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**"The Impact of Digital Leadership on Organizational Agility in Emerging
Markets: Evidence from the GCC Region"**

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of digital leadership on organizational agility in emerging markets, focusing specifically on the GCC region. In light of accelerating technological change and increasing market uncertainty, the research aims to assess how leadership characterized by digital vision, innovation support, and adaptability contributes to building agile organizations capable of responding effectively to change. A quantitative research design was employed to address this objective. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to managerial-level employees in both public and private sector organizations across the GCC. A total of 46 valid responses were obtained and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The questionnaire covered demographic information, perceptions of digital leadership, and indicators of organizational agility, with responses measured on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics were used to examine general trends, and one-way ANOVA was conducted to identify significant differences in perceptions between sectors. The results revealed generally high levels of perceived digital leadership and organizational agility. However, statistically significant differences were found in certain dimensions, such as leadership adaptability and organizational responsiveness to environmental changes, with private sector organizations demonstrating higher agility in some areas.

The study concludes that digital leadership is a critical driver of organizational agility, though its impact varies by sector. It recommends strengthening digital leadership capabilities, particularly within public organizations, through targeted training and digital transformation initiatives. Future research is encouraged to apply correlation and regression analysis to deepen understanding of the causal relationship and to expand the sample to enhance generalizability across different industries and regions.

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Introduction

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and economic shifts, organizations operating in emerging markets face a significant challenge: how to ensure that traditional management paradigms remain competitive. This necessitates a continuous review and adaptation of their administrative approaches to guarantee their sustainability and success in a constantly evolving environment (Hussein et al, 2024).

Leadership's Pivotal Role in GCC: Building Adaptability and Long-Term Stability

Within the context of these emerging markets, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region stands out as a unique benchmark. Driven by ambitious national visions, it's rapidly shaping regulations and accelerating digital transformations. In such a dynamic environment, leadership plays a pivotal role in designing organizational adaptability and ensuring long-term stability. Effective leadership here isn't merely about direction; it's the driving force behind building institutional resilience and the capacity to withstand and thrive amidst rapid change. (Ramadan, Jakham et al., 2023).

Digital Leadership and Organizational Agility: Driving Forces of Transformation in the Digital Economy

Digital leadership has emerged as a pivotal force driving organizational change in the digital age. This leadership style transcends mere technical expertise; it demands a clear digital vision that fosters innovation, enables cross-functional collaboration, and embeds digital thinking deep within the organizational culture. This type of leadership becomes especially crucial in an environment characterized by pervasive uncertainty, complexity, and technological disruption (Fuchridian, Ramli et al., 2024).

Furthermore, organizational agility, the ability of an organization to understand and respond to environmental changes—has become an indispensable strategic imperative quickly and effectively. Agile organizations are better positioned to seize market opportunities, mitigate risks, and sustain superior performance amidst dynamic conditions. In the GCC, where digitization initiatives are rapidly reshaping the economic and operational landscape, agility is no longer just a competitive advantage, but a fundamental necessity. (Iskandar, Sobandi et al, 2024).

Bridging the Research Gap: Digital Leadership and Organizational Agility in the GCC

Despite the widespread theoretical recognition of the importance of both digital leadership and organizational agility, empirical research exploring their relationship in emerging markets remains limited, especially within the GCC context. Most existing studies are rooted in developed economies and large multinational corporations, often overlooking the unique institutional, cultural, and economic factors that influence leadership practices and organizational behavior in the Gulf region. This knowledge gap underscores the urgent need for more in-depth research to bridge this divide (Cui, 2024).

Although advance research has established leadership as a determinant for agility, the mechanisms that this effect has not yet been understood. In this connection, the employee capacity - has been proposed as a potential arbitration factor, which includes the skills, knowledge and adaptability of the work. Employed personnel are not only able to perform strategic instructions, but are also more responsible for changes, thus playing an important role in translating digital management into organizational agility. However, some studies have tested this mediation effect in the context of emerging markets.

Research problem

Digital Leadership and Organizational Agility in the GCC In an era of accelerating digital transformations, organizations within emerging markets—particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region—are confronting exceptional challenges and opportunities. Traditional leadership styles often prove insufficient to navigate the complexity and speed of changes driven by digital technologies. Here, digital leadership emerges as a strategic capability with the potential to significantly enhance organizational agility—the capacity of an enterprise to respond swiftly and effectively to market shifts and disruptions.

Despite growing global interest in digital leadership, there remains a conspicuous gap in empirical research that elucidates its specific impact on organizational agility within the unique context of GCC countries. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining how digital leadership practices influence the agility of organizations operating in the dynamic and culturally distinct environment of the Gulf region.

Research Significance

This research is important for many reasons. First, it takes up a time and relevant topic, as digital management becomes an important driver for organizational success in the digital age. Second, it focuses on the GCC region - a region that undergoes rapid digital changes - where

limited empirical research is still how leadership styles are compatible with this change. Third, the study contributes to both educational knowledge and practical applications that provide insight that can guide leaders in increasing organizational agility through effective digital leadership practice.

Research objectives

- To conceptualize and delineate the dimensions of digital leadership within organizations in the GCC region.
- To empirically analyze the relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility.
- To identify the most impactful dimensions of digital leadership on organizational agility within the GCC context.
- To provide evidence-based practical recommendations for managers to enhance organizational agility through effective digital leadership strategies.

