

THE ROLE OF AGILE LEADERSHIP IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A SURVEY STUDY AT AL-MUSTAQBAL UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

In light of the rapid and successive transformations witnessed by the contemporary business environment, organizations face significant challenges related to competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability, necessitating the adoption of modern and effective leadership approaches to ensure outstanding and sustainable performance. This research addresses the role of agile leadership in achieving sustainable performance within business organizations, being one of the contemporary leadership styles that represents a strategic response to environmental, economic, and social changes.

The research focuses on examining the nature of the relationship between agile leadership and its core dimensions (humility, calmness, wisdom, patience, objectivity, trust) and sustainable performance, which encompasses economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The research adopted a descriptive-analytical methodology to collect data from employees in business organizations and analyze it statistically using SPSS software, testing the main and sub-hypotheses to determine the extent of the impact of agile leadership on sustainable performance.

The results revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance. Furthermore, all dimensions of agile leadership were found to significantly influence the improvement of organizations' economic, social, and environmental performance. Regression analysis showed that agile leadership can explain a substantial proportion of the variance in sustainable performance, reflecting its strategic importance in developing organizations and enhancing their competitiveness and survivability. Based on these findings, the research offers a set of practical recommendations, including the continuous adoption of agile leadership strategies, training management and employees on its dimensions, fostering a culture of trust and objectivity, and monitoring sustainable performance through precise indicators, in order to achieve institutional excellence and long-term success sustainability.

Keywords: Agile Leadership, Sustainable Performance, Statistical Analysis, Organizational Management, Organizational Agility, Competitiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Amid the accelerating transformations in the contemporary business environment, accompanied by complexity, intensified competition, and instability, it has become imperative for business organizations to adopt modern leadership styles capable of adapting to these changes and confronting organizational challenges efficiently and effectively. Agile leadership is one of the most prominent contemporary leadership approaches that has emerged as a strategic entry point to

address organizational problems and achieve institutional excellence, in both Arab and foreign organizations.

Agile leadership is based on a set of intellectual, philosophical, and guiding principles focusing on flexibility, employee empowerment, continuous improvement, and rapid response to environmental changes, making it an integrated approach for improving performance and developing service quality. Adopting this leadership style enhances organizations' ability to achieve employee satisfaction and meet their expectations, as well as improving current and future customer satisfaction levels, which positively reflects on the overall performance of the organization in volatile competitive environments.

Agile leadership is also considered one of the fundamental pillars in functional and organizational improvement processes, as it aims to develop work methods by adopting innovative practices, enhancing organizational creativity, and raising resource use efficiency, thereby enabling the organization to face challenges, overcome problems, and achieve distinguished and sustainable performance levels compared to other organizations.

Accordingly, this research is organized into four main sections. The first section addresses the research methodology, while the second section is devoted to the theoretical framework, covering the research variables of agile leadership and sustainable performance. The third section presents the field study, and the research concludes with findings and recommendations.

Section One: Research Methodology

1.1 Research Problem

Business organizations currently face increasing challenges resulting from continuous changes in the economic, technological, and social environment, which imposes the need to maintain their organizational reputation and the quality level of services provided, without neglecting these aspects due to their direct impact on their ability to survive and continue. In this context, agile leadership has emerged as one of the modern leadership styles characterized by its reliance on ethical values, collaborative work, mutual respect, and trust-building within the organization.

Despite the growing importance of this leadership style, its level of application and the extent of its impact on achieving sustainable performance remain unclear in many business organizations, which constituted a primary motive for the researcher to study the nature of the relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance and to measure the magnitude of the effect between them.

Accordingly, the research problem revolves around the following question: *What is the role of agile leadership in achieving sustainable performance in business organizations?*

1.2 Research Importance

The importance of this research stems from its addressing of a contemporary management topic that is receiving increasing attention in modern management thought, due to its pivotal role in enhancing the ability of business organizations to compete, survive, and continue in environments characterized by complexity, dynamism, and rapid change. Organizations today face growing challenges that require adopting flexible leadership styles capable of adapting to accelerating economic, social, and technological changes.

