

## **Teachers' Perspectives on the Use of Telegram for Online Distance Learning During the Pandemic of COVID-19**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The pandemic of Covid-19 is a blessing in disguise. Academics seem to be using various ways to impart knowledge to their students as far as Online Distance Learning (ODL) is concerned. One of the applications that they have chosen is Telegram. This study investigates the perceptions of academics teaching English using Telegram as a tool during ODL. The objectives of the study are to identify the academics' beliefs on the benefits of using Telegram, the perceived drawbacks of using Telegram in their teaching and learning, the reflections on the use of Telegram in classrooms, and the intentions of using Telegram during the post-pandemic. The study employed 66 instructors at tertiary level education and teachers teaching primary and secondary schools across Malaysia. The research employed a questionnaire to collect the data for the current study with closed and open-ended items. The results obtained from the study showed that Telegram could support teaching and learning during the pandemic, enhance communication between student-teachers by providing prompt responses, and be used to share information between students and teachers. The research implied that the use of Telegram is relevant, especially during this pandemic. Since teaching and learning is a mutual effort between teachers and students, it is encouraged that the former can assist the latter in making the classroom a fruitful session.

**Keywords:** Teaching and learning; Education, Social networking, Telegram application, Online survey

## Introduction

The pandemic of Covid-19 and the execution of lockdowns, i.e., Movement Control Order (MCO), have impacted many people, industries and institutions. In Malaysia, MCO is a preventive action implemented by the federal government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the country. The government had to take drastic measures by closing schools and universities that involved millions of educators and students. The decision was made to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to avoid physical contact among students, educators and staff by following a social distancing policy. The Ministry of Higher Education has announced that all teaching and learning activities in universities and colleges moved from face-to-face learning to online learning approaches.

For the implementation, several platforms and tools can be used to conduct the teaching-learning processes, and therefore, Online Distance Learning (ODL) becomes handy at this stage. Levy (2017) states that the ODL's ability to provide communication, collaboration and the exchange of information seems to facilitate teaching and learning among teachers and students. Moreover, due to the flexible use of mobile devices and the development of telecommunication services, online tools in the learning environment have increased rapidly (Herrador-Alcaide et al., 2020) via video conferencing, chats and forums, online assessments, remote laboratories or teamwork through the web. Although web-based learning tools or games can assist students in learning English, particularly vocabulary (Ali et al., 2022), the variety of tools available today is more helpful in supporting ODL.

Google Meet, Zoom, Jitsi, Microsoft Team, and Cisco Collaboration Solutions are common tools used for video conferencing. Online video conferencing is a beneficial tool, especially for ODL, where students can fully benefit by reviewing past recorded videos for their revision. Nambiar (2020) argues that although there are limitations to online video conferencing due to poor connectivity, broadband, and audio and video quality, conducting ODL using video conferencing at least once a week would be a better approach for teaching-learning processes during the Covid-19 period. Each online video conferencing has its own pros and cons; it all depends on the user to utilise it based on their requirements and daily usage. The cost and pricing would be one of the main concerns in implementing these online platforms for ODL in their respective institutions.

## Literature Review

### *Telegram as a platform for ODL*

Smartphones have made it possible for learners to engage in meaningful learning. Ali et al. (2020) assert that device besides tablets is among the popular gadgets that are widely used among young and adult learners. Their uses enable learners to install Telegram on their desktops, making the application a growing popular tool among Gen-Z today. Telegram is a messaging application that offers various features. Interestingly, Telegram is free, user-friendly and listed as the most accessible application (Roslan & Halim, 2021) to support remote or online distance learning. Telegram is vital to be considered in this research due to its many exciting and powerful features. According to Mensah, Sakyi, and Pufaa (2018), adopting the Telegram app for ODL is recommended as it has positively impacted the students' attitude towards learning. It makes learning becomes less stressful and able to increase the passion for virtual learning. However, despite the many benefits elaborated, as previously stated, the cost and pricing would be one of the main concerns in implementing ODL. Therefore, not just a free application should be in consideration, it is also necessary, however, to pay attention to

the internet bandwidth underpinning the app when it is in use as it will affect the quality of the video conferencing and the learning process in general. Regarding this issue, a recent finding has revealed that group chat and messaging application such as Telegram has been identified to use a low-bandwidth tool offering a practical immediacy interaction between the teachers and the students (Stanford, 2020). Thus, it makes Telegram the best application to be used in this current research in supporting ODL.

