



PERCIEVED INFLUENCE OF FACE-TO-FACE AND REMOTE INSTRUCTION ON LEARNING IN GAMBIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

In compliance with laid down safety guidelines to contain the massive spread of COVID-19 in the Gambia, teaching and learning activities through the traditional face-to-face instructional mode in Gambian Universities have been disrupted. Subsequently, ICT-driven remote instruction was adopted by most tertiary institutions. Despite this intervention, technical and internet-related problems have largely hampered the smooth delivery of lectures through the face-to-screen channel. This has dire implications for students' interest and attitude to learning. Therefore, this study examined face-to-face and face-to-screen modes of instruction as predictors of students' interest and attitude toward learning in Gambian Universities. Three research questions were raised and data were collected with ICT using online survey comprising 115 participants. The results showed that face-to-face instruction contributed more to students' interest and attitude toward learning than the face-to-screen mode. The study also found that students prefer the remote channel of instruction to the conventional face-to-face mode. Also, Gambian undergraduates perceived the influence of both face-to-face and face-to-screen instruction on their interest and attitude toward learning as positive. Therefore, it was recommended that the face-to-screen mode of instruction should be retained and progressively used alongside face-to-face instruction in conventional universities in post-COVID 19 Gambia.

Keywords: Face-to-face, remote instruction, interest, attitude, Gambian Universities.

INTRODUCTION

The Gambia is the smallest and perhaps one of the poorest countries in the West African sub-region. As a developing country with low economic and technological development, the need for human capital development in the Gambia through access to quality university education cannot be overemphasized. Until 1999, The Gambia did not have any university, although post-secondary institutions existed that provided, inter alia, training of teachers, agricultural agents, and medical personnel (Gambia College); technical education (GTTI), and management training (Management Development Institute). As a result, all Gambian students seeking university education were obliged to leave the country, with few of them returning.

Efforts to increase access to university education, build home-grown technocrats and produce high-level manpower in the country made the Gambian government establish the University of The Gambia (UTG) in 1999. The country also established the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) and the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) to



safeguard quality control and assurance in university and higher education in The Gambia. Besides, the Gambian government upgraded some of the existing post-secondary institutions of learning and issued operational licenses to investors that wish to have been given establish private universities in the country. The implication of this is that the country currently has more than five conventional and two open universities.

To make university education available to the citizens, the Gambian government spends huge sums of money to provide bonds, grants, and sponsorship for indigent students with the aspiration to attain university education. Due to the high level of poverty in the country, many parents are unable to sponsor their children to university education with an estimated 70% of undergraduates in Gambian universities under one form of sponsorship program or the other. Students not sponsored by their parents, the government or any of the charitable organizations are mostly self-sponsored and had to combine education with employment. Therefore, to ensure face-to-face instruction for all students, irrespective of their employment status, the nation's conventional universities offer weekend and evening classes in their academic programs. The face-to-face classroom interaction has been the only mode of instruction in all the conventional universities since the inception of university education in The Gambia.

However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to contain its spread in the Gambia has had serious implications for different aspects of the social life of the citizens. In education, the total shutdown of schools and the declaration of lockdown measures by the president on March 17th, 2020 meant that the process of learning in all the schools in the country was brought to a halt. However, all the Universities in the country have leveraged on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to ensure that their students receive lectures and continue learning through face-to-screen instruction by using applications such as Zoom, Imo, Google classroom, Google meet and so on despite the ban on convergence in a conventional classroom to receive face-to-face instruction.

Irrespective of the means of instructional delivery, learning remains the primary goal of any teaching activity. Hence, learning cannot occur in a vacuum because there can be no learning without some form of teaching, either through face-to-face or face-to-screen channels. Learning involves the processes that enhance students' thinking, problem-solving skills and improve performance. Efforts to improve students' learning experiences have largely focused on creating a conducive learning environment and improving the quality of instruction (Olagbaju & Popoola, 2020). According to Brown and Dryden (2004), humans are naturally inclined to learn because of the inherent curiosity to enquire and learn about the world around them. Similarly, all humans can learn if the learning material is interesting or presented in interesting ways (DeCarvalho, 1991).

