

Attitudes of Students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Yarmouk University towards Using Video platforms in Distance Education

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Abstract

Despite the gigantic challenges raised by the Covid-19 pandemic, coping with them is a remarkable approach in the history of mankind. Especially in terms of education, stakeholders and policymakers are taking every possible effort to satisfy both instructors and students effectively. For this purpose, several online platforms such as Zoom, Moodle, Skype, and others are offering technology-enhanced learning. The current article also examines the students' attitudes towards Zoom Application as a source of Distance Learning. The researchers employed experimental design and selected $n=251$ students from the Faculty of Mass Communication, Yarmouk University Irbid, Jordan. To broadly validate the presumed relationships, the researchers employed the Structure Equation Modelling technique. Findings showed that due to greater accessibility and usability, students are optimistically accepting Zoom Applications for Distance Learning purposes. Despite many respondents also expressed some challenges regarding the Zoom Application, all the participants acknowledge this Application is one of the best platforms regarding technology-enhanced learning. Thus, the researchers concluded that Zoom is the most preferred Application for eLearning during the current pandemic. However, there is another important application as well, that should be highlighted to examine their aspects as a source of the crisis management system.

Keywords

Zoom; Technology Enhanced Learning; Higher Education; eLearning; Covid-19; Jordan

To cite this article: Alhammad, K. L.; Habes, M, Al Olaimat, F and Haddad, I. (2021) Attitudes of Students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Yarmouk University towards Using Video platforms in Distance Education. *Review of International Geographical Education (RIGEO)*, 11(5), 1041-1052. doi: 10.48047/rigeo.11.05.99

Submitted: 10-10-2020 • **Revised:** 15-12-2020 • **Accepted:** 20-02-2021

Introduction:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the whole world is witnessing radical changes in social, economic, educational, and cultural areas of life. The lockdown conditions and the fear of infection adversely impacted daily life activities. To cope with the increased educational challenges during the Covid-19 outbreak, the local ministry of education and other stakeholders suggested distance learning as an effective tool for sustaining educational activities (Al-Shakhanbeh & Habes, 2022; Groupe URD, 2020; Habes, Ali, Salloum, Elareshi, & Ziani, 2020). Consequently, students worldwide began to start depending on Distance Learning as an only option to continue their educational journey. This swift transition raised several concerns and questions regarding the creditability and importance of Distance Education in a broader context K. Alhumaid, Ali, Waheed, Zahid, and Habes (2020). As noted by Mumtaz, Saqulain, and Mumtaz (2020), despite both developed and developing countries suffered equally, developing regions are comparatively more facing the current educational challenges. Less attention towards Distance Education concerns regarding its competencies, and students feeling difficulty to adapt Distance Education were among the most gigantic challenges. According to K. Alhumaid, Habes, and Salloum (2021); Hassanien, Chang, and Mincong (2021) and D. N. Tahat, Tahat, and Habes (2020), we are dependent on Information Communication Technologies to meet our various needs. We realize how life has changed and improved through ICT integration especially in the learning and education process. Especially today, when healthcare challenges are negatively affecting our daily life, along with the other students, ICT has also facilitated the educational journey of special students (Agusriadi, Elihami, Mutmainnah, & Busa, 2021; Ali, Habes, Youssef, & Alodwan, 2021; Salloum, Al-Emran, Khalaf, Habes, & Shaalan, 2019).

Similarly, the higher education sector in Jordan is one of the most prominent sectors affected by this pandemic. Before, the pandemic, Jordanian Universities were running educational systems through the traditional classroom learning environment. Due to the lockdown all over Jordan, Jordanian universities needed to resort to distance education as an inevitable option starting from the second semester of the academic year 2019 / 2020 AD until now. (Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum, & Mhamdi, 2021). Consequently, many people opposed and favored distance learning as the common objection was regarding its reliability and effectiveness. Here the most important opinions were given by the students, professors, and parents, as they were the center of attention, and possess the main importance in the Jordanian educational system. In this regard, among all the available options, the educational institutions, teachers, and students adapted Zoom as the most reliable source of Distance Education across the world. Now staying at home, social distancing, lockdown, and other preventive measures are not hindering the educational activities as Zoom is facilitating the educational journey in the best possible way (Guzachchova, 2020). As noted by Sayem, Taylor, McClanachan, and Mumtahina (2017), Zoom is one of the significant e-learning applications, providing simultaneous e-learning opportunities and offering online discussions. It also helps to display files for class lessons and lectures by either teacher or students; having their accounts. Also affirmed by (Koutroumpousi & Tsinakos, 2016), as argued that through video conferencing features, zoom helps students and teachers to communicate through face-to-face meetings. This technology-enhanced learning is useful when educational institutions are facing difficulties in arranging formal classroom environments or gathering the students and teachers that are in different geographical locations (Guzachchova, 2020). Accordingly, the current investigation also explores the attitudes and perceptions of students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Yarmouk University towards distance education, particularly through the Zoom educational platform. Here, selecting Zoom will not only highlight the characteristics of the Zoom Application but also will address the importance of Distance Learning through technological facilities.

