

THE CONTEMPORARY HEALTH MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS: BRIDGING FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

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Abstract

Contemporary management is a current process and updating science by which the manager plans, organizes, leads, and achieves ultimate organizational goals to accomplish hierarchical objectives and outcomes. Contemporary management skills also include overseeing individuals achieve institutional goals and objectives, maintaining power, ensuring discipline, and ensuring that the strategy aligns with the company's vision, mission, and long-term goals. The managers of organizations and healthcare institutions could adopt many management theories. Consequently, they can be used as a guideline for successful and effective management styles at their management level. System Management and contingency theory are examples of the theories of contemporary management. COVID-19, for instance, is one of the global emergencies that required all levels of healthcare sector managers to respond appropriately and promptly and to be dynamic in their management style. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, this essay will address the management strategy and the macro factors impacting contemporary management, the contemporary management skills and attributes, the management system and change management theory, and the management style and practice, with some management insights and reflections from readings and experiences, conclusions, and recommendations.

Keywords: *Contemporary management, COVID-19, Crisis management, Health management, Resources management.*

Introduction

Managing organizations today is a complex undertaking, and seasoned leaders of international organizations face many challenges inside and outside their organizations. To successfully make decisions and lead others, managers must possess complex skills, knowledge, and abilities that enable them to interpret signals from the environment and respond appropriately (Jones et al., 2016).

Contemporary theories of management explain and help describe the rapidly changing nature of today's organizational environment. It involves planning, directing, organizing, and controlling activities to achieve organizational goals. Managers at every level of an organization are responsible for effectively using resources.

Developing decision-making skills, monitoring information, and employee supervision is essential to success. In addition, management challenges include managing a diverse workforce by maintaining a competitive edge, behaving ethically, and using emerging technologies (Oberholzer-Gee, 2021).

It emphasizes working efficiently in the global market; Therefore, diversity management is essential. A modern management strategy involves creating values that reflect an obligation to provide a safe workplace for personnel at all levels of the organization; therefore, leadership training in ethics and compliance is provided (Stirk & Sanderson, 2016). It also has strong ties to society and ensures a sustainable environment, which is why the development of collaborative skills is included. Some factors currently influencing the management landscape are talent, technology, diversity, globalization, ethics, and professionalism. There are two everlasting truths: life is synonymous with change, and managing people is a challenging mission. To solve the problem, managers now face new challenges. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a rapidly changing business situation and several emerging obstacles (Growth Engineering LMS L&D, 2021).

Literature Review

Management is the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling people and other resources to achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively. Corporate resources include people and their skills, know-how, and experience; equipment; raw materials; computers and information technology; patent of the invention; financial capital; customers; and loyal employees (McLaughlin et al., 2022).

Contemporary management is a process through which an administrator prepares, organizes, directs, and achieves organizational goals to attain hierarchical objectives. It is a current strategy for managing a firm that includes planning, decision-making, and monitoring. This strategy seeks to set objectives aligned with stakeholders' interests, including traditional investors, employees, and customers. In addition, modern management teams rely on analysis of human behavior and environmental factors to produce an effective and organized work environment (The Black Sheep Community, 2022).

Administrators at all levels of an organization are responsible for the efficient utilization of assets. The managers can develop talents and abilities in determining, examining facts, and regulating faculty, which are crucial for future advancement. However, they may encounter challenges in contemporary management, particularly in dealing with a diverse workforce, ethically employing assets, and making the most of technology (Indeed, 2022).

One of the main goals that organizations strive to achieve is to provide the highest quality of goods and services that customers value and desire. Therefore, the primary goal of healthcare managers is to provide cost-effective, safe, and quality healthcare services to patients in a healthcare facility. In addition, healthcare managers must balance the quality of care for their patients with efforts to save costs (Jones et al., 2016).

Organizational performance measures how effectively and efficiently managers use available resources and supplies to satisfy internal and external customers and achieve the organization's goals—corporate performance increases in proportion to increased management efficiency and effectiveness (Maital & Seshadri, 2012).

