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Management Skills and Growth Strategies in a Post-Pandemic World

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Abstract

This article discusses the ten research studies that constitute the Transnational Marketing Journal (TMJ) special issue, which has the stated intent on investigating the development of management skills and growth strategies in the post-pandemic world. The ten studies collectively offer insights in this regard that are applicable for pandemic and non-pandemic situations. This special issue runs the gamut of management actions and prepares companies for the future. The proposed integrative framework in this article categorises the ten studies based on their implications on countries, companies, and consumers. Further, this article identifies and delineates future research directions that emanate from the limitations posed by the ten studies and based on topics that are not covered in this issue. Overall, this article aims to serve as a guide to understand and appreciate this special issue on a topic of vital interest.

Keywords: *Management skills; pandemic; growth strategies; COVID-19*

Introduction

Today, the COVID-19 pandemic consumes much of the global attention on macroeconomic conditions, organisational performance, and consumer wellbeing. Several factors have contributed to this ubiquitous attention.

First, and perhaps the most critical, has been the involvement of the medical community. The pandemic is foremost a medical crisis impacting almost every country. While the overall death toll of the COVID-19 pandemic (more than 4.1 million, as of July 2021 (World Health Organization, 2021)) is lower compared to other pandemics in the past (e.g. the flu pandemic of 1918–1920 claimed between 20–50 million lives, the bubonic plague in the 14th century claimed between 75–200 million lives), the disruption caused by COVID-19 to our daily lives cannot be dismissed easily. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has upended the routine functioning of daily lives and has placed the world in a much-changed and hyper-alert environment. While the foremost attention goes towards healthcare needs (now more than ever), coming to terms with the crisis has significantly impacted people worldwide. Specifically, the psychological and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are widespread and challenging, to say the least. Recent multi-country studies on the psychological impact of COVID-19 have highlighted extensive concerns about social distancing, anxiety, depression, stress, and other negative feelings, in addition to concerns about the practical implications of the pandemic response (Holmes *et al.*, 2020; Xiong *et al.,* 2020). Further, Holmes et al. (2020) proposed a framework to prioritise and coordinate research in the areas of psychology, social,

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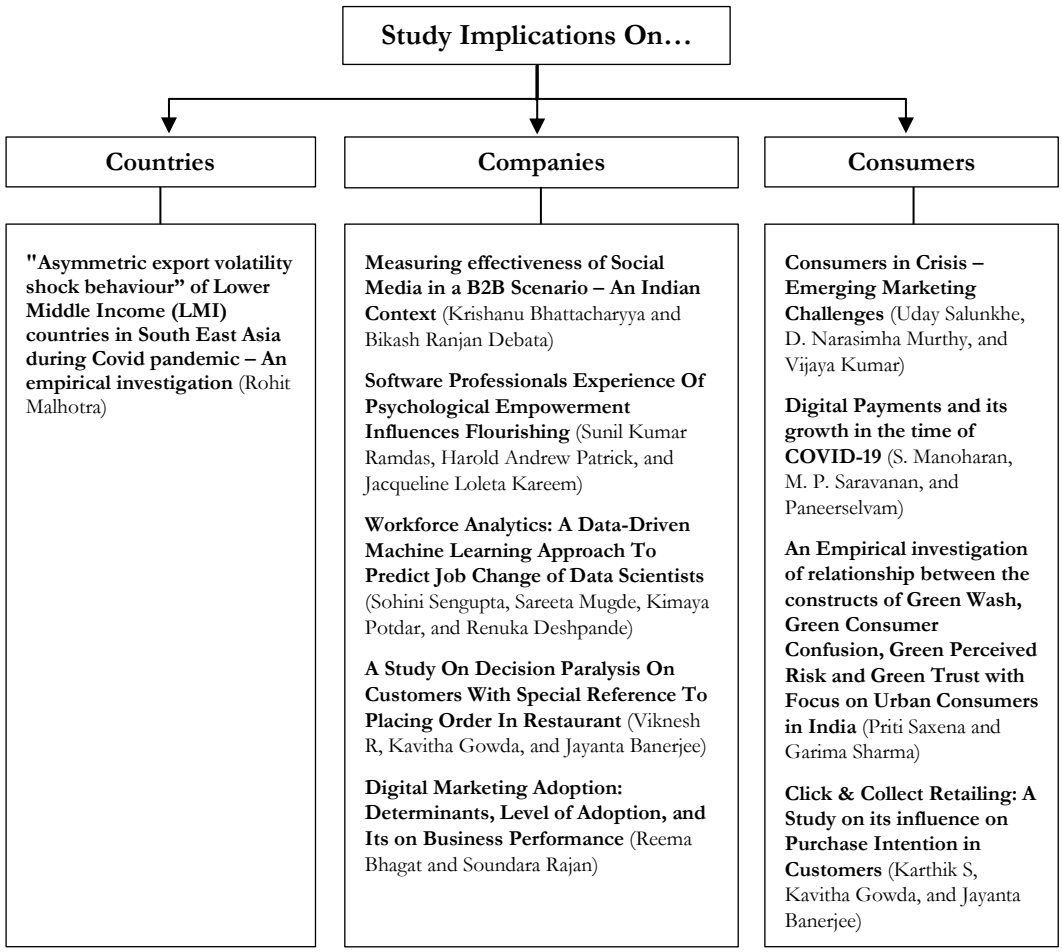
and neuroscience and called for a multidisciplinary research approach to investigate and understand vital mental health science issues arising from the pandemic. Such ongoing research efforts indicate the critical attention that COVID-19 is garnering as the world collectively finds a way to adjust amidst this challenging environment.

