

Hi, Let's Meet Online! A Study of Virtual Meeting Platforms During the Pandemic

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Publication information
Research article

HOW TO CITE

Lim, L.X., et al. (2022). Hi, let's meet online! A study of virtual meeting platforms during the pandemic. *Asia Pasific Journal of Management and Education*, 5(1), 126-140.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32535/apjm.e.v4i3.1432>

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Received: 15th May 2021
Accepted: 15th November 2021
Published: 20th March 2022

ABSTRACT

In this era of globalization, technological developments are becoming more sophisticated and connecting people worldwide. Technology advancement is essential, and its importance can be seen especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Virtual meeting platforms have become the main platform to strengthen people's connections from different places. People held more meetings using virtual meetings platforms throughout the current global pandemic. The shifting from face-to-face to online meetings has related to some challenges, prompting questions about how meetings using virtual online platforms may contribute to users' satisfaction. This study focuses on users' intention to use virtual meeting platforms for work-related meetings or education-related lectures during the Covid-19 pandemic. The researchers found that perceived usefulness, convenience, and risk are strongly associated with user intention to use virtual meeting platforms. This study adds new insights into the literature related to virtual meeting platforms.

Keywords: Covid-19, Perceived Convenience, Perceived Risk, Perceived Usefulness, User Satisfaction, Virtual Meeting Platform.

INTRODUCTION

Virtual meetings platform is online meetings are held through a web browser application or software installed on a computer or mobile device. Using online meeting software, users can connect via virtual meetings, also known as web conferences or video conferencing. The covid-19 pandemic and the related stay-at-home orders have significantly changed people's working habits. Undeniably, the Covid-19 epidemic has impacted many aspects of lives. Therefore, many countries restricted social life as a means to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus within the country. Hence, some even imposed a partial or complete lockdown on their citizens. For instance, movement restrictions range from prohibiting large gatherings, temporary closure of schools and offices, and even a temporary shutdown of the economy, in which workers from non-essential sectors of the economy are unable to go to work (Aryani et al., 2021). The global pandemic, a double-edged sword, provides opportunities for businesses to optimize business performance (Kee et al., 2021; Yo et al., 2021). During the pandemic, the use of virtual meeting platforms for remote work, distance education, and online social relationships has increased significantly worldwide.

One of these shifts is the rising usage of video conferencing for communication and business meetings. Meetings over the internet platform are the most popular social platform system run through a web browser or computer. Many virtual meetings platforms include Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Skype for Business, Cisco WebEx, GoToMeeting, and ezTalks Meetings. As a result, most people usually use virtual meetings for education purposes and working purposes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. According to a poll taken on May 31, 2020, 50 percent of the United States respondents indicated they mostly stayed at home due to the overwhelming Covid-19 pandemic, said they had conducted more internet video streaming since then (Kunst, 2020).

One of the leading virtual meetings platforms is Zoom which is the web meeting software for users who wish to communicate with other people remotely quickly and easily. It also has excellent video, crystal clear audio, and rapid sharing options, making it to be the researchers' preferred video conferencing platform. As a result, many individuals would consider using virtual meeting platforms as the first choice for classes, meetings, workshops, and seminars during the pandemic. For instance, as Americans work from home in record numbers, the video conferencing and calling app Zoom soared to the top of the US download rankings last week, with 3.2 million new downloads (Buchholz, 2020). However, as the saying goes, every coin has two sides, and same as the virtual meetings platform. This is because many users report experiencing Zoom fatigue or mental and physical fatigue due to video conferencing (Duffy, 2020). For instance, the causes of "Zoom Fatigue" include excessive amounts of close-up eye gaze, cognitive load, increased self-evaluation from staring at video of oneself, and constraints on physical mobility (Bailenson, 2021).

On the other hand, the Cisco WebEx video conferencing service reported 25 billion meeting minutes in April 2020, 10 billion more than the total meeting minutes recorded in March 2020, and doubled the amount reported in January 2020. The social distancing measures implemented during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic resulted in a worldwide surge in demand for remote solutions and have affected the increased utilization of the Cisco WebEx virtual meeting platform (Liu, 2021). Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the increasing usage of the internet and advancements in the field of information technology has gradually boosted the use of online meetings. Online meetings or virtual meetings platforms have brought a variety of benefits, particularly to the business world, since they now allow employees to speak with colleagues and associates in faraway regions without having to leave their office to discuss corporate strategy and challenges.