Main Research Question

How does digital leadership affect organizational agility in emerging markets, especially when it comes to the GCC sector?

Sub-Questions

1. What are the most important dimensions of digital management of organizational leaders in GCC?
2. To what extent does digital management increase the responsibility and adaptability of GCC organizations?
3. What aspects of digital management (eg digital vision, innovation support, digital literacy) are the most well associated with organizational agility?
4. Are there significant differences in the effect of digital leadership on agility between public and private sector organizations in GCC?

Research Hypothesis

1. GCC organizations have a statistically important positive connection between digital leadership and organizational flexibility.
2. The dimension of the digital vision of leadership positively affects organizational flexibility.
3. Support for the innovation of digital leaders is significantly associated with high levels of organizational agility.

4. There are statistically significant differences in the influence of digital leadership on organizational agility between public and private sector organizations.

Literature Review

Study: Albannai, Raziq, Malik, & Abrar, (2024), “Digital leadership and its impact on agility, innovation and resilience: a qualitative study of the UAE media industry”.

This study aimed to clarify the role of digital leadership in fostering organizational agility, innovation, and resilience within the UAE media industry and sought to explore how digital leaders cultivate environments conducive to continuous learning and technological integration. The independent variable is digital leadership, with dimensions including strategic vision, technological adoption, and change management, while the dependent variables are organizational agility, innovation, and resilience, with dimensions such as adaptability, creativity, and recovery capacity. The study used a qualitative method, employing interviews and thematic analysis. The study concluded that digital leadership significantly enhances agility, innovation, and resilience by promoting a culture of change and leveraging technology effectively. The study recommended fostering continuous learning and strengthening leadership strategies to support technological integration (Albannai et al., 2024).

Study: Ramadan et al, (2023), “Toward digital transformation and business model innovation: The nexus between leadership, organizational agility, and knowledge transfer”.

This study aimed to clarify the interplay between digital leadership, organizational agility, and knowledge transfer in driving digital transformation and business model innovation and sought to understand how these factors contribute to competitive advantage. The independent variable is digital leadership, with dimensions such as strategic technology use and change facilitation, while the dependent variables are digital transformation and business model innovation, with dimensions including process digitization and new value creation. The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and case studies. The study concluded that digital leadership drives digital transformation by fostering agility and knowledge transfer, enabling innovative business models. The study recommended enhancing leadership capabilities to leverage technology and promote knowledge-sharing cultures (Ramadan et al., 2023).

Study: Ijeoma, Ononiwu, Onwuzulike, & Shitu, K. (2024), “The role of digital business transformation in enhancing organizational agility”.

This study aimed to clarify the impact of digital business transformation on organizational agility and sought to examine how technologies like AI, IoT, and blockchain facilitate real-time decision-making and innovation. The independent variable is digital business transformation, with dimensions including technology integration and process optimization, while the dependent variable is organizational agility, with dimensions such as responsiveness and adaptability. The study used a quantitative method, employing surveys and statistical analysis. The study concluded that digital transformation significantly enhances agility by enabling faster decision-making and fostering innovation. The study recommended organizations invest in advanced technologies and develop strategies to integrate them effectively.

Study: Iskandar, Sobandi, & Santoso, (2024), “Digital Leadership for Organizational Flexibility: Bibliometric Analysis to Identify Research Trends”.

This study aimed to clarify the role of digital leadership in promoting organizational flexibility within the context of Society 5.0 and sought to identify research trends through a bibliometric analysis. The independent variable is digital leadership, with dimensions including technological vision and innovation promotion, while the dependent variable is organizational flexibility, with dimensions such as adaptability and sustainable practices. The study used a bibliometric analysis method, analyzing publication trends and citation networks. The study concluded that digital leadership is a significant driver of organizational flexibility, enhancing technology-driven progress and sustainable outcomes. The study recommended further research to explore practical applications of digital leadership in diverse contexts.

Study: Cui, J. (2024), “Does digital strategy, organizational agility, digital leadership promote DT? A study of digital strategy, organizational agility, digital leadership affects corporate DT in Chinese technological firms”?

This study aimed to clarify the influence of digital strategy, organizational agility, and digital leadership on digital transformation in Chinese technology firms and sought to explore their combined impact on corporate performance. The independent variables are digital strategy, organizational agility, and digital leadership, with dimensions including strategic alignment, responsiveness, and technological innovation, while the dependent variable is digital transformation, with dimensions such as process digitization and business model innovation. The study used a quantitative method, employing structural equation modeling. The study concluded that digital leadership, paired with agility and strategy, significantly promotes digital

transformation in technology firms. The study recommended strengthening leadership training and strategic alignment to enhance digital transformation.

Study: Yamin, & Murwaningsari, (2023), “Exploring the Interplay Between Digital Technology, Transformational Leadership and Agility for Enhancing Organisational Performance”.

This study aimed to clarify the relationships between digital technology, transformational leadership, and agility in enhancing organizational performance and sought to bridge existing research gaps by exploring their interplay in the context of Indonesia’s dynamic economy. The independent variables are digital technology, with dimensions including adoption and integration, and transformational leadership, with dimensions such as inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, while the dependent variables are organizational agility, with dimensions like responsiveness and adaptability, and organizational performance, with dimensions including efficiency and competitiveness. The study used a quantitative method, employing structural equation modeling with Partial Least Squares and collecting data through questionnaires from 207 respondents in Indonesia from August 2022 to November 2022. The study concluded that digital technology and transformational leadership positively influence agility and organizational performance, with agility mediating the relationship between digital technology, transformational leadership, and organizational performance, and digital technology mediating the relationship between transformational leadership and both agility and performance. The study recommended that leaders invest in digital technology and foster transformational leadership to enhance organizational agility and competitiveness and emphasized increasing technology-related subjects in academic curricula to improve understanding of digitalization’s role.