The importance of the research lies in the fact that it is not limited to analyzing the nature of the theoretical relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance but seeks to test this relationship empirically and verify the possibility of investing it practically to contribute to improving organizational performance in the long term. The research also highlights the strategic

role of agile leadership in supporting sustainability requirements across its various dimensions by achieving a balance between economic performance, enhancing social responsibility, and preserving environmental resources.

The importance of this research is further increased due to the scarcity of studies that have addressed agile leadership as a modern approach to achieving sustainable performance, which gives this research scientific and applied value and contributes to presenting results that can benefit administrative leaders and decision-makers in the organization.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To define the theoretical and conceptual foundations of agile leadership and sustainable performance.
2. To demonstrate the relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance.
3. To clarify the role of agile leadership in achieving sustainable performance.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1.4.1 Relationship Hypotheses

- **H₁**: There is a statistically significant relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance in the surveyed organization.
- **H_{1a}**: There is a statistically significant relationship between agile leadership and economic performance.
- **H_{1b}**: There is a statistically significant relationship between agile leadership and social performance.
- **H_{1c}**: There is a statistically significant relationship between agile leadership and environmental performance.

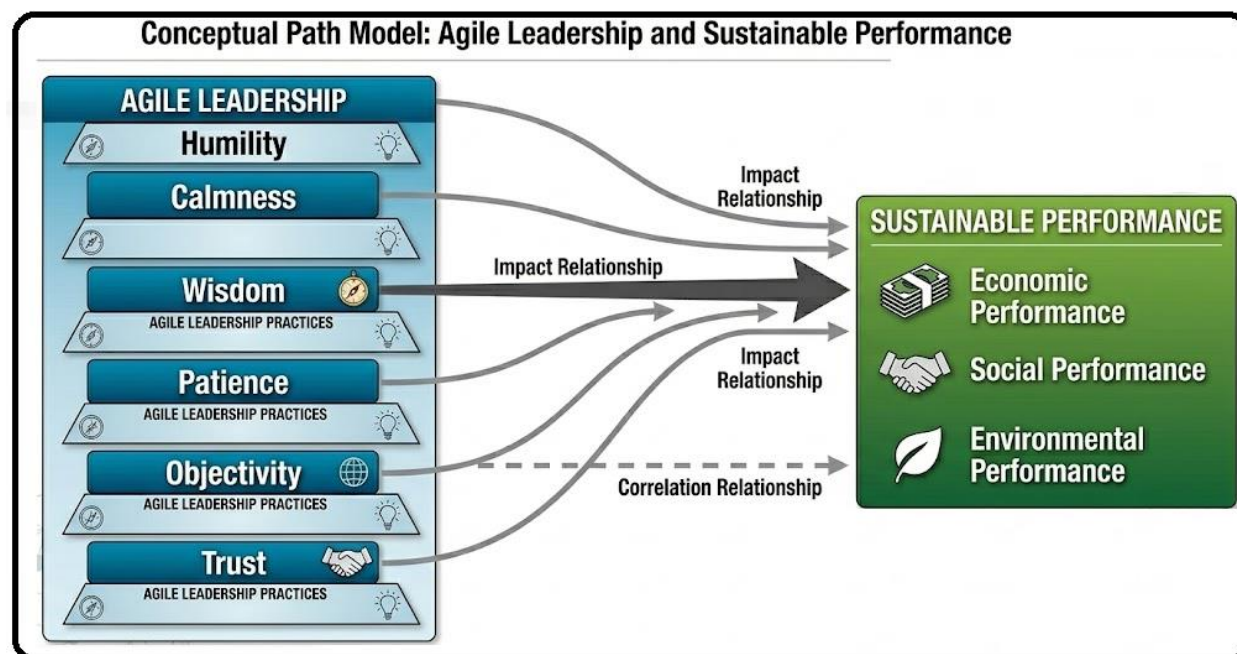
1.4.2 Impact Hypotheses

- **H₂**: Agile leadership has a significant positive impact on sustainable performance.
- **H_{2a}**: Agile leadership has a significant positive impact on economic performance.
- **H_{2b}**: Agile leadership has a significant positive impact on social performance.
- **H_{2c}**: Agile leadership has a significant positive impact on environmental performance.

