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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Students' Acceptance towards Microsoft Teams for Learning Arabic Language

Nur Hakimah Md Sallehuddin<sup>1</sup> ✉ Tuan Sarifah Aini Syed Ahmad (Dr)<sup>2</sup>, Fatin Aliyah Hassan<sup>3</sup> and Nur Amirah Nabihah Zainal Abidin<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1234</sup>*Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Seremban Campus, Malaysia*

**Corresponding Author:** Nur Hakimah Md Sallehuddin, **E-mail:** [hakimah87@uitm.edu.my](mailto:hakimah87@uitm.edu.my)

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### ABSTRACT

The Arabic language is one of the third languages offered for degree students at UiTM. The students must complete three levels (I, II and III). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the methodology of teaching the Arabic language was by using the traditional way, which was face-to-face instruction. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the methodology of teaching in UiTM has shifted to Open and Distance Learning (ODL). This new way of teaching affected the students' acceptance of learning the Arabic language as they were familiar with the traditional method of teaching. This study aimed to get feedback on student's acceptance of using Microsoft Teams in teaching and learning the Arabic language. The objectives of this study are (i) to evaluate the Perceived Usefulness (PU) of Microsoft Teams among UiTM Students learning Arabic Language, (ii) to assess the Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) of Microsoft Teams among UiTM Students learning Arabic Language and (iii) to investigate the students' attitudes towards using Microsoft Teams in learning the Arabic language. The sample consisted of 121 students from three different faculties: Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences (FSKM), Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR) and Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (FSPPP). The data were collected using Google Forms. The result shows that the students agreed that the application of Microsoft Teams for learning the Arabic language was easy to access, convenient and user-friendly. Other than that, they also agreed Microsoft Teams helped them to learn the Arabic language efficiently and perform a task quickly and were interested in using the apps for learning. It is suggested that MS Teams is one of the convenient online applications that can be used in learning the Arabic language via the Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode.

### KEYWORDS

Acceptance, Microsoft Teams, Arabic Language, Technology Acceptance Model, Open Distance Learning.

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### 1. Introduction

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) offers eight foreign languages to students, namely Arabic, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, German, Spanish and Italian. In order to meet the requirements of diploma and bachelor's degree programmes, the Arabic language is one of the alternatives of foreign languages offered to qualify them for graduation. In UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan (UiTMCNS) Seremban campus, Malaysia, the Arabic language courses are offered only to degree students in three faculties, Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences (FSKM), Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR) and Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (FSPPP).

The purpose of learning the Arabic language as an alternative subject in UiTM is to acquire basic skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing. In addition, other than learning vocabulary, students are also exposed to Arabic language grammar, such as الفعل (verb), الضمائر (pronouns) and the Arabic culture from the topics included in the textbook, such as المشروبات و المأكولات (food and beverages), الأعياد (celebration), and السفر و التجول (travel and sight seeing). Students are required to complete three levels of the Arabic language courses, which are Introductory Arabic Language Level I, II and III, coded as TAC401, TAC451 and TAC501, respectively.

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Before the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the Arabic language teaching and learning method used was solely the traditional method of teaching which is face-to-face. The worldwide pandemic has changed the face-to-face method of teaching to Open Distance Learning (ODL). The ODL was implemented in UiTM as an alternative teaching and learning process since all the educational institutions were closed during the pandemic. In ODL, the teaching and learning process requires both lecturers and students to use online applications to make class happens virtually, where the technology tools and applications are used to replace the physical class. Some popular online applications used for teaching and learning are Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco Webex and Microsoft Teams.

ODL is considered a new norm of teaching method, especially in learning the Arabic language. The lecturers and students need to explore the applications in order to make online classes conducted smoothly. Unfortunately, not all lecturers and students are familiar with using the applications that may affect the teaching and learning process. Some of the problems that arise are a lack of knowledge in using applications, slow Internet coverage, long hours in front of the device, and difficulty in engaging the teaching and learning process.

A study by Tu and Luong (2021) shows that among the problems often encountered by students in online courses were a lack of interaction between teachers and students, internet interruption, poor technical skills and limitation of technology infrastructure. This situation also occurs in Indonesia, where Ritonga et al. (2021a) suggest that a lack of understanding of network systems, limited availability of network connection and infrastructure limitation of network technology are some of the problems that arise in implementing online learning. In response to the problems that arise, this study focused on students' acceptance of Microsoft Teams in learning the Arabic language.