As competitive organizations try to protect their staff from the coronavirus with travel limitations and virtual work arrangements, in-person interactions with teams, customers, or suppliers may become increasingly rare. Undeniably, virtual meetings platform brings many advantages to people in each sector today. First and foremost, one of the advantages of virtual meetings platform is help organizations reduce their expenditure and cost in traveling. This is because the organization does not need to pay and spend money to their employee to travel across any country or city when they can communicate and conduct business meetings virtually with other people or customers virtually around the world with the click of a button.

Furthermore, virtual meetings platforms also have easy access for the user. For instance, it is not easy to get all stakeholders together in one location for business meetings, especially if they are from various nations. This is because an online meeting allows all participants to engage with one another, which may not be possible in a physical meeting. In reality, participants with a meeting of more than 20 people rarely have enough time to connect with all of the other participants, but this is achievable in online meetings. Online meetings are held using web conferencing software, which allows each person to engage with other participants quickly. Besides that, virtual meetings platform also become an interactive medium that is effective for all participants. This paper investigates if perceived usefulness, convenience, and risk influence user intention to use virtual meeting platforms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Virtual meeting platform has been identified as video applications and software that connect individuals through the internet including in the form of video conferencing or web conferences, as well as other features such as chatting. In this research, the survey is carried out to identify the perceived risk, convenience, and usefulness. According to Al-Marroof et al. (2020), Google Meet was used as an instructional social network at one of the private higher education institutions in The British University in Dubai (BUiD) in the United Arab Emirates. Purwanto and Tannady (2020), Google Meet was also used for the online meeting in Indonesia. The studies reported that the attitude to the platforms influences the intention to use online meeting platforms.

Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness, defined by Davis (1986), is the subjective perception of users where they believe that using certain technologies can improve their work performance. Purwanto and Tannady (2020) found that users think using the platforms is simple, resulting in a more favorable attitude. From the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)'s perspective, perceived usefulness is related to accepting a computer or technology system. Perceived usefulness refers to users' expectation that a given application system will improve their work efficiency. Then, a favorable attitude about platforms will generate interest in their acceptance. The attitude variable will act as a moderator in the technology acceptance model. The researchers hypothesize:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the perceived usefulness of virtual meeting platforms and intention to use.

Perceived Convenience

Yoon and Kim (2007) also defined perceived convenience as a level of convenience toward time, place, and execution that one perceives when using the wireless network to complete a task. In addition, a product or service relieves a user's cognitive, emotional, or bodily stress, it is termed convenient. There are two types of convenience for consumers such as product and service. Time and effort determine if a product or service is convenient. Karl, Peluchette, and Aghakhani (2021) researched the good, bad, and ugly of using video conferencing for work purpose meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic. Analysis using text mining process and qualitative analysis of the 549 comments made to a LinkedIn online discussion board had been done. Through the research, they discovered six major themes: three related to camera and microphone concerns, two related to eating and meeting management issues, and one is work-from-home issues. These issues are examined in relation to media naturalness and meeting science. Yo et al. (2021) found that perceived convenience is strongly associated with customer satisfaction. Therefore, the researchers hypothesize that perceived convenience is positively related to the user intention to use.

H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived convenience from using virtual meeting platforms and intention to use.

Perceived Risk

Perceived risks refer to the spirit cost associated with customers' purchasing behavior, which represents a kind of uncertainty about the future. This uncertainty will directly affect the consumers' purchase intention (Wei et al., 2018, pp. 4). Ojuawo and Awosanya (2020) investigate the role of virtual meeting platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic. Social distancing and travel limitations have resulted in a huge increase in the use of technology (particularly video conferencing) for distant meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic. From local interdisciplinary team meetings to national and international committees, this mode of communication has been critical in ensuring the organization's and other businesses' continued viability, albeit in a new environment. However, in the current Covid-19 reality, video conferencing has swiftly become one of the most critical corporate tools for ensuring excellent business continuity. Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, and GoTo Meeting are the most well-known video conferencing

