

Narcissistic Leadership, Organizational Cynicism and their Relation with Meaningful Work among Nurses: A Comparative Study

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1.ABSTRACT

Background: Presence of narcissistic leadership in health care organization creates bias and disappointment among nurses, this fosters a culture of negative attitude toward the health care system which leads to organizational cynicism that make nurses unable to do her job well and the work loss its meaning. **Aim:** to investigate narcissistic leadership, organizational cynicism and their relation with meaningful work among nurses at Main Mansoura university hospital and Mansoura general hospital. **Method:** A Comparative descriptive research design was utilized with a sample of (162) nurses at Main Mansoura university hospital and (180) nurses at Mansoura General Hospital. Tools of data collection were narcissistic personality tool, organizational cynicism scale and the work and meaning inventory scale. **Results:** The studied nurses had moderate level of narcissistic leadership at both hospitals (43.8%), (58.9%) respectively. The studied nurses had low organizational cynicism at both hospitals (85.2%), (76.7%) respectively. The studied nurses had low meaningful work at both hospitals (85.2%) respectively (76.7%) respectively. **Conclusion:** there was a negative non-significant relationship between narcissistic leadership and meaningful work at both hospitals. There was no statistically significant relationship between organizational cynicism and meaningful work at both hospitals. **Recommendations:** Conduct regular training sessions about leadership skills and organizational inclusion that positively impacts leaders' behavior and stimulate their openness to other views, provide performance incentives, promotions, and bonuses for nurses to make their work more meaningful.

Keywords: Meaningful Work, Narcissistic Leadership, Organizational Cynicism.

2.Introduction

Nursing is a dynamic profession and the largest workforce in a health care organization that takes a major role in health leadership. Health care organizations are often fast-paced, complex and high-pressure environments, therefore, this means that nurse leadership is required during every shift (Major, 2019).

Leadership plays a critical role in improving workforce, career motivation efficiency, also it provides guidance, direction, facilitate decision making and enhances nurse's morale (Aij&Rapsaniotis, 2017). Leadership defined as the process of getting people to do their best to achieve desired results, it involves developing and communicating a vision for the future, motivating people, and gaining their engagement (HassenYimam, 2022). While, leader is defined as the person who sets the goals of his group and who Leadership has two sides the bright side and the dark side, bright side it is the leadership style in which leaders consciously put people above profit, they consciously trust rather than doubt, and create an inspiring vision for the future that balances

people, profit, and planet (Kun, Szabó & Balogh, 2021). While, the dark side of the leadership is potentially be toxic leadership, a type of negative or ineffective leadership style that's broadly defined as a leadership style where a leader engages in systematic and persistent destructive behavior that could potentially harm the nurses and the health care organization. Toxic leadership is an umbrella term that include several aspects of negative leadership one of them is the narcissistic leadership which have bad effects on nurses and the health care organization (Labrague , Lorica, Nwafor, & Cummings, 2021).

Narcissism is defined as a complex personality traits and processes that involve a grandiose yet fragile sense of self as well as a preoccupation with success and demands for admiration (Zeng, 2020). Narcissistic leadership is one of the leadership styles in which the leader does not care about his followers whereas his or her only priority is to project himself (Alhasnawi & Abbas, 2021). While, narcissistic leader is defined as one who has grandiose beliefs and motivated by

power and admiration of subordinates (Disque, 2020). Those leaders are characterized by grandiosity, self-absorption, vanity, feelings of entitlement, willingness to exploit others and overly positive self-views Gruda et al., 2021).

Narcissistic leadership has negative consequences on nurses and health care organization. Nurses can experience frequent absenteeism, low job satisfaction, poor job performance, decreased work motivation, low morale, job stress and burnout, frustration, disappointment, gossiping, exhaustion and higher nurse turnover. At the organizational level, it leads to quality issues, poor work environment and poor safety within the health care organization. It is also fosters the development of a toxic organizational culture that could potentially lead to the development of more toxic leaders in the future (Labrague et al., 2021). As narcissistic leaders lack integrity and behave unethically, nurses tend to develop negative feelings, beliefs and attitudes that are subsequently reflected in terms of and feelings of organizational cynicism (Aboramadan, Turkmenoglu, Dahleez, & Cicek, 2021).

