

RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS ON THE USE OF TELEGRAM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Technology has affected virtually every industry, including education. Many schools have now incorporated technology into learning through information and communication technologies (ICTs). During the COVID-19 pandemic, this study looks at how students perceive Telegram Classroom as a learning tool. A qualitative descriptive approach was used in this study, which included an online questionnaire and in-depth online interview sessions with students from the Abetifi Presbyterian College of Education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 28 students enrolled in the TELEGRAM program for Information Technology courses for a minimum of one term. Five students were also interviewed to gain insight into their TELEGRAM experience. The findings revealed that in a COVID-19 pandemic, many factors influence students' online learning processes, including utility, ease of use, ease of learning, and satisfaction. TELEGRAM is a great way to improve the talents, abilities, discipline and self-directed learning of students by providing them with teaching materials.

KEYWORDS

Covid-19, Online learning, educational technology, Information Technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

The globe has been shaken by the outbreak of a coronavirus outbreak, also known as COVID-19. It transformed into an outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on December 31, 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed these diseases to be a global pandemic a few months later, on March 11, 2020; this occurred because thousands of people worldwide had been exposed, and many thousands of people had become victims. According to a study, a pandemic can occur simultaneously in many countries around the world (Agung and Surtikanti, 2020). The disease is spreading quickly and it is difficult to identify people who have been exposed to it. The number of casualties has increased dramatically. Given the complexity of managing this outbreak, world leaders decided to adopt a strategy to cut off the COVID-19 distribution chain. Notwithstanding the economic impacts, social distancing has resulted, and full containment has become a difficult option for many countries to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Education was also harmed as a result of the policies' implementation. Teaching and learning programmes in schools have also been discontinued since the enactment of social distancing. Many countries, including Ghana, have adopted policies that prohibit all direct educational practises, forcing the government and related institutions to develop alternate educational mechanisms for students and students who are unable to complete the educational process in educational institutions. According to UNESCO statistics, a total of 39 countries have enforced

school closures, affecting a total of 421,388,462 students. During the pandemic of covid-19, the Ghanaian Minister of Education released a Circular Note instructing school and other educational institutions, including higher education, to temporarily suspend traditional teaching and learning practises in schools and enable students to conduct lessons from home through e-learning. Teachers can use e-learning tools such as TELEGRAM, Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Team, and others, according to him.

These e-learning platforms have gained popularity in Ghana as a result of their widespread use and installation. One of the most current and future problems is online learning. During epidemics, technology-based learning is the preferred method of instruction. Almost every school in the world uses some kind of online learning. In this day and age, online learning is nothing new. Educators must be proficient in both teaching and the use of instructional media. Educators must master many things in this period, including internet technology mastery. The internet has evolved into an effective and efficient means of obtaining and sharing data and information without regard for spatial or temporal constraints. Currently, the advancement of internet technology affects a variety of areas of life, including governance, economics, social issues, and education. As competencies that teachers and students must have, current educational priorities are inextricably linked to technological growth demands. TELEGRAM is one of the learning apps used by teachers to facilitate online learning.

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TELEGRAM is a free tool that has several features that facilitate student-teacher engagement in an online virtual classroom. During Pandemic Covid-19, it aids both the teacher and the students in their learning. However, according to the writer's observations, several issues arose during the TELEGRAM learning process. Because of the poor internet access, some students did not enter TELEGRAM. Furthermore, some of the students were unfamiliar with TELEGRAM. To assess the learning process during pandemic covid-19, it is essential to know students' perceptions of TELEGRAM as a learning tool. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, students' interpretations of TELEGRAMs were presented based on their experiences, as described in this paper. The experience of an entity, occurrence, or relationship obtained by resuming information and interpreting a message is known as perception (Ridho and colleagues, 2019).

It explains perception by giving a sense to stimulus-response in resuming information and predicting a message that involves focus, hope, motivation, and memory. Following this, establishes understanding as a step of the overall action process, allowing us to tailor our behavior to the environment we live in (Agung and Surtikanti, 2020). In this case, the students' interpretation can be described as their established opinion following a particular experience that necessitates adjustment. Knowing students' expectations are important because it allows teachers or lecturers to assess their students' perceptions after learning the data. According to the student's interpretation is critical in determining the efficacy of a teacher (Quadratullah et al., 2020). Teachers will change what students dislike and enhance what students like by learning about their perceptions, whether it's about how to teach or how to convey content to students. As a result, the understanding of students is crucial, particularly for teachers or lecturers.