For effective learning to take place, both the materials and procedure must be made to appeal to learners so they become engaged in the process of learning till they develop an interest and positive attitude to learning. However, there are lots of factors that hinder quality instructional procedure and some of these are access to technology, teachers' qualification and experience, societal indifference, lack of funds, and misplaced priority on educational policy, to mention a few. Like in most countries, the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has redefined the mode of instruction in Gambian Universities. However, the adoption of ICT-driven face-to-screen instruction for university undergraduates across the Gambia could influence students' interest and attitude to learning because of several factors that exist among undergraduates within the country. Some of these factors include poor knowledge and skills of ICT, lack of ICT-friendly smartphones, laptops, and other devices that can be used for the newly introduced mode of instruction among others.

Since adopting the wholesale use of technology in university education in the Gambia as fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, the concerns of most of the stakeholders have been to ensure that student's interest



and attitude to learning are kept at optimum level (Ghazi-Saidi, Criffield, Kracl, Mckevley, Obasi, & Vu, 2020). Karl, Shahnaz, Erol, Masao, and Tabrizi (2008) argue that face-to-screen mode of instruction offers flexibility and convenience in instructional delivery but requires technical skills and knowledge; therefore, both the instructors and students must be adaptable, knowledgeable, and ICT complaint. University education is capable of fostering national and human capital development in any nation. Therefore, be it face-to-face or face-to-screen instruction, it is important to ensure that the students are well motivated and their interest and attitude to learning remain high.

Interest and attitude play significant roles in the way learners accept and process information during the process of instructional delivery. Interest is capable of fueling learners' curiosity and desire to inquire and learn more about the topic. Interest also helps the learners to stay focused all through the process of instruction be it through the conventional face-to-face or the ICT-supported face-to-screen mode. Without interest, it will be very difficult to stay focused and learn. However, attitude is feeling of like or dislike towards a thing, process, or person. Positive attitudes are capable of reinforcing learning while a negative attitude impedes students' learning outcomes. Researches in education have shown that attitude formed over some time can change in the face of new realities or experiences.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of technologies on instructional procedures and learning outcomes such as students' achievements, attitude, satisfaction, interest, motivation, and so on. For example, Wisan, Nazma, and Pscherer (2001) and Mpungose (2020) found that students are much more satisfied with and preferred face-to-face mode of instruction to the face-to-screen and online mode. However, the result of the study further showed that students who had had at least four sessions of face-to-screen instruction indicated higher levels of satisfaction. To White (1999), there was no significant difference in the performance for students exposed to face-to-screen instruction and those who received face-to-face instruction. Also, Karl, et al (2008) and Ghazi-Saidi, et al (2020) found face-to-screen, online learning, or other eLearning channels to be preferred above the conventional face-to-face instruction by most students. Thus, research findings on the relationship between face-to-face and face-to-screen models of instruction and students' learning outcomes are largely inconclusive.

Available literatures on the influence of face-to-face and face-to-screen instruction on students' learning outcomes in different subject areas have largely focused on variables such as satisfaction, achievement, and motivation. Most of the existing studies were not conducted on university undergraduates in the Gambia or the two variables of interest in this study which are students' interest and attitude to learning. Hence, this study examines face-to-face and face-to-screen modes of instruction as predictors of students' interest and attitude to learning in the Gambian Universities.