Macro Factors of Management

Strategic management and orientation consider macro factors as essential contextual components that strongly impact an enterprise's strategic direction. The macro factors influencing contemporary healthcare management are numerous, including technological developments, the experience of healthcare providers and management teams, financial constraints, supply and resource limitations, and many other factors. In addition, new environmental realities affecting the operations and performance of organizations are characterized by constant and often unpredictable changes. As a result, many organizations have been called upon to strengthen their ability to react and adapt to changing and uncertain environmental conditions to maintain their competitive position (Barat et al., 2016).

In Saudi Arabia, rapid changes in the private sector hospital environment have put a lot of pressure on hospitals to pay attention to marketing and health service strategies. As a result, the macro factors affecting management have recently been the subject of significant research in the significant business literature. Furthermore, it has become a substantial area of concern for all organizations, relying heavily on a sophisticated understanding and analysis of the industry in which the hospital competes and their competitors in the work field.

The strategy literature of management supports the idea that owners and top management must deal with the effects of these factors. Organizations that can respond appropriately to varying degrees of factors and uncertainty are more effective and able to sustain. The potential for globalization depends on industry characteristics and especially industry-specific drivers such as market forces, cost factors, technology, government policies, and competitive considerations (Darwin, 2017).

Management Challenges or Opportunities

No healthcare system in the world is stable, and all systems undergo significant changes at one stage or another. In developing countries, many large instabilities and challenges are being driven by the rise of the middle class, the growing demands of that middle class, and the globalization of the economy (Vincent & Amalberti, 2016). The following factors are more likely to influence changes in health system management:

1. Health transitions, including demographics, epidemiology, and the emergence of infectious and pandemic diseases.
2. Latest technological advances - in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.
3. Discovery and innovation in the field of organ transplantation
4. Computer-aided medical interventions and robotics
5. Molecular microbiology

6. Genetic engineering technology and gene therapy
7. Information highway and transfer technology
8. Quality management and quality assurance
9. Profitability and efficiency
10. Medical ethics and legal issues
11. Scientific research and development
12. Evidence-based practice in medical sciences

One of the recent health transition challenges was the emergence of the new coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), which impacted all healthcare dimensions worldwide. Some of the challenges that are associated with the dissemination of this pandemic globally include the increased demand for medical supplies and personal protective equipment, the higher need for skilled healthcare providers and nurses, more pressure on the healthcare facilities, emergency services, and critical care departments, and augmented financial constraints of the health care organizations (Peiffer-Smadja et al., 2020).

On the other side of the coin, these challenges have created some opportunities in the management systems of the healthcare organizations, as the management strategies of the hospitals and healthcare organizations adopted more effective and efficient manner in medical supplies and resource utilization, increased the training and education of their medical and nursing staff to become acquainted with the most updated information and skills to be the first line barrier against the invasion of the pandemic, utilized strategies of staff retention such as professional development, incentives, and salaries adjustment, restructuring of the hospitals' departments to deal with a large number of cases come daily, and activated the emergency and disasters management plans and become more ready to deal with such pandemics in the future.

Implications of management strategy & purposes

Regarding the implications for that management strategy & their purposes, those management strategies enabled the healthcare systems to survive in the face of this lethal pandemic and, handle the rocketing number of complicated COVID-19 cases, and develop preventive and management techniques of the pandemic via the early detection and diagnosis of the infectious issues, administration of complex and critical points, and prevention of disease transmission through the proper use and handling of personal protective equipment and comprehensive service of different types of vaccines to the public and health care professionals.

Management Skills

Management theories are a set of ideas that suggest general rules for directing or managing an organization or business. They explain how managers and supervisors implement strategies to achieve organizational goals and motivate employees to perform at their best (Dewar et al., 2022).

The role of the leader is to set direction, vision, and strategy, while the manager's role is to implement and translate the strategic vision into value creation. Often, leaders apply concepts from different management theories that best suit their employees and company culture. Although many management theories were created long ago, they still provide valuable and practical frameworks for leadership teams in the workplace and managing businesses today (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

There are numerous reasons why managers and leaders should study and apply existing management theories in the workplace (Mckeown, 2019), including:

1. Increase productivity: Through these theories, leaders learn How to get the most out of their team members, improve performance and increase productivity.
2. Simplifying decision-making: Management theories provide leaders with strategies to accelerate decision-making, making them more effective in their roles.
3. Strengthening Collaboration: Leaders learn to encourage team members' participation and increase collaboration across the team.
4. Increase objectivity: Management theories support the managers of the organizations to make scientifically evidenced changes instead of relying on their judgment.

