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FIRST NATIONS CULTURAL APPROACHES TO WORK IN CANADA: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

Abstract:

Many organizations in Canada have the opportunity to diversify their workforce and replace an aging workforce with a quickly growing Indigenous population. Maintaining a diverse workforce is becoming critically important for organizations as they operate in a complex environment requiring multiple approaches to problem-solving and the integration of a diversity of perspectives to maintain a competitive advantage. The availability of Indigenous workers who have unique cultural perspectives would seem to be a perfect solution, however, there is a problem as to how to support and retain these workers. This issue is demonstrated by the fact that in 2011, the unemployment rate for Indigenous people in Canada was measured at 12.3%, compared with 6.8% for non-Indigenous people and numbers on retention reflect this disparity. Though barriers to successful employment are numerous and complex, Indigenous people cite a lack of cultural understanding from managers and peers as one of the key issues that they face with regard to gaining and retaining employment. Therefore, this qualitative, multiple case study explored further and expanded on how Indigenous cultural approaches to work and subsequent work interactions influence employment and employment retention from an Indigenous perspective. Data was collected and analyzed from 12 participants; a focus group of six as well as six individual in depth interviews with First Nations men and women over 18 and under 55 who had a minimum of five years' work experience. Understanding the context of culture and the influences on work outcomes for Indigenous people may generate new understanding of the problems and their placement in work engagement theory.

Keywords:

Indigenous Engagement Work Cross Cultural