The pandemic's impact on areas outside the healthcare spectrum is unmistakable. The acute nature of COVID-19's impact, especially on the economic, social, and political frameworks, is probably due to the increased connectivity and integration of countries, companies, and citizens on a global scale (McKibbin and Fernando, 2020). Further, research has identified that socioeconomic, demographic, environmental, and ecological factors are significantly correlated with emerging infectious diseases (i.e. pandemics) and their increased prevalence (Morse, 1995; Jones *et al*., 2008), with indications that the occurrence trend of such pandemics will likely continue and intensify in the future (Madhav *et al.,* 2017). All these indicate that it is essential that we prepare better for future pandemics, should they arise.

Accordingly, a conference was organized by the Prin. L. N. Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research (WeSchool), Mumbai, India between January 21–22, 2021 on the theme of "Management Skills and Growth Strategies in a Post-Pandemic World". Further, the *Transnational Marketing Journal* (TMJ) commissioned a special issue for the express purpose of laying the groundwork for understanding how organisations would perform in a post-pandemic world. Ten papers were accepted which, altogether, cover a wide array of country-, company-, and customer-specific issues during and post the ongoing pandemic. Each paper either explicitly addresses concerns arising out of the pandemic or investigates a general concern that impacts non-pandemic times. Collectively, these articles underscore the need to devote more research and attention to organisational concerns, and the crucial role played by the pandemic. These articles reflect that the institutional realities and conditions prevailing during the pandemic and non-pandemic times differ greatly. Considering this, the observation emerging from this special issue indicates the need to develop new conceptual approaches and undertake deeper investigations of typical marketing phenomena that may be needed, should another global crisis occur. In effect, these papers point toward the need for a more organised understanding of management strategies that can be considered for implementation during most global crises.

Conceptual Overview of the Special Issue

The following integrative framework (Figure 1) organises the ten papers according to a conceptual through-line for the special issue and broaches all relevant issues during the pandemic, post-pandemic, and non-pandemic times. The key motivation for this special issue is: what management skills and growth strategies can companies develop in a post-pandemic world? Accordingly, the articles contained in this issue collectively consider a post-pandemic world that (a) deals explicitly with the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftereffects, or (b) investigates a non-pandemic world and how companies function in such a world. The proposed framework in Figure 1 illustrates this point and serves as a guide to understanding this special issue. Further, the framework classifies the papers into three categories of implications – countries, companies, and consumers. Under such a classification, the articles collectively discuss business approaches impacting a post-pandemic world.



In short, the proposed framework corresponds to the constituents of an economy (i.e., country-related, company-related, and consumer-related) that are impacted by a global crisis such as a pandemic. The following sections provide a detailed discussion on these constituents as they relate to the accepted papers for this special issue.