Current management theory

Healthcare facility managers can apply many management theories to facilitate the management process and improve their management skills, leadership qualities, and attributes (Joly, 2021). One of the most well-known management theories today is contingency theory which focuses on the idea that there is no single best way to manage a task or process. The contingency approach often referred to as the case approach is based on the premise that all management activities are situational. Therefore, whether the manager is organizing a company-wide institution or managing the

production process planning, the best solutions are usually influenced more by internal and external constraints than by a predefined management strategy or style (Naudé, 2021).

Contingency theory builds on accepted elements of systems theory. It realized that an organization is an open system of interdependent and interacting subunits. However, it added that the behaviour of individual subunits depends on internal and external environmental factors. These factors may include relationships between two other subunits or external systems. This is especially true when these internal or external units/systems influence the desired outcome of a subunit (Lustig, 2015). Contingency theory also suggests changes or designs of structures, leadership styles, and control systems in an organization that enable the organization to respond to environmental contingencies (Dunn, 2021).

Role of management in executing strategy

Since the emergence of COVID-19 in China, the pandemic had spread to attack all cities around the world, creating some uncertainty and distress, especially in the first year of emergence when there were no clear and unified treatment protocols for COVID-19 cases, no vaccinations, and no verified recommendations. The compliance of people with the infection control measures, hand hygiene, wearing masks, and social distancing varied significantly from one region to another for both public and healthcare providers, reflecting the effect of some external environmental, political, and even financial factors on the adherence to such guidelines and protocols (Shahin & Hussien, 2020).

Contingency management theory can be adopted to deal with such emerging circumstances associated with the emergence of the global pandemic. The contingency management model requires the managers and leaders to use a mix of intellectual skills for problem-solving, intrapreneurial skills to create value, and interpersonal skills to talk & engage. The problems that emerged due to COVID-19 are many, including the deficiency of medical supplies the healthcare institutions, the shortage of professional healthcare providers, and the lack of standardized and unified protocols to deal with the pandemic (Peiffer-Smadja et al., 2020). Therefore, intellectual skills of problem-solving through the efficient use of medical supplies and sources, national industrialization of equipment and faster importing, recruitment of skilled health care professionals and the training of the hospital staff, adoption of evidence-based protocols and unified standardized pathways for the treatment and management of COVID-19 cases are considered the cornerstone for the proper administration of the pandemic.

The managers' utilization of intrapreneurial skills to create value of adherence to hospital instructions by the medical team and the public's safety measures were of great importance to mitigate the pandemic and minimize the dissemination of the disease in the communities. Additionally, the use of interpersonal skills in talking, communicating, encouraging, and speaking positively, convincing the health care professionals and the public to vaccination and to abide the governmental instructions, engaging in activities of disease prevention, recruiting the social and mass media, and being a role model are all crucial steps in creating the necessary change in others behavior and increasing their commitment toward their community and themselves.

A recent study by Lee et al. (2022) applied the contingency theory of conflict management to examine how contingency factors influence the public's perceptual and behavioral responses to COVID-19 and the role of attitude toward the Communicable Disease Control (CDC) preventative measures during this catastrophe. The results showed that respondents were more likely to take a more lenient stance toward the CDC when they perceived greater severity and vulnerability to COVID-19. This finding indicates the link between threat assessment and stance movement is demonstrated in the prevention literature during organizational crises.

Respondents were also more likely to adopt a favorable stance when their attitudes (reputation and credibility) toward CDC were more fortunate. This result demonstrates the role of prestige, one of the most influential situational factors in determining the position of the public towards a healthcare organization, which reflects the importance of having trusted natural relations and good communication skills. It also emphasizes the importance of public relations and reputation management efforts in building a trustworthy and trustworthy organization.