Organizational cynicism is defined as negative attitude of a nurse towards his or her health care organization (Mughal, 2020). Organizational cynicism can be explained in three sub-dimensions named cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive cynicism is the idea that the health care organization does not show a fair, moral, honest, and sincere attitude toward its nurses, while affective cynicism is the feeling of anger, furiousness, disgust, disdain, or humiliation regarding the institution for which one works. Finally, behavioral cynicism occurs when nurses have strongly critical attitudes toward the health care organization with a tendency toward negative and derogatory behavior. (Sungur, Özer, Saygili, & Uğurluoğlu, 2019).

Organizational cynicism has a negative impact on nurse's performance, feelings and their attitude toward their health care organization. It also has a negative impact on nurse's meaningful work, as leaders ignore nurse's welfare. They focus on their own work nor showing satisfaction with nurse's work. They are willing to put one's own needs ahead of others because they have a selfish. Such leaders reduce the meaningfulness of the work by reducing nurse's inner sense of meaning and overshadow nurse's ability to develop strategies regarding meaningful work (Kayani, Zafar, Aksar, & Hassan, 2019).

Meaningful work is defined as the deeper level of intrinsic motivation and an instrument of work

satisfaction and work commitment (Pasha & Ur Rehman, 2020).

Meaningful work focus on three core dimensions namely positive meaning (PM), meaning making (MM), and greater good (GG) motivations. Positive meaning is a good feeling nurses perceive from their jobs which are thought to be important, meaningful, significant, and purposeful (Miller, 2019). Meaning making It is how nurses see their jobs as helpful for others, they deeply understand themselves and their surrounding environment, and their work promotes personal and occupational growth that converges into a wider perception of a meaningful life (Frémeaux & Pavageau, 2022). And greater good motivations It is a positive attitude that the most meaningful work is believed to have a great impact on people (Tong, 2018).

Meaningful work produces several positive health care organizational outcomes such as reduction of absenteeism, motivation for work, amiable work behavior, nurse's engagement, job satisfaction, reduced stress, organizational identification, career development, nurse performance, nurse fulfillment, and sense of empowerment (Jena, Bhattacharyya, & Pradhan, 2019).

2.1 Significance of study:

Narcissistic leadership has not been extensively investigated in the nursing context, even though misbehaviors of leaders have important costs for nurses and for patients. Narcissistic leadership have a negative impact on nurses' meaningful work, it threatens the nursing profession's nature. Moreover, narcissistic leadership interacting with meaningful work, could also indirectly impact on wellbeing outcomes (Ghislieri et al., 2019). The narcissistic leadership creates an atmosphere of frustration due to the bias it introduces, this will create a culture that is characterized by lower levels of integrity in the organization and higher levels of distrust will be generated which lead to nurses' feeling of organizational cynicism. As nurses don't leave health care organizations—they leave their leaders. Organizational cynicism makes nurses feel unfriendliness within their health care organization which affecting their performance as nurses become unable to do her job well and the work loss its purpose and become have no meaning (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anjum, 2020).

2.2 Aim of the study

This study aims to investigate narcissistic leadership, organizational cynicism and their

relation with meaningful work among nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital.

2.3 Research questions:

RQ1: Is there relationship between narcissistic leadership and meaningful work among nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital?

RQ2: Is there relationship between organizational cynicism and meaningful work among nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital?

RQ3: What are the difference between narcissistic leadership, organizational cynicism and meaningful work among nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital?

3. Methods

3.1 Research design:

Comparative descriptive research design was utilized to conduct this study.

3.2 The study setting :

The study was carried out at Main Mansoura University Hospital, which provides a wide range of health service at Delta Region. and Mansoura General Hospital which affiliated to Ministry of Health and Population

3.3 Participants of the study:

The participants of present study included all nurses available during the time of data collection at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital. Total number was 342 nursing staff.

3.4 Tools of data collection-:

Three tools were used for data collection:

Tool (I): Narcissistic Personality tool:

This tool was developed by **Raskin and Terry (1988)** to assess narcissistic leadership among nurses.

It consists of two parts:-

Part (1) Socio demographic data of nurses such as (age, gender, marital status, level of education and experience years).

Part (2) consists of 37 items categorized into six dimensions include authority (8 items), self-sufficiency (6 items), superiority (5 items), exhibitionism (7 items), Exploitativeness (5 items), and entitlement (6 items). The responses will be measured by a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= Disagree very much to 5= Agree very much.

Scoring system: Based on cut of point 50%

- High level narcissistic leadership > 70%
- Moderate level narcissistic leadership 50 -70%
- Low level narcissistic leadership < 50%

Tool (II): Organizational Cynicism Scale (This scale was developed by **Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar (1998)**). It aims to measure organizational cynicism among nurses. It consists of 12-items categorized into three dimensions includes:-cognitive cynicism (4 items) and affective cynicism (4 items) and behavioral cynicism (4 items).