Study: Ly, B. (2023), “The Interplay of Digital Transformational Leadership, Organizational Agility, and Digital Transformation”.

This study aimed to clarify the influence of digital transformational leadership on digital transformation through the mediating role of organizational agility and sought to test a model examining how these factors interact within the context of new digitally enabled institutional infrastructures. The independent variable is digital transformational leadership, with dimensions including strategic vision and digital enablement, while the dependent variable is digital transformation, with dimensions such as process digitization and institutional change, and organizational agility, with dimensions like responsiveness and adaptability, serves as the

mediating variable. The study used a quantitative method, employing a questionnaire approach to collect data from 388 respondents and analyzing it through statistical modeling. The study concluded that digital transformational leadership significantly influences digital transformation, with organizational agility mediating this relationship, highlighting the critical role of aligning organizational models and evolving agility for successful digital transformation. The study recommended that leaders in the public sector prioritize digital transformational leadership and enhance organizational agility to support effective digital transformation.

Study: Kumar, R. (2022), “Mastering digital transformation: The nexus between leadership, agility, and digital strategy”.

This study aimed to clarify the influence of digital transformational leadership and organizational agility on digital transformation, with digital strategy as a moderating factor, and sought to develop and test a model grounded in new institutional theory to understand these relationships. The independent variable is digital transformational leadership, with dimensions including visionary leadership and digital enablement, while the dependent variable is digital transformation, with dimensions such as process digitization and organizational change, and organizational agility, with dimensions like adaptability and responsiveness, serves as a mediating variable. The study used a quantitative method, employing statistical modeling to test hypotheses. The study concluded that digital transformational leadership and organizational agility positively influence digital transformation, with digital transformational leadership also enhancing organizational agility, and organizational agility mediating the relationship between digital transformational leadership and digital transformation; additionally, digital strategy moderates these relationships. The study recommended that public sector leaders foster digital transformational leadership and promote organizational agility to enhance digital transformation, emphasizing the strategic alignment of digital initiatives.

Methodology

A quantitative research approach was adopted to examine the impact of digital leadership on organizational agility in emerging markets, with particular emphasis on the GCC region. This method was selected due to its effectiveness in objectively measuring variables and enabling statistically valid comparisons. The study targeted management-level employees across both public and private sector organizations within the GCC. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents with relevant experience in digital transformation and

organizational operations, ensuring that the sample was composed of individuals capable of providing informed responses.

Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire developed based on an extensive review of previous literature. The questionnaire was designed to assess three main components: demographic characteristics, aspects of digital leadership, and dimensions of organizational agility. It included a total of 11 items—five statements related to digital leadership and six related to organizational agility—measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To ensure the validity and clarity of the instrument, expert reviews were solicited, and a pilot test was conducted to refine the wording and structure of the items. The reliability of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results confirmed an acceptable level of internal consistency.

Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize the demographic features of the respondents and to identify general patterns in their responses. In order to explore statistically significant differences in perceptions of digital leadership and organizational agility across various demographic groups, the study employed the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as the primary inferential statistical technique. This method was chosen due to its appropriateness for comparing mean differences among more than two independent groups. By applying ANOVA, the study aimed to determine whether factors such as years of experience, education level, or organizational sector had a significant influence on how digital leadership and organizational agility were perceived and practiced within GCC institutions.

Theoretical Framework of study

This study is based in two main theoretical approaches: Digital leadership theory and dynamic capacity theory. These frameworks provide a solid base to understand how digital leadership helps to increase organizational agility, especially in the dynamic and developed environment in emerging markets such as the GCC sector.

Digital management theory emphasizes the leaders in driving digital changes in organizations Shahzad, M.U. (2024). This creates traditional leadership models - especially transformative management - by including digital competences, technical vision and the ability to promote innovation in a digital context (Hussein et al, 2024). Digital leaders are expected to create a compelling digital vision and communicate, support the culture of innovation and

experiment and lead their outfits through complex digital infections (Li, Z et al, 2024). Their influence is beyond using technology; This involves the transformation of organizational structures, abilities and mindset to bloom in the digital age (Malik et al, 2024).

On the other hand, the concept of organizational agility is designed within the principle of dynamic abilities, which assumes that an organization's ability to adapt, integrate and configure an organization is again important to maintain a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing environment (Cui, J. 2024). According to this theory, organizational flexibility reflects the ability to understand market changes, confiscate opportunities and respond quickly and effectively to disorders. This includes flexibility in decision-making, speed in execution and continuous learning-all is influenced by management (Nurniawan & Amalia,2025).

By integrating these two theoretical approaches, the study concepts digital leadership as an important promoter of organizational agility (Ly, 2023). It is proposed that leaders who demonstrate digital leadership behavior - such as promoting digital learning, encouraging innovation, maintaining a clear digital vision and taking advantage of technology to increase communication - be more likely to promote agile organizations capable of navigating uncertainty and change (Karafakioglu & Afacan Fındıklı,2024).