An interesting finding from the study was that the respondents' political ideology indirectly influenced their housing position towards CDC through threat evaluation and attitudes towards CDC. In other words, the degree of conservatism has reduced the threat assessment and created a less favorable attitude toward the CDC (Lee et al., 2022).

Management System and Change Management

Change management is a systematic approach to managing the transition or transformation of an organization's goals, processes, or technology (Lawton & Pratt, 2022). It aims to guide for implementing change, controlling change, navigating the transition, ensuring changes are accepted and put into practice, and helping people adapt to change.

There are different change management models in the organization, such as Lewin's Change Management Model, McKinsey 7-S Model, ADKAR Change Management Model, Nudge Theory, Kübler-Ross Change Curve, Deming Cycle (PDCA), Bridges' Transition Model, and Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change (Whatfix, 2019).

Managing change in health care is common, challenging, and demanding. The healthcare industry faces more obstacles and resistance to change than other sectors as healthcare organizations are extremely large and complex, with many people playing key roles, such as patients, doctors, nurses, administrators, etc. (Smith, 2018).

Implications For Adaptive Management Systems

Kotter's model has been extensively studied in the business world and applied in healthcare (Kotter, 2012). The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the health system, which necessitates management changes, particularly in the management of infection control standards (United Nations Population Fund, 2020).

1. Increase the level of urgency

Establishing a sense of urgency prepares healthcare providers for change. To prevent people from sinking into a false sense of security, hospital leaders are beginning to raise awareness of all the challenges and external threats that can affect the hospital environments due to COVID-19, such as undersupply due to increased demand and overuse of personal protective equipment, the spread of infections among healthcare providers that threatens the safety of people, patients, and families.

2. Guiding Coalition Building

The hospital director forms a multidisciplinary team to develop a plan and set clear goals, including establishing policies, procedures, and guidelines for containment spread of COVID-19, improving early detection of infections, and standardizing disease management protocols according to clinical guidelines.

3. Create a Vision

A clear vision must be focused, realistic, achievable, desirable, and easily communicated to others. Managers and leaders clarify the direction of overall change, motivate individuals to act in the correct order, and coordinate actions to ensure alignment with the hospital's vision and goals (Roberts et al., 2016).

4. Communicate for Buy-In

Communicating a clear vision creates a shared sense of the desired future and drives and coordinates action toward change. The team must ensure that a clear and straightforward vision is shared with all employees and allows questions to be asked.

5. Empowering Action

Empowering people by removing as many barriers as possible to realizing the vision of change, in turn, empowers as many people as possible to act toward that vision. However, walls can come from any of these four sources (Roberts et al., 2016):

- a. *Structural barriers*: During COVID-19, hospitals must change their structures to match the vision. The workplaces for infection prevention are going to be designed differently, for instance, focusing on smooth curved surfaces instead corners, avoiding surfaces that trap dirt microbes, making structures easy to clean and disinfect, and increasing the number of isolation rooms with negative pressure (Diamond, 2020).
- b. *Competency barriers*: Needs to change competencies, attitudes, and behaviours to improve infection control practices, focusing on training healthcare workers, patients, and families to remove any possible hidden barriers (Opens et al., 2021).
- c. *Systems barriers*: Establish policies and procedures to support the vision to help remove barriers that prevent people from acting in the direction of the new idea rather than correcting or addressing obstacles and problems. The main issue in processes is to empower people rather than implement the details of the change.
- d. *Managers / Supervisors as barriers*: Most transformation programs encounter managers who resist change. Managers and team leaders need to be on the side of change to affect change by empowering them and inspiring employees to increase their ability to fulfill the change vision.

6. Creating Short-term Wins

This can be applied by winning in small steps and ensuring that short-term goals are displayed to employees to keep employees interested and excited to achieve their ultimate goals and give them a sense of urgency to stay on task.

7. Consolidate improvements and create more change

Senior management focuses on maintaining urgency to change. The management reinforces the task until people who are slow to adopt the change have been converted and the job is completed. This can be encouraged by inviting a guest speaker from another hospital that has made a similar change to show employees that the mission is possible and keep them motivated to keep moving towards the goal.

