

**The Impact of Board and Audit Committee Characteristics
on Earnings Management During the COVID–19 Pandemic:
An Empirical Study on Jordanian Public Shareholding
Industrial Companies**

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AL–Zaytoonah University of Jordan, 2023

This study aimed to demonstrate the direct relationship between the characteristics of the board of directors and the audit committee on earnings management during the COVID–19 pandemic. The study population included all industrial companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange during the period (2018–2021), totaling 53 companies. The sample consisted of only 31 companies from the study population that provided the required data during the study period.

The study found a statistically significant negative relationship between the board of directors' size, the independence of board members, CEO duality, audit committee size, independence of audit committee members, and financial expertise of audit committee members, with earnings management during the COVID–19 pandemic. However, there was no significant relationship between the number of board meetings, the number of audit committee meetings, and earnings management during the

pandemic. The study also concluded a statistically significant positive relationship between earnings management and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study recommends companies to adhere to governance guidelines to mitigate opportunistic behaviors of executive management and protect the rights of all relevant parties. It also emphasizes the need for intensified post-COVID-19 studies to illustrate the pandemic's effects on various economic sectors, raise investor awareness about proper methods of interpreting financial reports, and shed light on the techniques used by management for earnings management before making investment decisions. Furthermore, the study advocates for more research into existing gaps in accounting standards that are exploited by management for earnings management purposes.