Review of Literature:

The Relationship between Zoom Application, Usability, and Accessibility:

Internet as a major learning platform helps students and teachers worldwide to gratify their educational needs. Websites aimed at learning and education, provide the learners with both

audio and video-based lectures having manually adjustable difficulty levels. Currently, several websites offer eLearning even educational institutions are also offering eLearning to enhance the students' educational experiences (Orouba, Mohammed, & Mahmoud, 2020; Khalaf M Tahat, Habes, & Tahat, 2020). In this context, the Zoom application is one of the most prominent and leading web-based platforms that ensure greater accessibility to the learning platforms. Especially during the current pandemic, Zoom is the most preferred online platform that is offering technology-enhanced learning in the best possible way (Habes, Alghizzawi, Ali, SalihAlnaser, & Salloum, 2020; Pratama, Azman, Kassymova, & Duisenbayeva, 2020; Ziani, Elareshi, Habes, Tahat, & Ali, 2021).

The significance of the Zoom application can be estimated by the fact that today more than 95% of social media users consider Zoom as a superior and most preferred platform. Here this 95% of online media users consider Zoom as highly reliable, ensuring quality services, ease of use, enhanced communication-based features, ensuring positive results (Zoom, 2020). Another benefit offered by the Zoom application is the synchronous learning and communication feasibility. For students, Zoom is greatly helping them to sustain their education during the Covid-19. For them, it is facilitating their educational journal when traditional classroom learning and real-time face-to-face communication are not possible (Novawan, Aisyiyah, Miqawati, Wijayanti, & Indrastana, 2020). Here, Alfadda and Mahdi (2021) also validated the importance and role of Zoom application in students Distance Learning during the Covid-19. The researcher used the case study method and selected data from n= 75 foreign language learning students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Results indicated that accessibility and perceived outcomes are the two basic reasons, attributed to Zoom application acceptance and usage.

H1: There is a significant relationship between Zoom Application, usability, and accessibility

The Relationship between accessibility and Distance Learning Acceptance:

During the last decade, economic, social, and other aspects of life have improved. Here besides the role of other things, internet adaption, integration, and usage has also affected and even facilitated our daily life. Particularly, the use of the Internet for learning and financial well-being is of greater significance (Nazzal & Alradi, 2020). A study conducted by Kim, Matson, Myung, Xu, and Karray (2014) identified the perceptions and attitudes of university students in Saudi Arabia towards e-learning. the study sample consisted of n= 366 students at bachelor's degree level. to achieve the study objectives, a tool consisting of n= 28 items was used to measure student attitudes towards e-learning. The study results revealed positive attitudes towards e-learning. they also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in student attitudes towards e-learning due to the variable of specialization (scientific, literary), while there were statistically significant differences in student attitudes towards e-learning due to the ease of access for both students and the teachers. Similarly, Aljarrah, Thomas, and Shehab (2018) conducted a study aimed at identifying the attitudes of students at the University of Jordan towards using Moodle software in their learning. The study sample consisted of n= 131 male and female students. The study tool consisted of n= 35 items. The study results revealed that there were positive attitudes of the study sample towards using Moodle software in their learning. The study sample indicated that Moodle software helped to facilitate their learning process and increase their classroom participation as it is easily downloadable and freely available.