Country-related Implications

It is no question that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted global economies. A recent survey by McKinsey in April 2021 reported that the pandemic continues to be the biggest risk to domestic risk (48% of respondents), followed by unemployment (17% of respondents) (McKinsey, 2021a). Moreover, surveys also indicate that as new waves of the pandemic occur, the perception of the pandemic as the biggest risk also increases. For instance, the COVID-19 was cited as the biggest risk by all countries, except India, at a time when the COVID-19 wave was muted in India (McKinsey, 2021b). Additionally, respondents from the developed economies were more likely than their emerging economies counterparts to cite pandemic as a risk to overall economic growth. Further, owing to localised and rolling regional lockdowns, countries such as India are experiencing marked declines in business activity (Bhati, 2021).

Such findings underscore the critical role of COVID-19 in signaling country-related issues, including inter-country differences.

Particularly, from the perspective of economic shocks, research has established the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on demand and supply shocks in the economy (Meyer *et al.,* 2020a; Meyer *et al.,* 2020b; Brinca *et al.,* 2020). In this regard, the study titled "Asymmetric export volatility shock behaviour' of Lower Middle Income (LMI) countries in South East Asia during Covid pandemic - An empirical investigation" by Rohit Malhotra investigates the macroeconomic export volatility shock behavior and the impact of COVID-19 as an uncertain shock. The study observed "extended" non-smooth and noisy "shock propagation" post initial recovery. Further, the study recognised countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan as "noisy shock contributors", while Nepal and Sri Lanka were "noisy shock receivers". Such findings present international trade implications and identify potential intra-regional trade convergences as policy implications.

Company-related Implications

As governments and the healthcare communities struggle to contain the pandemic, companies also contend with making challenging decisions in the face of uncertainty. Companies have started to recognise the importance to be accorded to their external environment, along with their internal business goals. For instance, the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) has called for the adoption of integrated reporting by companies worldwide to establish financial stability and sustainability. The IIRC defines an integrated report as "a concise communication about how an organization's strategy, governance, performance, and prospects, in the context of its external environment, lead to the creation of value over the short, medium and long term" (IIRC, 2013). The IIRC recommends that an integrated report should include information on the nature and quality of an organisation's relationships with stakeholders, while also reporting on and reporting to the stakeholders' needs and interests. In times of a pandemic such as this, a dedicated approach to recording and relating to the needs of a firm's external environment is critical to the ultimate survival of firms (García-Sánchez et al. 2020).

The emerging COVID-19 literature has also identified the creation of a 'new normal' that impacts the economic, demographic, technological, political, and social dimensions of the business environment (Ahlstrom *et al.,* 2020). The newly changed business environment has now brought increased attention to the design and deployment of global value chains (GVCs) (Gereffi *et al.,* 2005; Nadvi, 2008; Gereffi, 2014). Particularly, considering COVID-19, Verbeke (2020) stated that the establishment of GVCs involves the assembling of "many economic activities that are technically or managerially linked to each other and that can benefit from joint coordination to create value", Such an approach can better prepare companies to "… respond swiftly to exogenous shocks" (Verbeke, 2020). The prominence of GVCs during this pandemic arises from a key idea that drives GVCs – no enterprise can efficiently produce all the offerings needed by consumers (Gereffi, 2020). Therefore, firms establish complex, global supply chain networks that link global economies and corporations with resources and communities to create value-generating offerings. In this regard, Hipp and Binz (2020) found evidence to suggest that a firm's survival depends on the firm's positioning in different parts of a value chain and the related global innovation system configurations.

Amidst such company-related issues, the studies in this special issue deal with similar vital organisational concerns such as social media effectiveness, employee empowerment, workforce analytics, consumer decision paralysis, and digital marketing adoption. These studies represent a growing list of contemporary challenges typically faced by companies.

For instance, the study titled "Measuring effectiveness of Social Media in a B2B Scenario – An Indian Context", by Krishanu Bhattacharyya and Bikash Ranjan Debata, investigates the measurement of success and effectiveness of social media in a business-to-business (B2B) setting. In doing so, they developed an instrument to measure social media return on investment (ROI) that can inform a company about the success and effectiveness of their social media initiatives. The development of the instrument resulted in the identification of four dimensions (identified as social engagement, organic return, financial return, and brand testament), consisting of 17 items. The development of such an instrument would help managers prudently allocate budgets. Further, managers will be able to structure marketing teams efficiently and prioritise marketing actions that are linked to long-term investment goals.