Statement of the Problem

Learners' attitudes and interests are important classroom variables that can determine achievement as a process of instruction. Interest instills the curiosity to inquire in learners, sustains their attention, and helps them to focus on the task during the instructional procedure. The face-to-screen mode of instruction in the Gambian University system was necessitated by the government's response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the country. Most of the undergraduates and lecturers are new to the online or remote instructional procedure. Several studies have confirmed that the use of face-to-screen instruction and several audio-visual resources in the teaching of several school subjects contributed significantly to students' achievement, satisfaction, interest, retention, and recall. However, the findings of these studies were mostly inconclusive and conducted outside the shores of the Gambia. Therefore, this study examined face-to-face and face-to-screen modes of instruction as predictors of students' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities.



Research Questions

Three research questions were raised in the study and these are:

Do undergraduates in Gambian Universities prefer face-to-face or face-to-screen mode of instruction?

What is the perceived influence of face-to-face instruction on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities?

What is the perceived influence of face-to-screen instruction on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities?

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

Lev Vygotsky's (1896-1934) Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) was a novel; approach to explaining the role of support of learning. ZDP describes what an individual can do, achieve or learn alone and what he can do with the help or assistance from an experienced peer or adult who is either a teacher or facilitator. His thoughts have since become the foundation of much research and theory in cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978) found that children could solve more difficult problems through supports which can be in form of instruction or some form of assistance from a more knowledgeable partner. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the gap between the actual development level of the learner and his or her level of potential development through access to support, information, or instruction from an experienced adult or in collaboration with peers. The ZDP has serious implications for this study with regards to the influence of the face-to-face and face-to-screen modes of instructional support on university undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning.

Face-to-face and face-to-screen modes of instruction: Implications for students' interest and attitude

Several factors have been identified as being capable of contributing to students' achievement after exposure to a process of instruction. Some of these factors include the use of innovative instructional strategy (Ogunleye & Babajide, 2011), teachers' communication styles (Ogunyemi & Olagbaju, 2020), use of audio-visual resources (Shah & Khan, 2015; Mpungose, 2020), interest (Olagbaju & Popoola, 2020) and attitude (Tesser, 1993). Also, some researchers have attributed the dwindling levels of students' interest and attitude to reading and learning as some of the factors responsible for poor learning outcomes of students in secondary and post-secondary levels of education. Undergraduates in the different universities in the Gambia are confronted with similar challenges because most of them often combine academics with employment or drive to get sponsors from Europe and the US. These activities affect their interest and attitude to school work, lectures, classroom participation, writing of examination, executive and delivery of classwork or project, and the submission of assignment.

Interests and attitudes are important learner variables that are capable of determining the effectiveness of any course or mode of instruction and learning outcomes. This has also informed why the government and other stakeholders in the Gambian educational sector have introduced several initiatives to promote effectiveness in teaching to make learning interesting, fun-filled, and enjoyable. The technology-supported instructional procedure has been found to contribute to students' interest and attitude to learning (Olagbaju & Popoola, 2020). Students tend to appreciate and pay attention to teachers who are knowledgeable, dynamic, and creative during instructional delivery either through the conventional face-to-face mode or the face-to-screen and other eLearning options.

The adoption of the face-to-screen mode of instruction by Gambian Universities as a precautionary measure to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in the country was aimed at actively engaging the students and sustaining their interests and attitude to learning. Institutions of learning that could not switch to fully online classes because of the requirements in terms of logistics, capital, and technical resources have



adopted the electronic schooling (eSchool) alternative. Most of the institutions in the country adopted the choice of face-to-screen mode of instruction which supports psychical distancing and the use of audio-visual resources. Since the inception of the face-to-screen mode of instruction in most conventional universities in the Gambia, most of the students and lecturers have had to struggle to cope with ICT-related challenges such as poor internet network, lack of internet-friendly phones and laptops, poor know-how in terms of operating the technologies or resources which pose serious threats to students' interest and attitude to learning. In some cases, learners have complained that they miss the personal attention and contact from lecturers.