1.5 Hypothetical Model of the Research



Note: Solid arrows indicate impact relationships; dashed arrows indicate correlation relationships.



1.6 Research Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive-analytical method due to its high suitability for studying contemporary administrative phenomena. This method allows describing the reality of agile leadership within business organizations and analyzing the nature of the relationship and impact between its various variables and sustainable performance. The descriptive-analytical method is characterized by its ability to collect data from the study population and analyze it statistically to reach accurate and objective results that contribute to providing practical and applicable recommendations within organizations.

1.7 Research Population and Sample

1.7.1 Research Population

The research population consists of employees in the organization under study at various administrative levels (top, middle, and executive management), as they are most capable of evaluating leadership practices and performance levels within the organization. Selecting this population allows for an objective and realistic assessment of the impact of agile leadership on sustainable performance.

1.7.2 Research Sample

A random sample was selected to ensure comprehensive representation of the research population and to achieve objective results.

- Number of questionnaires distributed: 50
- Number of questionnaires returned and valid for analysis: 47
- Response rate: 98.7%

1.8 Research Tool (Questionnaire)

The study relied on the questionnaire as the primary data collection tool, given its common use and suitability for administrative research. The questionnaire was designed based on the theoretical framework and previous studies related to agile leadership and sustainable performance.

1.8.1 Parts of the Questionnaire

1. **General Information:** Gender, age, job level, years of service.
2. **Agile Leadership Measurement Items:** Based on the six dimensions (humility, calmness, wisdom, patience, objectivity, trust).
3. **Sustainable Performance Measurement Items:** Based on the dimensions of economic, social, and environmental performance.

1.8.2 Measurement Scale

The five-point Likert scale was used to measure the questionnaire items, according to the following gradation:

1. Strongly Disagree – 2. Disagree – 3. Neutral – 4. Agree – 5. Strongly Agree

1.9 Research Variables**1.9.1 Independent Variable: Agile Leadership**

Measured through the following dimensions:

- Humility
- Calmness
- Wisdom in action
- Patience
- Objectivity
- Trust

1.9.2 Dependent Variable: Sustainable Performance

Measured through the following dimensions:

- Economic performance
- Social performance
- Environmental performance

1.10 Questionnaire Items**1.10.1 Agile Leadership Items****1. Humility**

- The leader treats employees with respect without discrimination.
- The leader acknowledges mistakes when they occur.
- The leader encourages employees to express their opinions.

2. Calmness

- The leader makes decisions calmly in difficult circumstances.
- The leader controls their emotions during crises.
- The leader addresses problems with deliberation and deep thinking.

3. Wisdom to Act

- The leader relies on experience and knowledge when making decisions.
- The leader balances alternatives before choosing the appropriate solution.
- The leader considers the interest of both the organization and employees.

4. Patience

- The leader demonstrates patience when facing failures.
- The leader gives employees sufficient time to learn.

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- The leader deals positively with work pressures.

5. Objectivity

- The leader makes decisions without bias.
- The leader relies on facts when evaluating performance.
- The leader seeks to address errors in a logical manner.

6. Trust

- The leader trusts the abilities of employees.
- Employees feel secure under the current leadership.
- Mutual trust prevails between management and employees.

1.10.2 Sustainable Performance Items

1. Economic Performance

- The organization seeks to improve its financial efficiency.
- The organization ensures the optimal use of resources.
- The organization achieves stable financial results.

2. Social Performance

- The organization cares about employee satisfaction.
- The organization is committed to social responsibility.
- The organization provides a fair and safe work environment.