In the study titled "Software Professionals Experience of Psychological Empowerment Influences Flourishing", by Sunil Kumar Ramdas, Harold Andrew Patrick, and Jacqueline Loleta Kareem, the topic of psychological empowerment of employees is investigated. By focusing on the Indian IT organisations, the study investigates whether psychological empowerment can serve as a motivation for employees in the workplace, and its related effect on employee flourishing. Accordingly, the study aims to understand the relationship between psychological empowerment and the flourishing of software professionals in India. The study revealed that psychological empowerment critically influences the level of the flourishing of organisations and individuals. It also creates an emotional ability to enable employees intrinsically to have positive outcomes. This study presents important implications for talent management, team building, continuous learning, and crisis management, among others.

In the study titled "Workforce Analytics: A Data-Driven Machine Learning Approach To Predict Job Change of Data Scientists" by Sohini Sengupta, Sareeta Mugde, Kimaya Potdar and Renuka Deshpande, the issue of employee continuity from a skills perspective is investigated. In this regard, this study aimed to predict the attrition rate of big data and data science managers and to understand the factors underlying managers' choice to leave employment. Using a machine learning approach, the study found that using a random forest classifier model performs the best in predicting the attrition of managers. Further, to identify the factors determining an employee's decision to quit, the study found that five variables (i.e. city development index, company size, enrolled university, education level, and city) to explain with 50% accuracy; and an additional four variables (i.e. training hours, gender, experience, company type) to explain up to 90% accuracy. These findings present important business implications in terms of employee upskilling, precise and focused hiring efforts, and constitution and migration of employees/teams across regions.

In the study titled "A Study on Decision Paralysis on Customers with Special Reference to Placing Order in Restaurant", by Viknesh, Kavitha Gowda, and Jayanta Banerjee, the topic of decision paralysis in the restaurant service industry is investigated. This study found that decision paralysis can affect consumer purchase decisions while ordering in a restaurant. Further, the study contends that the decision paralysis occurs due to increased choice, similar

choice, decoy price, too much information about the selection, and dissatisfaction with the choice catered. Specifically, the study found a significant positive relationship between variables such as choice overload, choice similarity, decoy price, information overload, and choice dissatisfaction. These findings indicate that consumers reach a point of decision paralysis due to a variety of factors, particularly at the time of ordering a menu item. This study informs restaurants that offering the right choice, at the right price, and at the right time can help consumers overcome the problem of decision paralysis.

In the study titled "Digital Marketing Adoption: Determinants, Level of Adoption, and its on Business Performance" by Reema Bhagat and Soundara Rajan, the topic of digital marketing (DM) media use by women entrepreneurs is investigated. This study explores the determinants of digital marketing adoption amongst women entrepreneurs, the level of adoption of digital marketing tools, and the impact of digital marketing adoption behaviour on sales. This study identified six factors (perceived expertise, enterprise readiness, perceived industry and regulatory pressure, size of the enterprise, perceived consumer pressure, and perceived benefits) to influence the digital marketing adoption behaviour among women entrepreneurs. Further, the study found that the majority of women entrepreneurs showed a low level of adoption, indicating that digital marketing adoption is still in its early stage of adoption, and that the adoption of digital marketing has a positive impact on sales.

Consumer-related Implications

The COVID-19 pandemic has reiterated the need to provide value to consumers, perhaps now more than ever. Particularly, value has overtaken luxury as a desirable attribute in consuming offerings (Arora *et al.,* 2020). Further, a McKinsey survey shows that 40% of consumers in the US, UK, Germany, and France have switched brands/retailers during the pandemic and have cited price and value as the top two reasons for doing so (Fiedler *et al.,* 2020).