Similarly, the limitations of the 'face-to-screen' mode of instruction are too many, especially with regards to students' interest and attitude to learning. The implementation of the face-to-screen instructional procedure was hasty. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, most of the lecturers were not even trained on the use of audio-visual eLearning resources in instructional delivery. Although some of the universities provided internet-ready modems and data subscriptions for the lecturers and students respectively, training and orientation on the use of the face-to-screen mode of instruction for staff and students to ease the switch from the conventional face-to-face mode of instruction to the newly adopted face-to-screen instructional procedure.

Teaching is a two-way interaction and exchange between the instructor and the learner. In a face-to-face instructional approach, the teacher is physically present within the walls of a classroom to instruct and guide students in learning a particular concept. The face-to-face approach enables students to concentrate and interact with fewer distractions during the course of the lesson. It can be easily monitored by the instructor through hands-on activities, on-the-spot evaluation, and corrective feedback in the classroom. Karl et al (2008) present some of the benefits of the face-to-face mode of instruction as: it allows social and spatial awareness between the instructor and students, the arrangement and scenery of a classroom stimulates learning, aids effective teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction; supports the use of important non-verbal cues during instruction and provides a faster and more efficient means of communication than the online or face-to-screen mode of instruction.

However, the face-to-screen mode of instruction supports the use of technology, the internet, and audio-visual resources in instructional delivery. It allows the instructor to work remotely and defy space because the instructor does not need to be physically available in a classroom to teach. In a face-to-screen mode of instruction, the content can be pre-recorded or streamed live through audio-visual media such as television, laptops and personal computers, smartphones, Google meet, Google classroom, Zoom, YouTube, WhatsApp, and other social media tools. According to Aggarwal (2009) and Ghazi-Saidi (2020), advances in technology have provided limitless possibilities in instructional delivery through audio-visual aids for narrations and program hosting. Also, Mishra and Yadav (2004) posit that the use of audio-visual resources in teaching is capable of stimulating the interest of learners in different subject areas. Several studies have investigated the use of technology-supported face-to-screen instruction viz-a-viz the conventional face-to-face mode of instruction and the findings have been insightful.

The use of face-to-screen instruction and eLearning has been found to improve the quality of instruction and students' learning experience because concepts are easily presented with images and animations. However, instructional procedures in most lecture halls in Gambian Universities before the COVID-19 induced lockdown were largely conducted using the marker board with few halls having installed projectors for presentations and little or no use of e-learning resources. Although the face-to-screen mode of instruction is a child of necessity and still in its infancy in most Gambian Universities, an examination of the relationship between the two modes of instruction and students' interest and attitude to learning is important. The findings of such studies can provide information that will be beneficial to improving the quality of conventional face-to-face and face-to-screen modes of instruction.



A common problem with most of the studies is the selection of appropriate audio-visual resources in light of the multitude of audio-visual at teachers' disposal in the 21st-century technology-driven society. Studies (Awasthi, 2014; Mpungose, 2020; Olagbaju & Popoola, 2020) have established that there can be overuse or abuse of audio-visual resources in instructional delivery because it is not all audio-visual resources that can deliver the outcomes expected. Other studies have investigated the relationship between face-to-face and face-to-screen or online instruction and students' learning outcomes. For example, Beard and Harper (2002) investigated students' attitudes and opinions about the conventional face-to-face and technology-driven online instructions. Although the group that received face-to-screen instruction was able to learn at their own pace by making use of technology, the findings of the study showed that the students that received online or face-to-screen instruction were dissatisfied because of technical-related problems and the poor quality of interaction during the instruction.