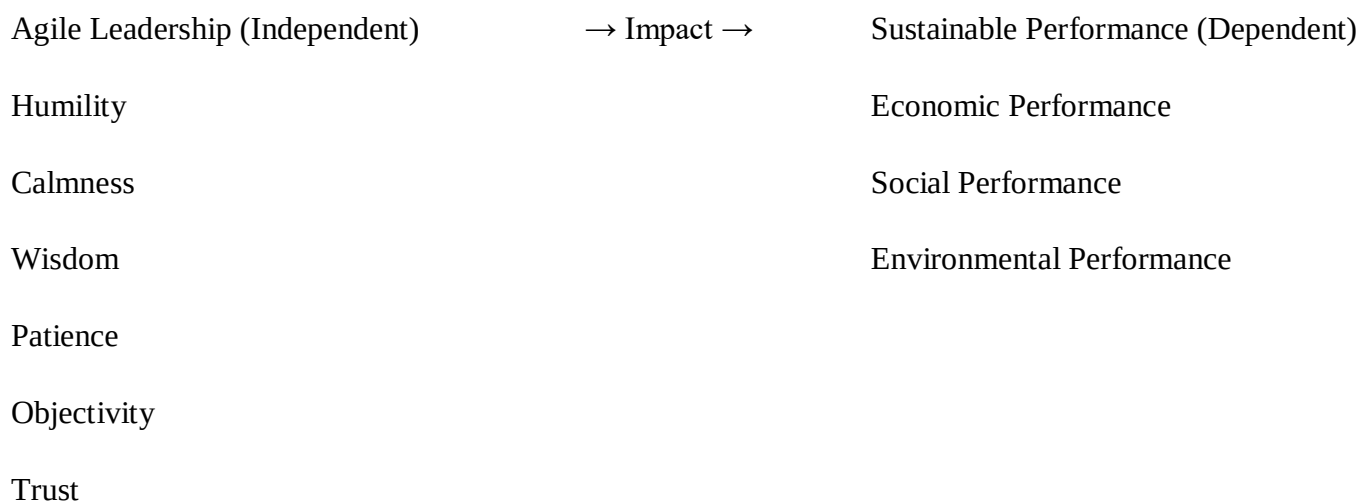
3. Environmental Performance

- The organization seeks to reduce waste.
- The organization is committed to environmental protection.
- The organization adopts environmentally friendly practices.

1.11 Conceptual Model of the Research

The research is based on a conceptual model showing a direct impact relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance, where the dimensions of agile leadership influence the enhancement of the organization's economic, social, and environmental performance.

Conceptual Model Representation:



This model indicates that adopting agile leadership practices contributes to improving sustainable performance, achieving a balance among the three dimensions and ensuring the organization's ability to face environmental, economic, and social challenges.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 Agile Leadership

2.1.1 Concept of Agile Leadership

Agile leadership is defined as a modern leadership style based on adopting organizational flexibility and a high capacity for rapid response to environmental changes, through empowering employees, encouraging teamwork, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This leadership style aims to direct human resources and organizational processes toward achieving sustainable added value for the organization and its stakeholders, in line with the requirements of the changing competitive environment.

Agile leadership is considered an extension of modern management thought that focuses on reducing waste, accelerating decision-making, and maximizing the benefit from the accumulated knowledge and expertise of employees. It also seeks to build flexible organizations capable of adapting to uncertainty by adopting innovative work methods, delegating authority, and enhancing mutual trust between leadership and employees, thereby raising performance levels and achieving strategic goals efficiently and effectively.

Several researchers believe that agile leadership is not merely a set of tools or administrative methods but represents an integrated leadership philosophy based on changing traditional thinking patterns and transitioning from control-based leadership to participation- and empowerment-based leadership, making it one of the main approaches to achieving organizational sustainability in contemporary business organizations (Al-Salem, 2020).

2.1.2 Importance of Agile Leadership

Agile leadership gains increasing importance in contemporary business organizations as it represents one of the modern administrative approaches that contribute to achieving competitive advantage and institutional excellence through the optimal utilization of employees' skills, abilities, and experiences, directing them toward achieving the organization's strategic objectives. This requires achieving an effective balance between the support and empowerment the organization provides to employees and the performance, commitment, and responsibility levels it expects from them, ensuring the achievement of mutual interests for both parties.

The importance of agile leadership lies in the following aspects:

1. Empowering employees to use agile tools and methods in addressing problems and making decisions in critical situations, contributing to enriching their jobs and developing their professional skills and abilities.
2. Facilitating organizational improvement processes by reducing operational costs, minimizing waste, and enhancing the efficiency of using available resources.
3. Improving the quality of services and products provided to customers by reducing waiting times, speeding up processes, and increasing reliability levels.
4. Enhancing customer satisfaction by improving the value delivery experience and reducing non-value-added activities, which positively reflects on the organization's image and competitive reputation.