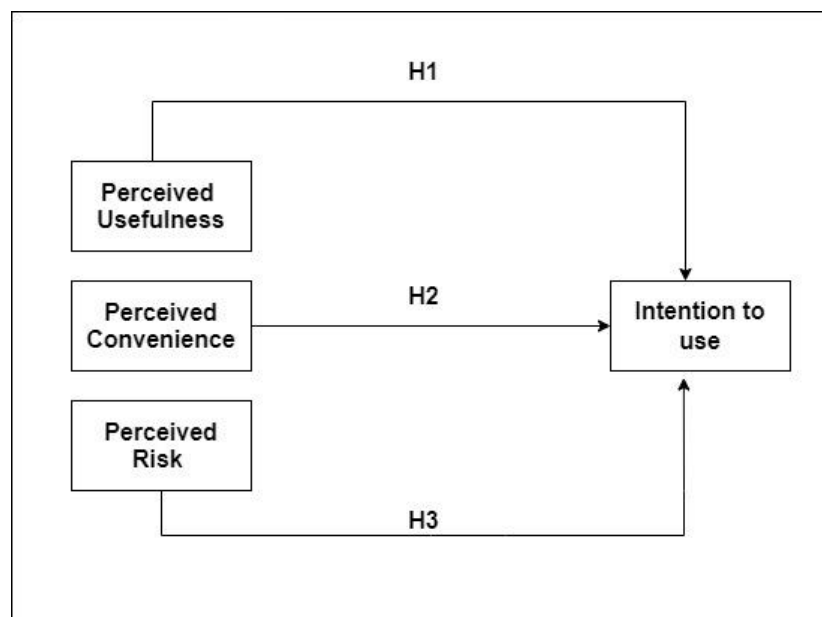
applications. As with any product or service, there are several options for selecting video conferencing software. This research study Virtual Meeting Platforms different features such as the free trial period, number of participants and audiences, time restriction for a meeting, and others. This study also considers some of the human factor elements of remote meetings and provides suggestions to enhance participants' experience during this period. Because of the perceived risk of attending meetings physically, the researchers expect that perceived risk would associate with user intention to use virtual platforms.

H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived risk and intention to use.

Intention to Use

Yi and Moon (2021) study the consequences of virtual technology-based courses replacing live classroom-based courses due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Educational institutions have been obliged to implement online lessons either by recorded lecture or presented live via virtual meeting platforms. Little thought has been given to the viability of giving courses via a virtual meeting platform. Thus, this study investigates the factors that influence students' intentions towards the continued usage of virtual meeting platforms. This research also investigated the relationship between technological readiness (TR) and perceived social presence (SP) in a virtual communication context in conjunction with course satisfaction and desire to utilize the technology in the future. A survey of 525 college students in South Korea who had attended classes using a virtual meeting platform was used to obtain data. The examination of serial mediation indicated a route in which social preference and course satisfaction entirely mediate the positive relationship between technological readiness and sustainability.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

An online survey of 102 Virtual Meeting Platform users from Malaysia and other countries was done by researchers. This survey looks at how perceived usefulness, convenience, and perceived risk influence users' intention to use virtual meeting platforms. The data was collected using Google Forms. The researchers employ SPSS software IBM SPSS Statistics Software version 26 to analyze the data. Respondents were given clear instructions and were required to answer their degree of agreement for each statement using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All items were constructed to assess users' perceptions of the virtual meeting platforms in terms of perceived usefulness, convenience, and risk. All items were designed with care, and feedback from the supervisor was incorporated. An exploratory factor analysis indicated that all the items loaded cleanly onto their respective factors. The questionnaire for all variables can be found in the Appendix.

Demographic-personal data

The researchers used single-statement items to determine the demographics of the respondents, including age, gender, nationality, and occupation.

Intention to use

The researchers created a 4-item scale to identify user intention to use virtual meeting platforms. A sample item included, *"I will be using the Virtual meeting platforms for the classes, meetings, workshops, and seminars in the future."*

Perceived Usefulness

The researchers created a 4-item scale to assess how users perceived the usefulness of the virtual meeting platforms. A sample item included, *"Virtual meeting platforms are helpful as I can meet many people online, locally and abroad during the pandemic."*

Perceived Convenience

The researchers created a 5-item scale to identify how users perceive virtual meeting platforms to bring convenience. A sample item included, *"Virtual meeting platforms are efficient as I can multitask while meeting online."*

Perceived Risk

The researchers created a 4-item scale to assess how users perceived the risk of physically attending meetings, classes, and workshops. A sample item included, *"I am worried about getting infected by coronavirus when going for physical classes, meetings, workshops, and seminars during the pandemic."*

