

The effect of digital leadership on Kuwaiti hospitals' employee performance**Mubarak Mohsen Eid Mohamed ALfares^{a*} and Marie Hassan Banikhaled^a**^a*The World Islamic Sciences & Education University (WISE), Jordan***CHRONICLE***Article history:*

Received: April 10, 2022

Received in revised format:

May 14 2022

Accepted: June 6, 2022

Available online:

June 6, 2022

*Keywords:**Digital Leadership**Employees' Performance**Innovation**Persuasion, and knowledge Kuwaiti Hospitals***ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to identify the Impact of Digital Leadership on Kuwaiti hospitals' employee performance by using a descriptive and analytical methodology. According to statistics provided to us by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health, the study population consists of administrators in Kuwaiti hospitals, numbering 12006. A simple random sample commensurate with the study's objectives was drawn, numbering 372 administrators to distribute the study questionnaire to them, and 277 valid questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. It was also found that there is a statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of digital leadership with its dimensions (innovation, persuasion, and knowledge) on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance. The researchers recommended that it is essential to strengthen the factors that lead to enhancing the concept of digital leadership under its essential elements in the work environment. as well as paying attention to the priorities of the impact of the digital leadership elements on the performance of employees in order to obtain a practical impact.

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1. Introduction

Organizations in the twenty-first century face great challenges, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Among these challenges are the rapid changes in the field of information and communication technology, the openness and liberalization of global markets, the growing role of the knowledge economy, the increase in competition, the movement of integration, and joint projects between organizations (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Wanasida et al., 2021). These challenges make it imperative for organizations, in general, to respond to them with a clear vision that enables them to anticipate the future to discover and seize opportunities, know threats and risks and avoid them, and this will only happen if they manage their resources well and enhance their capabilities and strength by adding a high value to their business that makes them at the forefront and always achieve victory (Mihardjo et al., 2019). In the past few decades, leadership scholars have been trying to monitor the effects of digitization processes by focusing on the role of leaders' ability to integrate digital transformation into their companies while at the same time inspiring employees to embrace change, which is often seen as a threat to the status quo. It is clear that organizations are changing due to technological improvements, and this requires a systematic use of digital leadership, which contributes to enhancing the benefit of developments resulting from digitization and the use of technology in various sectors. To ensure success, it is necessary to pay attention to the use of information technology in the target sector in the manner that is. It frames the process of using digital leadership correctly and thoughtfully to avoid any problems that may arise as a result of its application (Nambisan et al., 2017). The hospital sector in the State of Kuwait is of increasing importance that requires attention to digitization in various fields in light of the conditions of a global epidemic crisis, which highlighted the need to conduct this study to identify the impact of digital leadership on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance.

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This study is a new scientific addition in digitization by linking it to modern concepts of leadership such as digital leadership. This study also highlights information technology as an essential mediating variable, whose importance has increased in the various theoretical literature. The hospital sector in the State of Kuwait also stands out as one of the vital sectors in the Kuwaiti economy, highlighting the practical importance of this study in the successful application of digitization in this sector through digital leadership.

2. The proposed study

The problem of the study revolves around the presence of a great need for attention in raising the level of the employees' performance in the hospital sector, especially as we live under epidemiological conditions associated with the Corona pandemic. Especially, there are few studies related to the subject of the study and applied in the hospital sector in the State of Kuwait, which highlights the need to conduct recent studies on this subject to benefit from the employment of digital leadership in improving the employees' performance in Kuwaiti hospitals. So that, it became clear the need to pay attention to conducting this study in order to answer the following main question:

What is the impact of digital leadership on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance?

2.1 Study hypotheses

The study adopted the following main hypotheses:

Main hypothesis:

H: There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of digital leadership with its dimensions (innovation, persuasion, and knowledge) on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance.

From it emerge the following sub-hypotheses:

H₁: There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for innovation on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance

H₂: There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for persuasion on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance

H₃: There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of knowledge on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance.