Due to the increased usage and benefits of e-learning software, students prefer them as an important learning tool. As technology has both negative and positive influences, its educational usage is among the most prominent facilitates (Abdullah & Ziden, 2015). Also validated by Al-Yamani and Jabali (2020), as they conducted a study aimed at identifying the attitude towards distance education technology and its relationship to some variables among postgraduate students at Palestinian universities. The study sample consisted of n= 91 male and female students at Palestinian universities (Al-Aqsa University, Islamic University, and Al-Azhar University). The study results revealed positive attitudes on the study tool as a whole. The study indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in student attitudes towards distance education due to two variables: gender and university.

H2: There is a significant relationship between accessibility and Distance Learning Acceptance

The Relationship between Usability and Distance Learning Acceptance:

According to Alsalhi, Eltahir, and Al-Qatawneh (2019), the traditional classroom environment is largely replaced by technology implementation. As the young generation feels the enthusiasm to adopt new trends, eLearning adoption is among their most preferred educational trends. In this regard, (K. F. Alhumaid, 2014; Malkawi, Bawaneh, & Bawa'aneh, 2020; Saeed Al-Marouf, Alhumaid, & Salloum, 2021) conducted a study aimed at examining student attitudes toward using e-learning systems in science courses in government schools in the United Arab Emirates. The study sample consisted of $n = 359$ male and female students selected randomly from the higher basic stage. To achieve the study objectives, a questionnaire consisting of $n = 27$ items was developed. The study results revealed positive attitudes towards using e-learning systems. They also revealed that there were statistically significant differences in student attitudes due to the gender variable in favor of females and due to the grade variable in favor of the tenth grade versus the eighth grade, while there were no statistically significant differences in student attitudes towards the scale as a whole due to any of the study variables (gender, grade, student average, scientific curriculum).

The usability of e-Learning can be estimated by the fact that; they support the dynamic learning process. Today eLearning is a norm in educational arenas, leading to positive outcomes. As a result, both teachers and students prefer eLearning as an important source of education and learning (Abuhlfaia & Quincey, 2018). Another study validates the usability factor of eLearning conducted by Khader (2016). The study sample consisted of $n = 28$ male and female teachers and $n = 118$ students divided into five groups, including Four experimental groups, learned by (Internet, CD, Internet with CD, and Teacher with Data Projector) and a control group learned by (the regular method). The study results revealed positive attitudes of teachers towards e-learning, while they revealed a statistically significant negative change in student attitudes towards e-learning. As noted by Qureshi and Irfan (2009); Khalaf Mohammed Tahat, Al-Sarayrah, Salloum, Habes, and Ali (2022), due to the increased usability and accessibility of web-based technologies, eLearning is widely accepted in educational institutions. Consequently, changes and even more modifications on the internet are expanding the prospects for potential learners.

H3: There is a significant relationship between usability and Distance Learning Acceptance

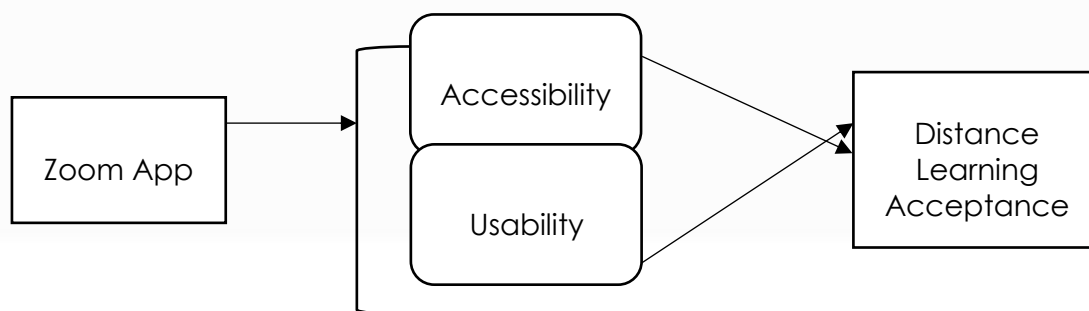


Fig 1: Study Conceptual Model

Methodological Procedures:

Type and Method of Study:

