Relationship between Agile Leadership Behaviors and Workplace Spirituality among Staff Nurses

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Abstract

Background: Agile leadership and workplace spirituality are interconnected, as agile leadership fosters an environment of trust, collaboration, and continuous improvement, which aligns with the values of workplace spirituality. This synergy enhances employees' sense of purpose and belonging, leading to greater job satisfaction and engagement. **Aim of the study**: the current study aimed to assess agile leadership behaviors and its influence on workplace spirituality among staff nurses. **Design:** a descriptive correlational design was used. **Setting:** the study was conducted at Ain Shams University Hospital which affiliated to Ain Shams University Hospitals. **Subjects:** the study subjects include (186) out of (350) staff nurses. **Tools:** two tools were used namely agile leadership behaviors and workplace spirituality questionnaire. **Results:** half (50%) of staff nurses had a low perception level regarding their total agile leadership, while more than half (56.5%) of staff had low perception level regarding their total workplace spirituality. **Conclusion:** there was highly significant statistically positive correlation between agile leadership behaviors and workplace spirituality among staff nurses. **Recommendations:** supporting organizational culture that contribute to the growth of the concept and strategies of agile leadership and its effect on the workplace spirituality, Implement agile leadership training for head nurses to improve staff nurse's workplace spirituality.

Keywords: Agile Leadership, Staff Nurses, Workplace Spirituality.

Introduction:

Simple or complicated work can be done by following well-defined processes and rules. For the complex work that forms the bulk of the challenges faced by today's organizations, leaders at all levels must focus on ensuring people work together efficiently and effectively, ensuring that the operation of the organization is properly connected to the value it delivers. Such focus is agile leadership. Organizations that wish to be agile need leadership that is adaptive, enabling them to respond rapidly to the market changes. Leaders must be agile as well, ready to accept the evolutionary disrupters that are constantly presenting them with challenges and opportunities **(Tannenbaum et al., 2023)**.

Agile leadership is a management philosophy that emphasizes adaptability, collaboration, and responsiveness in dynamic and often unpredictable environments. Originating from the agile methodology used in software development, agile leadership applies similar principles to organizational leadership.

Agile leadership is a modern approach to leadership that focuses on creating adaptable, responsive, and collaborative work environments **(Anggadwita et al., 2021).**

Agile leadership is about not only driving and promoting change, but also about being the change. Those who lead by example and actively engage in their development inspire people. This is through action rather than words. Agile leadership is a leadership style that strives to remove roadblocks to success so that employees can be more effective and productive. Agile leaders have frequent check-ins with team members to surface and address concerns early **(Cleveland & Cleveland, 2020).**

The main goal of an agile leadership is to increase teams' capabilities to attain higher levels of accomplishment, it enables the organization to achieve many goals accurately and quickly and contribute to improving the competitive position of the organization, agility

contains different types of flexibility and incorporates the capability to do unintended new activities in response to unexpected shifts in market needs or incomparable patient/customer request. Thus designers of organizational systems for emergency response, must ensure both discipline (structure and process) and agility (organizing work environment, continuous improvement, humility, calmness, wisdom, patience, objectivity and confidence). Despite the lack of a reliable objectivity, trust and roadmap, non-profit organizations responded with unaccustomed speed and agility to the urgent humanitarian needs **(Murphy, 2021).**

The workplace is becoming more and more dynamic and demanding. Work pressure is posing a severe threat to employees getting exposed to various psychological problems. Spirituality is a dynamic process in which individuals continuously interact with their environment and energize the external world through their interaction and get energy from the external world **(Ahmad et al., 2021).**

Workplace spirituality defined as the internal beliefs, values and feelings of an individual that influence his behavior in the workplace. Also it is aspect of the workplace, either in the individual, the group, or the organization that promote individual feelings of satisfaction, feelings of completeness and joy which contributes to improving the ability to deal creatively with situations which will impact nursing staff affective commitment where the nurse feels the work has meaning and importance for his or her life to strive to succeed the organization by achieving the goals set by the organization **(Abdulla & Askari, 2021).**