2.2 Literature Review

The picture of the determinants of individual and collective behavior on its importance for interpreting organizational behavior is not complete without knowing the concept of administrative leadership. The administrative leader affects the course of things in any organization, whether small or large (Hawi et al., 2015). Furthermore, to reach countries or a group of countries, hospitals must change the medical view and focus on evaluating the level of performance provided by individuals and addressing weaknesses, if any (Ajarmah et al., 2017). Digital leadership is a leadership style of an organization that requires a basic competency in communications, computing, content, and communications in order to contribute to the development of society's knowledge, which is done through the better use of digital technology and is also an essential part of driving the transformation towards better digital capabilities of companies (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018). Digital leadership development consists of integrating digital culture and competence to use digital technology as part of a leadership style to generate value. Due to the digital nature where information is easily accessible globally and in real-time and transparency, leadership styles in the digital age have developed the following characteristics: (1) creativity, (2) deep knowledge, (3) strong communication and collaboration, and (4) sincere engagement through vision (Toduk & Gande, 2016). Zhu (2015) also found similar characteristics of digital leadership, indicating that the leadership style is (1) creative, (2) thoughtful, (3) global visionary and willing to collaborate, (4) curious leaders, and also (5) profound leaders.

For the study, the following dimensions of digital leadership were relied upon:

- **Innovation:** Organizational innovation is an essential factor in the success of organizations, achieving competitive advantage, and achieving a stable economy at the community level. All organizations today face a dynamic environment characterized by rapid technological changes, short-term product life cycles, and globalization, and such organizations need to be innovative and creative more than before. You can survive, compete, grow and lead. (Hammoud, 2018)
- **Persuasion:** A leader cannot succeed without practicing or mastering the art of persuasion, as researchers rarely agree on the best way to define leadership, but most of them agree that leaders are masters of the work (Panda, 2014).

• **Knowledge:** Knowledge is the most critical resource in creating wealth and achieving excellence and creativity in the light of the intellectual data in which many intellectual concepts have escalated, such as factoring, privatization, the information revolution, and the expansion of the various human societies (Al-Ta'i & Al-Hadrawari, 2019; Hashem & Suleiman, 2019).

2.3 Employee performance

All the organizations we deal with, whether public or private, evaluate the performance of the employees who work for them, and the evaluation may be formal or informal. In fact, a formal evaluation is the focus of our main concern in human resource management. Some call it the evaluation (or estimation and estimation) of efficiency appraisal. Measuring and evaluating performance is one of the important processes practiced by the human resources department. Through measurement and evaluation, the organization can judge the accuracy of the policies and programs it adopts, whether they are policies for recruitment, selection and appointment, or training, development and follow-up programs and policies for its human resources. The process can also be used, if the organization is good at accomplishing it, to attract newcomers and human resources with a good qualitative structure for the organization. The performance appraisal process may reflect the legal, social and ethical image of the organization. At the level of the workers themselves, the measurement and evaluation process is considered a means through which the working individual learns about the strengths and weaknesses of condemnation, especially when announcing to the working individual the results of performance evaluation by the organization. Through it, the individual can develop strengths and address weaknesses. (Al-Hiti, 2005, 195).

Perhaps it is essential - especially when we are in work supervision - to refer to the worker. When we study the performance of workers, we find that each one in his practical performance is not without one of the following four types:

1. High performance, high motive agent,
2. High performance, low motive agent,
3. A low-performance, low-motivational factor,
4. Low factor and Low performance (Al-Ta'i et al., 2006).

To measure the performance of tasks and duties, the organization can use a set of performance standards, which will be adopted in this study:

- 1- Absenteeism: A decrease in long-term absenteeism indicates higher morale of workers.
- 2- Communication with colleagues: by increasing the mixing of the management with the workers, it leads to an increase in the morale and motivation for them, thus leading to a positive reflection on the performance of the workers.
- 3- Accuracy at work: What is meant by it is the employee's high skill when performing his work under the established standards.
- 4- Self-confidence: It means the confidence of the human employee in his qualities and abilities and his evaluation of things (Karunanithy & Ponnampalam, 2013; Prasad, Vaidya, & Anil Kumar, 2015).