### ***Previous Studies on the Use of Telegram***

Previous studies proved the effectiveness of the Telegram application in teaching and learning the English language (Khodarahmi & Heidari-Shahreza, 2018; Xodabande, 2017). The adoption of Telegram in English language learning enriches the different angles of EFL learners' English language skills, such as reading comprehension ability (Naderi & Akrami, 2018), vocabulary (Ghobadi & Taki, 2018), writing skills (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018), and improving speaking skills (Setiawan & Wahyuni, 2017; Xodabande, 2017). However, it is crucial to know how the teachers find Telegram as a tool that assists them in English language teaching. It is essential to cognise that teachers' and students' perceptions of how telegram plays a critical role in defining the success of learning using the app. If students and teachers perceive Telegram as easy to apply and valuable, it means that the platform gives satisfaction, heightens and promotes a positive attitude among them (Ahn, 2021).

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) was employed to identify the self-designed Telegram Bot among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers (Aisyah et al., 2021). Before the tool's implementation, the teachers used a commercial online learning platform. The teachers reported that they had experience using Telegram Bot for more than two years. As such, they could create the bot render lessons that were interactive for students. In their study, the students were reported to interact with the bots just like communicating with real-life teachers. The examples of bots that were used for teaching English were animated videos, quizzes, and tests. From the study, it could be understood that the use of Telegram Bots among the teachers was due to their knowledge of online learning platforms. Also, it was necessary to notify them that they took some time to use Telegram Bots before they were skilful in using them.

Telegram was reported to be an efficient tool as a teaching medium, especially when conducting writing and reading activities in English classes (Putra & Inayati, 2021). The study reported that teachers could improve their writing skills among students by using Telegram features. For reading, the researchers found that light could be used to help students develop their skills. In teaching English, the researchers reported that Telegram could be used as a medium for virtual learning, especially during the pandemic of Covid-19. Moreover, the interactive learning environment supported the atmosphere of the learning condition.

Kusuma and Suwartono's (2021) study investigated three variables, namely perceived usefulness, communication and interactions (among others), using Telegram for teachers teaching English. The study reported that teachers could provide helpful feedback when it was used in the online class conducted during the pandemic. They seemed enthusiastic about their teaching compared to not using the platform in terms of communication and interactions. They also felt comfortable communicating with their students using Telegram. They also believed Telegram made their students more engaged and participative in learning.

Telegram can be used for writing activities to enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' writing skills. In their study, Murni Hayati, Nair and Walton Wider (2021) assigned their participants to write descriptive essays. The post-test results showed that they

performed significantly higher during the test than the pre-test. Such was the result when the teachers reinforced new vocabulary via Telegram that they used in their essays. As a result, the students learned far beyond what was required by the teachers. The former was motivated since the teachers assisted them in their writing.

As explained earlier, the recent pandemic has caused teachers to shift from the normal face-to-face classroom to online learning in the blink of an eye. The growing need for an affordable yet, powerful application to ease the ODL in the education field has emerged dramatically. However, not just any online application can be considered for this research. The aim is to make ODL feasible and simultaneously support communication and collaboration between teachers and students regarding immediacy and portability.

Vahdat (2020) suggests further study to investigate the EFL learners' attitudes and preferences towards using Telegram in learning a language. Mac Callum and Parsons (2016) argue that in recommending Telegram as a useful application, it should be noted that understanding the underpinning theory is vigorous. This is because it will result in the teachers designing appropriate learning activities when the platform is used in their teaching and learning. According to the researchers, the paramount consideration in using Telegram as the medium for ODL is ensuring that the learning process takes place. Such is the primary and foremost concern of ODL apart from the matters concerning technology (Mac Callum & Parsons, 2016). Also, Momani (2020) suggests future research be conducted on the Telegram application as it is a practical application for teachers and students to replace face-to-face instructions. Moreover, the feature that promotes students and teachers' engagement in the ODL needs further investigation. The current research attempt to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' beliefs on the benefits of using Telegram?
2. What are the teachers' perceived drawbacks of using Telegram?
3. What are the teachers' reflections on the use of Telegram in the classroom?
4. What are the teachers' intentions for using Telegram in the future?