RESULTS

The respondents are mostly between 18 and 25 years old (90.2 percent), with approximately 77 being male (75.5 percent). About 95% of the respondents made up of Malaysians. Most respondents (83.3 percent) have a bachelor's degree, and 93 of the respondents (91.2 percent) are still students. The vast majority of respondents (76.5 percent) currently live in the city. The demographic information of the respondents is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Demography (*N*=102)

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		

Male	77	75.5
Female	25	24.5
Age		
18 to 25	92	90.2
26 to 30	5	4.9
31 to 35	3	2.9
36 to 40	2	2.0
Nationality		
Malaysia	95	93.1
Indonesia	6	3.9
Mauritius	1	1.0
Education Level		
Bachelor's degree	85	83.3
Diploma	10	9.8
Master's degree	3	2.9
Primary School	1	1.0
Secondary School	3	2.9
Employment Status		
Student	93	91.2
Employed	8	7.8
Unemployed	1	1.0
Location		
City	78	76.5
Rural Area	24	23.5

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondent (98%) have experience of using virtual meeting platforms and most of them use them for their education purpose (89.2%). Most of the respondents say that they use virtual meeting platforms more than 10 times a week (30.4%). The majority of respondents rate the virtual meeting platforms at "Good" (46.1%) and the second majority rated "Moderate" on their virtual meeting platforms, while there is only 1 person who stated that he or she have rated "Poor" for his or her experience on virtual meeting platforms. The majority of the respondents choose that the advantages when using the virtual meeting platforms are easy to use (83.3%), followed by the variety of functions (65.7%) and supports large audience (59.8%). There are 3 respondents who added that the other benefits are they no need to prepare proper outfits during the meetings, the virtual meeting platform is good during the online learning period, and they can join the meeting anywhere they want. However, the majority (89.2%) say that they have difficulty in using the virtual meeting platforms because they need a strong internet connection to use it and 51 respondents (50%) do choose that the meeting room always crashes when there are too many participants in the meeting room. About 3 respondents (2.2%) specified that they are unable to give full attention during online classes, they need to pay for more features, and the platforms will lag because of the connection problem.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Participation and Satisfaction on Virtual Meeting Platform (*N*=102)

	Frequency	Percentage
Purpose of Use		
Education Purpose	91	89.2
Working Purpose	11	10.8
Frequency of Use		
1 to 2 times a week	9	7.8
3 to 4 times a week	13	12.7
5 to 6 times a week	22	21.6
7 to 10 times a week	27	26.5
More than 10 times a week	31	30.4
Rating on Virtual Meeting Platforms		
Excellent	18	17.6
Good	47	46.1
Moderate	36	35.3
Poor	1	1.0
Advantages of Virtual Meeting Platforms		
Easy to use	85	83.3
Variety of function.	67	65.7
Supports large audiences	61	59.8
other	3	2.9
Disadvantages of Virtual Meeting Platforms		
I need a strong internet connection to use it	91	89.2
The meeting room crashes when there are many participants in the room	51	50.0
Subscription-based service is expensive	28	27.5
It is not very easy to use	11	10.8
It is not safe to use	4	3.9
other	3	2.9
Most Convenience Virtual Meeting Platform		
Google Meet	55	53.9
Zoom	25	24.5
Cisco WebEx Meetings	13	12.7
Microsoft Teams	9	8.8
Most Often Used Virtual Meeting Platform		
Cisco WebEx Meetings	42	41.2
Google Meet	34	33.3
Zoom	14	13.7
Microsoft Teams	12	11.8
Most Preferable Virtual Meeting Platform		
Google Meet	55	53.9
Zoom	25	24.5
Microsoft Teams	11	10.8
Cisco WebEx Meetings	11	10.8
Attraction of Virtual Meeting Platform		

Easy to Use	87	85.3
Various of Functions	43	42.2
Affordable Plans	23	22.5
others	6	5.9
Most Often Used Features		
Screen Sharing	53	52.0
Video	44	43.1
Annotation Tools	3	2.9
Polls	2	2.0
Intention of Update		
No	59	57.8
Yes	43	42.2
Overall Rating on Virtual Meeting Platforms		
Excellent	24	23.5
Good	62	60.8
Moderate	15	14.7
Poor	1	1.0
Intention of Using Virtual Meeting Platforms		
Maybe	37	36.3
No	2	2.0
Yes	63	61.8

