



Management Research Post-Covid-19 Pandemic

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the context of management research and, at the same time, has brought along opportunities for impactful research. However, are the academicians and research scholars ready to tap such opportunities? This question is more pertinent in the backdrop of highlighted concerns for university education that yield questionable social returns with obfuscated outputs, lack of timeliness, accessibility, and fragmentation. In the post-COVID-19 world, business research demands responsible and fast-paced research coordination where by the academicians and practitioners are expected to recalibrate what research is conducted and evaluated (Fainshmidt, Andrews, Gaur & Schotter, 2021).


Discussion

As the Covid-19 ravaged businesses worldwide, the webinars on the 'Post Covid world' flooded the social media space and gifted our vocabulary with one more phrase - 'New normal'. The new phrase represents a new way of thinking. It represents out of the box, innovative solutions and bold decision making. However, many referred to the 'new normal' a transformation of the existing business models' to benefit business, customers and the Post Covid-19 world. However, only a few companies are transforming their business models, and instead, such companies invest in automation or change in operating models only that leads such company's marginal returns. In contrast, organizations transforming their business models are proving to be more resilient yielding much greater benefits (Linz, 2021). The leadership's decisive decision-making, along with five other critical qualities is crucial in taking business organizations to next normal. Such practices include resolve, resilience, return, re-imagination, and reform (Sneader & Sternfels, 2020). Going beyond the "intellectual preparedness" of businesses, the recent article in Harvard Business Review recommended planning such future scenarios that are backed up by 'war-gaming simulations' (Reeves, Lang & Carlsson-Szlezak, 2020).

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We also witnessed how poor leadership skills and poor decision-making contributed to the loss millions of jobs worldwide during the pandemic. The lack of insight among the business leaders gave rise to incompetent leadership, 'denialist' leadership, panic leadership, othering leadership and authoritarian leadership (Tourish, 2020). As leaders receive increased attention and scrutiny during the crisis, stakeholders expect guidance, comfort, hope, and accurate information. The sudden spotlight on leadership during the pandemic revealed both hope and despair. While many leaders surrendered and were unable to lead and save, such leaders lost the support of stakeholders. On the other hand, examples of exemplary leaders were successful in navigating through the crisis and managing the balance between various stakeholders (Lagowska, Sobral & Furtado, 2020). The new generation of business leaders shall require positive leadership traits like protecting employees, displaying 'bounded optimism', timely and transparent communication,' displaying self-sacrificing behaviors, and empathy (Wieland, 2020). The need for a transformational leadership style fostering superior positive relationships with subordinates, performance motivation, and commitment is the need of the future business organizations.

We also witnessed how the technology and digital operations backed organizations were able to refocus on new opportunities spurred by the digitalization of work and workforce. Therefore, there is a need to view technology as a catalyst to change the business models creatively for the better (Sneader & Sternfels, 2021). The digitalization processes with minimum human interaction proved to be a latent solution to restore customer and employee confidence. Therefore, managers and researchers must take cognizance of changing circumstances whereby technology will shape the future of Industry. Even before the Covid-19 crisis, there has been a call for enhanced use of technology in the services landscape, especially "service robots" and Artificial Intelligence (Wirtz & Patterson, 2018).

There is a greater evidence demonstrating how associations of 'AI' and 'service robots' could replace human labour (Huang & Rust, 2021); however, at the same time, there is a concern among organizations whether service robots and other technologies can replace employees or they must invest in a rational choice like human-robot systems (Reis, Melão & Salvadorinho, 2020). Balance in the application of technology is required, therefore. We can never run away from it; technology is chasing us all. For example, before boarding flights- 'Web checkin' has become a mandatory requirement for all. However, human touch and warmth can hardly be replaced. All the themes discussed above are incomplete unless we look at them through the lens of innovation. The business organizations must take it to the next level and strategize using innovation to recover from the crisis and to restore stakeholder confidence for improved performance indicators.

Conclusion

The discussion proposed the framework for future research by the academicians and identified the key skill enhancement areas for the industry practitioners. As we are entering the post-Covid world, the new research directions and research models are the need of the hour. Academicians and researchers have to strive hard not to continue looking as elites disconnected from realities by engaging in the pre-pandemic research practices. The study has identified some of the critical areas that deserve the attention of the academic community and research scholars especially.

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