## **Method**

### ***Research Design***

A descriptive research design was employed to collect the current study's data. It can be employed for quantitative and qualitative data inquiries (Fluet, 2021). Using the quantitative inquiry method helps researchers collect quantifiable information for statistical analysis. In the current study, frequency (f) was employed to quantify the participants' responses answering to the items in the questionnaire. When used in qualitative data inquiry, descriptive research assists the researchers in understanding a particular phenomenon comprehensively.

## **Research Samples**

There were 66 language teachers and lecturers employed as samples in the current study, whereby 51 were females and 15 were male participants that were selected based on non-random sampling. In particular, convenience sampling was selected to choose the respondents, whereby the samples were chosen because they were conveniently available during the data collection periods (Fraenkel et al., 2011). Regarding gender, 15 (22.7%) of the samples are males while 51 (77.3%) are female participants. Most of them (35 samples) are aged 26 to 30 (53.7%). Twenty of them are at the ages of 31 to 35 years old (30.0%), while

others (11 samples) are between the ages of 35 to 40 years old (16.3%). They teach at both tertiary level education and schools. More specifically, 25 (37.8%) teach at universities while the remaining 41 (62.1%) teach at either secondary or primary schools. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants employed in the current study.

**Table 1:** *Demographic Information of Samples in the Study*

Items	Details	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	15	22.7%
	Female	51	77.3%
Age	35 – 40 years-old	11	16.3%
	31 – 35 years-old	20	30.0%
	26 – 30 years-old	35	53.7%
Teaching institutions	Tertiary level	25	37.8%
	Schools	41	62.1%

### ***Research Instrument***

A questionnaire was used for this study. This is because it is a reliable and quick method to collect data from multiple respondents effectively and promptly. It is exceptionally dynamic when it comes to large projects, where time is one of the significant constraints (Ary et al., 2010). Moreover, a questionnaire is a quick and effective way for the researcher to reach multiple respondents within several weeks. The study employed online questionnaires to gather data on the use of Telegram for ODL. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A captured the participants' demographics, such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, and teaching institutions. Sections B and C were designed to answer the study's research questions. In Section B, the respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with each statement in the questionnaire (containing six close-ended questions). Each item used a five-point Likert scale. At the same time, Section C contains the close-ended items having two open-ended questions. Data from Section B are used to answer Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. In addition, the open-ended items were formulated to seek answers for Research Question 3 and Research Question 4.

### ***Reliability of research instrument***

Cronbach's Alpha was employed to identify the reliability of the instrument. It shows that the reliability coefficient was 0.84. The scores demonstrate that the questionnaire is valid for the study. Fraenkel et al. (2011) argue that for research purposes, at least scores of .70 and preferably higher demonstrate that the instrument is reasonable to use in one research.

### ***Validity of research instrument***

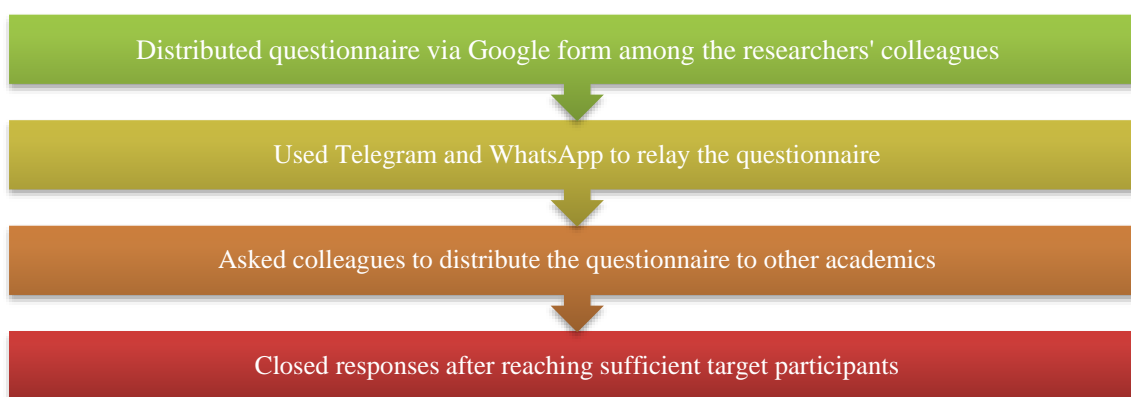
The items in the questionnaire were reviewed and evaluated by an expert to verify its content validity. In validating the instrument, they were a few questions that were required by the expert to be rephrased. Such was due to the complexity of the sentences and choice of words. As a result of the validity checking, the researchers were required to change two questions in Section B, i.e., Question 1 and Question 6. Question 1 was restructured from "Students can use Telegram to solve their internet issues" to "Telegram is a suitable platform to cater to students' poor connectivity issues". The researchers also changed Question 6 from "I could not directly communicate with my students whenever I use Telegram" to "Telegram



causes less direct communication between me and students". The comments were attended, and changes were made accordingly.