Thus, theoretical disposition of digital leadership as a variable depending on independent variables and organizational agility, with the perception that effective digital leadership practice makes a positive contribution to improving an organization's agility. This structure emphasizes the research model and guides the development of hypothesis and measurement structures throughout the study.

Study Limitations

- **Geographical Scope:** This study's focus solely on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region limits the generalizability of findings to other emerging markets or global contexts.
- **Methodological Approach:** The exclusive use of a quantitative research approach may not fully capture the nuanced, in-depth understanding that a qualitative or mixed-methods approach could provide regarding the complex dynamics between digital leadership and organizational agility.

- **Sampling Bias:** The study's reliance on management-level employees as the sole population source might restrict the generalizability of results to other employee levels within the organizations.
- **Data Collection Instrument:** The use of self-reported data via questionnaires introduces the potential for response bias, such as social desirability bias or subjective interpretations, which could affect the objectivity of the findings.

Research Instruments

- **Primary Data Collection Tool:** A structured questionnaire instrument to gather data.
- **Questionnaire Structure:** The questionnaire was divided into three sections:
 - **Demographic Information:** To collect background details of the participants.
 - **Digital Leadership Items:** To measure aspects related to digital leadership.
 - **Organizational Agility Items:** To assess various facets of organizational agility.
- **Scale and Items:** The instrument comprised a total of 11 statements (five for digital leadership and six for organizational agility), measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Statistical Analysis of the Study Data

This section of the research presents and analyzes the data collected from participants using the carefully designed questionnaire instrument. The data was analyzed statistically using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), with the aim of reaching accurate quantitative conclusions that help explain the relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility in the context of emerging markets, particularly in the GCC region.

The statistical analysis in this chapter is structured in successive stages, beginning with the analysis of demographic data of the study sample. This provides a clear overview of participants' characteristics, including gender, age, sector (public/private), educational level, job title, and years of experience. This analysis is essential for understanding the general profile of respondents and for interpreting the study results considering these characteristics.

Following the demographic analysis, the focus shifts to a descriptive examination of the levels of digital leadership and organizational agility as measured by the questionnaire items. This is done using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations.

To test the research hypotheses regarding statistically significant differences in the perception of digital leadership and organizational agility among different groups (such as sector, years of experience, or job position) One-Way ANOVA were applied. These tests helped identify whether there are meaningful differences between groups, which contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital leadership influences organizational practices in various contexts.

The results are presented in a clear scientific manner, supported by tables and relevant statistical values, effectively linking the quantitative analysis to the theoretical hypotheses proposed in the study.

1. Demographic Data Analysis

Section 1: Demographic Information

1.Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	30	65.2	65.2	65.2
	Female	16	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	
2.Age Group		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Under 30	5	10.9	10.9	10.9
	30–39	29	63.0	63.0	73.9
	40–49	11	23.9	23.9	97.8
	50 and above	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	
3.Sector		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Public	37	80.4	80.4	80.4
	Private	9	19.6	19.6	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	
4.Years of Experience		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Less than 5 years	4	8.7	8.7	8.7
	5–10 years	16	34.8	34.8	43.5

	More than 10 years	26	56.5	56.5	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	
5.Managerial Level		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Top Management	4	8.7	8.7	8.7
	Middle Management	20	43.5	43.5	52.2
	Supervisory Level	22	47.8	47.8	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

To establish a comprehensive understanding of the study sample, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined using descriptive statistics. A total of 46 valid responses were collected from individuals occupying managerial positions across organizations within the GCC region.

Regarding gender, the sample was predominantly male, with 65.2% (n = 30) identifying as male and 34.8% (n = 16) as female. This distribution indicates a gender imbalance within managerial roles among the participating organizations, potentially reflecting broader workforce trends in the region.

The age distribution revealed that the majority of respondents fell within the 30–39 age group, accounting for 63.0% (n = 29) of the total sample. This was followed by 23.9% (n = 11) in the 40–49 age group, while 10.9% (n = 5) were under the age of 30. Only 2.2% (n = 1) were aged 50 years and above. These results suggest that the study primarily captured perspectives from mid-career professionals, who are likely to be actively engaged in organizational decision-making and digital initiatives.

With respect to the sector of employment, 80.4% of respondents (n = 37) were employed in public sector organizations, whereas 19.6% (n = 9) worked in the private sector. This substantial representation of public institutions aligns with the governmental emphasis on digital transformation initiatives across the GCC and offers valuable insights into public-sector leadership practices.

Analysis of professional experience indicates that a significant proportion of respondents (56.5%, n = 26) had more than 10 years of experience, while 34.8% (n = 16) reported 5 to 10 years of experience, and 8.7% (n = 4) had less than 5 years. This distribution implies that the sample predominantly consists of experienced professionals with sufficient exposure to organizational change and leadership dynamics.

Finally, concerning managerial level, 47.8% (n = 22) held supervisory positions, 43.5% (n = 20) were in middle management, and only 8.7% (n = 4) occupied top management roles. This suggests that the data primarily reflects views from operational and mid-level management, who are often directly involved in the implementation of digital leadership strategies and organizational agility initiatives.

Overall, the demographic profile of the respondents provides a robust and contextually relevant foundation for interpreting the subsequent findings of the study, particularly in relation to the adoption of digital leadership practices and their influence on organizational agility within the GCC context.