3. The proposed study

This study is a descriptive and analytical methodology to identify the impact of digital leadership on the employees' performance in Kuwaiti hospitals, where previous studies and references on the study variables were reviewed. According to statistics provided to us by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health, the study population consists of administrators in Kuwaiti hospitals, numbering 12006. A simple random sample commensurate with the study's objectives was drawn, numbering 372 administrators to distribute the study questionnaire to them, and 277 valid questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. The study questionnaire was designed by reviewing the theoretical literature on the subject of the study, and it was divided into two parts, the first of which is related to the demographic variables, and the second is related to the study variables.

The five-point Likert scale was used in the design of the study questionnaire as follows:

Strongly agree: (5). agree (4). Neutral: (3). Disagree: (2). Strongly disagree: (1)

3.1 Statistical analysis

Spss v26 was used to analyze the data collected from the sample. Following tests were used:

- 1)- Descriptive measures.
- 2)- Multiple regression: to test the main hypothesis.
- 3)- Linear regression: to test the Sub- hypothesis.

3.2 Sample Characteristics

By using Frequency and percentage, it was found that 83% of the sample is males. Also, it was found that the highest percent of the sample has got bachelor degree (56.3%), whereas 71.1% of the sample has experience for more than 15 years.

3.3 Descriptive Analysis

In order to determine the attitudes toward the questions, mean and standard deviation were used. The results are mentioned in Table 1 as follows,

Table 1
Descriptive Analysis for the study questions

	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. There is a great deal of interest in innovation at work in the hospital	3.96	.985
2. Innovation reduces overall hospital costs	3.65	1.203
3. Hospital staff are encouraged to come up with innovative business ideas	3.54	1.199
4. There is an interest in creating advanced systems at work to enhance employment opportunities	3.74	1.122
5. Work innovation enhances the competitiveness of Kuwaiti hospitals	3.81	1.031
Innovation	3.7394	.95269
6. Management is concerned with persuading employees of the ideas and data presented	3.09	1.346
7. Convincing employees of the presented ideas increases the chances of their successful implementation	3.05	1.420
8. There is a deliberate sequence of attempts to convince employees of innovative ideas	3.12	1.395
9. The accuracy of the information provided is taken into account to convince employees of ideas	3.20	1.381
10. It is necessary to diversify the means of persuading employees with innovative ideas	3.22	1.357
Persuasion	3.1357	1.19458
11. There is interest in diversifying the methods of obtaining knowledge in the hospital	3.23	1.221
12. There is an interest in increasing the sources of obtaining the required knowledge	3.36	1.233
13. There is an emphasis on obtaining specialized knowledge in hospital work	4.05	1.154
14. Management is interested in facilitating the exchange of acquired knowledge among employees	4.12	1.155
15. Management is concerned with training employees on ways to obtain the necessary knowledge at work.	3.87	1.208
Knowledge	3.7264	.92989
16. The hospital staff is very careful	4.39	1.039
17. There is cooperation between hospital staff to get the work done	3.18	1.187
18. There is an improvement in the performance of hospital staff	3.85	1.098
19. There is a decrease in error rates at work	3.62	1.223
20. There is a decrease in the absence rates in the hospital	3.23	1.253
Employee Performance	3.6556	.91395

Above table shows that the grand mean for each variable reflects positive direction from the sample point of view because it is greater than neutral (3). Also, the table shows that the mean mean for each variable reflects positive direction from the sample point of view because it is greater than neutral (3).

