Microsoft teams platform in distant learning beyond students’ perspectives. Each questionnaire item required a response based upon the four-point Likert-type scale used to measure attitudes with choices ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The questionnaire items mostly centered on the overall students’ perceptions towards investigating the role of Microsoft teams in the distant learning in the time of COVID-19 Pandemic and also attempting to find responses whether the app platform is challenging, attractive and motivated students to interact synchronously or asynchronously. Moreover, it investigates how far it influences their academic attainment and being satisfied enough with what they learn.

3.3 Data collection

Data were collected through google forms techniques, namely a questionnaire. The questions in the questionnaire were recognized and focused on investigating the dysfunctions of Microsoft teams platform in distant learning beyond students’ perspectives. It was sent for teachers as URL via WhatsApp. The questionnaire has taken three months to be analyzed.

Table 1: I face technical problems when using Microsoft Teams

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	33	25.8	25.8	25.8
	disagree	32	25.0	25.0	50.8
	agree	45	35.2	35.2	85.9
	strongly agree	18	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	128	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 Indicates that (45) of the students agree with facing techno issues when they log into the app (35.2%) chosen of the respondents. It is noticed that, the students are a quarter (25.8%) selected strongly disagree.

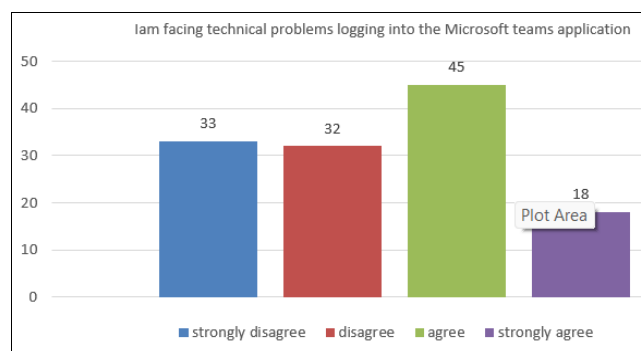


Fig 1: I am facing technical issues in using Microsoft-Team

Table 2: Difficulty to understand video lessons in YouTube channel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	17	13.3	13.3	13.3
	disagree	26	20.3	20.3	33.6
	agree	40	31.3	31.3	64.8
	strongly agree	45	35.2	35.2	100.0
	Total	128	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 item contradicts considerably with item (1). The respondents are a third (45/35%) claim that they sometimes find difficulty to understand the lesson videos due to the speed with (17/13.3%) selected are strongly disagree.

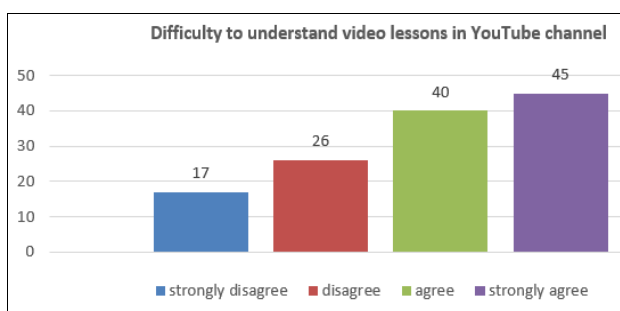


Fig 2: Difficulty to understand video lessons in YouTube Channel

Table 3: Academic performance satisfaction since Corona

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
valid	strongly disagree	28	21.9	21.9	22.7
	disagree	30	23.4	23.4	46.1
	agree	32	25.0	25.0	71.1
	strongly agree	37	28.9	28.9	100.0
	Total	128	100.0	100.0	

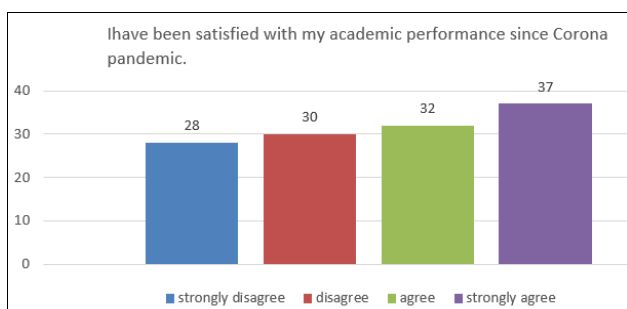


Fig 3: Academic performance satisfaction since Corona

4. Discussion

The instrument sufficiently answered all questions of the research thoroughly highlighted with literature of the study and data analysis of the questionnaire. An issue is raised upon whether students have technological issue in accessing the app platform. The result is seen obviously in item no (1) of the data analysis. Mseleku (2020) [13] reviewed the challenges of information technology and poor internet service. Further, students have deficiency to understand on line video lessons due to the speed and other challenges like distance education and the separation of teacher-learner

influence in the educational organization which is added by Keegan (1980)^[5].