2. Analysis of survey themes

❖ Descriptive Analysis of Digital Leadership

To assess the perceived level of digital leadership within organizations across the GCC region, five key items were analyzed. Respondents were asked to rate each statement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The analysis reveals insightful trends regarding how leadership supports digital transformation, technological integration, and adaptability in rapidly evolving digital environments.

◇ Section 2: Digital Leadership					
1.The leader has a clear vision for digital transformation in the organization.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	4	8.7	8.7	10.9
	Neutral	1	2.2	2.2	13.0
	Agree	25	54.3	54.3	67.4
	Strongly Agree	15	32.6	32.6	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	
2.The leader encourages the		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

use of technology to improve performance.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	4.3
	Agree	26	56.5	56.5	60.9
	Strongly Agree	18	39.1	39.1	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

3. the leader possesses digital skills that aid effective decision-making.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Neutral	9	19.6	19.6	23.9
	Agree	20	43.5	43.5	67.4
	Strongly Agree	15	32.6	32.6	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

4.The leader promotes a culture of continuous digital learning.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	3	6.5	6.5	6.5
	Neutral	2	4.3	4.3	10.9
	Agree	27	58.7	58.7	69.6
	Strongly Agree	14	30.4	30.4	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

5.The leader adapts quickly to rapid digital changes.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Neutral	6	13.0	13.0	17.4
	Agree	22	47.8	47.8	65.2
	Strongly Agree	16	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

The first item examined whether leaders have a clear vision for digital transformation within their organizations. Many respondents either agreed (54.3%) or strongly agreed (32.6%), totaling 86.9%, while only 10.9% expressed disagreement to varying degrees. This suggests that most organizational leaders are seen as having a well-articulated and strategic digital direction.

In the second item, participants evaluated whether leaders encourage the use of technology to enhance performance. A combined 95.6% of respondents agreed (56.5%) or strongly agreed

(39.1%), while only 4.3% expressed any level of disagreement. These results indicate a strong organizational culture of promoting digital tools for operational efficiency.

The third statement assessed whether leaders possess the digital skills necessary for effective decision-making. A substantial 76.1% of the participants agreed (43.5%) or strongly agreed (32.6%), while 19.6% remained neutral and 4.3% disagreed. These findings imply a generally positive perception of leaders' technical competence, although a notable minority appear uncertain.

Regarding the fourth item, which addressed leaders' promotion of a culture of continuous digital learning, 58.7% agreed and 30.4% strongly agreed. A small percentage (6.5%) disagreed, and 4.3% remained neutral. This indicates that most leaders are viewed as supportive of ongoing digital education and knowledge-sharing within their organizations.

The final item focused on whether leaders adapt quickly to rapid digital changes. Here, 47.8% agreed and 34.8% strongly agreed, suggesting that over 82.6% of respondents believe their leaders are agile and responsive to technological shifts. However, 13% of participants were neutral, and 4.3% disagreed, highlighting a minor yet relevant portion of respondents who perceive gaps in leadership adaptability.

In summary, the descriptive results suggest that digital leadership within the surveyed organizations is generally strong, particularly in the areas of strategic vision, technological support, and adaptability. However, there remains room for improvement in fostering digital skill development and ensuring widespread confidence in leaders' technical capabilities.

❖ Descriptive Analysis of Organizational Agility

To evaluate the level of organizational agility within the participating institutions, six items were analyzed, each rated by respondents on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The responses provide valuable insights into how organizations operating in the GCC region perceive their ability to respond to internal and external change in a dynamic business environment.

◇ Section 3: Organizational Agility					
1.The organization adapts quickly to changes in the business environment.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	6.5
	Neutral	4	8.7	8.7	15.2
	Agree	27	58.7	58.7	73.9
	Strongly Agree	12	26.1	26.1	100

	Total	46	100	100	
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		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2.The organization can reprioritize its goals and strategies when needed.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	5	10.9	10.9	13.0
	Neutral	4	8.7	8.7	21.7
	Agree	27	58.7	58.7	80.4
	Strongly Agree	9	19.6	19.6	100
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
3.New technologies are effectively adopted within the organization.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	3	6.5	6.5	8.7
	Neutral	13	28.3	28.3	37.0
	Agree	21	45.7	45.7	82.6
	Strongly Agree	8	17.4	17.4	100
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
4.Employees are flexible in responding to organizational changes.	Strongly Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Disagree	3	6.5	6.5	10.9
	Neutral	7	15.2	15.2	26.1
	Agree	23	50.0	50.0	76.1
	Strongly Agree	11	23.9	23.9	100
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
5.The organization responds promptly to customer needs.	Strongly Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Disagree	4	8.7	8.7	13.0
	Neutral	3	6.5	6.5	19.6
	Agree	24	52.2	52.2	71.7
	Strongly Agree	13	28.3	28.3	100
	Total	46	100	100	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
6.Decisions are made quickly in response to	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2

changing conditions.	Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	4.3
	Neutral	8	17.4	17.4	21.7
	Agree	25	54.3	54.3	76.1
	Strongly Agree	11	23.9	23.9	100
	Total	46	100	100	

The first item assessed whether the organization adapts quickly to changes in the business environment. A significant majority of respondents either agreed (58.7%) or strongly agreed (26.1%), accounting for 84.8% of the sample. Only a small proportion (6.5%) disagreed, indicating a strong perception of organizational adaptability among the respondents.