In this regard, the creation of value to customers by firms has been studied extensively in pre-pandemic times. Specifically, the topic of value to the customer has been investigated concerning perceived customer value (Gutman, 1982), value chain (Porter and Millar, 1985), price and quality (Zeithaml, 1988), service quality (Bolton and Drew, 1991), relationship marketing (Ravald and Grönroos, 1996), consumer experience (Holbrook, 1996), competitive advantage (Woodruff, 1997), business marketing (Anderson and Narus, 1998), customer loyalty (Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000), price and perceived value (Monroe, 2012), and direct and indirect contributions (Kumar and Rajan, 2020), amongst others. Recognising the trade-off aspect involved in value to customers (i.e. giving up some elements to receive value), Kumar and Reinartz (2016) defined customer perceived value as the customer's net valuation of the perceived benefits accrued from an offering that is based on the costs they are willing to give up for the needs they are seeking to satisfy. Based on this definition, Kumar and Reinartz (2016) contended that customers choose actions that ceteris paribus maximise the desired consequences and minimise concurrent undesired consequences. They further offered that customers assess the value of an offering against a group of competing offerings considering a comparison standard such as concurrent competitive offerings, expectations, or past experiences. Finally, they derived that when customers opt for offerings deemed to be of the highest value, the consequences manifest in behavioural (i.e. choice, loyalty, customer lifetime value) and attitudinal (i.e. satisfaction, loyalty) outcomes.

While value creation rests as the overarching goal of many organizations (Freeman *et al.*, 2004), the pandemic setting continues to reaffirm an organization's commitment towards creating and delivering value to its consumers. This is evident from emerging research that has investigated value creation in the pandemic setting to focus on aspects such as convergence innovation (Lee and Trimi, 2020), managing business relationships (Obal and Gao, 2020), corporate social responsibility activities (Srinivasan and Eden, 2021), social bricolage entrepreneurial thinking (Batat, 2021), and retailer strategies (Pantano *et al.,* 2020), amongst others. Keeping in line with ongoing research, the articles appearing in this issue also delve into pertinent organisational issues, such as realignment of marketing mix strategies, the introduction of digital payments, 'green' behaviour amongst consumers, and innovative retailing strategies that ultimately could lead to the development of value to consumers in pandemic and non-pandemic times.

For instance, the study titled "Consumers in Crisis – Emerging Marketing Challenges", by Uday Salunkhe, D. Narasimha Murthy, and Vijaya Kumar, investigates how marketers should redefine their marketing strategies to adapt to changing consumer behaviour during a pandemic. Using structural equation modeling, the study establishes that among a wide range of industries, a change in the organisation's marketing mix was needed. This study recommends that to better equip their organisations to counter the pandemic effects, marketers should comprehend the social and economic impact of the pandemic, invest in digital technologies to reach out to the customers virtually, streamline their supply chain to take advantage of localisation, offer family-oriented products, adopt short-term pricing policies, and develop alliances with competition for economies of scale.

The study titled "Digital Payments and its growth in the time of COVID-19" by S. Manoharan, M. P. Saravanan, and Paneerselvam, investigates the behavioural intentions of customers to use digital payments. Using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology-2 (UTAUT2) model, the study demonstrates that effort expectancy and habit have a positive effect on behaviour intentions; performance expectancy and hedonic motivation harm behaviour intentions; and social influence, facilitating condition, and price value have no effect on behavioural intentions. This study presents important implications for marketers to offer digital payments as a valued offering to their customers.

The study titled "An Empirical investigation of relationship between the constructs of Green Wash, Green Consumer Confusion, Green Perceived Risk and Green Trust with Focus on Urban Consumers in India", by Priti Saxena and Garima Sharma investigates the topic of green marketing – a growing concern among marketers across many markets. The study explores the impact of greenwashing (i.e. the phenomenon of customers questioning the overall green claims of an organisation that subsequently leads to a lowered confidence in green products) on green trust among Indian consumers. The study found that greenwashing is positively correlated with green consumer confusion and green perceived risk, implying that consumers exhibit heightened confusion or apprehension of green products when companies resort to greenwashing. Further, the study found greenwashing and green trust to be negatively correlated indicating that consumers tend to trust green products less when companies resort to greenwashing. Interestingly, unlike previous studies, this study found no mediating effects on the relationship between greenwashing and green trust. This contra-finding indicates a direct impact of consumer trust on green products and could potentially

signal a highly knowledgeable consumer base. The unique findings advanced by this study call for further research in this important area of marketing.

The study titled "Click & Collect Retailing: A Study on its influence on Purchase Intention in Customers" by Karthik S, Kavitha Gowda, and Jayanta Banerjee investigates the topic of click and collect practice in the retailing industry. This study investigates the perceived usefulness of using click and collect online shopping mode on the customer's purchase intentions. The study found that product risk, offline experience, and perceived usefulness influence buying behaviour of consumers. This finding indicates that the assurance of product functionality and durability have a vital role to play during shopping. This study underscores the importance of understanding the acceptance of the click and collect option offered by retailers and the key variables that influence the purchase intention of customers.