Similarly, Wisan, Nazma, and Pscherer (2001) and Vamosi, Pierce, and Slotkin (2004) reported that students exposed to face-to-screen and online modes of instruction were dissatisfied with the channel of instruction especially because they were accustomed to the conventional face-to-face mode of instruction. No doubt, there will be a lot of distractions on the part of the student and may not be properly monitored by the instructor. Both approaches have their merit and demerit. For example, Shah and Khan (2015) found that animation and information presented on the screen during the face-to-screen mode of instruction provided a different learning experience that was beneficial to the development of critical thinking in students. Also, Fredericksen, Pickett, Shea, Pelz, and Swan (2000) reported that there are no significant differences between the satisfaction of students exposed to face-to-screen or online instruction and those exposed to the conventional face-to-face mode of instruction. Given these findings, it is important to examine the relationship between face-to-face and face-to screen modes of instruction and students' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities. This study examined the perceived influence of face-to-face and remote instruction on students' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities.

METHOD

This study examined the relationship between two modes of instruction and undergraduate students' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities. The participants comprised 115 undergraduate students from the three conventional universities that recently adopted the face-to-screen and online learning mode of instruction as a response to the COVID-19 lockdown in the Gambia. An online-based questionnaire on "undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning through face-to-face and face-to-screen instruction" was designed using the Google Form platform and used to collect information from the respondents.

The instrument for Data Collection

Face-to-face and Remote/Face-to-screen Modes of Learning on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in the Gambian Universities Scale (FFMLGUS) was used to collect data. The instrument was administered online through a link that was sent to students through their lecturers and designated class representatives. The instrument contained 20 items: 10 each on interest and attitude to learning with responses ranging from always, sometimes to never.

Sampling Techniques

115 (100-400 levels) undergraduates across all the departments and the three conventional Universities in the Gambia were selected for this study. Data gathering coincided with the national declaration of COVID-19 lockdown, social and physical distancing restrictions in the country which prompted the closure of the Universities. Therefore, the researchers adopted an online survey using a Google form link.



The survey was conducted using a Google Form link shared on social networking sites, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, which are the most accessible social media platforms in Gambia. The data was gathered using a non-proportionate sampling approach. It is a combination of snowballing such that the researchers forwarded the link to students' class representatives and selected lecturers who in turn forwarded the same to the class WhatsApp groups. With this, almost all the group of students in the three universities was reached through their smartphones and other devices. The researcher ensured that the sample included 115 students from 100 to 400 levels across the three conventional universities in the Gambia that responded to the online survey.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Research Question One: Do undergraduates in Gambian Universities prefer face-to-face or face-to-screen mode of instruction?

Table 1. Undergraduates' Preference for face-to-face or face-to-screen mode of instruction

S/N	Items	N	Frequently	Rarely	Never	Mean
1	It is more fun to learn through uploaded videos and other eLearning channels than in a classroom.	115	38 47.5%	49 40.8%	28 11.6%	2.08
2	I am able to concentrate more with a teacher in the class than when seeing a video	115	84 82.6%	22 14.4%	9 2.95%	2.65
3	Watching lecture videos is as interesting as face-to-face classroom teaching.	115	41 49.5%	51 41.1%	23 9.27%	2.15
4	I am learning more contents from Face-to-screen teaching than the face-to-face approach.	115	35 44.5%	51 43.2%	29 12.2%	2.05
5	I prefer watching the e-Lectures live and participate in real time	115	65 68.6%	37 26%	15 5.2%	2.46
6	The use of e-Lecture channels makes me do more learning than in face-to-face classroom instruction.	115	37 47.6%	44 37.7%	34 14.5%	2.02
7	I usually look forward to video uploads by my lecturers	115	75 76.2%	30 20.3%	10 3.38%	2.56
8	I cannot wait to return to the conventional face-to-face classroom interaction.	115	80 80%	25 16.6%	10 3.33%	2.60
9	I love to watch the lecture videos over and over again unlike a face-to-face instruction	115	63 67.7%	38 27.2%	14 5.0%	2.42
10	I will like e-Lectures options to be maintained even after the lockdown.	115	62 69.1%	30 22.3%	23 8.55%	2.33