This is an experimental study, aimed at examining the current facts related to the nature of the phenomenon such as perceptions, behavior, attitude depending on quantitative methods and statistical analysis in interpreting data. The study aims to identify the attitudes of students particularly from the Faculty of Mass Communication at Yarmouk University towards using the Zoom platform in distance education. The survey method was used which was distributed among the residents through electronic questionnaires to collect data from the study sample (Habes, Salloum, et al., 2020; Roopa & Rani, 2012). The questionnaire contained $n = 34$ questions having

questions regarding demographical data of the respondents, and their opinion regarding Zoom as a source of eLearning during Covid-19 (Hruska & Maresova, 2020). The researcher further used Statistical Package for Social Sciences, and AMOS for the data analysis process which included descriptive analysis and also the Structural Equation Modelling (Arkkelin, 2014; Salloum, Al-Emran, Habes, et al., 2019).

Validity and Reliability:

To measure the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher checked the validity by presenting it to a group of media specialists who made some observations. In light of their directives, the researcher made some amendments to it to become valid for the final application, besides conducting the validity analysis of the research tool. Moreover, to verify the reliability of the tool, the reliability coefficient was calculated using the internal consistency method according to the Cronbach Alpha formula (Md Ghazali, 2016).with the value of 0.972, we found that the research tool is strongly reliable. **Tables 1** and **2** present a summary of reliability and validity results:

Table 1:

Bivariate Pearson Correlation

	Zoom	Accessibility	Usability	Distance Learning
Zoom				
Accessibility	.964			
Usability	.954	.944		
Distance Learning	.930	.968	.907	

Table 2:

Intercoder Reliability Assessment

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha	Status
ZA>US>AC	.895	Reliable
US>DLA	.812	Reliable
AC>DLA	.901	Reliable

Note: ZA: Zoom Application, AC: Accessibility, US: Usability, and Distance Learning Acceptance

Study Population and Sample:

The study population consisted of a total of n= 1330 male and female students at the bachelor's degree level and n= 70 male students at the master's degree level at the Faculty of Mass Communication - Yarmouk University. The researchers randomly selected a sample of n= 300 male and female students. However, the researcher received n= 251 accurately filled questionnaires, as the n= 49 or 16.3% of questionnaires were missing did not respond, incompletely filled. Thus, the response rate was 83.6%. **Table 3** indicates the frequencies and percentage of the participants' demographical characteristics:

Table 3:

Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample

Variable	Constructs	f	%
Gender	Male	119	34%
	Female	231	66%
Specialization	Public Relations & Advertising	162	49%
	Radio & Television	90	27%
	Journalism	80	24%
Academic Program	Bachelor	332	95%
	Master	18	.5%

Study Results and Discussion:

Table 4 indicates the means ranged between (2.00 - 2.68). Item No. (5): " I believe that the distance education saves time and effort" ranked first with an arithmetic mean of (2.68), while item No. (9): " I hope to learn all my courses using Zoom educational platform" ranked last with an arithmetic mean of (2.00). The mean of the total degrees was (2.38). As shown in item No. (14), the degree of satisfaction of the study sample with using the Zoom platform in distance education was moderate with an arithmetic mean of (2.53). all the attitudes of students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Yarmouk University towards using the Zoom platform in distance education were moderate with the lowest ranking almost. The results of this study were consistent with the study (Alharthi, Yamani, & Elsigini, 2021) that there were positive attitudes towards e-learning.

Table 4:

Attitudes of students towards using Zoom platform in distance education

S/R	Items	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Variance
1.	Distance education saves time	2.68	1.416	1	3	.282
2.	Zoom increases academic attainment.	2.67	1.224	1	3	.305
3.	Easily learn all my courses.	2.58	1.216	1	3	.312
4.	Enjoy distance	2.53	1.307	1	3	.299
5.	Feel great	2.53	1.264	1	3	.299
6.	Zoom develops self-learning skills.	2.47	1.264	1	2	.243
7.	Zoom enables participate remotely	2.44	1.338	1	3	.283
8.	Zoom increases self-reliance	2.42	1.071	1	3	.283
9.	Freedom to share and interact	2.42	1.261	1	3	.283
10.	Comparatively better	2.37	1.257	1	3	.298
11.	Zoom develops self-confidence.	2.32	1.250	1	3	.283
12.	Zoom promotes creativity	2.32	1.157	1	3	.272
13.	prefer learning through Zoom	2.11	1.150	1	3	.283
14.	Zoom motivates me to study and learn.	2.11	1.15	1	2	.299
15.	I eagerly wait using the Zoom	2.11	1.197	1	3	.290
16.	Learn courses	2.00	1.106	1	3	.290

Analysis of Variance:

To examine any Mean differences based on the respondents' demographical differences, the researchers employed a One-Way Analysis of Variance (Sawyer, 2009). As visible in **table 6**, there are no potential means differences based on respondents' gender and academic level. However, based on the specialization programs of the students, their responses were varying with the significance value of $p \geq .321$.