## Data Collection Procedures

In collecting the data for the current study, the researchers randomly distributed the online questionnaires using Google Forms to their colleagues. WhatsApp and Telegram were employed to distribute the online form in that the researchers pasted the link onto the applications. Texts were also written asking their colleagues' a favour to relay the online questionnaire to other academics. The researchers provided a week for the returned questionnaires. The Google form was deactivated when they obtained 66 responses, indicating that no more responses were accepted. Later, data analysis took place. Figure 1 shows a linear procedure for the data collection employed in the current study.



**Figure 1:** *Procedures for collecting data in the current study*

## Data Analysis

In analysing the data, descriptive statistics were used to analyse the close-ended items. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in generating the data from the set of items in the questionnaire. Meanwhile, thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns or themes from the open-ended data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis of the data went through the coding and categorising processes to answer the formulated research questions. Moreover, verbatim reporting is observed in presenting the data in the current study. Therefore, responses that are not formal are retained, and any grammatical errors are not corrected to ensure their authenticity.

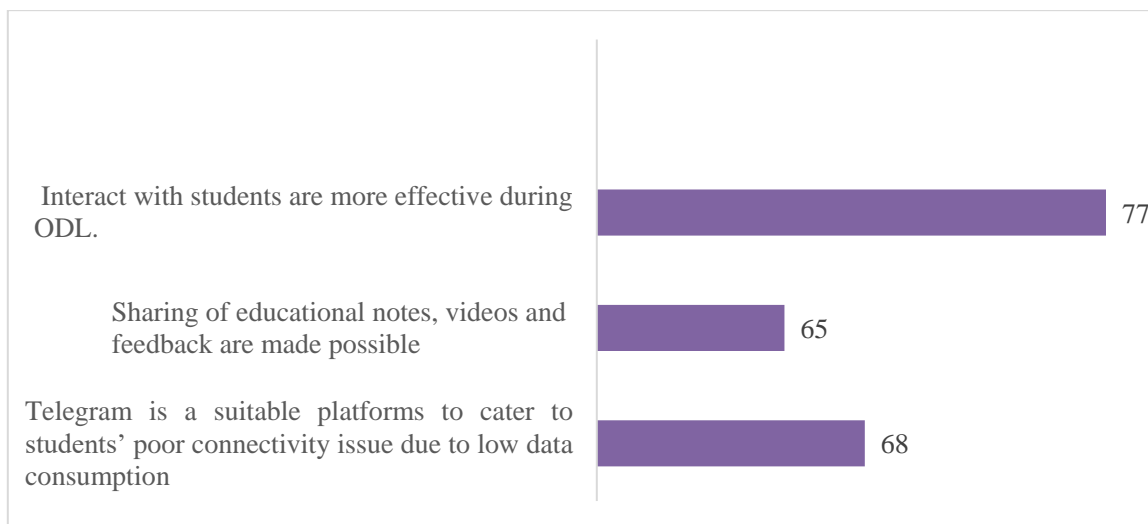
## Findings and Discussion

Findings and discussion in this section are reported according to the research questions formulated at the beginning of the paper. The highlights of this Section are concerned with teachers' beliefs about using Telegram, the perceived drawbacks of using Telegram among teachers, reflections on using Telegram among teachers and intentions of using Telegram for teaching and learning post-pandemic.

### *Teachers' beliefs on the benefits of using Telegram*

The findings that are reported in this section derive from Section B (Item 1, Item 2 and Item 3) of the questionnaire concerning the teachers' beliefs about using Telegram for teaching. It was found that 65% of them believed that they could easily share all educational notes,