8. Institutionalizing new approaches

Culture is influential, so cultural change occurs after individuals have undergone change for a long time and when the experience approaches the norm. Monitoring of implementation is essential to ensure the continuity of change adoption. However, orientation and follow-up programs must be offered for newly hired employees to get them off to a good start.

Management Styles

The management style is how a manager works to achieve his/her goals. Management style includes how a manager plans, organizes, makes decisions, delegates, and manages the employees. This can vary greatly depending on the company, management level, industry, country, and culture, as well as the person himself.

Transformational leadership is characterized by building relationships and motivation among employees. Transformational leaders can generally inspire trust and respect among employees. They communicate loyalty through a shared vision, which boosts productivity, and improves employee morale and job satisfaction. In transactional leadership, the leader acts as a change manager, communicating with employees to improve production (Sfantou et al., 2017). In general, there are three significant types of management styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (VALAMIS, 2022).

Organizational culture

Organizational culture refers to the beliefs and values that have long existed in an organization, as well as the beliefs of employees and the intended values in their work that influence their attitudes towards work and their behaviors (Tsai, 2011). Directors often tailor their leadership behaviour to accomplish the organization's mission, which can affect employee job satisfaction.

The culture within the organization is critical in creating a healthy working environment. By communicating organizational culture to employees, their acceptance of it can influence their behaviour and attitudes at work. When the interaction between management and employees is good, it further contributes to communication and collaboration within the team and helps to fulfill the mission and goals assigned by the organization, thus improving satisfaction within the work team (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2011).

The management and leadership of health professionals are essential to enhancing the quality and integration of care. Leadership style plays a vital role in improving quality measures in health care and nursing. The impact on health-related outcomes is different between various leadership styles (Iqbal et al., 2015). Healthcare organizations need to ensure technical expertise, capacity building, and positive organizational culture that balances leadership priorities and existing skills to improve healthcare quality health metrics and make progress.

The Interplay Between Management Style & Workforce Empowerment

According to Maamari and Saheb (2018), initiating, building, and enhancing a strong culture within an organization creates a sense of belonging, similarity, and unity among employees, in addition to the core belief of organizational ownership. This sense of belonging alone creates operational efficiency as employees begin to engage with their organizations and link their future happiness and career plans with the growth and well-being of their organization (Maamari & Saheb, 2018).

In the same vein, a study by Sokro (2012) shows that most of the participants believe that organizational culture has an impact on both employee motivation and performance and contributes remarkably to the achievement of the objectives of the organization. The more motivated employees are, the better they perform, as evidenced by their efficiency and productivity in the company.

Employee empowerment can occur at different institutional levels, including organizational, managerial, and individual level empowerment (Sokro, 2012). Employee empowerment can be achieved by recognizing employee contributions to the business, rewarding responsible ownership in the workplace, supporting collaboration, fostering a culture of employee engagement, retaining top talent, empowering team leaders, supporting teams, providing the information the team needs, inspiring and motivating employees, helping connect employees better especially teleworkers, facilitating workflow, communicating business goals and organization vision which ultimately leading to better-performing teams.

The Interplay Between Company Culture & Employee Empowerment

A workplace culture that supports innovation and employee well-being and helps them take the initiative at work plays a vital role in empowering employees and building a better employee experience by assisting them to find meaning in their work and encouraging them to understand how their performance affects the business. Indeed, the way in which employees are motivated has a direct impact on how they feel about their jobs, their managers, and the organization.

The Interplay Between Leadership Style/ Work Empowerment and Employees' Satisfaction

Employee empowerment can be influenced by the perception that the organization cares about its well-being and that its work is appreciated. Empowering nurses can increase job satisfaction and improve patient care. Leadership style and empowerment influence employee job satisfaction (Alrasheedi et al., 2022).

Specchia et al. (2021) also confirmed that organizational culture has a significant positive correlation with leadership behaviour and job satisfaction. In addition, leadership behaviour was significantly positively correlated with job satisfaction. Therefore, it is concluded that a leader's communication with employees and the use of an effective leadership style are keys to motivating employees, empowering them in the workplace, and promoting employee satisfaction.