Table 5 shows the challenges the study sample faced in distance education. Item "Sufficient time available during the assessment/examination" ranked first with an arithmetic mean of (4.56), while item "Communication with colleagues (4.44). Item "The increase communication via Zoom motivates me" ranked third with an arithmetic mean of (4.17), while item "A large number of students in one course" ranked fourth with an arithmetic mean of (3.97). The total of the arithmetic means was (4.01), as all acceptability levels are high. Thus, these respondents indicate students Distance Learning acceptance due to its greater accessibility.

Table 5:
Accessibility Factor in Distance Education

S/R	Items	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Variance
17.	Online education is easy to access	3.97	1.98	1	3	.283
18.	Internet package.	2.65	1.34	1	3	.283
19.	Laptop	2.35	1.24	1	3	.298
20.	Smartphone.	1.88	1.11	1	3	.283
21.	Educational materials	3.68	1.68	1	3	.272
22.	Communication with colleagues	3.44	1.65	1	3	.283
23.	Record the lecture.	3.92	1.87	1	3	.299
24.	Satisfactory lecture duration.	3.10	1.24	1	3	.290
25.	Availability of time	4.56	0.82	1	3	.312
26.	Increased in online chat	4.17	0.91	1	3	.299

Table 6:
Analysis of Variance

Variable	Constructs	f	Sign.
Gender	Male	3.988	.002
	Female		
Specialization	Public Relations & Advertising	1.176	.321
	Radio & Television		
Academic Program	Journalism	218.35	.000
	Bachelor		
	Master		
	Public Relations & Advertising		

Hypotheses Testing:

To test the study hypotheses, the researcher utilized Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as unlike other techniques, path Analysis helps to determine the proposed relationship(s) in a broader manner (Kite & Whitley, 2018). Along with path analysis, the researcher also examined the t-value, f-value, and significance value by using the multiple regression analysis (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2019). As visible in **Table 7** below, all the hypotheses are validated as there is a strong, significant association between Zoom Application, Accessibility ($t= 2.971, p \geq .000$), Usability ($t= 1.714, p \geq .000$), and Distance Learning Acceptance ($t= 2.034, p \geq .000$).

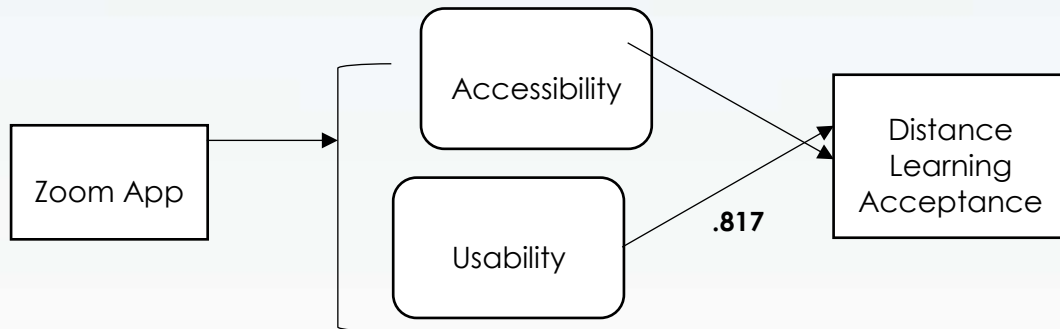
Table 7:
Hypotheses & Conceptual Model Testing

Relationship	path	t	f	Sign	Status
ZA>AC>US	.915	2.971	3301.26	.000	Accepted
US>DLA	.884	1.714	2337.08	.000	Accepted
AC>DLA	.817	2.034	1602.20	.000	Accepted

Note: ZA: Zoom Application, AC: Accessibility, US: Usability, and Distance Learning Acceptance

Discussion & Conclusion:

Today the omnipresence of technology is an obvious phenomenon. As technology is much integrated into the education system, there has been a gigantic transformation in both teaching and learning environments. "Online Distance Learning" is now a buzzword in educational arenas, especially when the healthcare crisis is adversely affecting every field of life (Rahim, 2021). Besides the healthcare, education and even economic resources are also facing several challenges, and local governments are making every possible effort to cope with these challenges (Alameri, Masadeh, Hamadallah, Ismail, & Fakhouri, 2020).



