

Salaries for entry-level managers likely to drop post COVID-19

Columns



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There is a tremendous opportunity to conduct research in a scenario where large-scale experimental contexts are being naturally created rather than having to be simulated.



Representative image | Photo Credit: PTI

Given the lockdown and physical distancing requirements, education is leveraging digital modes now more than ever. While digital technology had already come in, a large part of its use was for learning towards non-degree granting programmes. However, in the past few weeks, a large number of institutions have started using digital modes for their mainstream programmes, including those which are degree-granting. Given the user experience so far, it will lead us to a new normal, where there is greater confidence in leveraging digital learning. In the post-COVID-19 scenario, I believe this new normal will settle down more towards opening new markets rather than the existing markets

which have grown in the in-class education mode.

In the specific context of the IIMs, I see a slew of new programmes with a focus on inclusivity in delivering quality education in a digital or even blended mode, while at the same time continuing the exclusive model of high-quality education that is primarily an in-class contact mode. The latter would continue to be essential for brand building.

Students would have more opportunities for earning degrees using the digital mode. However, transformational learning would still depend significantly on the in-class contact mode. As students turn into becoming professionals, 'work from home' options would increase. Salary slabs for entry-level managers will most likely drop in the forthcoming years.

This period of the highly infectious virus that knows no borders, and the consequent attempts at dealing with it by reduced movement and transaction levels, provides an opportunity to examine fundamentals of the meaning of 'activity'. Physical movement may decrease. Digital transactions would increase. There would be more need for digital highways (bandwidth, equipment, software), rather than physical highways. This is of special consequence to India, where quality digital reach is far below what is required. Also, consider the (media) attention given to the number of COVID-19 cases and the consequent deaths. If the same attention was given to the deaths toll of road accidents in the country (which is well over 150,000 a year), what an impact it could have on measures to reduce the same!

There is a tremendous opportunity to conduct research in a scenario where large-scale experimental contexts are being naturally created, rather than having to be simulated. I present a few issues in the transportation context. For example, reduced traffic flows' impact on safety and pollution, the effect on freight trains due to the running of fewer passenger trains, the development of a zero-based passenger timetable, rather than tinkering with an on-going system. These are but a few issues in a larger milieu of research questions that could be addressing communication, psychological and sociological behaviour, marketing, supply chain, economics, etc.

The IIMs are well placed to both generate and address a range of research questions, that would have implications on whatever is the new normal in the post-COVID-19 world, including lessons for organisations and economic activity of the future.

G Raghuram is a guest contributor. Views expressed are personal.