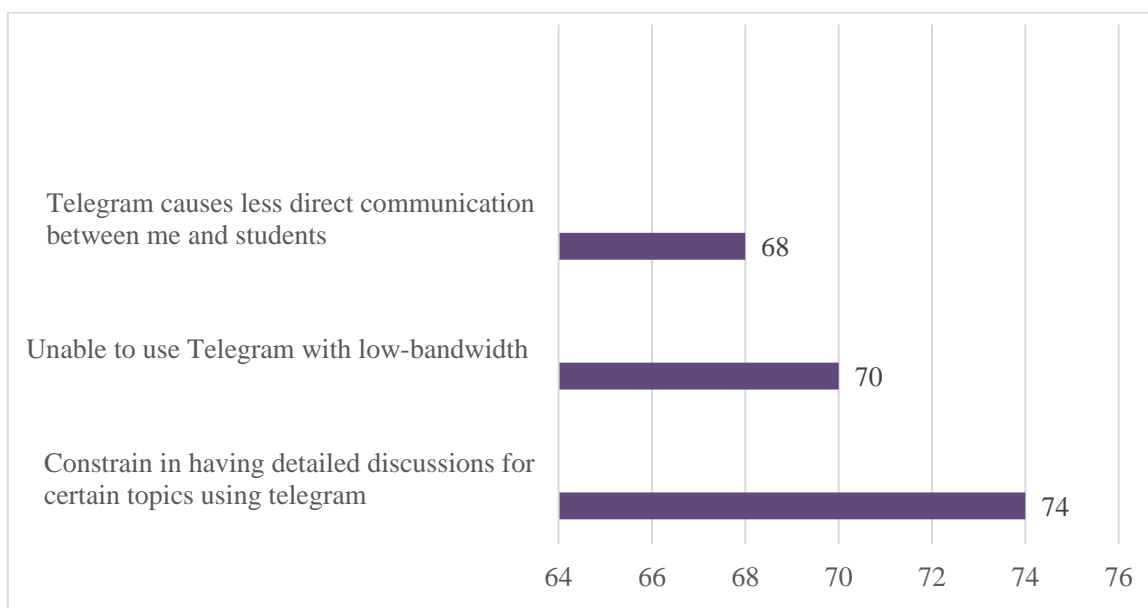
videos, and feedback with students via Telegram. More than half of them (68%) posited that the platform suited their students' poor connectivity issues due to the latter's low data consumption. The result also showed that 77% of them agreed that using the Telegram application could increase their interaction with their students. Figure 2 shows the teachers' beliefs on the benefits of using Telegram according to percentages based on the items formulated in the questionnaire.



**Figure 2.** Percentages of teachers' beliefs on the benefits of using Telegram

**Teachers' perceived drawback of using Telegram**

Answers for teachers' perceived drawbacks using Telegram are obtained from Section B of the questionnaire. In particular, responses in Item 4, Item 5 and Item 6 were analysed to answer the formulated research question. The data showed that 74% agreed that they could not have a detailed discussion about certain topics using the Telegram application. Meanwhile, 70% of them felt that the inability to access the platform due to no internet connection was another reason that hindered them from using it. Also, 68% of them felt that they could not communicate directly with their students when using Telegram. Figure 3 shows the teachers' perceived drawbacks of using Telegram when teaching their students.



**Figure 3.** Percentages of Teachers' Perceived Drawback of Using Telegram

### ***Teachers' reflections on the use of Telegram in the classroom***

The findings discussed in this section derive from Section C, in particular, Item 7 of the questionnaire. The analysis of the respondents' reflections on the use of Telegram in teaching and learning can be categorised into three (3) common themes. The themes are "Feasibility of having open class management", "User-friendly features", and "Low bandwidth".

#### ***Feasibility of having open class management***

The respondents preferred to use Telegram to manage their classroom due to its open class management system. Teacher 4 said, "Student management is far neatly arranged compared to other communication platforms such as WhatsApp". Besides that, Teacher 6 was happy that the features in Telegram are really helpful to organise her students' work. She commented, "It offers channels where I can get instant responses from my students. Also, using the channel allows the students to submit their work under one big post. Hence, the channel is organised and not messy". Similarly, Teacher 21 also agreed with its open class management where he could monitor his students' postings and assess their performance instantly. He said, "An analysis of frequency on students' postings/responses and the amount of each student's writing can be carried out to assess and monitor my students' performances in the course". Two other teachers expressed their opinion on this matter by commenting:

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Teacher 24	:	I can provide instant feedback to students to everything related to the topic
Teacher 30	:	Really convenient to manage my classes.