Management Insights

Although management is an innate skill and ability in human beings, managerial skills and abilities can be enhanced through study and education. The utilization of modern organizational theories in the management of organizations and healthcare institutions can help to reach correct administrative positions and make the appropriate decisions at the proper time. Many management theories take management from different perspectives, they are all flawed and ideal, and managers can adopt other management theories and styles according to the situation (Altadonna, 2022). One of the most current managerial theories is the contingency theory which focuses on the idea that there is no optimal solution or decision for administrative problems or dilemmas. The answer is situational and depends on the contingency or emergent situation.

One of the most significant challenges at the current time is the emergence of COVID-19 globally, which required healthcare managers and decision-makers to handle the issues associated with the pandemic, such as the deficiency of medical supplies, lack of workforce and healthcare providers, and many other social, political, and financial issues depending on the science of management and coming back to the management theories and best evidence-based practices.

Reading the lectures and textbooks and reviewing the literature and current research available about management theories enhanced our knowledge and abilities in management and increased our insights to utilize the managerial approaches in the direction of organizations, especially in healthcare institutions. Moreover, the readings have widened the horizon of management scope to integrate the current management theories into the classical management styles.

Applications for Health Management

It is crucial to work on updating the managerial styles of the managers from time to time to stay connected and current with the challenges and advancements on the local and global levels to maintain the productivity of their organizations and survive in the business market. The same applies to the healthcare sector, as hospitals worldwide compete continuously to attract customers, who are the patients, through the provision of the highest level of quality medical and hospitality services and protecting their safety and security.

The management of hospitals plays a vital role in improving hospital services. Therefore, it must adopt the current management theories in its strategic and day-to-day operational plans. The best magnet hospitals in the world had the best managers behind this success and adopted a contemporary and dynamic management style. Professional and active management could be one of the main factors in retaining highly skilled and experienced healthcare providers and attracting the highest number of patients on the national and international levels.

Managers must have a clear vision of what they are planning to be in the future. They are advised to vary their management styles based on the stages of their achievement journey to reach the optimal goal with the help of every member of their organizations. Updating the managers' knowledge about the current management theories and their skills is one of the pillars of that success. This should consider all levels of managers in healthcare organizations, including the top management, middle, and operational level managers.

Discussion

Contemporary management is considered an essential criterion for modern management in the healthcare sector. It relies on current management theories regarding management experience in making critical decisions. There are several basic skills or competencies through which managers can access the best management style at their departments or healthcare institutions. One of the most successful theories in contemporary management is the contingency theory, which is based on the lack of an optimal management style or a single decision or solution to the problems and dilemmas facing managers in daily practices. The managers of organizations and healthcare institutions should be open to studying, exploring, and adopting modern management styles and referring to contemporary management theories to achieve personal and personal success and achieve their institutions' general goals.

Conclusions

Although management skill is one of the innate traits that are instilled in some managers, however, management skills can be continuously developed and improved to reach the application of the best and most successful administrative strategies and styles in managing healthcare institutions to go with these institutions to the highest levels of competition locally and globally.

One of the best ways to develop managers' management strategies at organizations is to rely on increasing the managers' knowledge and access to books and articles that deal with modern management strategies and theories in contemporary management.

Succeeding in today's business world, medical industries, and healthcare services is embracing uncertainty and emergencies with knowledge and a plan of action. Hopefully, this essay can help managers at all levels start thinking of the appropriate management styles and strategies to take on these challenges confidently and invest in improvement opportunities.

Recommendations

It is highly recommended to work on updating and improving the managers' knowledge regarding contemporary management theories, modern management strategies, and leadership styles in healthcare institutions in Saudi Arabia and the world to provide the best healthcare quality services, maintain patient safety, and achieve the highest employee satisfaction with the retention of the skilled healthcare professionals.

The dilemmas of the pandemics that invade the world confirm, beyond any doubt, that there is no one way to manage crises and that management strategies can be developed to ensure taking the best management decisions and achieving effective improvement, preventive, and curative solutions at the lowest costs.

The development of managerial styles is independent of trial and error or the individual management practice and experience at the institutions. Instead, it extends to reviewing recent research and studies in contemporary management and referring to the various management theories to increase the insight and deepen the knowledge in the management field.

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