Also workplace spirituality defined as an experience of interconnectedness, shared by all those involved in the work process, initially triggered by the awareness that each is individually driven by an inner power, which raises and maintain her /his sense of honesty, creativeness, proactivity, kindness, dependability and confidence, .Workplace spirituality has three important dimensions. The first dimension is meaningful work –signifies the degree to which people experience a deep sense of meaning and purpose at work. The sense of community is the second dimension which means people see themselves a connected to each other and that there is some type of relationship between ones inner self and the inner self of other people. The third and the most important dimension is value- alignment which measure whether or not individual's experience strong sense of alignment between their personnel values and the organizations mission and purpose **(Green, 2019).**

Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization. Also, defined the concept as "the desire to find ultimate purpose in life, and to live accordingly **(Hassan et al., 2021).**

Agile leadership and workplace spirituality share a common goal of creating a positive and fulfilling work environment. Agile leadership emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, and continuous improvement, which naturally aligns with the principles of workplace spirituality that focus on meaning, purpose, and a sense of community. By fostering open communication and trust, agile leaders help employees feel valued and connected to their work, enhancing their overall well-being and job satisfaction. This supportive atmosphere encourages employees to bring their whole selves to work, integrating their personal values with organizational goals. **Brown, (2022).**

Significance of the Study:

During round on nurse intern at Ain shams university hospitals the researcher noticed that staff nurses have little contact with their leaders , not motivated enough to work hard to achieve organizational goals , not empowered to have opportunities to promote their clinical experiences , slow response to their needs and ignorance to their rights in decision making and problem solving .So this study will conducted to determine the influence of agile leadership behaviors on staff nurses' workplace spirituality.

Health care organizations are adopting a value approach and are learning to distinguish between what is valuable and what doesn't matter is a development that has been going on for the last decade and health care organizations have taken the first, sometimes bold, steps in a cost effective transition to becoming more adaptable to the environment So, it needs effective an agile nurse leaders who understand the complexities of the rapidly changing global environment. Many agile leaders increased team members´ internal motivation, thus influencing their efforts, This is recommended to implement agile leadership , in many studies concluded that it is important to apply agile management systems and be successful health care organizations need to follow technological developments and adapt them very quickly. Therefore, agile leaders are of great importance in this process**. (Louis, 2021).**

Aim of the Study:

This study aims to assess agile leadership behaviors and its influence on workplace spirituality among staff nurses through:

1- Assessing agile leadership behaviors as perceived by staff nurses.

2- Assessing workplace spirituality as perceived by staff nurses.

3- Finding out the relationship between agile leadership behaviors and workplace spirituality among staff nurses.

Research question:

Is agile leadership behaviors has influence on workplace spirituality among staff nurses?

Subjects and Methods:

1.Research design

A descriptive correlational design was used in this study.

2.The study setting:

This study was conducted at Ain Shams Hospital which is affiliated to Ain Shams University hospitals. It provides general and medical services, and it consists of six floors which includes (immunology and allergic diseases, tropical medicine, endocrinology, chest diseases and intensive care units). The study was conducted in all units of the hospital with bed occupancy rate is (618 beds).

3.Subjects of the study:

The Subjects of the present study was included 186 out of 350 staff nurses were selected by simple random sampling technique.

4.Sample size

The sample was selected by simple random sampling technique, it was (186) out of (350) staff nurses calculated by the following equation which developed by **(Thompson, 2012).**

$$n = \frac{Np(1-p)}{(N-1)(d^2/z^2) + p(1-p)}$$

n = sample size

N = number of population

Z = confidence level 95%

d= margin of error (0.05)

p = probability 0.5

5.Tools of data collection:

Data for this study was collected by using two different tools namely; agile leadership questionnaire and workplace spirituality questionnaire.

First tool: Agile Leadership Questionnaire:

It consisted of two parts.

Part I: This part was intended to collect staff nurses' personal data including: age, gender, marital status, nursing qualifications, years of nursing experience and have you attended training courses, workshops or seminars on agile leadership.

Part II: This part was used to assess agile leadership behaviors as perceived by staff nurses, this tool developed by **Ibrahim, et al., (2022)**. This questionnaire consists of 34 items, divided into eight main dimensions: organizing work environment (5items), continuous improvement (5 items), humility trait (3 items), placidness trait (4 items), wiseness trait (4 items), patience trait (3 items), objectivity (5 items) and confidence trait (5 items).