It is found that “There is a great deal of interest in innovation at work in the hospital” has the highest mean in the “Innovation” variable. As well as, “It is necessary to diversify the means of persuading employees with innovative ideas” has the highest mean in the “Persuasion” variable. And, “Management is interested in facilitating the exchange of acquired knowledge among employees” has the highest mean in the “Knowledge” variable. Finally, it is found that “The hospital staff is very careful” has the highest mean in the “Employee Performance” variable.

3.4 Reliability test

Cronbach Alpha is used to test the consistency of the questionnaire. Alpha value = 0.942 reflects high level of reliability since it is greater than 0.60.

3.5 Normality test

The researcher extracted the values of skewness and kurtosis to test the extent to which the data follow the normal distribution. The results in the following table indicate that the variable values are close to zero, which indicates that the data follow the normal distribution (Gujarati & Porter, 2009).

Table 2
Normality Test

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Innovation	277	-.349	.146	-.461	.292
Persuasion	277	-.003	.146	-.019	.292
Knowledge	277	-.807	.146	.507	.292
Performance	277	-.750	.146	.468	.292
Valid N (listwise)	277				

3.6 Hypothesis testing

We first examine the main hypothesis of the survey. Table 3 presents details of testing the main hypothesis of this survey.

Table 3
The main hypothesis of the survey

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.752 ^a	0.565	0.56	0.60622		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	130.214	3	43.405	118.105	.000 ^b
	Residual	100.33	273	0.368		
	Total	230.544	276			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.884	0.173		5.1	0
	innovation	0.03	0.061	0.031	0.486	0.627
	persuasion	-0.13	0.052	-0.169	-2.513	0.013
	knowledge	0.823	0.054	0.837	15.114	0

Multiple Regression tests are used to test the mentioned hypothesis. The above table shows that $F = 118.105$ is significant at 0.05 level. Also, $r = 0.752$ reflects high levels of correlation and the independent variables explain 56.5% of the variance in the dependent variable. So that, there is a statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of digital leadership with its dimensions (innovation, persuasion, and knowledge) on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance.

Form the coefficient table we concluded that:

- We accept H1 "There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for innovation on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance" since t value = 0.486 is not significant at 0.05 level.
- We reject H2 "There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for persuasion on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance" since t value = -2.513 is significant at 0.05 level.
- We reject H3 "There is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of knowledge on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance" since t value = 15.114 is significant at 0.05 level.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

This study aimed to identify the Impact of Digital Leadership on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance.

The study was applied to administrators in Kuwaiti hospitals, and it was found through this study that employees in Kuwait hospitals have a high level of awareness of the importance of applying digital leadership in them, as the dimension of innovation is the most applied dimension, while the dimension of persuasion is the least applied.

It was also found that there is a statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of digital leadership with its dimensions (innovation, persuasion, and knowledge) on Kuwaiti hospitals' employees' performance. As well as, there is no statistically significant impact at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for innovation on Kuwaiti hospitals. It was also found that the dimension of knowledge is the most influential dimension on the performance of workers in Kuwait hospitals.

These findings confirm the great importance of digital leadership, which is consistent with its findings (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018; Toduk & Gande, 2016; Zhu, 2015). It also emphasizes the importance of knowledge as an important component of digital leadership, which contributes to improving the performance level of employees

The following is a presentation of the main recommendations of the study:

- Strengthening the factors that lead to enhancing the concept of digital leadership according to its essential elements in the work environment.
- It is necessary to pay attention to the priorities of the impact of the digital leadership elements on employees' performance to obtain an effective impact. Therefore, the priorities of the dimensions of digital leadership should be arranged to achieve hospitals' goals.
- It is necessary to develop the awareness of hospital staff about digital leadership and increase their knowledge of its impact on improving their performance.
- Training hospital staff on the art of obtaining knowledge and using it to raise their performance level,

- Facilitate the process of sharing acquired knowledge among employees.

Conducting future studies on the subject of study that are applied in other vital sectors such as the telecommunications sector.

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