The objectives of this study were:

- i. To evaluate the Perceived Usefulness (PU) of Microsoft Teams among UiTM Students in learning the Arabic Language.
- ii. To assess the Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) of Microsoft Teams among UiTM Students in learning the Arabic Language.
- iii. To investigate the students' attitudes towards using Microsoft Teams in learning the Arabic language.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Open Distance Learning**

The teaching and learning of the Arabic language in UiTM CNS are commonly carried out through the traditional way using face-to-face instruction. However, the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 abruptly forced the Malaysian government to implement online learning as the new norm in teaching and learning. As for UiTM, the classroom instruction conducted online during the outbreak is called online distance learning (ODL). To align with the situation, ODL was implemented in the teaching and learning of the Arabic language during the pandemic by introducing an application in order to ensure that the teaching and learning process could continue regardless of the circumstance. Wargadinata et al. (2020) state that online learning or ODL helps to increase students' independence in learning the Arabic language by using peer interaction, responses and teacher's online responses.

Since the outbreak, there are several applications in teaching and learning that have been introduced and exposed to lecturers as well as students so that classroom instruction can be implemented entirely through online platforms (Ismail et al., 2021). From time to time, these online applications expand and increase in various types of usage and functions, for example, the application for class management: Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams and Padlet. Ritonga et al. (2021b) state that there are other online platforms to support Arabic learning, such as WhatsApp, Kahoot, Quizizz, YouTube and Google Drive. When online applications are applied, students' acceptance is one of the most important aspects to consider in order to make the teaching and learning process achieve the main purpose, which is to deliver and transfer knowledge to students. Davis (1993) states that the pivotal factor in determining the success or failure of using technology is user acceptance.

### **2.2 Microsoft Teams (MS Teams)**

MS Teams was released in 2017; it is a part of Office 365 that serves teamwork through conversations, meetings, channels, apps and file sharing. This application integrates outstanding features that help online learning, such as online video calls and screen sharing, channels, chat in channels, file storage and share points.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, UiTM has provided licensed Online learning applications via MS Teams as a way to help and facilitate UiTM lecturers in conducting ODL. MS Teams is considered a new normalization practice in ODL, specifically in learning the Arabic language. Rojabi (2020) states that MS Teams is categorized as something new for students' participation in online learning. Rojabi (2020) explains that MS Teams motivate students to participate in the teaching and learning process. Thus, it helps the students to understand learning materials more easily.

Yen and Nhil (2021) suggest that MS Teams help to facilitate teachers to prepare and create appropriate online learning, tests and questions by providing some features that allow teachers and students to work together continuously and create and share content and all resources on one platform. In addition, the teachers can also share documents securely and add tabs to specific applications such as Quizlet, Kahoot and Survey Monkey (Martin and Tapp, 2019). The features offered by MS Teams also help lecturers in UiTM in managing students and classes by linking MS Teams to the learning management portal of UiTM, UFuture,

One of the features of ODL which is most beneficial is the flexibility that cannot be obtained in the traditional face-to-face class. Students are able to personalise their learning in terms of pace and time in studying the materials. This was evident in the study conducted by Yen and Nhil (2021) on the effectiveness of online English teaching and learning to non-English major classes using the Microsoft Teams application. The study found that one of the biggest benefits of using MS Teams in online teaching was students' learning process became more flexible. If they were not able to participate in the class, they could watch the lecture videos without the time and place limitations. This situation cannot be achieved in a traditional face-to-face classroom.

The finding was also supported by a study conducted by Pal and Vanijja (2020) in India on the perceived usability of MS Teams as an online learning platform. They suggest that students can benefit from online learning, as they can learn in a more flexible way without limitations and boundaries from anywhere and at any time, even at their own pace.

There were various previous studies on students' perceptions and acceptance towards online learning using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). However, research conducted on Microsoft Teams is limited (Alaby, 2020). The following are previous studies on the acceptance of students towards online learning and applications used for conducting online learning.

Han and Sa (2021) conducted a study on university students' acceptance of online classes using TAM. The results of the study suggest that developing an easy-to-use class focusing on frequent features used by students could improve online class satisfaction. In addition, training and advice provided continuously by the university help students perceive the usefulness of online classes.