❖   **Scoring system**:

The responses of the participants were m scored against three points Likert Scale. "Always" as (3), "Some Times" as (2) "Rarely" as (1). For each dimension, the scores of the items were summed–up and the total was divided by the number of items, giving the mean score for this part. These scores were converted into a percent score. The perception level of agile leadership was considered.

- low if the percent score was less than 60%

- moderate if the percent score ranged from 60% to 75%

- High if the percent score was more than 75% **(Ibrahim et al., 2022).**

Second tool: Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire

This tool was used to assess staff nurses perception regarding workplace spirituality. It developed by **Gupta. (2013),** and adopted from **Mohammed, (2020).** It consists of 35 items, divided into four main dimensions: meaningful work (9items), sense of community (12items), organizational values (9items) and compassion (5items)

❖   **Scoring system:**

The responses of the participants were measured on a 5-point Likert scale and polarized in (Strongly Agree =5, Agree =4, Neutral =3, Disagree =2, strongly Disagree =1). For each dimension, the scores of the items were summed–up and the total was divided by the number of items, giving the mean score for this part. These scores were converted into a percent score. The perception level of workplace spirituality was considered:

- Low if the percent score was less than 60%

- Moderate if the percent score ranged from 60% to 75%

- High if the percent score was more than 75% **(Mohammed, 2020).**

Operational Design:

The operational design for this study included three phases namely: preparatory phase, pilot study and field work.

Preparatory phase:

This phase started from May 2024 till the start of June 2024, the researcher reviewed the national and international related literature, the material in textbooks & scientific journals were used in the study to be acquainted with study subject.

The reliability:

Tools of data collection were examined through assessing their internal consistency by cronbach alpha. It represented in the following table:

Data Collection Tools	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Agile Leadership Questionnaire	34	0.933
Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire	35	0.873

Pilot study:

The pilot study was carried out on 35 staff nurses who representing 10% of the total of the study subjects. The aim of the pilot study was to examine the applicability of the tool, clarity of language, test the feasibility and suitability of the designated tools. It also served to estimate the time needed to complete the forms by each study subject and identifying potential obstacles and problems that may be encountered during data collection. The time for filling the questionnaires took around 25-35 minutes. The pilot study was conducted in June 2024. The study subjects who participated in the pilot were excluded from the main study sample.

Field work:

Field work of the study took two months started in July 2024 and completed at the end of August 2024. The researcher met the head nurse of each unit for determining the suitable time to collect the data from the staff in each unit. The researcher introduced herself to staff nurses in the workplace, explains the aim and component of the questionnaires and distributed the sheets to staff nurses in their work settings at different times. The researcher was present during the data collection period to explain how to filling the questionnaires, clarify any ambiguity and answer any questions. Data was collected two days per week at the morning and afternoon shifts. The researcher collected about twenty two to twenty four questionnaires every week. The filled forms were handed back to the researcher to check each one to ensure its completeness.

Ethical Consideration

Prior to the study conduction, ethical approval was obtained from the scientific research ethical committee affiliated to the Faculty of Nursing at Ain Shams University. The subjects were informed about their right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and the collected data kept confidential and used for scientific work only. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant in the study.

Administrative design:

To carry out the study, the necessary approvals were obtained. An official letter was issued from Dean of Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, to obtain permission from the hospital directors about conduction the study. The researcher met both hospital directors medical and nursing to explain aim of the study and get their approval to collect data and seek their support.

Statistical Design:

The statistical analysis of data was done by using the computer software of Microsoft Excel Program and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages for categorical data, the arithmetic mean (X), and standard deviation (SD) for quantitative data. Qualitative variables were compared using the chi-square test (X) 2, P-value to test the association between two variables, and Pearson correlation test (R- test) to the correlation between the study variables. Degrees of the Significance of results were considered P-value < 0.05 Significant (S) and P-value < 0.01 highly Significant (HS) .