Thus, the current research involved $n = 251$ students from the Faculty of Mass Communication, Yarmouk University, Jordan. The sample participants were males and females from different academic levels and specialization backgrounds. The researcher utilized structural equation modeling to examine the proposed relationship between potential study variables. We found a strong significant relationship between Zoom Application and Distance Learning due to greater usability and accessibility provided by Zoom. This study also contributed to the existing literature especially, to highlight the importance of online learning platforms particularly Zoom Application. Especially during the Cpvod-19 outbreak, when educational institutions are resorting to Zoom Application as online learning is the only method to resume academic activities. According to Guzachchova (2020), the electronic application Zoom has helped educational activities almost at every level. Especially, those who are unable to attend formal classroom environment, are resorting to Zoom application for educational and learning purposes. This wider acceptance of the Zoom application is also witnessed in the current study showing greater compatibility with the previously conducted studies (see (Earon, 2020; Joia & Lorenzo, 2021; Serhan, 2020) We also found that accessibility and usability are two major factors in eLearning acceptance on Zoom application, these results are strongly consistent with the study conducted by Ali et al. (2021), as their study also affirmed accessibility and usability as two basic determinants of internet technology acceptance for educational purposes during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Hence, to cope with the current educational challenges, switching to an electronic learning system is a significant step towards crisis management as well K. Alhumaid et al. (2020). In this regard, electronic learning platforms, especially Zoom has introduced several pathways in the learning systems. The widespread accessibility, technology-enhanced learning, and associated useful outcomes, all are largely contributing and adding more value to Zoom Application usage and preference among the students. Here Zooms helps the teachers to present their learning material in a variety of ways. Screen sharing enables both students and teachers to focus more on the learning material with greater accessibility and even screen capturing and recording characteristics. Besides, text and videos, students can also give presentations and even share their opinions as similar to the formal classroom learning environment. Teachers also motivate their students to actively participate in the questioning and learning process to enhance their critical learning skills (Guzachchova, 2020). Likewise, the Students of Mass Communication also appreciate and consider the Zoom Application an important source of technology-enhanced learning. They consider Zoom Application as offering: **(i)** accessible educational and information-based material, and **(ii)** equal opportunities to both teachers and students regardless of their geographic location (Earon, 2020). For this purpose, educational institutions worldwide, especially Higher Education institutions are motivating students to accept and integrate Zoom Application as one of the best sources of resuming their educational activities.

Besides, this study also contains some practical and theoretical applications in terms of technology acceptance in crises. **First**, this study focuses on Zoom application as a replacement for formal education. We can also prefer the Zoom application as a source of learning for distance learning even after the current healthcare crisis (Habes, Ali, et al., 2021). **Second**, developing countries can take some primary propositions from this study to implement and reform eLearning systems. **Third**, students from other disciplines such as animal sciences and management sciences can also rely on Zoom application to resume their educational activities in general.

Limitation & Recommendations for Future Research:

Despite this research addressed internet-based applications as a source of resuming educational activities during the current outbreak, it also has some limitations.

First, the researcher focused only on the Zoom application, when we have many other applications such as Skype, Google Meet, and others.

Second, the number of variables is limited in the research model, however, there can be many other variables especially in terms of the Technology Acceptance Model.

Third, the study sample contains students only from the Faculty of Mass Communication that further narrows down its scope. Therefore, despite many limitations, this research is adding much to the existing literature especially regarding eLearning acceptance and educational management during crises. Thus, in light of the results of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

- i. Encouraging students to develop their educational skills through using distance education platforms.
- ii. Conducting more research and studies related to distance education platforms in general and Zoom platform in particular.
- iii. The need for technical mechanisms to prevent students from cheating on the Zoom platform during exams.

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