The responses will be measured by A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 =strongly agree.

Scoring system: Based on cut of point 50%

- High level organizational cynicism > 70%
- Moderate level organizational cynicism 50 - 70%
- Low level organizational cynicism < 50%

Tool (III): The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) scale: This tool was developed by **Steger, Dik and Duffy (2012)**. It aims to measure three sub-scales of meaningful work among nurses. It consists of 10-items categorized into three subscales include. Positive meaning (4 items), meaning-making through work (3 items) and greater good motivations (3 items). The responses will be measured by A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= absolutely untrue to 5= absolutely true.

Scoring system: Based on cut of point 50%:

- High level meaningful work > 70%
- Moderate level meaningful work 50 - 70%
- Low level meaningful work < 50%

3.5 Validity of the study tools:

Tools translated by researcher into Arabic and tested for its face and content validity by a panel of five expertise from faculty of nursing at Mansoura University who revised the tools for clarity, applicability, comprehensiveness, understanding, and relevancy and implementation simplicity

3.6 Reliability of the study tool:

Reliability test of the study tools; narcissistic leadership, organizational cynicism and meaningful work, were tested by Cronbach's Alpha reliability was computed and found (0.897), (0.876), (0.896) respectively.

3.7 Pilot study:

A pilot study was carried out on 34 nurses (10%) for Main Mansoura University hospital and

Mansoura General Hospital, 17 nurses for Mansoura General Hospital and 17 nurses for Main Mansoura University hospital of the study sample to test the clarity, feasibility of the statement and to determine the time needed to fill-in questions nurses who shared in the pilot study were excluded from the main study sample. Based on the pilot study, necessary modification includes clarification, and rewording.

3.8 Data analysis:

Data entry and statistical analysis was performed using computer software the statistical package for social studies (SPSS) version 22 and appropriate statistical test will be used.

3.9 Ethical consideration:

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethical Committee of Faculty of Nursing, Mansoura University. An official permission to conduct the study was obtained from the responsible administrator of the hospital. An oral consent was obtained from nursing staff who accept to participate in the study after providing the explanation of nature and aim of the study. All participants were informed that the study is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants were assured about the confidentiality of the collected data and the privacy of the study sample was assured at all phases of the study.

3.10 Data collection:

The researcher collected data through distributing the questionnaire sheets (I, II and III) to nurses at Mansoura General Hospital and Mansoura University hospital. The aim of the study and how to fill the questionnaire sheets was explained by the researcher. Nursing staff filled the tools individually at once and they read the questionnaires and filling it sheet acquired from 10-15 minutes. The data collection process started at study sample from the beginning of April to the end of May 2022. And at Mansoura University hospital the data collection process started from the beginning of June to the end of July 2022.

3.11 Statistical analysis:

The collected data were coded, entered, tabulated and analyzed using SPSS software. For quantitative data, the range, mean and standard deviation were calculated. For qualitative data, which describe a categorical set of data by frequency, percentage or proportion of each category, comparison between two groups and more was done using Chi-square test (2). For comparison between means of two groups of parametric data of independent samples, student t-

test was used. Correlation between variables was evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r). Significance was adopted at $p < 0.05$ for interpretation of results of tests of significance ((Dawson & Trapp, 2004).

4. Results:

Table (1): Illustrates socio demographic data of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital. Regarding Main Mansoura University Hospital most of nurses were females (60.5%) and (69.1%) of studied sample age ranged from 21-<30 years old, regarding marital status (56.2%) were married, in concerning experience years (42.6%) had experience less than 5 years, for educational level (56.8%) of them had technical institute of nursing.

Regarding Mansoura General Hospital this table shows that majority of nurses were females (80.6%) and (50.0%) of studied sample age ranged from 21-<30 years old. regarding marital status (68.3%) were married, in concerning experience years (43.3%) had experience less than 15 years, for educational level (48.3%) of them had technical institute of nursing.

Table (2): Illustrates correlation between total scores of narcissistic leadership, total organizational cynicism scale and total meaningful work scale among the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital. There is no statistically significant correlation between total scores of narcissistic leadership and total meaningful work scale at both hospitals and there is no statistically significant correlation between total scores of organizational cynicism and total meaningful work scale at both hospitals.