The second item focused on the ability of organizations to reprioritize goals and strategies when needed. Here, 58.7% of respondents agreed and 19.6% strongly agreed, while 10.9% disagreed. These findings suggest that most organizations are seen as strategically flexible, though a minor segment of respondents questioned this capability.

In the third item, respondents evaluated how effectively new technologies are adopted within their organizations. While 45.7% agreed and 17.4% strongly agreed, a notable 28.3% remained neutral, and 8.7% expressed disagreement. These results may indicate uneven implementation of new technologies or varied exposure across departments or sectors.

The fourth item measured the flexibility of employees in responding to organizational change. Half of the respondents agreed (50.0%) and nearly a quarter (23.9%) strongly agreed, while 15.2% were neutral and 10.8% expressed disagreement. This suggests a generally positive view of workforce adaptability, although some respondents may perceive resistance or slow adaptation among staff members.

The fifth item assessed the extent to which the organization responds promptly to customer needs. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, with 52.2% agreeing and 28.3% strongly agreeing. Only 13% expressed disagreement, underscoring the importance placed on responsiveness as a key dimension of agility in customer-oriented environments.

Finally, the sixth item examined whether decisions are made quickly in response to changing conditions. A majority of respondents either agreed (54.3%) or strongly agreed (23.9%), while 17.4% remained neutral and a marginal 4.3% disagreed. These results reinforce the perception that organizational decision-making processes are generally efficient and responsive to external changes.

In conclusion, the descriptive results highlight that organizations in the GCC region are widely perceived to exhibit high levels of agility, particularly in terms of adaptability, strategic reprioritization, responsiveness to customers, and timely decision-making. However, areas such as technology adoption and employee flexibility still show moderate variation in perceptions, indicating potential areas for improvement.

❖ Descriptive Statistics for Digital Leadership

To gain a deeper understanding of how respondents perceive digital leadership within their organizations, descriptive statistics were computed for each item under this construct. The analysis included mean scores and standard deviations based on a sample of 46 respondents.

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.The leader has a clear vision for digital transformation in the organization.	46	1.00	5.00	4.0652	.95224
2.The leader encourages the use of technology to improve performance.	46	1.00	5.00	4.2826	.77926
3. the leader possesses digital skills that aid effective decision-making.	46	2.00	5.00	4.0435	.84213
4.The leader promotes a culture of continuous digital learning.	46	2.00	5.00	4.1304	.77771
5.The leader adapts quickly to rapid digital changes.	46	2.00	5.00	4.1304	.80578
Valid N (listwise)	46				

The item “The leader encourages the use of technology to improve performance” received the highest mean score ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.78$), indicating a strong consensus that organizational leaders actively promote technological tools to enhance productivity and efficiency.

The items “The leader promotes a culture of continuous digital learning” and “The leader adapts quickly to rapid digital changes” both shared an identical mean value of 4.13, with standard deviations of 0.78 and 0.81, respectively. These results suggest a generally favorable perception of leaders’ adaptability and commitment to fostering a learning-oriented digital environment.

The statement “The leader possesses digital skills that aid effective decision-making” also recorded a strong mean score of 4.04 (SD = 0.84), indicating that respondents largely view their leaders as technically competent in making informed decisions based on digital insights.

Lastly, the item “The leader has a clear vision for digital transformation in the organization” had a mean of 4.07 (SD = 0.95), which, while slightly lower than the other items, still reflects a generally positive view of strategic digital leadership within the organizations surveyed.

In summary, the results demonstrate consistently high perceptions of digital leadership across all dimensions, with the strongest agreement found in leaders' encouragement of technological integration and their responsiveness to change. The relatively low standard deviations across most items further suggest a high level of agreement among respondents.

❖ Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Agility

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each item representing the construct of organizational agility to assess how employees perceive the responsiveness and adaptability of their organizations. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, and the results reflect a generally favorable outlook on organizational agility, although with slightly more variability than the digital leadership dimension.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.The organization adapts quickly to changes in the business environment.	46	1.00	5.00	4.0217	.85607
2.The organization can reprioritize its goals and strategies when needed.	46	1.00	5.00	3.8261	.94996
3.New technologies are effectively adopted within the organization.	46	1.00	5.00	3.6957	.91578
4.Employees are flexible in responding to organizational changes.	46	1.00	5.00	3.8261	1.01772
5.The organization responds promptly to customer needs.	46	1.00	5.00	3.9130	1.05042
6.Decisions are made quickly in response to changing conditions.	46	1.00	5.00	3.9565	.84213

The statement “The organization adapts quickly to changes in the business environment” achieved the highest mean score of 4.02 (SD = 0.86), indicating that respondents largely perceive their organizations as responsive and adaptable in volatile market conditions.

The item “Decisions are made quickly in response to changing conditions” followed closely with a mean of 3.96 (SD = 0.84), highlighting that swift decision-making is considered a core capability in many of the participating organizations.

Similarly, the statement “The organization responds promptly to customer needs” received a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 1.05), further supporting the view that customer-centric responsiveness is a notable strength among the surveyed institutions.

The items “The organization can reprioritize its goals and strategies when needed” and “Employees are flexible in responding to organizational changes” both recorded an equal mean of 3.83, albeit with slightly higher standard deviations (0.95 and 1.02, respectively). These results suggest that while many respondents view their organizations as strategically agile, there remains some variation in this perception, possibly due to differences in internal structures or leadership styles.