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#### ***User-friendly features***

Telegram is user-friendly and easy to manoeuvre for new users. The respondents agreed that one of the user-friendly and secure messaging apps is Telegram. Teacher 10 commented, "I love it because I do not have to share my phone number with my students. Hence, my privacy is secured. Besides, I love that I can pin my announcement and I love that I can still edit messages after I send them". Telegram presents itself with an elegant and modern interface. Due to its accessibility and simplicity, teachers could easily use Telegram as a teaching and learning platform. Teacher 18 said, "It is accessible, easy and fun. It is not complicated like other apps", Teacher 19 also agreed with this by saying, "During ODL, I found Telegram is better than WhatsApp to manage my classes. The interface is simple and easy to use". Teacher 34, 39 and 47 also shared their opinions on this matter by commenting:

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Teacher 34	:	It is simple and easy to use for teaching and learning
Teacher 39	:	I like its interface. Easy to use and simple
Teacher 47	:	Although I prefer face-to-face interaction, Telegram has made my life easier by inventing user-friendly features.

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#### ***Low bandwidth***

Telegram emerges as an efficient platform for teaching and learning in ODL due to its low bandwidth. The respondents said they could access Telegram without worrying about slow internet and connectivity issues. Teacher 7 expressed, "Telegram is an effective platform compared to desktop conference apps such as Zoom or Discord, but more effective for students with unstable internet connections or low data allocations". Teacher 9 also commented, "...I do agree that it is a useful platform to share notes for teaching and learning materials as it doesn't use up much space and can be accessed offline". Teachers and students with limited or poor internet connections benefitted from using Telegram in ODL. According to Teacher 11, Telegram is incredibly



straightforward, and students can provide quick responses even if their internet connections are unstable. Other teachers also voiced their opinions on this matter by saying:

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Teacher 17	:	I can easily monitor students during the class and instantly post lesson materials via telegram because it requires less data
Teacher 20	:	I can run Telegram easily on my laptop when I engage with my students for a blended learning mode and flipped learning mode although the internet connection is unstable at that time
Teacher 36	:	Telegram required less space and it is accessible offline
Teacher 37	:	Easy, free and can be accessed offline

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### ***Teachers' intentions of using Telegram***

The reporting of findings in this sub-heading stems from Section C, in particular, Item 8 of the questionnaire. Four (4) themes were formulated by asking the respondents about their intentions to use Telegram as a platform for teaching and learning. The themes that emerged from their responses are "Big size limit of Telegram", "Ease of use", "Telegram enhances interaction" and "Telegram allows sharing of materials".

### ***Big size limit of Telegram***

The respondents in the study stated that Telegram provided big storage, and therefore, they could download files they could use in their teaching. Cloud storage could also be employed when they have important documents to download. Teacher 19 commented, "Telegram provides a large amount of storage to save or downloads files, and it provides cloud storage because we can store or save files on cloud". Similarly, Teacher 22 had the same opinion regarding the storage using the cloud as she could store different media in Telegram. She said, "Telegram provides unlimited storage. This means all your text messages; images media files and documents will be saved on their cloud". Another respondent, Teacher 2 also benefitted from cloud storage since it was easy to use whenever she wanted. She remarked, "It has a cloud storage which is easy to access". Together with big storage, managing files is also effective using Telegram. Teacher 20 mentioned, "Telegram has better storage capacity and management" while Teacher 21 expressed his opinion on this matter by commenting, "It has better memory system and management. In effect, the big storage enabled users to upload files relatively fast. Two (2) of the teachers voiced out their opinions:

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Teacher 26	:	All learning materials can be uploaded in a short time and also less data consumption
Teacher 31	:	... Telegram allows users to upload large files

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### ***Ease of use***

The ease of use is another reason educators are interested in using the platform in the future. Teacher 28 said, "It is really convenient for me as an educator!". Teacher 50 and Teacher 35 had the same opinion as Teacher 28 about using Telegram for teaching and learning. On top of that, Teacher 36 replied that it was a free application, while Teacher 1 felt that it was the most comfortable platform besides its ease of use, as shown in the excerpts below:

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Teacher 35	:	Easy, convenient and free
Teacher 36	:	Telegram is simple and easy to use. Plus, it's free
Teacher 1	:	Telegram is the easiest and the most comfortable platform to all

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Teacher 34 compared to its ease of use with other platforms. She responded, "It is easy to use compared to other apps". For Teacher 29, the simple interface was the feature she liked most about Telegram. She stated, "I like its simple interface". The ease of use also concerns its users' ability to share documents. Teacher 17 expressed, Teachers can easily share all the documents with the students in one step". Her opinion was shared by Teacher 43 to upload course content. She stated, "Easy to upload course contents".