Results:

Table (1): Shows that more than two fifths (44.1%) of the study participants were more than 30 years old, more than three quarters (79.6%) of them were female, the majority (90.3%) of them were married, more than two fifths (43%& 47.8%) of them had a technical institute of nursing and had experienced more than 30 years, and the majority (90.9%) of them weren't attended the training course

Table (2) Reveals that around quarter (21%) of staff nurses had high perception level of patience trait. While around two fifths (40.9%) of staff nurses had moderate perception level of placidness trait. in addition, around two thirds (65.1%) of them has low perception level of objectivity trait.

Figure (1) Reveals that half (50%) of

staff nurses had a low perception level regarding their total agile leadership. While, more than two fifths (45%) of staff nurses had moderate perception level regarding their total agile leadership.in addition, the minority (5%) of them had high perception level regarding their total agile leadership levels**.**

Table (3) Reveals that less than one fifth (16.7%) of staff nurses had high perception level of compassion. While two fifths (40.9%) of staff nurses had moderate perception level of compassion. in addition, around two thirds (53.2%) of them had low perception level of sense of community.

Figure (2) Indicated that minority (6.9%) of staff nurses had high perception level regarding their total workplace spirituality. While, more than one third (36.6%) of staff nurses had moderate perception level regarding their total workplace spirituality.in addition, more than half (56.5%) of them had low perception level regarding total workplace spirituality.

Table (4): Indicates that there was a highly statistically significance positive correlation between agile leadership levels, and workplace spirituality levels among staff nurses.

Table (1): Frequency Distribution of Staff Nurses' Personal and job characteristics data (N 186)

Item	N	%
Age (year)		
<25	38	20.4
25-30	66	35.5
>30	**82**	**44.1**
Mean±SD	30.08±5.57	
Gender		
Male	38	20.4
Female	**148**	**79.6**
Marital Status		
Married	**168**	**90.3**
Unmarried	18	9.7
Educational Qualification		
Nursing Diploma	58	31.2
Technical Institute of nursing	80	43
Bachelor of Nursing	41	22
Master degree	5	2.7
Doctora degree	2	1.1
Years of experience in nursing		
<10	37	19.9
20	60	32.3
>30	**89**	**47.8**
Mean±SD	14.31±7.89	
Attending Training courses		
Yes	17	9.1
No	**169**	**90.9**

Table (2): Frequency of total distribution of staff nurses' perception regarding their agile leadership dimensions (N=186)