Alabay (2021) researched students' perceptions towards using Microsoft Teams in learning French. The study focused on three main themes, which were the reality of distance learning, the user-friendliness of Microsoft Teams and learning a foreign language online. The objective of the study was to compose a deeper understanding of students' perceptions using the popular application in the online learning process. The result shows that students had different views on using the application for the online learning process. In terms of the reality of distance learning, the user-friendliness of Microsoft Teams and learning a foreign language online.

Syed Ahmad et al. (2020) studied students' acceptance towards using Google Classroom (GC) to learn English Exit Test (EET699). The study revealed that there were significantly strong positive effects between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness, a moderate positive effect between Perceived Usefulness and Attitude towards Use, and a moderate positive effect between Attitude towards Use and Actual System Use. However, the effect between Perceived Ease of Use and Attitude towards Use was not significant. Overall, the study indicated positive feedback on students' acceptance towards learning EET699 through GC in learning EET699.

The majority of the studies show positive results from students in acceptance and adapting online applications. Research in online learning and acceptance towards using applications for online learning is relatively still new in the teaching and learning of the Arabic language. Therefore, these areas of research need to be explored. In response to it, this study aimed to examine the students' acceptance towards Microsoft Teams in learning the Arabic language to fill the research gap in the field.

### **2.3 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Davis, (1993)**

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis in 1993 was based on adopted principles from Fishbein and Ajzen's attitude paradigm from psychology. This model is one of the most widely used by researchers to predict the use of a product or technology in the future (Pal & Vanijja, 2020). Moreover, from TAM, the factors that determine the success or failure of an information system project can be obtained from user acceptance towards the system design features of the components in the model (Davis, 1993). TAM is used not only to explain users' acceptance through the system design but also to understand the way to improve the system to a better design.

Figure1: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1993)

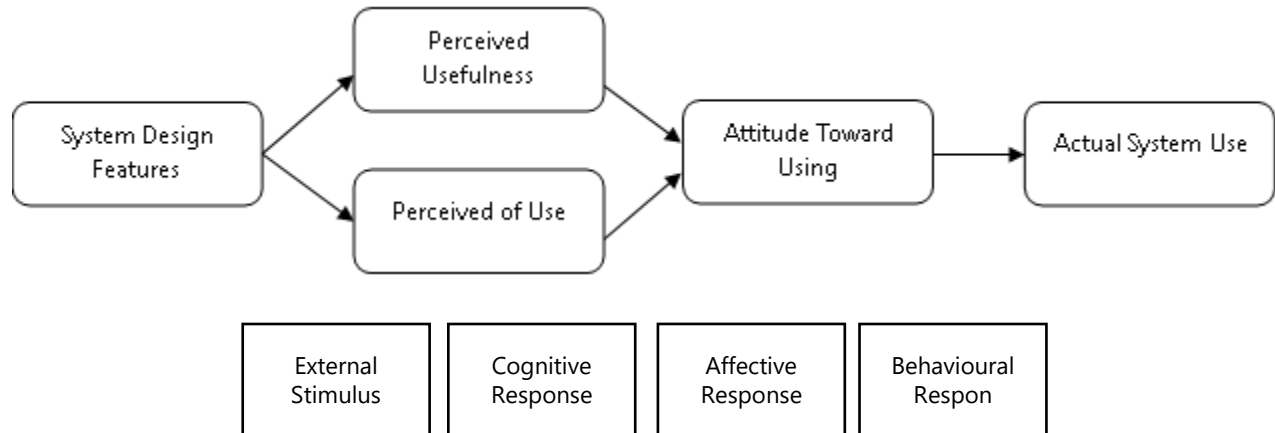


Figure (1) shows the relationship between the components of TAM. This indicates that perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) jointly predict the attitudes towards using technology (ATU). Perceived usefulness (PU) also influences the user's behavioural intention (BI) in using technology. Intention to use (ITU) also determines the actual use of technology (Adwan et al., 2013). They adopt perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as key variables that influence users' attitudes, intentions, and actual behaviour toward using new technology. The basic tenet is that users are more inclined to use new technology if they think that it helps them do their job and is easy to use. Several e-learning studies have used the TAM model (Ngampornchai & Adam, 2016)

A survey form based on the components of TAM was introduced by Syed Ahmad et al. (2020) in the study titled 'Acceptance of Google Classroom in Learning English Exit Test'. Meanwhile, this study focuses on the acceptance of Microsoft Teams in learning the Arabic language. The survey form is adapted in order to collect data. There is a new improvement made to align with the focus of the study.