### ***Telegram enhances interaction***

Telegram enables interaction between teachers and students. The platform improved communication among students when they were assigned to work in groups; as Teacher 44 noted, "It is especially effective when students were assigned to do group works". Teacher 7 reported, "I will use telegram for students' groupings from now on". Telegram also encourages live interaction between teachers and students, allowing the former to create polls. Teacher 10 said, "... have a live chat with the students. I can test their understanding by creating simple polls before the class ends". Meanwhile, Teacher 4 used Telegram to evaluate her online learning activities. She uttered: "I'm going to use it for my online learning to gauge with my students".

### ***Telegram allows sharing of materials***

The sharing of materials is made possible using Telegram. One of the teachers, Teacher 39, said he could share resources via Telegram. He commented, "... to share learning materials and exercises". Teacher 45 argued that Telegram was much easier to use than other social media for sharing resources for teaching and learning. She responded, "It's not complicated like other social media. So, I can easily share anything related to my subject"

## **Discussion**

### ***Telegram in the teachers' perspectives for teaching and learning***

Teachers enjoyed Telegram's excellent support for media sharing and storage, regardless of the size or type of media, which included documents, images, audio and videos for teaching and learning purposes (Alahmad, 2020; Faramarzi et al., 2019; Prokopyev et al., 2021). A study by Prokopyev et al. (2021) reported positive feedback on the use of Telegram as an e-learning tool for a university mini-course. Both teachers and students said that the feature of creating personal data storage made it easy for them to retrieve content at their convenience. In a different study by Alahmad (2020), the researcher pointed out how Telegram is a better instant messaging system for teachers in media sharing. This is because of the application's ability to send individual messages and broadcast them to an infinite audience, in this case, the students. In the context of educational media sharing, it was claimed that teachers and students preferred the cloud storage Telegram offers (Wiranegara & Hairi, 2020). This feature is reported to ease files access even while using different devices. Interestingly, these findings were similar to Faramarzi et al.'s (2019) study. It was reported the cloud-based feature could ensure permanent access to the files across different devices, making it an ideal choice for teachers. The findings revealed that teachers could cater for students with low internet connectivity.

Turning now to the findings on the teacher-student increase interaction whereby the results of the current study agreed with the research conducted by Iqbal et al. (2020). They were interested in exploring teachers' and students' perceptions of using Telegram to supplement online medical education during the pandemic. Their study concluded that Telegram is beneficial for online medical education due to the ease of communication between

their colleagues and class leaders. In addition, Telegram also eases information sharing in terms of timing, schedules and announcements. Moreover, offering prompt feedback can assist in effective teaching and learning, especially for face-to-face instruction and assessment in or outside the classroom (Alahmad, 2020).

### ***Hindrances of using Telegram among teachers***

The study results showed that Telegram did not allow teachers and students to have detailed discussions on some topics. This finding is contrary to Kusuma and Suwartono (2021) in that their study reported that teachers assisted their students in discussion when Telegram was used for the purpose. The former was described as making the class session engaged as they encouraged students to participate when the discussion was held via the platform. The teachers were also enthusiastic about teaching and explaining the materials. However, the inconsistent results between the current study and Kusuma and Suwartono's (2021) study might be due to the topics discussed in which Telegram might not be a suitable tool for online discussion. Discussions requiring lengthy explanations may not be feasible if they are conducted using Telegram. Another obstacle to using Telegram found in the study was the internet connection the teachers sometimes faced. As a result, they could not text the students, relaying the tasks they needed to be doing.

Nevertheless, Kaur Swaran Singh et al. (2020) suggested teachers opt for other online learning resources. Conducting asynchronous distance learning is one of the ways to overcome the internet connection issue. The researchers recommended recording the teaching session based on the syllabus that needed to be taught on that particular day. Then, the recording can be uploaded onto YouTube and made accessible for students to access during or outside class hours. Moreover, the researchers suggest that relying on one platform source is insufficient for a successful ODL session. Yet, it required teachers to use synchronous and asynchronous methods to conduct classes during this challenging time.