2.1.3 Dimensions of Agile Leadership

1. Humility: Humility represents an essential leadership trait reflecting the leader's self-awareness and recognition of the limits of their knowledge and abilities, enhancing their openness to continuous learning and benefiting from others' experiences. Humility is an acquired leadership virtue requiring internal commitment and a fundamental change in leadership behavior, as it contributes to enhancing mutual trust, encouraging participation, and building positive relationships with employees.

2. Calmness: Calmness enables the leader to deal rationally with organizational pressures and challenges, especially in critical situations and crises. This dimension allows the leader to think carefully, analyze alternatives deeply, and make balanced decisions away from emotion and haste (Al-Salem, 2020).

3. Wisdom to Act: Wisdom in action is an advanced form of leadership thinking based on integrating logical reasoning, practical experience, and objective reading of the organizational reality. Wisdom enables the leader to choose the most appropriate alternatives and make effective decisions that align with the organizational context.

4. Patience: Patience represents an essential element in agile leadership, as it allows the leader to deal with organizational failures and recurring challenges with a positive spirit and insightful administrative awareness. Patience helps to achieve gradual and sustainable improvement in the performance of the organization and its employees (Al-Hamdani, 2018).

5. Objectivity: Objectivity is associated with rational thinking and reliance on the scientific method in analyzing problems and making decisions. Objectivity enables the leader to diagnose errors realistically, avoid personal biases, and address organizational issues with clear and methodical approaches (Al-Zoubi, 2019).

6. Trust: Organizational trust is the cornerstone of the success of agile leadership and teamwork, as an organization cannot achieve its goals without mutual trust between leadership and employees. This trust is based on transparency, integrity, commitment to institutional values, and clarity of policies and procedures (OECD, 2020).

2.2 Sustainable Performance

2.2.1 Concept of Sustainable Performance

Sustainable performance is considered one of the modern strategic concepts in contemporary management thought, as it reflects the organization's ability to achieve its economic goals and maximize shareholder value while adhering to its social and environmental responsibilities, ensuring its continuity and ability to survive and grow in the long term. Sustainable performance is not limited to achieving short-term financial results but goes beyond that to include achieving an integrated balance between the requirements of economic growth, social justice, and environmental protection (Heizer et al., 2016).

2.2.2 Dimensions of Sustainable Performance (The Three Pillars of Sustainability)

1. Social Performance: This dimension includes achieving social justice, improving living standards, enhancing social dialogue, providing a fair and safe work environment, as well as protecting culture and societal values. Attention to social performance contributes to enhancing employee satisfaction, increasing their organizational loyalty, and improving the organization's image in the community (Campbell et al., 2020).

2. Economic Performance: Economic performance focuses on the organization's ability to achieve financial sustainability through continuous growth, financial stability, and efficiency in

resource use. This includes achieving profits in a rational manner, maximizing economic value, and ensuring the continuity of operational processes (OECD, 2020).

3. Environmental Performance: Environmental performance is concerned with preserving natural resources, reducing negative environmental impacts resulting from the organization's activities, reducing pollution, and ensuring the rational use of energy and resources (Heizer et al., 2016).

These dimensions are collectively known as the "Triple Bottom Line" due to their effective role in evaluating the sustainable performance of organizations (Campbell et al., 2020).

3. PRACTICAL SIDE (FIELD STUDY)

To analyze the study data, SPSS software was used according to the following methods:

1. Descriptive Analysis: Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency Distribution.
2. Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to measure the internal consistency of the tool (>0.7 indicates high reliability).
3. Correlation Analysis: Pearson's test to determine the strength of the relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance.
4. Regression Analysis: To determine the impact of agile leadership and its dimensions on sustainable performance and its dimensions.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Descriptive analysis was conducted for all study variables using SPSS to determine the mean scores of employees' assessments for each dimension of agile leadership and sustainable performance.