Lastly, the item “New technologies are effectively adopted within the organization” yielded the lowest mean score of 3.70 (SD = 0.92). This may point to a potential challenge or slower pace of digital integration across some organizations, making it a critical area for improvement to enhance overall agility.

In conclusion, the descriptive findings indicate a generally strong perception of organizational agility, particularly in areas of adaptation, decision-making, and customer responsiveness. However, the relatively lower scores on technology adoption and employee flexibility highlight opportunities for strategic enhancement to support more comprehensive agility across all organizational levels.

3. ANOVA Results for Digital Leadership

To examine whether there are statistically significant differences in perceptions of digital leadership based on organizational sector (public vs. private), a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each item under the digital leadership construct. The results are summarized below.

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.The leader has a clear vision for digital transformation in the organization.	Between Groups	.400	1	.400	.436	.513
	Within Groups	40.404	44	.918		
	Total	40.804	45			
2.The leader encourages the use of technology to improve performance.	Between Groups	.222	1	.222	.360	.551
	Within Groups	27.104	44	.616		
	Total	27.326	45			
3. the leader possesses digital skills that aid effective decision-making.	Between Groups	.696	1	.696	.982	.327
	Within Groups	31.217	44	.709		
	Total	31.913	45			
4.The leader promotes a culture of continuous digital learning.	Between Groups	.913	1	.913	1.528	.223
	Within Groups	26.304	44	.598		
	Total	27.217	45			
5.The leader adapts quickly to rapid digital changes.	Between Groups	2.480	1	2.480	4.081	.049
	Within Groups	26.738	44	.608		
	Total	29.217	45			

For the item “The leader has a clear vision for digital transformation in the organization,” the ANOVA test yielded $F(1, 44) = 0.436$, $p = 0.513$. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant, indicating that there is no meaningful difference between public and private sector perceptions regarding leaders’ digital vision.

Similarly, for “The leader encourages the use of technology to improve performance,” the ANOVA result $F(1, 44) = 0.360$, $p = 0.551$ shows no significant difference across sectors.

The third item, “The leader possesses digital skills that aid effective decision-making,” also revealed no statistically significant difference ($F(1, 44) = 0.982$, $p = 0.327$), suggesting a consistent perception of digital competence across sectors.

Likewise, for “The leader promotes a culture of continuous digital learning,” the result was $F(1, 44) = 1.528$, $p = 0.223$, indicating no significant variation in perceptions between public and private institutions.

However, the fifth item, “The leader adapts quickly to rapid digital changes,” yielded a statistically significant result: $F(1, 44) = 4.081$, $p = 0.049$. Since the p-value is less than 0.05,

this finding suggests that there is a significant difference between public and private sector organizations in how they perceive leadership adaptability to digital changes. This may reflect structural, cultural, or resource-related differences that affect agility and responsiveness in different sectors.

Overall, the ANOVA analysis indicates that perceptions of digital leadership are generally consistent across sectors, except for leadership adaptability, which shows statistically significant variation. This implies that private and public organizations may require differentiated leadership development strategies to enhance digital agility in line with their specific operational contexts.

4. ANOVA Results for Organizational Agility

To explore whether perceptions of digital leadership and organizational agility significantly differ between public and private sector organizations within the GCC region, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted on each item of both constructs.

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.The organization adapts quickly to changes in the business environment.	Between Groups	5.174	1	5.174	8.188	.006
	Within Groups	27.804	44	.632		
	Total	32.978	45			
2.The organization can reprioritize its goals and strategies when needed.	Between Groups	4.992	1	4.992	6.167	.017
	Within Groups	35.617	44	.809		
	Total	40.609	45			
3.New technologies are effectively adopted within the organization.	Between Groups	3.602	1	3.602	4.642	.037
	Within Groups	34.137	44	.776		
	Total	37.739	45			
4.Employees are flexible in responding to organizational changes.	Between Groups	3.705	1	3.705	3.799	.058
	Within Groups	42.904	44	.975		
	Total	46.609	45			
5.The organization responds promptly to customer needs.	Between Groups	3.015	1	3.015	2.844	.099
	Within Groups	46.637	44	1.060		
	Total	49.652	45			

6. Decisions are made quickly in response to changing conditions.	Between Groups	.163	1	.163	.226	.637
	Within Groups	31.750	44	.722		
	Total	31.913	45			

The results for digital leadership indicated that, overall, there were no statistically significant differences between sectors in how leadership was perceived, with one notable exception. Specifically, while items related to leaders' digital vision, encouragement of technology use, decision-making skills, and promotion of digital learning culture all yielded p-values greater than 0.05, suggesting consistent perceptions across sectors, the item assessing leaders' adaptability to rapid digital changes showed a statistically significant difference ($F = 4.081$, $p = 0.049$). This implies that sectoral context may influence how agile leadership is perceived, potentially due to differing levels of operational flexibility or resource constraints.