However, the students were satisfied towards Microsoft teams in their academic progression. This issue has been examined comprehensively in items (3) of the data analysis. In addition to, the Microsoft teams app has lessened the students- teacher contact that nearly to three quarters of the students are engaged in on line learning. Kirtman 2009 declares regarding the notion of peer interaction in the literature that a majority of students stated that there was no real difference in their learning when comparing a class session online vs. an in-class session, some students did acknowledge a difference in terms of community and peer

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the authors are assured towards investigating the Microsoft teams app in the distant learning for the students. The assumption is confirmed by the data generated by fifteen questionnaire items. For instance, it is obviously clarified that the chart displayed the students’ perspectives on the effectiveness of Microsoft teams in their learning process. Moreover, the data analysis of the chart shows that the vast majority of the students have agreed upon the notion of applying Microsoft teams is a brilliant idea. The students’ frequency expresses more than (90) of responses towards positivity of the app. Nevertheless, some students complain about having deficiency in understanding the video lessons related to the speed and clarity.

Additionally, the data also shows that students are a third (45/35%) emphasizing the previous issue. Finally, the study is considered as valuable reference in addressing students’ attitudes and experiences towards learning pedagogical app. It is an authenticated, factual document that would guide further studies related to distant learning barriers and students ‘interaction through the virtual world. Also, the essential point that would track the effectiveness and interaction of the electronic app is “students’ motivation”. It is the backbone of enhancing and achieving goals whether the students interact positively or facing challenges that would interfere their learning process appropriately.

6. Recommendations

The study accordingly recommends the following:

- Enhancing virtual learning through providing successive training for both teachers and students to have adaptability on app platform.
- The educational organizations should adopt effective, applicable and accessible learning app to avoid interrupting technological issues that may happen through students’ access virtually.
- Applying differentiation teaching strategies concerning the issue of deficiency in watching video lessons.
- Innovating new strategies regarding online motivation for the students through the virtual world.
- Enhancing students’ motivation intrinsically by gifting them appreciation certificates and exciting stickers to dedicate their efforts.

7. Acknowledgment

Author would like to express his gratitude to the EFL teachers who responded to the questionnaire and made great valuable contribution to the study. Also, thanks for Khalid bin Ahmed prep. school for their generous contribution to

carry this study. A special thanks for Dr. Telal Khalid for his inspiring guidance to finish this study.

8. References

1. MOEHE. Distance Learning for Public Schools, March 10, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.edu.gov.qa/en/Pages/Corona.aspx>
2. Gunawardane CN, McIsaac MS. Distance Education. Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology. Ed. David H. Jonassen. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004, 355-395.
3. Moore MG, Kearsley G. Distance education: A systems view. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1996.
4. Holmberg B. Theory and practice of distance education. London: Routledge, 1989.
5. Keegan DJ. On Defining Distance Education. Distance Education. 1980; 1(1):13-36. Retrieved on February 4, 2021 from: <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/164197/>.
6. Paris SG, Turner JC. Situated motivation. In P. R. Pintrich, D. R. Brown & C. E. Weinstein (Eds.), Student motivation, cognition, and learning: Essays in honor of Wilbert J. McKeachie. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994, 213-237.
7. Schunk DH, Usher EL. Social cognitive theory and motivation. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of human motivation. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012, 13-27.
8. Ryan RM, Deci EL. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. Contemporary Educational Psychology. 2000a; 25(1):54-67. Doi: 10.1006/ceps.1999.1020
9. Brophy J. Motivating students to learn (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.
10. Bekele TA. Motivation and satisfaction in internet-supported learning environments: A review. Educational Technology & Society. 2010; 13(2):116-127.
11. Park JH, Choi HJ. Factors influencing adult learners' decision to drop out or persist in online learning. Educational Technology & Society. 2009; 12(4):207-217. Retrieved from: <http://www.ifets.info/>
12. Artino AR, Stephens JM. Learning online: Motivated to self-regulate? Academic Exchange Quarterly. 2006; 10(4):176-182.
13. Mseleku Z. A literature review of e-learning and e-teaching in the era of Covid-19 pandemic. International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology. 2020; 5(10):588-597.
14. Alhuwaydi A. Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges in Online Teaching: A Survey Across Universities in KSA" TESOL International Journal. 2021; 16(3):1. ISSN: 2094-3938
15. Microsoft. Welcome to Microsoft Teams, 2018. [online] Available at: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/teams-overview> [Accessed 15 March 2019]
16. Techterms.com. App Definition, 2019. [online] Available at: <https://techterms.com/definition/app> [Accessed 18 March 2019].
17. Christensson P. Bot Definition, 2019. [online] Techterms.com. Available at: <https://techterms.com/definition/bot> [Accessed 18 March 2019].
18. Tsai P. Business Chat Apps in 2018: Top Players and Adoption Plans. 20 December. The Spiceworks Community, 2018. [Online]. Available from: <https://community.spiceworks.com/blog/3157-business-chat-apps-in-2018-topplayers-and-adoption-plans> [Accessed 07 March 2019].
19. Pretorius M. SharePoint and Assignments. 15 November. Microsoft Teams for Education, 2018. [Online]. Available from: <https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/Microsoft-Teams-for-Education/MicrosoftTeams-Assignments-and-SharePoint-Documents/td-p/287119> [Accessed 12 March 2019].
20. Deci EL, Ryan RM. Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. New York: Plenum Press, 1985.
21. Hrastinski, Stefan. Asynchronous and synchronous e-learning. Educause Quarterly, 2008, 4.
22. Matuga JM. Self-regulation, goal orientation, and academic achievement of secondary students in online university courses. Journal of Educational Technology & Society. 2009; 12(3): 4-n/a. Retrieved from: <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1287037464?accountid=27700>