A Roadmap for Future Research

In recent times, very few world events have negatively impacted the global business community as has the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this ongoing global event, the research community continues to investigate important pandemic-related issues. In this regard, it is also our hope that this special issue spurs new thought and research on COVID-19. While each study in this special issue pushes the envelope on this emergent and timely area of research, they do open avenues for future research. To highlight future research avenues, we have synthesised the studies and have categorised new research directions from two viewpoints – (1) based on existing limitations of the studies, and (2) based on specific lines of research inquiry not covered in this special issue. We believe such an approach to identify future research directions would be beneficial for researchers and practitioners.

Limitations of the Studies

Despite the studies' notable contributions, they do exhibit some key limitations, which when avoided can help conceptualise future research. Specifically, the limitations of the studies contained in this special issue can be distilled into two broad categories – conceptual limitations and methodological limitations.

Conceptual limitations

First, without exceptions, all studies in this special issue are in the emerging markets context. Further, except the study by Malhotra, all studies contained in this issue are in the Indian context. While such an approach to study conceptualisation does bring focus to the special issue, the findings from these studies do not lend themselves well to generalisability. Specifically, by including other study contexts (particularly the developed market's perspective), readers may gain a broader understanding of the larger topic of study – i.e. the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, despite COVID-19 featuring in some of the studies in this issue, the pandemic only serves as a backdrop in which the studies are conducted, rather than forming an integral part of the studies. Future research on the COVID-19 impact on businesses and management strategies must build COVID-19 into the core conceptualisation of the inquiry. In effect, the business variables of interest that are directly impacted by COVID-19 (e.g. sales, revenue, market share, etc.) must be written into the study focus. Such an approach would generate more nuanced business implications.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, not all studies in this issue consider pandemics as the focus of the study. While such studies may not offer precise guidance for managers to navigate the ongoing disruptions due to COVID-19, the non-pandemic setting of these studies would still be relevant to businesses in the post-pandemic world. Further, the non-pandemic studies in this issue highlight important insights that continue to impact businesses and consumers.

Methodological limitations

First, except for the studies by Malhotra and Sengupta *et al.*, all studies in this issue use survey methodology as the mode of inquiry. Despite the usefulness of survey research, researchers must also explore other forms of research such as developing statistical models (using proprietary data), ethnography, projective techniques, storytelling, visual data analysis, among others. Specifically, some of the studies covered in this issue could also have benefitted from model development using advanced quantitative techniques. The Sengupta *et al.,* study is noteworthy for its use of a novel research method (i.e. machine learning). To embark on model development, the types of data collected would also vary, and consequently the research approach to the studies. Additionally, management researchers must also focus on theory building and conceptual formulations that go beyond an analytical or empirical focus. By widening the approaches to management research, we can prepare well for the future and contribute to the body of knowledge. Future research can investigate including a wider range of research methods.

Second, several of the studies in this issue have relied on single-country emerging markets data (i.e. India), and in many cases data that focus on a limited geographic region within India. Such a data collection approach raises concerns that results might not prove generalisable across all emerging markets, or even across India. This is particularly relevant in consumer-related studies where country-specific or culture-specific factors might be critical in determining the findings. Further, with the COVID-19 experience of countries showing significant variation, it would be prudent to consider multi-country data to obtain generalisable results. This can be a source of thought for future research.

Finally, the studies in this issue are also subject to limitations about the rigour and depth of analyses. Except for a couple of studies, all other studies rely on a limited number of variables in the research inquiry. When investigating a high-impact issue such as the COVID-19 pandemic, attention to a limited number of variables is likely to yield short-sighted results. Along with the theoretical enrichments and conceptual expansions suggested earlier, the inclusion of additional variables, measures, and metrics can significantly improve the investigation approach and the preciseness of the findings.