Standard Mean = 2.00; Weighted Mean = 2.33

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of the Undergraduates' Preference for face-to-face or face-to-screen channels of instruction in Gambian Universities. The result shows that majority (47.5%) of the undergraduates frequently agreed that it is more fun to learn through uploaded videos and other eLearning channels than in a classroom (mean = 2.08); 82.6% frequently agreed that they are able to concentrate more with a teacher in the class than when seeing a video (mean = 2.65); 49.5% frequently agreed that watching lecture videos is as interesting as face-to-face classroom teaching (mean = 2.15); 44.5%



frequently agreed that they are learning more contents from face-to-screen teaching than the face-to-face approach (mean = 2.05); 68.6% frequently agreed that they prefer watching the e-Lectures live and participate in real time (mean = 2.46); 47.6% frequently agreed that the use of e-Lecture channels makes them do more learning than in face-to-face classroom instruction (mean = 2.02); 76.2% frequently agreed that they usually look forward to video uploads by my lecturers (mean = 2.56); 80% frequently agreed that they cannot wait to return to the conventional face-to-face classroom interaction (mean = 2.60); 67.7% frequently agreed that they love to watch the lecture videos over and over again unlike a face-to-face instruction (mean = 2.42); and 69.1% frequently agreed that I will like e-Lectures options to be maintained even after the lockdown (mean = 2.33). In conclusion, the responses of the students to each item revealed that they preferred the face-to-screen mode of instruction to the conventional face-to-face mode of instruction.

Research Question Two: What is the perceived influence of face-to-face instruction on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities?

Table 2. Perceived influence of face-to-face instruction on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities

S/N	Items	N	Frequently	Rarely	Never	Mean
1	Watching lecture videos boosts my interest in learning as face-to-face instruction does.	115	38 50.8%	33 29.4%	44 19.6%	1.94
2	I would rather prefer that all the e-Lectures should be taught again in the classroom after the lockdown	115	61 69%	28 21.1%	26 10.2%	2.30
3	Face-to-face teaching allows me to prepare ahead of class and participate when learning.	115	85 82.2%	25 16.1%	5 1.61%	2.69
4	Learning via video and e-Channels does not facilitate as much learning as face-to-face classroom instruction.	115	44 53.4%	44 35.6%	27 10.9%	2.14
5	I do not support the use of e-Lectures.	115	49 55.8%	50 38%	16 6.08%	2.28
6	I prefer face-to-face classroom teaching to online/video teaching that relies on the internet.	115	78 77.4%	31 20.5%	6 1.98%	2.62

Standard Mean = 2.00; Weighted Mean =2.32

Table 2 shows the perceived influence of face-to-face instruction on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities as shown by the frequency distribution of students' responses to the items used. The table shows a weighted mean of 2.32 which is greater than the standard mean of 2.00. This implies that the undergraduates positively perceived the influence of face-to-face instruction on their interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities. Two of the items used contributed to this positive perception because their means are greater than the weighted mean. In order of magnitude, the items are item 3 – Face-to-face teaching allows me to prepare ahead of the class and participate when learning (mean = 2.69) and item 6 – I prefer face-to-face classroom teaching to online/video teaching that relies on the internet (mean = 2.62). Hence, it could be concluded that Face-to-face teaching allows undergraduates to prepare ahead of the class and participate when learning, a reason why they prefer face-to-face classroom teaching to online/video teaching that is largely dependent on technology and the internet.



Research Question Three: What is the perceived influence of face-to-screen instruction on undergraduates’ interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities?