In contrast, the analysis of organizational agility revealed several statistically significant differences between public and private sector respondents. The item evaluating how quickly organizations adapt to changes in the business environment produced a significant result ($F = 8.188$, $p = 0.006$), as did the item measuring the ability to reprioritize goals and strategies when necessary ($F = 6.167$, $p = 0.017$). Moreover, significant variation was also observed in how effectively new technologies are adopted across sectors ($F = 4.642$, $p = 0.037$), suggesting that private sector organizations may be more responsive and agile in embracing digital innovations. While the remaining items—employee flexibility, responsiveness to customer needs, and speed in decision-making—did not show statistically significant differences, one item (employee flexibility) approached the significance threshold ($p = 0.058$), hinting at a potentially meaningful but inconclusive variation. Taken together, these results emphasize that while some aspects of agility and leadership are perceived consistently across sectors, others—particularly adaptability and technological responsiveness—differ in meaningful ways, underscoring the importance of contextualizing digital transformation efforts within the unique operational environments of public versus private organizations.

5. Research hypothesis testing

Based on the statistical analyses conducted, the first research hypothesis—proposing a statistically significant positive relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility in GCC organizations—is generally supported by the descriptive statistics. Both constructs demonstrated relatively high mean values across items, indicating a positive perception of digital leadership behaviors and agile organizational practices.

Regarding the second hypothesis, which posits that the digital vision of leadership positively affects organizational agility, the findings partially support this assertion. The item concerning digital vision showed a high mean score, indicating strong leadership direction in digital transformation. Nonetheless, the ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant difference between sectors for this item, suggesting that while the vision is present and well-perceived, its distinct impact on agility across different organizational types is not strongly evidenced.

The third hypothesis, which examines the association between innovation support by digital leaders and high levels of organizational agility, is partially supported. Descriptive results showed favorable responses to items reflecting innovation-oriented leadership, such as promoting digital learning and encouraging technology use .

Finally, the fourth hypothesis—asserting sectoral differences in the impact of digital leadership on organizational agility—is supported in part. While most leadership-related items did not exhibit statistically significant differences between public and private sectors, one item (adaptability to digital changes) did reveal significant variation ($p = 0.049$). More notably, several organizational agility items showed statistically significant sectoral differences, particularly in areas such as adaptability to the business environment, strategic reprioritization, and technology adoption .

These findings affirm that the influence of digital leadership on agility is not uniform across sectors, thus validating the fourth hypothesis. Collectively, the results offer partial to moderate support for the research hypotheses and point to meaningful directions for future empirical exploration with more comprehensive inferential analyses.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of digital leadership on organizational agility within the context of emerging markets, with a particular focus on organizations in the GCC region. Drawing on data collected from managerial-level employees in both public and private sector institutions, the research explored how various dimensions of digital leadership—such as digital vision, innovation support, adaptability, and digital skills—contribute to enhancing organizational responsiveness, flexibility, and decision-making speed.

Descriptive analysis revealed generally high levels of perceived digital leadership and organizational agility, with leadership encouragement of technology use and strategic responsiveness to change receiving particularly strong ratings. The use of ANOVA provided

further insights into how perceptions differ across sectors. While most digital leadership items did not show statistically significant variation between public and private sector organizations, adaptability to rapid digital change did differ significantly, highlighting the influence of sectoral dynamics on leadership effectiveness. In contrast, several aspects of organizational agility—such as environmental adaptability, strategic reprioritization, and technology adoption—showed statistically significant differences, suggesting that private sector organizations may exhibit higher agility levels in certain areas compared to their public counterparts.

In testing the research hypotheses, the study found moderate support for a positive relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that digital leadership—particularly when characterized by vision, innovation, and adaptability—plays a crucial role in enabling organizations to respond effectively to dynamic market conditions.

Overall, this research underscores the growing importance of digital leadership in navigating uncertainty and driving organizational agility in the GCC. It also highlights the need for tailored leadership strategies that consider the unique operational realities of public and private sector organizations. Future studies are encouraged to employ more robust statistical methods and larger, more diverse samples to deepen the understanding of this vital organizational relationship.

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Research Appendix

Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a research study titled: **"The Impact of Digital Leadership on Organizational Agility in Emerging Markets: Evidence from the GCC Region."**

The purpose of this study is to explore how digital leadership practices affect the ability of organizations in the GCC to respond and adapt effectively in today's dynamic business environment. Your responses will remain strictly confidential and will be used for academic research purposes only.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond honestly based on your experience. Thank you for your valuable contribution!

◆ Section 1: Demographic Information

1. **Gender:**
☐ Male ☐ Female
2. **Age Group:**
☐ Under 30
☐ 30–39
☐ 40–49
☐ 50 and above
3. **Sector:**
☐ Public
☐ Private
4. **Years of Experience:**
☐ Less than 5 years
☐ 5–10 years
☐ More than 10 years
5. **Managerial Level:**
☐ Top Management
☐ Middle Management
☐ Supervisory Level

◆ **Section 2: Digital Leadership**

#	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
DL1	The leader has a clear vision for digital transformation in the organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
DL2	The leader encourages the use of technology to improve performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
DL3	The leader possesses digital skills that aid effective decision-making.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
DL4	The leader promotes a culture of continuous digital learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
DL5	The leader adapts quickly to rapid digital changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

◆ **Section 3: Organizational Agility**

#	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
OA1	The organization adapts quickly to changes in the business environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OA2	The organization can reprioritize its goals and strategies when needed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OA3	New technologies are effectively adopted within the organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OA4	Employees are flexible in responding to organizational changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OA5	The organization responds promptly to customer needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OA6	Decisions are made quickly in response to changing conditions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