Regarding less direct communication between teacher-student, it seems that such results did not take us by surprise. The presence of a teacher cannot replace the use of any online learning platforms. However, using the teaching methods in relation to Maria and Arokia's (2021) study, the interactive method and mobile teaching could be implemented to solve the issue of communication between teachers and students. Using audio-visual aids for interactivity could ensure participation among students in the class. The researchers also suggested inviting guest speakers to enable interactions between the former and the students. In addition, a study on four types of instructions showed that communication relied heavily on the instructor's involvement and reflective assignment requirement (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005). Therefore, when teachers and students 'socialise' in teaching and learning, the magnitude of interaction could be enhanced. This is by asking students what they do not understand or need further clarification with. Teachers can also comment on the students' work to ensure direct communication between them in class.

### ***Reflection on the use of Telegram among teachers***

The results of the teachers' reflections concerning the use of Telegram for teaching and learning showed that they were satisfied with their choices of using the platform for ODL. The feasibility of having open class management attracted them to use Telegram instead of using other applications such as WhatsApp, IMO, or Viber (Sutikno et al., 2016). Working on different skills and sub-skills in Telegram is very easy but depends on a particular platform's educational provisions. In discussing Telegram, which has user-friendly features as claimed by the participants in the current study, its lightness, very fast and reliability were some of the features that made the participants favour the platform for teaching and learning (Sutikno et

al., 2016). They also favoured the various services supporting the educational process, such as groups, media sharing, and polls (Aladsani, 2021).

Last but not least, the teachers stated their preference for using Telegram was due to its low bandwidth application. They can access their accounts from multiple devices simultaneously, and messages appear simultaneously on all devices. Teachers can use Telegram via mobile phones and laptops without interruption during the lesson (Alizadeh, 2018).

### ***Perceptions on the future use of Telegram among teachers during post-pandemic***

The overall findings on the teachers' intention of using Telegram in the future (or post-pandemic) showed that they had positive perceptions of using the platform. In discussing the big size limit of Telegram, this is the factor that made them prefer to use it in their teaching. The luxury of having 2 gigabytes (GB) compared to 1.5GB for the storage limit (Singh, 2020) made them able to restore more notes and materials for their classes. Also, with that size limit, they can send media files bigger than before. Moreover, high-resolution photos or 4K videos improve video quality (Hanson, 2019). The finding on the ability to share materials using Telegram agrees with the ones reported by Permana et al. (2021). It was found that a group of tutors created a Telegram group, 'Online Tutors', to share their teaching plans and materials. They all interacted with one another, sending voice notes, for instance, before administering their classes. In supporting the theme that Telegram enhances interaction, students in Iksan and Saufian's study (2017) reported they were more active in class using the platform during the vocabulary learning session. Students enjoyed communicating with peers using Telegram, unlike when they had face-to-face communication in that everyone might not have the chance to give their thoughts. Telegram also helped teachers and students to communicate as both could do so at any time and place (Heidari Tabrizi & Onvani, 2018). To the researchers, such was extra learning, in particular the learning of vocabulary, among students, as their learning was not limited to the classroom setting only. Their use of the social network for learning a second language facilitated their learning experiences.

## **Conclusion**

The use of Telegram today is almost an integral part of academics' daily lives. Just like amalgamating other technological platforms in learning English, video resumes (Ali, et al., 2022), Google Classroom and WhatsApp (Kaur Swaran Singh et al., 2020) or integrating blended learning in language classes (Maria & Arokia, 2021), educators in the first place need to be creative and organised. Such is especially true when introducing any of these platforms to benefit learners. Align with the catastrophic situation that educators are facing, the current study showed that most of them preferred to use Telegram as the medium of instruction to impart knowledge to the students. Findings in the study showed that the Telegram application could be incorporated into academic institutions, particularly in the curriculum, to improve academic instruction. This study also suggests that academics can use the Telegram application as a complementary tool besides face-to-face instructions and assessments in learning English.

Furthermore, from the study, it can be recommended to the academics that the Telegram application may enable their students to perform self-study and thereby change their roles to be autonomous in their learning. In learning English, particularly in learning vocabulary, it is recommended that further study combines Telegram with other platforms, such as digital board games. Ali et al. (2018) state that its use allows learners to widen their vocabulary choices, and as a result, improve their English skills. In terms of the significance of the study, the results

presented in the research may facilitate improvements in the use of mobile learning in higher education. The evidence from this study suggests that the research in Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is rapidly increasing. Yet, studies on Telegram in Malaysian settings based on academics' perceptions of using the platform are still limited. Thus, this study may provide a foundation for similar research in the future.

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