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Embracing Diversity in Dentistry through Effective Leadership and Management

Bhaven Modha

Health Authority of Anguilla, British West Indies

The contemporary workplace is evolving at a rapid and revolutionary rate. Contributing factors include: globalisation, competition; mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances; technological advancements; innovative learning and development methods; delayering and downsizing of organisations; greater flexibility and autonomy of workers; an ageing population; extensive social and demographic changes; a multigenerational workforce and societal, political and economic changes. These transformations are bringing together persons from different cultures and backgrounds that possess varying skillsets, thereby, increasing diversity amongst the modern workforce.

Diversity can be considered as recognising, understanding and accepting individual differences. Diversity characteristics can be grouped into four dimensions: (i) personality: traits, skills and abilities; (ii) internal: gender, race, ethnicity, intelligence quotient and sexual orientation; (iii) external: culture, nationality, religion, marital or parental status and (iv) organisational: power, department, union or non-union. In healthcare, a diverse workforce has been acknowledged as attempting to positively overcome barriers in access for underrepresented groups.

The ever-changing workplace and increasingly diverse workforce have been important topics to transpire over the past three decades. The latter may contribute to organisational success and reputation; however, if managed unsuccessfully, it may lead to adverse outcomes including absenteeism, increased staff turnover, conflict, discrimination and litigation. Although there is vast literature on leadership and management theories, there are limited studies, which decisively examine how such theories can allow diverse teams to be better led and managed. Thus, the author considers the main leadership and management theories and their implications in leading and managing the increasingly diverse workforce within dentistry.

Biography:

After qualifying as a dentist in 2012 from Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, Universities of Exeter and Plymouth in the Southwest of England, UK, Dr Bhaven Modha has had both a varied and unique mix of experience in dentistry. From gaining worthwhile skills and experience from several general dental practices, Bhaven's journey in dentistry has also included dentist positions in secure units to include prisons and immigration removal centres; special care community clinics, university and educational establishments and as a senior dentist overseas.