The students' perceptions in this study centred on the utility, ease of use, ease of learning, and satisfaction of using TELEGRAM in online learning. These considerations are important to make students' perceptions of online learning more relevant to the needs of this study. This application, according to some study, allows lecturers or teachers to discuss the scientific ideas they have for students (Rozak and Albantani, 2018). Learning by TELEGRAM, according to, is part of a technique that uses technology to aid faculty and students in the learning process (Ocampo et al., 2017). Lecturers may have materials on the subject taught in TELEGRAM. Lecturers should post some teaching materials, assign student assignments, and upload the students' grades so that they can see their course scores right away. Furthermore, Telegram Classroom may be used to cancel meetings while lecturers are out of town or unavailable during class hours. TELEGRAM, reduces costs by using less expensive stationery and other materials and can reduce time-released electricity (Alim et al., 2019).

In other words, TELEGRAM users can spend less time and energy than the average. However, not all students have an online account, which is one of the major obstacles to understanding the usefulness of online courses. Some students do not have smartphones or a data plan, making it difficult for them to participate in online discussion sessions. In the G-suite for Education programme, TELEGRAM is one of the free Telegram services (Ventayen et al., 2018). It encourages paperless instruction to streamline tasks, improve teamwork, and facilitate seamless communication, all of which help to make teaching more efficient and meaningful. This study aims to determine the TELEGRAM application's usability as an online learning tool. This programmed can be downloaded and logged into on a smartphone for both lecturers and students. To allow students to enter the class, the lecturer only needs to build a class and share the class code with them. Students can submit their assignments easily through this application, revise their assignment, and check their scores given by the lecturer.

It also has some advantages, such as eliminating the need for paper. It can be accessed from anywhere and on any computer as long as there is an internet connection, and it allows lecturers and students to chat, provide feedback to students, and personalize learning. It includes a learning

function that encourages lecturers to actively develop and manage assignments as well as provide input to students. The TELEGRAM programme assists lecturers in managing student jobs. It is advantageous to both lecturers and students because it is simple and easy to use. There have been some studies done on the use of TELEGRAM. The teacher's understanding of TELEGRAM, according to is that it is just a facilitation method, such as for uploading documents and making announcements (Harjanto and Sumarni, 2019). Unfortunately, teachers continue to regard this app as inadequate due to its lack of user-friendliness.

A study at Daffodil International University conducted another study that focused on teachers' and students' perceptions of Telegram Classroom (Alim et al., 2019). TELEGRAM is commonly used by teachers because it is required by the university. TELEGRAM allows for greater contact between the teacher and the students. Students, on the other hand, agree that this forum is beneficial because it allows them to easily access the teachers' learning materials. Several studies have focused on the efficacy of E-learning Moodle, TELEGRAM, and Edmodo, the optimization of using Telegram Classroom as a learning media TELEGRAM as an alternative way to improve learning quality, and TELEGRAM as a medium for Improving Attainment of Graduate Attributes (Sewang, 2017; Madhavi et al., 2018; Hakim, 2016; Soni et al., 2018; Sewang, 2017).

2. METHODS

The method used in this research is quantitative descriptive through an online Questionnaire and online deep interview sessions with students from Abetifi Presbyterian College of Education. During the covid-19 pandemic, 28 students participated in TELEGRAM's Information Technology learning programme for at least one term. Students were asked to complete a survey to learn about their experiences with TELEGRAM (Asnawi, 2018). This study gathered data by analysing students' perceptions of online learning based on their personal experiences. The survey was created in telegram format and then distributed to the students. A second interview was conducted to elicit more detailed responses from the students. The data were gathered through an in-depth interview phase to learn more about students' perceptions of Telegram in the online learning process, according to (Creswell and Clark, 2007). This interview took place with the student's permission.

