

## **Journal of Asia Business Studies**

### **Special Issue Call for Papers**

#### **Normalising the Un-Normal: Defining a Post-Pandemic Strategy for Business in Asia**

##### **Guest Editors:**

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The COVID-19 pandemic crisis vindicated the findings of Ernst & Young's 2019 survey that found that only 20% of the executives surveyed believed their companies were prepared to respond to a large adverse risk (EY, 2020). The impact of Covid-19 pandemic forced many organisations around the world to undergo significant transformation, re-strategizing business processes and to adopt technologies for sustainable operations. This drastic transformation has impacted almost all industries alike including the health-care sector, education, retail, travel, food, and government agencies. These drastic changes meant that organizations had to quickly change their work practices and rely extensively on the use of digital technologies that is likely to influence life for the foreseeable future in the way people interact and operate in their daily routine lives as well as workplace (Griffin and Denholm, 2020). As all citizens, employees, students, and public- and private-sector organizations are forced to adapt to alternate ways of doing things, several technologies use facets, such as remote work and flexible work from home arrangements have become the norm and gain much relevance (Herath and Herath, 2020). In light of this transformation, it assumes much significance to assess and compare the difference before and during the un-normal on business models and the ensuing business model shifts and adjustment in near future.

In a way, Covid-19 became the accelerator for one of the most drastic workplace transformations in recent years affecting how we work, socialize, shop, learn, communicate, and, of course, where we work will be changed forever (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020). The ubiquity of consequences of Covid-19 and the accompanied uncertainty and fear lead to new trends and norms that made people somewhat suspicious and less susceptible at the same time (Donthu and Fustafsson, 2020). This crisis shines a light on the importance of strategic insights for sustaining business in this un-normal and how organisations envisage to develop a deep understanding of business risks, testing limitations and innovative techniques to overcome the challenges associated with any future resurgence or crisis. As government leaders at the federal, state, and local level begin to share reopening plans, business leaders need to be informed and empowered to develop and implement successful business strategies that can serve as an enduring source of competitive advantage in times of future crisis. The “great unfreezing” due to the heat of coronavirus crisis (Sneader and Sternfels, 2020), presents an opportunity—and a need—for many companies to build the competences they wish they'd invested in before: to become more agile, to work in new ways, shift their operating models, reinvent the role of operations in their enterprises, accelerated product-development, customer-experience innovation, mass customization, improved environmental sustainability, and more interconnected, nimble ecosystem management.

Against this backdrop, two interesting questions for future research emerge here:

- (i) *What are different dynamic capabilities and agile business practices that have helped firms in overcoming the challenges associated with un-normal?*
- (ii) *How can these firms institutionalize these dynamic capabilities and agile practices that they have employed during the un-normal?*

In light of the discussions above, this special issue call for papers on “**Normalising the Un-Normal: Defining a Post-Pandemic Strategy for Business**” empirical and conceptual papers that contribute to the debate around about the long-term strategies for greater resilience and to apply lessons learned from the Covid-19 experience to explore research inquisition and themes to better prepares firms for future disruptions. The main objective of this conference is to explore how firms envisage to outmanoeuvre uncertainty, address system resilience issues, develop a capacity framework to juggle a range of new systems priorities and challenges, developing the capability to face business continuity risks amounting to sudden changes in volume, real-time decision-making, workforce productivity and security risks. The research themes, issues and topic may be based around the following, but certainly not limited to explore further avenues. To continue this debate, scholars are encouraged to submit their conceptual and empirical research papers related to, but not limited to, topics given below:

- Using the current crisis as a source of enduring source competitive advantage.
- Embracing future of work defined by the use of more automation and technology.
- The challenges and impediments faced by employees, in the next normal.
- How does use of new business models affect people in their decision-making and productivity?
- What are the efficacy and pitfalls of revamped strategies, business practices and business models used during the pandemic and how these can assist business in future?
- How do information-sharing technologies and practices affect people during the time of duress?
- Assess organisation’s response efforts to Covid-19 and identifying areas for improvement in next normal.
- What are the cyber security and technology management issues that exploded due to remote/flexible technology setups?
- Conceptualising business models that have the capacity to respond quickly to change and are source of resilience, desirable creativity, innovative mechanism.
- Developing an understanding of how COVID-19 pandemic has created behavioural changes in firms, such as facilitating the adaptation of team members to working more effectively in virtual team environments
- Role of gender diversity in planning, decision-making, and emergency response systems.
- Organisational insights the crisis process has provided to help strategize and capitalise on the opportunity for business transformation.
- Explore the trends during the pandemic could shape what the world may look like in the long-term.
- Identify decisions and actions that will improve resilience to the rapidly changing landscape.
- Move beyond “recovering” from the crisis, and towards “thriving” in the long run.

**Submission Process:**

All manuscripts will be reviewed as a cohort for this special issue (SI) in *Journal of Asia Business Studies* (JABS). Manuscripts must be submitted by March 31, 2022 at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jnlabs>. All submissions will go through the JABS regular double-blind review process and follow the standard norms and processes. For more information about this special issue call for papers, please feel free to contact the SI Editors.

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