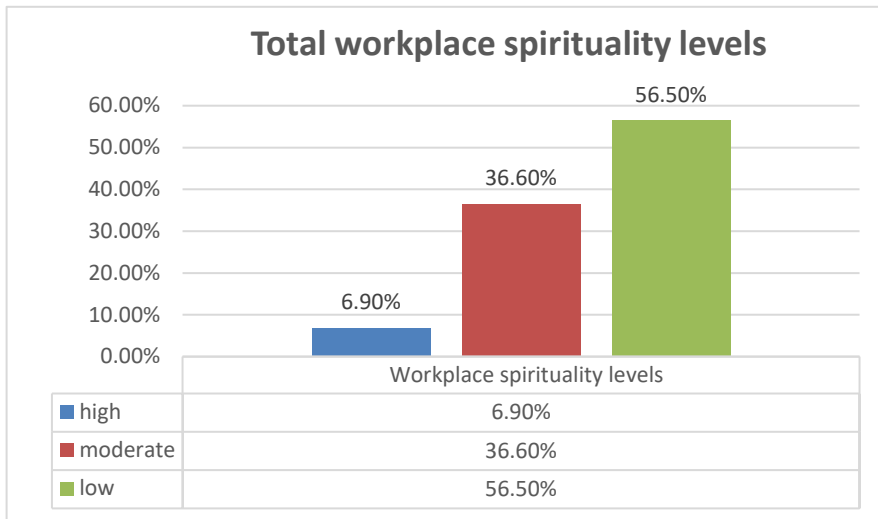| Agile Leadership	Agile Leadership Dimensions among Staff Nurse					
	High >75		Moderate 60-75%		Low <60 %	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Organizing Work Environment	26	14	54	29	106	57
Continuous Improvement	**37**	**19.9**	51	27.4	98	52.7
Humility Trait	31	16.7	62	33.3	93	50
Placidness Trait	25	13.4	**76**	**40.9**	85	45.7
Wiswness Trait	26	14	73	39.2	87	46.8
Patience Trait	39	21	52	28	95	51.1
Objectivity Trait	24	12.9	41	22	**121**	**65.1**
Confidence Trait	27	14.5	59	31.7	100	53.8
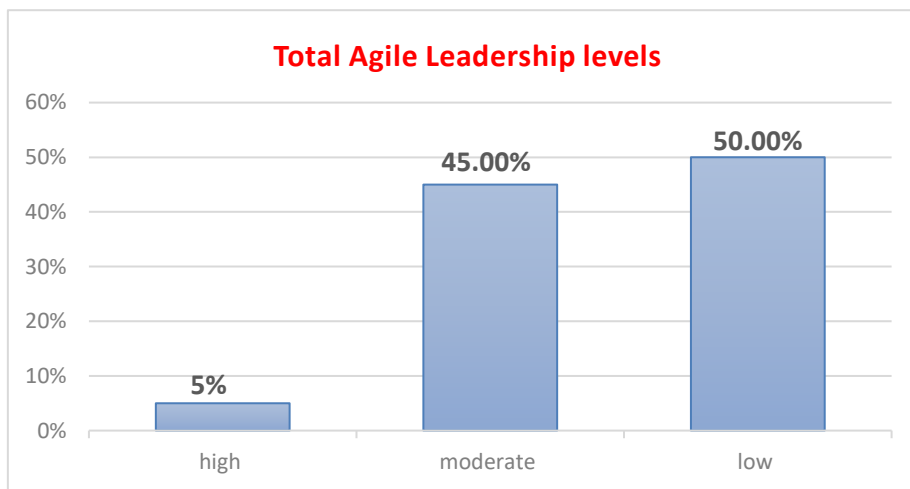
Figure (1): Total Distribution of Staff Nurses' Perception Regarding Agile Leadership levels (N=186)

Table (3): Frequency of total distribution of staff nurses' perception regarding their workplace spirituality dimensions (N=186)

Dimensions	Workplace Spirituality Dimensions Among Staff Nurse					
	High >75		Moderate 60-75%		Low <60 %	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Meaningful work	24	12.9	69	37.1	93	50
Sense of community	27	14.5	60	32.3	**99**	**53.2**
Organizational values	22	11.8	67	36	97	52.2
Compassion	**31**	**16.7**	**76**	**40.9**	79	42.5

Total workplace spirituality levels

Workplace spirituality levels	
high	6.90%
moderate	36.60%
low	56.50%

Figure (2): Total distribution of staff nurses' perception regarding their workplace spirituality Levels (N=186)

Table (4) Correlation between total agile leadership levels, and total workplace spirituality among Staff Nurses.

Items	Total Workplace Spirituality
Total Agile Leadership	**r = 0.896** **P = 0.000 ****

**Correlation is significant at the 0.0 level

Discussion:

Organizations must recognize the value of organizational agility as they can improve the speed of decision-making, learning, and product development and significantly reduce the time between prototype creation and release of the product to the market. One of the most widely accepted philosophies or ways of working to achieve organizational agility is Agile. Agility can result from being aware of changes in both the internal and external environments. It can take an effective form if it is accompanied by the ability to use resources to respond to changes at a convenient and flexible time and also to the ability of the organization to implement changes (**Omidvar et al., 2021).**

In the light of staff nurse's perception level regarding their agile leadership dimensions the present study showed that around two thirds of staff nurses had low perception level of objectivity trait dimension. From the researcher point of view ,this might

be due to personnel relationship of head nurse as its can lead to favoritism or baise

impacting objectivity, experience level and communication barriers can lead to misunderstanding which can compromise objective decision making.

This result similar with the study conducted by **Önalan et al., (2023)** who conducted a study the mediating role of management innovation in the impact of agile leadership on firm performance and found majority of studied sample had low perception level of objectivity traits.