Interpretation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Dimension
High	4.32	0.68	Humility
High	4.15	0.71	Calmness
High	4.28	0.65	Wisdom in action
Medium-High	4.05	0.73	Patience
High	4.20	0.69	Objectivity
High	4.40	0.62	Trust
High	4.10	0.70	Economic Performance
High	4.25	0.68	Social Performance
High	4.18	0.66	Environmental Performance

Interpretation of Results:

The results indicate that all dimensions of agile leadership and sustainable performance received high assessment levels from the sample members. The highest mean was for the trust dimension (4.40), while the patience dimension (4.05) had the lowest mean, although it remained within the high level. At the level of sustainable performance, the results showed convergence in means among the three dimensions, indicating that the organization is moving in a balanced direction toward achieving sustainability.

3.2 Testing Research Hypotheses

3.2.1 Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the questionnaire tool was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient:

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Variable
0.912	18	Agile Leadership
0.895	9	Sustainable Performance

Interpretation: The high Cronbach's Alpha values (>0.7) indicate that the research tool has high internal reliability.

3.2.2 Correlation Analysis (Testing H_1 , H_{1a} , H_{1b} , H_{1c})

Pearson's coefficient was used to measure the strength of the relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance:

Sig. (p)	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Variables
0.000	0.78	Agile Leadership – Sustainable Performance

Interpretation: The results show a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance, supporting the main relationship hypothesis (H_1). This correlation indicates that applying agile leadership practices contributes to improving the economic, social, and environmental outcomes of the organization.

3.2.3 Regression Analysis (Testing H_2 , H_{2a} , H_{2b} , H_{2c})

Linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the impact of agile leadership dimensions on sustainable performance:

Sig. (p)	Regression Coefficient (β)	t	Dimension
0.004	0.18	2.95	Humility
0.014	0.15	2.50	Calmness
0.002	0.20	3.12	Wisdom
0.043	0.12	2.05	Patience
0.018	0.14	2.40	Objectivity

Sig. (p)	Regression Coefficient (β)	t	Dimension
0.001	0.21	3.45	Trust

$R^2 = 0.65$

Interpretation: The regression analysis results indicate that the dimensions of agile leadership explain approximately 65% of the variance in sustainable performance ($R^2 = 0.65$), which is a strong indicator of the positive impact of this leadership style on institutional performance. All dimensions demonstrated a significant impact ($p < 0.05$), confirming H_2 and its sub-hypotheses.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

1. The study results indicate a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between agile leadership and sustainable performance in business organizations ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the importance of adopting modern leadership styles to enhance organizational outcomes.
2. It was found that all dimensions of agile leadership (humility, calmness, wisdom, patience, objectivity, trust) have a significant and positive impact on sustainable performance, reflecting the role of these dimensions in improving decision-making efficiency and enhancing the interaction between leadership and employees.
3. The study showed that the three dimensions of sustainable performance (economic, social, environmental) were positively affected by the application of agile leadership, reflecting the organization's success in adopting flexible methods capable of adapting to complex and changing work environments.
4. Linear regression analysis revealed that agile leadership can explain approximately 65% of the variance in sustainable performance ($R^2 = 0.65$), a strong indicator of the strategic role of this leadership style in enhancing organizational continuity and achieving institutional excellence.
5. Agile leadership contributes to building an organizational culture based on continuous learning and innovation, thereby supporting the development of overall performance and enhancing competitiveness in local and international markets.

4.2 Practical Recommendations

1. **Permanent adoption of agile leadership strategies:** The organization should adopt agile leadership principles at all management levels to enhance competitiveness and achieve sustainable performance.
2. **Training employees and top management:** Develop training programs focused on the dimensions of agile leadership to ensure the effective use of its tools and strategies in daily practical situations.
3. **Enhancing a culture of trust, objectivity, and calmness:** The organization should promote these values in decision-making processes to reduce risks, improve efficiency, and increase employee and customer satisfaction.
4. **Regular monitoring and measurement of sustainable performance:** Establish an integrated key performance indicator (KPI) system reflecting the impact of agile leadership on economic, social, and environmental aspects, with periodic reviews to evaluate results and take corrective actions.

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5. **Adopting continuous improvement programs for organizational processes:** Develop innovative methodologies to reduce waste and increase added value for services and products, contributing to achieving long-term sustainability and institutional excellence.
 6. **Encouraging innovation and individual and collective initiatives:** Empower employees to provide innovative solutions and motivate them to actively participate, thereby enhancing the organization's ability to adapt to rapid changes in the business environment.

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