The researchers shared the instruments with the students and interviewed some of them in this report. The researchers examined IJEMI e-ISSN: 2716-2338 157 the results of the instrument and the interview. The data was collected by Solomon Ofori Jnr, Gyane (Students' Perceptions of Using TELEGRAM. Furthermore, the collected data was analysed to explain the details so that it could be understood not only by the researchers but also by those who were looking for the research results. The data was analysed thematically to create a communication effectiveness paradigm to better explain the phenomenon studied. Data analysis was performed after the interviews were finished, according to and the researchers interpreted the results thematically to clarify the findings according to the context (Glaser and Strauss, 2017).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Student's Perception

Table 1: Recapitulation of the study results from students				
Factors	RD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	RA (%)
Usefulness	0	9.0	60.5	30.5
Ease of Use	0	14.03	65.25	20.72
Satisfaction	0	18.48	54.82	26.70
Ease of Learning	0	9.1	55.05	35.85

Within the factor of usefulness, 60.5 percent of participants accepted that this TELEGRAM is beneficial, as seen in the table above. When it comes to ease of use, 65.25 percent of them believe that the software is simple to use. The next factor also agrees that 55.05 percent of students found it

easy to learn how to use the app. Finally, when it comes to happiness, 54,82 percent of students say they are happy.

3.2 Usefulness

According to the findings, 60,5 percent of students believe that this TELEGRAM is useful on the usefulness scale. TELEGRAM is a resource that students can use to store document materials. Furthermore, some teachers liked to post the materials provided in class as a summary so that they could be accessed after the classroom learning session ended. Teachers will show students how to follow up on lessons and tasks. Another result revealed that when the instructor shared resources with the class before the lesson, it was supposed to be pre-reading materials to help students understand the subject better. Before they join the classroom discussion, it is beneficial to activate their context information. Furthermore, some teachers preferred to post the materials provided in class as a summary after the lesson, so students could access them after the classroom learning session ended. TELEGRAMS are extremely convenient and suitable for the learning process, increasing student efficiency. According to the interview results, some students acknowledged that TELEGRAM feedback helped them improve their work; however, another student disagreed, claiming that some feedback only focused on the surface level, which did not help them improve their work. Some students have mentioned that using TELEGRAM as a learning aid in an EFL setting where English is not used in daily conversation is extremely beneficial.

3.3 Ease of Use

When it comes to ease of use, 65,25 percent of students believe that the programme is simple to use. It means that, in general, students accepted that this platform is virtually universal in terms of their learning activities since it can be accessed via laptops or smartphones running a variety of operating systems (OS). TELEGRAM is simple for them to use; they have no significant difficulties using the features. Some students mentioned that TELEGRAM is simple to use based on the results of the interview. Aside from that, all content, students' assignments, and quizzes can be well documented. As a result, students will easily review previously learned content. When they practise in TELEGRAM, they can also see their ranking. It can be translated as students believing that the TELEGRAM assists them in completing the assignment because the TELEGRAM allows them to save time and effort when completing and sending the assignment electronically. Students may also engage with one another on the discussion page, which allows them to collaborate more effectively. They will talk about the job or mission on the internet.

3.4 Ease of Learning

When using TELEGRAM, 55,05 percent of the students experienced ease. Students are not unfamiliar with using the Telegram application. For years, they've stayed in touch via a Gmail account, telegram drive, and other features. It's the same with TELEGRAM, where they have no major issues even though this platform is relatively fresh. TELEGRAM is a method that they can use to learn quickly. Students stated that using TELEGRAM is very easy based on the results of the interview. They can use any device, such as a computer or a smartphone, to access all TELEGRAM features. It's linked to a Gmail account, so everything is connected to it. TELEGRAM, on the other hand, was a breeze to use since it offered a variety of usability options. The application could still be accessed via email and a web browser if the students failed to install it. Even if there was no signal or power, they could access all of the provided explanations, materials, and quizzes when they had the opportunity.

3.5 Satisfaction

When it comes to happiness, 54,82 percent of the students say they are happy. Because of its functionality and advantages, such as active participation in online class events, easy-to-use features in submitting online assignments, easy-to-access reference materials, and an improvement in student motivation due to online activities and discussions, TELEGRAM is a great forum as an effective tool for learning. The questionnaire's results were backed up by the interview's findings.

TELEGRAM, according to the majority of interviewees, is a good way for them to learn English outside of the classroom. Even though they were not in school, they claimed to be in an English-speaking setting. In online learning, the content and assignments were delivered in a reasonable amount of time. The delivered material and assignment were deemed important to the course by the students. The teachers also held discussions to address the students' concerns. Several students, on the other hand, said they struggled to understand the path and materials included in the assignments, and that traditional learning seemed more interesting. They said that by having a face-to-face meeting, they would be able to comfortably listen to and watch the lecturer's explanation. Rosenblit (2006) agrees, stating that humans' need to socialise is important. It explains why the majority of students choose to learn in a classroom environment.