**3. Methodology**

This study was conducted at UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan Seremban Campus. The sample was collected through purposive sampling, which fit the criteria that had been set by the researcher (Creswell, 2012), which were students who enrolled in the Arabic language courses. The sample consisted of 121 students who registered for Introductory Arabic Language level I, II and III courses coded as TAC401, TAC451 and TAC501.

Students were given a MS Teams link through a WhatsApp message and used MS Teams to learn the Arabic language independently. An online questionnaire created using Google Forms was distributed to the students through a link given via a WhatsApp message after the students used MS teams for one month.

In order to evaluate the students' acceptance towards MS Teams in learning the Arabic language, the questionnaire consisted of two parts : (1) a demographic profile and (2) 12 items that were adapted from (Syed Ahmad et al., 2020) based on TAM (Davis, 1993). For the demographic profile, the items were age, gender, programme and types of the Internet connection used for ODL purposes. For the second part, students were asked to rate four items for each component: Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Attitude Toward Use (ATU).

To measure students' acceptance towards using MS Teams for learning the Arabic language, they needed to select the options provided in five Likert scales: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Table 1 shows the 12 items used in the second part.

**Table 1.** Items for the questionnaire adapted from Syed Ahmad et al. (2020) based on Davis (1993)

No.	Remark	Item
1.	PEU1	Microsoft Teams is user-friendly.
2.	PEU2	Microsoft Teams is convenient.
3.	PEU3	I do not need any training to use Microsoft Teams.
4.	PEU4	It is easy to access Microsoft Teams.
5.	PU1	Microsoft Teams helps me to learn the Arabic Language efficiently.
6.	PU2	Microsoft Teams helps me to improve my grades in the Arabic Language.
7.	PU3	Microsoft Teams helps me to save time in learning the Arabic Language.
8.	PU4	Microsoft Teams helps me to perform learning tasks quickly.
9.	AT1	I want to use Microsoft Teams more.
10.	AT2	I want to recommend my friends to use Microsoft Teams.
11.	AT3	I am interested to use Microsoft Teams.
12.	AT4	It is worth to use Microsoft Teams.

The data collected were analysed by using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Missing data were checked, and normality tests were conducted since means were used to interpret the findings. Then, descriptive analysis was conducted to obtain the mean scores for the items in the second part of the questionnaire. The means of the five-Likert scales were interpreted by using the guideline provided by Alston and Miller (2002) as follows:

**Table 2.** Interpretation of mean of the five-Likert scale

Likert Scale	Likert Description	Mean of Likert Scale
1	Strongly Disagree	1.0 - 1.49
2	Disagree	1.5 - 2.49
3	Neutral	2.5 - 3.49
4	Agree	3.5 - 4.49
5	Strongly Agree	4.5 – 5.0

**4. Results and Discussion**

The results and discussion are divided into three (3) sections based on the questionnaire used for the data collection. The first section presents students' demographic profiles, while the next section discusses the types of the internet connection used in ODL. The final section describes the results and discussion of descriptive statistics of TAM items.

**4.1 Demographic Profile**

The sample consisted of 121 students from the UiTM Negeri Sembilan Seremban campus. The descriptive analysis indicated that there were no missing data for all items. The sample consisted of 96 female students (79.3%) and 25 male students (20.7%). The students' age range was from 21 to 25 years old. They were from four programmes which were AM228: Bachelor of Administrative Science, CS241: Bachelor of Science Statistics, and CS248: Bachelor of Science. Management Mathematics and CS249: Bachelor of Science (Hons) Mathematics. The majority of the students (73.9%) were from AM228. It was followed by CS249 (20.7%), CS241 (4.1%) and CS248 (1.7%). Table 3 presents the demographic profile of the sample.