Inconsistent with the present study findings a study conducted by **Akhmad et al., (2024)** who studied "The Influence Of Agile Leadership, Innovative Work Behavior And Organizational Commitment Through Work Productivity On Institutional Performance In The Industrial Era" and found high perception level regarding wisdom traits.

Concerning staff nurses' perception regarding their total agile leadership levels, the present study showed half of the staff nurses had a low perception level regarding their total agile leadership. From the researcher point of view, the majority of staff nurses had resistance

to change and preferred to work traditionally, lacked training and knowledge about how to become more agile and adopt new methods in performing work, lacked of organizational support system, and lacked awareness about how important that agile leadership behaviors can influence organization sustainability and employees career success and satisfaction

A similar finding was consistent with a study conducted **by Badran & Khaled, (2024)** who studied "Organizational Agility and Job Engagement among Staff Nurses" which revealed that half of the staff nurses had a low perception level regarding their total agile leadership.

Also, this study finding was inconsistent with a study conducted by **Mahmoud et al., (2022)** who studied "Organizational Agility and Teamwork as Perceived by Nursing Staff" which revealed more than half of the staff has a high level regarding their total agile leadership.

Concerning staff nurses perception regarding their workplace spirituality dimensions. The present study findings showed that round two thirds of staff nurses had low perception level regarding sense of community dimension. From the researcher point of view, this might be due to head nurse had a lack of support from upper management, highly workload as it can prevent engaging with community- building activities and may be due to poor communication skills from head nurse.

This study findings was inconsistent with the study conducted by **Khalaaf et al., (2022)** who studied "workplace spirituality and its influence on staff nurse's motivation and team effectiveness "which indicated that more than two thirds of studied staff nurses had moderate level of workplace spirituality.

Concerning staff nurses' perception regarding their total workplace spirituality levels. The present study findings showed that

More than half of staff nurses had a low perception level regarding total workplace spirituality. From researcher point of view, this may be due to intense workloads, unrealistic expectations, and lack of work-life balance can lead to burnout and reduce spiritual well-being.

In the same line findings, a study conducted **by Utami et al., (2021)** who studied" Relationship between Workplace Spirituality, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior", and found that the majority of nurses had low workplace spirituality level.

Also, another study which was consistent with the present result conducted by **Foster & Foster, (2019)** who study" The impact of workplace spirituality on work-based learners: Individual and organizational level perspectives", and indicated that the majority of the study subjects had a low spiritual workplace because there were no clear policies and procedures in place to support either management or employees.

In the light of correlation between total agile leadership levels, and total workplace spirituality among staff nurses. The current study findings presented that there was a highly statistically positive correlation between agile leadership levels, and workplace spirituality levels among staff nurses.

From researcher point of view, this might be due to agile behaviors enables nurses to respond swiftly to uncertainties, take on new responsibilities, and create opportunities for themselves and their organizations. Agile leadership leading to spirituality enhances organizational well-being, employee satisfaction, and overall success.

Similar study findings, a study conducted by **Ibrahim et al., (2022)** who study "Effect of Educational Program about Head Nurses' Agile Leadership on Staff Nurses' Workplace Spirituality and Job Reputation", and presented that there was a positive correlation between agile leadership levels, and workplace spirituality levels among staff nurses.

On the same line a study conducted by **Abdulla et al.,(2021)** who study" Agile Leadership Behaviors and Their Role in Promoting Workplace Spirituality", and

concluded that there was a positive correlation between agile leadership and workplace spirituality.

Conclusion:

There was a highly statistically positive correlation between agile leadership behaviors and workplace spirituality among staff nurses.

Recommendation:

In the light of results of this study, the following recommendations were suggested:
• Implement agile leadership and workplace spirituality workshops periodically for all nursing staff at all levels based on their job description as a refreshment course.
• Conduct regular meetings with nursing staff to discuss and solve their main problems that will enhance their workplace spirituality.
• Offer clear career advancement opportunities and professional development to give nurses a sense of purpose and growth within the organization.
• Continuously assess and improve organizational policies and practices based on the feedback and input from staff nurses.
For further studies:
• Agile leadership behaviors and its influence on job enjoyment.
• Assessing challenges and factors affecting agile leadership behaviors.
• Assess factors affecting workplace spirituality among staff nurses.

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