4. DISCUSSION

Three factors contributed to the performance of the TELEGRAM implementation. To begin with, several countries, including Ghana, have policies that require the government and related institutions to present alternate educational processes for students and students who are unable to complete the educational process in educational institutions. As a result, several schools offer students the opportunity to participate in an online learning programme. Students must study from home using online media such as Telegram. TELEGRAM has become one of the most popular online learning media due to its practicality. TELEGRAM is free software that can be downloaded and used on any smartphone for online teaching and learning. One of the more advanced features of this app is that it can be used in collaboration with other communities. A study discovered that using TELEGRAM as one of the Learning Management Systems has several benefits (LMS) (Izenstark and Leahy, 2015). Second, at the start of the school year, teachers participated in a professional development programme where they learned about and practised using TELEGRAM. Teachers were invited to the class, which began with an overview of TELEGRAM, its advantages, and how to use it to aid in the learning process. Teachers gained a better understanding of the application as a result of the programme, and they were able to make the most of it. Professional growth, according to, is a school's attempt to improve educators' skills to meet the needs of students (Mizell, 2014). e-ISSN: 2716- 2338 e-ISSN: 2716-2338 e-ISSN: 2716-153-163 in IJEMI Vol.2, No. 2, May 2021. As predicted, students will achieve their desired outcomes because teachers will provide them with the best method for their particular interests. Finally, the government advised children to study at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this does not imply that schools are closed. Instead, the traditional face-to-face learning method is replaced by online learning. Since that school offered an online learning class, students were required to enter TELEGRAMS to obtain materials and complete the teacher's assignment. Parents must accompany their children to class in this situation. Their parents play an important role in their children's TELEGRAM learning.

5. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a major paradigm change in Ghana's education system, from physical to internet-based classrooms. For the sake of people's welfare, the interactive classroom seems to be the ideal solution. Teachers and students are forced to work and study from home as a result of this situation. The transition poses a significant challenge, especially for those living in underdeveloped areas. TELEGRAM is an important learning tool, according to the current research, since it can help students develop their learning by active participation in online discussions and tasks. The findings revealed that the majority of participants viewed TELEGRAM as a useful and straightforward learning platform that enabled them to learn anywhere and at any time without having to communicate with teachers or classmates face-to-face. TELEGRAM is simple to use because students can complete assignments, upload them, take quizzes, and complete tasks all online. It is common among students because of its ease of use in assisting their learning.

TELEGRAM is also a good learning tool to complement face-to-face

conversations and a good collaboration medium for students and teachers, according to the majority of participants. Finally, TELEGRAM is an excellent tool for improving a student's skill and competencies. Except for teaching, students can learn on their own. Telegram School's active learning allows students to learn new things. This programme is very useful. Many technical limitations exist, such as students from any community who are unable to access the lecturer's account having restricted access to smartphones. Furthermore, Wifi access on campus is still restricted. Some students do not have adequate data plans to participate in online forums, and some students also upload their assignments using the accounts of their friends. To summarise, students perceive Telegram Application in the classroom as positive, which leads to improved learning. TELEGRAM is recommended not only because of the useful Utility resource but also because it encourages students to use the features more creatively to create more productive learning. Finally, this research shows that TELEGRAM can help students improve their skills, abilities, discipline, and self-learning by teaching materials. 161 IJEMI e-ISSN: 2716-2338

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APPENDIX

Table 2: The instrument Factor Questions Scoring

Factor	Questions	Scoring			
		RD	D	A	RA
Usefulness	1) Does this application help you become more effective?				
	2) Does this application help you become more productive?				
	3) Is this application useful?				
	4) Does this application save time when you use it?				
Ease of Use	5) Is this application easy?				
	6) Is this application simple when it is used?				
	7) Is this application user-friendly?				
	8) Do you use this application without written instructions?				
	9) Can you use it to recover instantly when making a mistake?				
	10) Do you learn how to use it fast?				
Ease of Learning	11) Do you easily remember how to use it?				
Satisfaction	12) Are you satisfied with this application?				
	13) Is this application fun to use?				
	14) Does this application work as expected?				
	15) Is this application great?				
	16) Is it convenient to use?				

Note:
RD : Really Disagree
D : Disagree
A : Agree
RA : Really Agree