Specific Lines of Future Research

Whereas the study limitations cited earlier (i.e. conceptual and methodological limitations) highlight areas for future research, specific lines of research also emerge for researchers to consider in the future. Considering the studies covered in this issue and related evolving topics (not covered in this special issue), we propose the following research areas for future research:

- The studies appearing in this issue relate to the COVID-19 experience of one country (i.e. India). With the focus of this issue being the development of management skills and growth strategies, more insights can be generated by considering other countries. Further, given the global scale of the COVID-19 impact and the connected nature of

business globally, it would be prudent to investigate the country-level experiences of COVID-19. Therefore,

RQ1: What management skills and growth strategies can be developed that can be generalised across developed and emerging countries?

- Much of the emerging research on COVID-19 has highlighted significant differences in the experience of developed and emerging countries. Further, intra-group differences (i.e. differences within emerging countries and developed countries) have also been identified. Such differences have been particularly due to geopolitical considerations and cultural factors, among others. Therefore,

  RQ2: Can generalised insights and findings be developed for emerging countries and developed countries, respectively, that account for country-specific characteristics?

- The still-developing COVID-19 pandemic has seen, among other challenges, a very high level of stress on the supply chain and logistics. This has been seen at all levels of business (i.e. global, regional, national, local, etc.). Businesses continue to develop innovative ways of countering the logistics issues, particularly at the consumer level (e.g. contactless delivery, contactless pay, curbside pickup, etc.). While these efforts continue to help businesses and consumers during these tough times, the continuity of such efforts in the future is unclear. Therefore,

  RQ3: How will the post-pandemic logistics/supply chain setup be, considering the novel and innovative pandemic measures implemented by companies? Specifically, what type(s) of ongoing pandemic measures are (not) likely to become permanent business actions in the post-pandemic world?

- A major challenge for companies worldwide has been the formation, deployment, and movement of teams. With countrywide lockdowns still in effect (albeit sporadically), companies have found it hard to continue regular business operations. The work-from-home format has found acceptance in many industries and countries as an accepted way of functioning. However, the management of teams and work output when employees are spread out remains a challenge. Therefore,

  RQ4: What resource optimisation rules can be developed that can be used to maximise output, particularly during pandemic times? Additionally, what management skills (e.g. technical, managerial, operational, etc.) should companies develop to maximise their resource productivity?

- Businesses now function in a data-driven world where all decisions are powered by data. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the power of data in driving timely and relevant decisions. Whereas data was primarily aggregated using technology thus far, we are in an era where technology plays a more central role in data collection and analyses. New-age technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and the Internet of Things, among others, are being used by companies across all domains and functions. Further, data-driven insights are being generated in real-time that are providing companies with the most updated information that is relevant to the business context. Therefore,

  RQ5: What data rules (i.e. types of data, sources of data, frequency of data collection, unit of data collection, etc.) must companies develop in the post-pandemic world to track, collect, and analyse data that can lead to the development of management skills and growth strategies?

The future research directions highlighted here represent only suggested directions and not an exhaustive list. A keen observation of the business environment and the ongoing COVID-19 trends will likely indicate new areas and topics of research. Further, the area of COVID-19 research in management is ripe for interdisciplinary research wherein insights from other disciplines such as healthcare, economics, psychology, epidemiology, and statistics, among others, can be gainfully integrated to elicit learning that can serve the field of marketing and management well. We hope the research roadmap presented here contributes to a start in this direction.

Conclusion

In a constantly changing pandemic situation, countries, companies, and consumers are tasked to be agile and adaptive. While the expectation is clear, being agile and adaptive is a challenging process – one that involves a constant (re)evaluation of goals and priorities. In this rapidly changing world, and looking ahead, particularly companies need guidance and solutions as they navigate the pandemic-related challenges. Regardless of the challenges, an aspect that is becoming clear is that the post-pandemic world is going to be a much-changed place. This involves a new look at the management skills and growth strategies that would continue to take the companies forward.

The challenge for those who submitted to this special issue was to provide novel insights and new directions for companies to traverse the uncertain future. The authors of the studies in this issue have done a commendable job of investigating the post-pandemic world. The results and insights provided by the studies in this special issue will equip firms with the required knowledge to prepare for marketplace changes and assist them in the post-pandemic world.

In conclusion, we are extremely privileged to have presided over the editorial process for this special issue. In this regard, we extend our gratitude to the *TMJ* Editorial Board for making this special issue possible. We now eagerly look forward to future research that will follow this special issue.

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