Figure (1): Illustrates level of total narcissistic leadership scores of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital. Regarding Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital this figure shows that the level of total narcissistic leadership was mostly moderate at both hospitals (43.8%), (58.9%) respectively.

Figure (2): Illustrates level of total organizational cynicism scale scores of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital. Regarding Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital this figure shows that the level of total organizational cynicism score was low at both hospitals (85.2%), (76.7%) respectively.

Figure (3): Illustrates level of total meaningful work scale scores of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital. Regarding Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura

General Hospital this figure shows level of total meaningful work scale scores of the studied nurses was low at both hospitals (85.2%) (76.7%) respectively

Table (1): Sociodemographic data of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital n=342

Sociodemographic data	The studied nurses (n=342)				χ^2 test	P value
	At Main Mansoura University Hospital (n=162)		At Mansoura General Hospital (n=180)			
	n	%	n	%		
Sex						
Males	64	39.5	35	19.4	16.684	0.0001*
Females	98	60.5	145	80.6		
Age years						
21-<30	112	69.1	90	50.0	14.616	0.001*
30-<40	33	20.4	69	38.3		
40-56	17	10.5	21	11.7		
Range	21-56		20-56			
Mean±SD	28.70±7.25		30.72±6.86			
t-test	2.637					
P value	0.009*					
Marital status						
Single	68	42.0	48	26.7	11.317	0.010*
Married	91	56.2	123	68.3		
Divorced	0	0	3	1.7		
Widow	3	1.9	6	3.3		
Experience years						
<5	69	42.6	54	30.0	5.924	0.052
5-<15	59	36.4	78	43.3		
15-38	34	21.0	48	26.7		
Range	1-38		1-28			
Mean±SD	8.07±8.17		9.87±7.44			
t-test	2.136					
P value	0.033*					
Education level						
Diplom	35	21.6	53	29.4	4.102	0.251
Technical	92	56.8	87	48.3		
Bachelor	35	21.6	40	22.3		

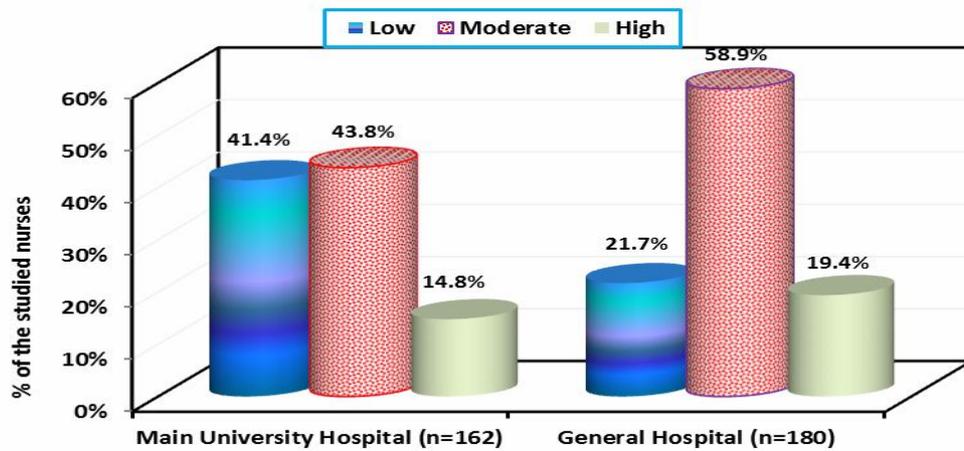


Figure (1): Level of total narcissistic leadership scores of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital.

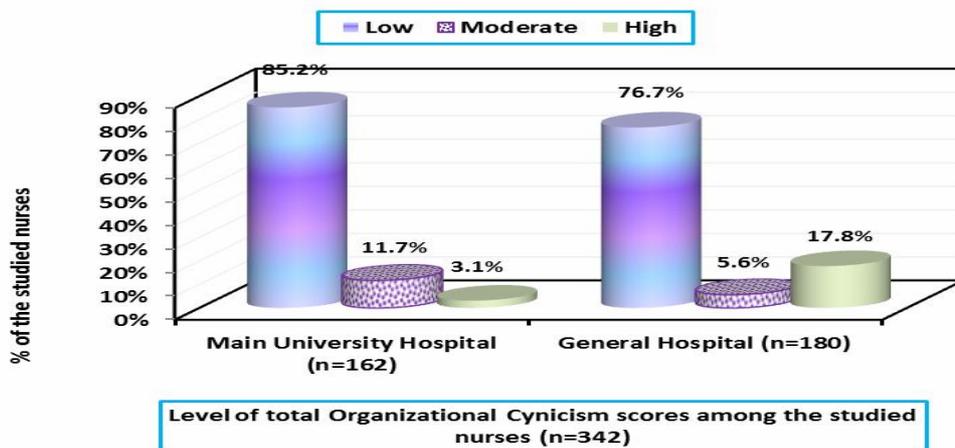


Figure (2): Level of total organizational cynicism scale scores of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital.