**Table 3.** Demographic Profile

	N	%
<b>Course Program</b>		
AM228	89	73.6%
CS241	5	4.1%
CS248	2	1.7%
CS249	25	20.7%
<b>Age</b>		
21	66	54.5%
22	38	31.4%
23	16	13.2%
25	1	0.8%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	25	20.7%
Female	96	79.3%

**4.2 Types of Internet Connection**

One of the most important facilities in the ODL process is the internet connection. Table 4 shows the types of the Internet connection used by UiTM students from the Seremban campus for learning the Arabic language on MS Teams.

**Table 4.** Types of Internet Connections

		Wifi	%	Prepaid	%	Postpaid	%
<b>N</b>	<b>Valid</b>	121	100%	121	100%	121	100%
	<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sum</b>		79	65.3%	51	42.1%	24	19.8%

The results indicated that the most used Internet connection among students for ODL was WiFi (65.3%). While the second most used Internet connection for ODL was the prepaid internet plan (42.1%). The least used Internet connection type was the postpaid plan (19.8%). In order to ensure the effectiveness of the ODL process, types of Internet connection play a big role in ODL. The teaching and learning process in ODL depends on the strength of the Internet connection in order to run any online learning activities smoothly. Slow and inadequate internet facilities are among the factors that affect online learning (Ullah et al., 2017). WiFi was the most preferred Internet connection by students. It may be due to the fact that it is free. While for the prepaid plan, students have to reload and top up when the Internet quota reaches the usage limit. As for the postpaid plan, it is more expensive than the two types of Internet connection mentioned.

**4.3 Descriptive Statistics of TAM Items**

The results were divided into three components, namely Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Attitude Towards Use (ATU). Descriptive analysis was used to obtain the mean score and standard deviation in measuring students' acceptance toward the MS Teams application in learning the Arabic language.

**4.3.1 Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) of Microsoft Teams**

Table 5 illustrates that the students agreed with all items, 'PEU4: It was easy to access Microsoft Teams' recorded the highest mean score (M=4.08, SD=.833). It is followed by 'PEU2: Microsoft Teams is convenient' (M=4.04, SD=.889) and 'PEU 1: Microsoft Teams is user-friendly' (M=4.00, SD=.931). The least mean score was recorded by 'PEU3: I do not need any training to use Microsoft Teams' (M=3.69, SD=.922). The results suggest that the MS Teams app was easy to use by students in learning the Arabic language in the ODL mode.

**Table 5.** Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) of Microsoft Teams

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation of Means
<b>PEU1</b>	121	1	5	4.00	.931	Agree
<b>PEU2</b>	121	1	5	4.04	.889	Agree
<b>PEU3</b>	121	1	5	3.69	.922	Agree
<b>PEU4</b>	121	2	5	4.08	.833	Agree

The findings in Table 5 are consistent with the study by Rababah (2020), which found one of the positive themes in learning using MS Teams was convenience. In addition, Duong and Nguyen (2021) also demonstrated that students found MS Teams easy to use. The new normalization in online teaching and learning needs a platform or an application that has a user-friendly interface, easy access and convenient features. MS Teams features such as the menu, interface and icons are helpful and make it easy to use (Alabay, 2021). These features may help to facilitate lecturers to make sure the ODL process runs effectively.

The findings of this study supported (Yen & Nhil 2021), which claimed MS Teams features allowed teachers and students to work together continuously at the same time; the biggest benefit of MS Teams is flexibility. Students can have their own pace and learning time without limitation. Alabay (2021) findings also show the students emphasized that MS Teams features are helpful and easy to use. In addition, (Wijayanto et al., 2021) study suggests that the MS Teams application in online learning is an initial step towards a new method of teaching and learning that makes the process easier.

**4.3.2 Perceived Usefulness (PU) of Microsoft Teams**

Table 6 illustrates that students agreed with all items. The highest mean score was recorded for ‘PU1: Microsoft Teams helps me to learn the Arabic Language efficiently’ (M=4.11, SD=.693). It is followed by ‘PU4: Microsoft Teams helps me to perform learning tasks quickly’ (M=4.10, SD=.779) and ‘PU3: Microsoft Teams helps me to save my time in learning the Arabic Language’ (M=4.04, SD=.850) and the lowest mean score was recorded by ‘PU2: Microsoft Teams helps me to improve my grades in the Arabic Language’ (M=4.00, SD=.753). The results suggest that MS Teams was a useful application for teaching the Arabic language in the ODL mode.