Over half of the respondents (53.9%) state that Google Meet is the most convenient virtual meeting platform but their often-used virtual meeting platform is Cisco WebEx Meetings (41.2%) followed by Google Meet (33.3%). The most preferable virtual meeting platform is Google Meet (53.9%) and the second majority is Zoom (24.5%). The majority reason why they choose the platforms as their preference is the platforms are easy to use (85.3%). The most often used feature in the virtual meeting platform is screen sharing (52%). More than half of the respondents (57.8%) stated that those online meeting platforms no need to update their features. There are about 37 respondents out of the 43 respondents (42.2%) who wish that platforms can update their features specified that the virtual meeting platforms need to update more features, fix the problem such as failure in sharing screen and lagging problem, and update the video and camera quality and filters. Most of the respondents (60.8%) rate "Good" for their experience on the virtual meeting platforms while there is only 1 person rate "Poor" for the virtual meeting platforms. Over three-fifths of the respondents (61.8%) stated that they will continue using the virtual meeting platforms while 37 (36.3%) think that maybe they will use it in the future. The reason they need to use it for study and work from home currently is no need to interact with others, they still can connect with others without a face-to-face meeting.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients, and Zero-order Correlations of Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
Perceived Usefulness	0.900			
Perceived Convenience	0.814**	0.829		

Perceived Risk	0.382**	0.382**	0.878	
Dependent Variable: Intention to Use	0.747**	0.719**	0.486**	0.875
Mean	5.9951	5.9784	5.6912	5.7794
SD	0.82428	0.79995	1.16263	0.91284
No of Items	4	5	4	4

Note: N=102; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. Diagonal entries in bold indicate Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of Cronbach alpha and correlations of all the study variables. In this research, all the items in all four variables were provided in the questionnaire on a 7-point Likert scale. The Cronbach alpha values reported for all variables are larger than 0.70. The Cronbach's alpha for perceived usefulness ($\alpha = 0.900$), perceived convenience ($\alpha = 0.829$), perceived risk ($\alpha = 0.878$), and intention to use ($\alpha = 0.875$) indicate a strong relationship between the items in those variables. There is a positive relationship in the correlation coefficient for all four variables. The positive relationship shows that when there is an increase in the value of one variable, the other variables' value will also increase too.

Table 4 shows that perceived usefulness, convenience, and risk were classified as independent factors, whereas intention to use was classified as a dependent variable. The findings revealed that perceived usefulness, perceived convenience, and perceived risk were correlated positively with the intention to use with the beta values 0.434, 0.286, and 0.211 respectively. Therefore, all three hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 were supported. R^2 with 0.621 indicates that perceived usefulness, perceived convenience, and perceived risk account for 62.1% of the difference in the intention to use virtual meeting platforms. This suggests that perceived usefulness, risk, and convenience were the main influencers of the intention to use online meetings platforms. The perceived usefulness is the key variable that can influence the users' intention to use virtual meeting platforms as its beta value recorded the highest (0.434) and it had the most significant p-value, 0.000. The Durbin-Watson test is widely used in least-squares regression analysis to assess the existence of residual serial correlation (Chen, 2016). Since the value, if the Durbin-Watson Statistic is 1.932, which is between 0 to 2. Hence, the value is positive autocorrelation.

Table 4. Summary of Regression Analysis

Intention to Use Virtual Meeting Platform Variables entered	Beta
Perceived Usefulness	0.434***
Perceived Convenience	0.286**
Perceived Risk	0.211**
R^2	0.621
F Value	56.17
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.932

Note: N=102 * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

DISCUSSION

Perceived usefulness significantly affects users' intention to use virtual meeting platforms. Users stated that they can be protected from the pandemic and keep them safe. This is because using virtual meeting platforms allowed them to not interact with others. Users' attitudes about adopting a new system or technology are influenced by perceived usefulness, and their attitudes ultimately impact their behavioral intentions to use virtual meeting platforms for study (Zheng & Li, 2020). There was strong evidence that the system would be effective in the present COVID-19 epidemic, and that students would prefer to use the online platform than risk infection, giving the variable importance. In the interests of safety, this also applies to students in many nations who use e-learning as a replacement for conventional learning (Yi & Moon, 2021). Malaysia's Ministry of Health Malaysia does suggest companies implement work from home to ensure the health and the safety of employees. According to Savić (2020), the unexpected demand for work from home is propelling the digital transformation of the workforce and the development of the workplace at an unprecedented rate. Since the virus's outbreak, widespread adoption of telecommuting has become a critical corporate transformation. Processes facilitated by information technology have undergone virtual transformations, displacing traditional labor patterns.