Table 3. Perceived influence of face-to-screen instruction on undergraduates’ interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities

S/N	Items	N	Frequently	Rarely	Never	Mean
1	Face-to-screen instruction accommodates the classroom atmosphere and corrective feedback unlike e-Lectures.	115	51 59.7%	39 30.4%	25 9.8%	2.22
2	E-Learning is the right way to go in the 21 st century. It should be maintained after lockdown.	115	56 63.6%	37 28%	22 8.3%	2.29
3	I feel that all subjects can be taught through e-Lecture channels to enhance students’ interest.	115	38 47.5%	49 40.8%	28 11.6%	2.08
4	I learn much from e-Resources such as videos and other e-Lecture materials.	115	84 83.4%	19 12.5%	12 3.97%	2.62

Standard Mean = 2.00; Weighted Mean =2.30

Table 3 shows the perceived influence of face-to-screen instruction on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities, as shown by the frequency distribution of students' responses to the items used. The table shows a weighted mean of 2.30 which is greater than the standard mean of 2.00. This implies that the undergraduates selected positively perceived the influence of face-to-screen instruction on their interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities. Item 4 – I learn much from e-Resources such as videos and other e-Lecture materials, which contributed to this positive perception because its mean (2.62) is greater than the weighted mean. This implies that undergraduates learn much from e-Resources such as videos and other e-Lecture materials.

The study found that undergraduates in Gambian Universities prefer the face-to-screen mode of instruction to the conventional face-to-face mode. This result supports Karl et al (2008) that learners prefer face-to-screen of instruction to the face-to-face approach. However, the result is at variance with the findings of several studies (Wisan, Nazma, & Pscherer, 2001; Ghazi-Saidi, 2020; Olagbaju & Popoola, 2020) that students are satisfied with and preferred face-to-face mode of instruction to the face-to-screen and other online modes. The findings of this study could be because the participants are mostly adults who are already familiar with the use of technology to a reasonable extent. The findings of this study also disagree with White (1999) that there is no significant difference in the students' preference for either face-to-screen or face-to-face mode of instruction. Also, the study found that most undergraduates in Gambian Universities had a positive perception of the influence of face-to-face instruction on their interest and attitude to learning. The finding of this study is not surprising because most of the learners are used to the conventional face-to-face mode of instruction and they have already established an opinion concerning the influence of the face-to-face mode on interest and attitude.

Lastly, the study found that most undergraduates in Gambian Universities had a positive perception of the influence of face-to-screen instruction on their interest and attitude to learning. This finding makes a big statement for the inclusion of technology into conventional classroom practices in Gambian Universities. In this study, students positively perceived the use of the face-to-screen mode of instruction on their interest and attitude because the use of technology improved the quality of instruction and allowed learners to participate in class real-time. The result also supports the findings of DeCarvalho (1991), Mishra and Yadav (2004), and Mpungose (2020) that the use of audio-visual resources in teaching is capable of stimulating the interest of learners in different subject areas.



Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the perceived influence of face-to-face and face-to-screen modes of instruction on undergraduates' interest and attitude to learning in Gambian Universities using 115 participants from 100 to 400 levels across all the three conventional Universities in the Gambia. The study adopted descriptive research design of survey type using Google form and ICT to administer the instrument for the collection of data for this study. Three research questions were raised and the results showed that the participants prefer the face-to-screen mode of instruction to the conventional face-to-face mode used before the COVID 19 restrictions. The result showed that most Gambian undergraduates had a positive perception of the influence of face-to-face instruction on their interest and attitude to learning. The third finding of this study was that most Gambian undergraduates had a positive perception of the influence of face-to-screen instruction on their interest and attitude to learning. Because of these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The face-to-screen mode of instruction should be retained in the conventional university system in The Gambia.
2. Face-to-screen mode of instruction should be progressively integrated into the operations of the conventional universities in the Gambia even in the post-COVID 19 era.
3. There is a need to continue to train lecturers on the effective use of technology and other face-to-screen modes in instructional delivery.
4. There is a need to develop more economically viable and data-friendly education Apps that can be incorporated into or used with conventional face-to-face instruction.

Limitations to the Study

Notable among the limitations to the study is in the area of data collection. Strict Covid-19 restrictions in the country limited face-to-face access to the respondents. However, this does not in any way affect that generalization of the results because students from all the tertiary institutions in the Gambia participated in the study.

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