**Table 6.** Perceived Usefulness (PU) of Microsoft Teams

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation of Means
<b>PU1</b>	121	1	5	4.11	.693	Agree
<b>PU2</b>	121	1	5	4.00	.753	Agree
<b>PU3</b>	121	1	5	4.04	.850	Agree
<b>PU4</b>	121	1	5	4.10	.779	Agree

In order to ensure the effectiveness of ODL, the usability of learning tools becomes an important aspect (Pal & Vanija, 2020). The results from perceived usefulness items showed the students agreed that MS Teams helped them to learn the Arabic language efficiently and perform the task quickly. Besides that, using MS Teams to learn the Arabic language also saved time and improved their grades. Wijayanto et al. (2021) state that online learning using MS Teams can make learning effective and practical even though it is remotely implemented. The interaction process between lecturers and students may also save time, where communication happens in real-time (synchronous). Moreover, communication can also happen at a delayed time (asynchronous) when using the features such as Conversation and Chat, in which teachers and students can reply to messages at a delayed time.

**4.3.3 Attitude Towards Use (ATU) Microsoft Teams**

The ATU mean score results in Table 7 indicate that the students agreed with all items. ‘ATU4: It is worth using MS Teams’ recorded the highest mean score (M= 4.06, SD= .840). It is followed by ‘ATU3: The students are interested in using Microsoft Teams in learning the Arabic Language’ (M=4.02, SD=.875) and ‘ATU1: They want to use MS Teams more’ (M=4.01, SD=.880). The lowest mean score was recorded by ‘ATU2: recommend friends to use MS Teams’ (M=3.98, SD=.931). The results suggest that the students had a positive attitude towards using MS Teams for learning the Arabic language in the ODL mode.

**Table 7.** Attitude Towards Use (ATU) Microsoft Teams

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation of Means
<b>ATU1</b>	121	1	5	4.01	.880	Agree
<b>ATU2</b>	121	1	5	3.98	.931	Agree
<b>ATU3</b>	121	1	5	4.02	.875	Agree
<b>ATU4</b>	121	1	5	4.06	.840	Agree

In contrast to the results in Table (7), a finding from (Ritonga et al., 2021a) on Arabic language online learning as perceived by students and lecturers shows negative perceptions of the quality of online Arabic learning outcomes. Some of the problems that arise that lead to the negative perception are cost consumption in using the Internet, poor Internet network connectivity and platform, applications, and software used for ODL. The results may suggest that students at the UiTM Seremban campus have sufficient facilities to participate in the ODL on MS Teams for learning the Arabic language.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study is the beginning step for enhancing the understanding of the students' acceptance towards Microsoft Teams in learning the Arabic language through ODL. From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the majority of the students agreed MS Teams was easy to use and useful application for learning the Arabic language in ODL mode. In addition, the students were interested and wanted to explore more in using MS Teams to learn the Arabic language. This study also shows that the majority of the students agreed that MS Teams features such as ease of access, convenience, and user friendly helped to facilitate the Arabic language learning process and utilize the ODL platform usage. As a result, the students were able to learn effectively and perform learning tasks quickly.

Students' acceptance towards technology application and software are important in the ODL method of teaching and learning. It requires both lecturers and students to have the knowledge of technology literacy skills, interactions and engagement in the online class. The selection of application is one of the main aspects to be considered in ODL. In order to increase technology literacy skills, a complete training workshop and module of the specific online application should be provided to both lecturers and students. A hands-on training workshop suits the best method of training that provides the participants with real experience and a practical way of using the application.

This study was conducted at UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan Seremban campus and focused on learning the Arabic language via ODL using MS Teams. Since this study focuses on the Microsoft Teams application and UiTM students from Seremban Campus in the ODL method of teaching and learning, it is suggested in future research to involve students from other universities to gain more perspective and responses towards online applications and platforms used in ODL. Moreover, various other online applications and platforms can be studied, for example, Microsoft Sites, Google Classroom, Padlet and so on. Conducting similar research and choosing other online applications for learning the Arabic language and students from other faculties would provide a deeper understanding of students' acceptance towards online applications. Besides, research on the online application in teaching and learning the Arabic language for other applications should be conducted as it is considered new compared to other languages.

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**ORCID** Nur Hakimah Md Sallehuddin : <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8400-2366>

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