Besides that, the result shows that perceived convenience does significantly influence the users' intention to use virtual meeting platforms. The convenience of a virtual meeting platform is important to users as users can use it anytime and anywhere. In the study of Berry et al. (2002), they stated that in service economies, the concept of service convenience is crucial although only a few understood it. The consumer convenience literature, which is robust in certain areas but lacking in others, pays inadequate attention to service convenience. Thus, it is key that online meeting platforms have a concise page and shortcut keys. For an instant, the research of convenience, communications, and control: How Students Use Technology. Kvavik (2002) states that Google Meet makes it simple for corporate and educational users to collaborate. For example, the user may utilize Gmail.com to join a Google Meet video conference, and the commercial video conferencing service is now available for free to all customers. As a result, consumers who have used Google Meet before like the simplicity and utility.

Lastly, the perceived risk will affect the intention to use virtual meeting platforms significantly. This risk is about the spread over of Covid-19 and the users' choices on which action will be taken if they can choose either to go out from home or stay in the house during the pandemic. The worry of contracting a disease may impact how a pandemic is viewed. It's an emotional reaction to a danger that may predict defensive responses regardless of risk intensity. Worrying, in other words, is a predictor of an individual's conduct when confronted with danger. Worrying about a pandemic may be influenced by a variety of variables, including socio-demographic features, societal environment, and personal beliefs (Khosravi, 2020). It seems very clear that the majority of the users prefer not to go out of the house because of concerns about their health, so they need to use virtual meeting platforms for every single meeting so they can keep track of their work or their

studies. However, there will be a negative impact if the researchers continue using virtual meetings rather than physical meetings, but the researchers have no choices. In the research from Porpiglia et al. (2020), they indicated that although the technology solution has a lot of potentials, it also has some serious flaws. On an internet platform, human touch, affections, and feelings are almost hard to replicate. Many official and informal relationships between teachers, delegations, scientific organizations, and companies may be jeopardized, thereby limiting networking possibilities.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to investigate user satisfaction on online meeting platforms, together with comparing the advantages and disadvantages of using virtual meeting platforms. The analysis above concludes that online meeting platforms users are satisfied with the virtual meeting platforms they have been using. Fear of infection had kept most of us staying indoors throughout the epidemic. Still, virtual meeting platforms have elevated distance constraints and provide a decent tool for people to stay connected. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the disadvantages listed by the respondents had outnumbered the enumerated advantages. Hence, the company in charge of the virtual meeting platforms should be alert on the issues and elevate the shortcomings. The result showed that most users have stated crashing of meeting room due to increased participants. As a result, it is recommended that virtual meeting platforms upgrade their servers to accommodate a bigger capacity of participants. Additionally, it should be highlighted that the users indicated the virtual meeting platform subscription-based service is costly. As a result, virtual meeting platforms can create an affordable plan that is strongly recommended, as most users are students aged 18-25, who have a smaller budget than working adults.

The objectives of this research also include an investigation on the willingness of users to adopt using virtual meeting platforms. Our analysis has shown that the perceived usefulness and convenience of virtual meeting platforms, including the perceived risk of Covid-19, have positively influenced the intention of users to use virtual meeting platforms in the future. Therefore, virtual meeting platforms should be attentive to these elements, primarily working on enhancing the usefulness and convenience to secure current users and attract more users in the future. Besides this, the findings indicate that certain users, particularly online learning students, have difficulty focusing during the meeting. Due to the absence of face-to-face interactions, distractions were easily infiltrated. As a result, several updates are recommended to help students maintain their focus. For example, virtual meeting platforms can have more interactive features such as response buttons, annotation tools, brainstorming tools, audio effects, and a Question-and-Answer section, encouraging students to participate more actively in-class activities and feel more involved in the class meeting. Not only that, but a variety of camera filters and backgrounds are also recommended because they can act as an icebreaker amongst participants and help to keep their concentration.

To conclude, virtual meeting platforms are effective technical instruments, particularly at this phase of the Covid-19 outbreak. As movement restrictions become more severe, virtual meeting platforms provide a means for individuals to

remain connected regardless of distance. This excellent tool enables individuals to pursue their studies and careers more easily. Online learning and working are no longer a fantasy; as technology advances, communication and engagement become more accessible in the modern era.

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