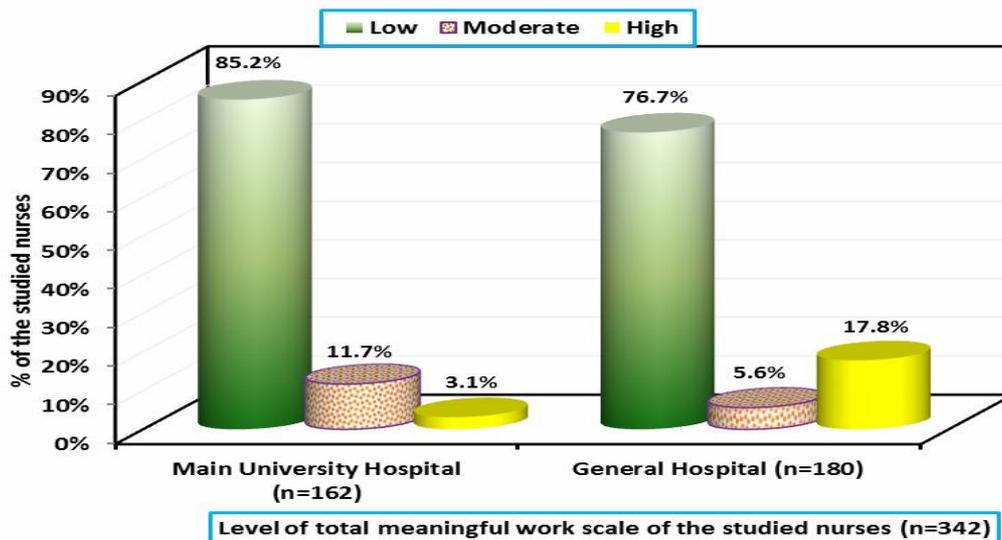


Figure (3): Level of total meaningful work scale scores of the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital.

Table (2): Correlation between total scores of narcissistic leadership, total organizational cynicism scale and total meaningful work scale among the studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital

Variables	The studied nurses at Main Mansoura University Hospital and Mansoura General Hospital (n=342)							
	At Main Mansoura University Hospital (n=162)				At Mansoura General Hospital (n=180)			
	Total scores of Narcissistic Leadership		Total Organizational Cynicism Scale scores		Total scores of Narcissistic Leadership		Total Organizational Cynicism Scale scores	
	r	P	r	P	r	P	r	P
Total Meaningful Work scale scores	-0.042	0.594	0.022	0.782	0.003	0.968	0.078	0.297

5. Discussion

Successful leadership is the foundation of any productive health care organization, and the presence of destructive leadership such as narcissistic leadership affects the nature of the health care organization and its nurses. When nurses work under toxic environments often have little or no choice which drop their energy levels and be completely frustrated and take a critical appraisal of the motives, actions, and values in their workplace which known by organizational cynicism (Baloyi, 2020). The existence of destructive leadership alters the nature of the work, which results in the loss of the work's identity and its meaning (Albrecht, Green, & Marty, 2021).

Regarding narcissistic leadership, the study revealed that studied nurses have a moderate level of narcissistic leadership at both hospitals. It may be due to some nurses believe they are capable of more than others, like to be in charge of others, prefer to take the decisions, believe they are a unique individuals, they are confident in their abilities

since everyone affirms them, like to be complimented and feel that if they ruled the hospital it would be a much better place.

On the same line with study results of Ghislieri, Cortese, Molino, & Gatti, (2019) found that that nurses worked at north-west of Italy hospital had a moderate level of narcissistic leadership as they believe that they are extraordinary persons and they thrives on compliments and personal accomplishments. Furthermore, Mousa, Abdelgaffar, Aboramadan, & Chaouali, (2021) concluded that healthcare professionals worked at Egyptian Public Hospitals have a moderate level of narcissistic leadership as they refuse to being criticized, engage in one-way communication, they

have arrogant manner which diminishes the trust of other in them and stimulate the counterproductive behavior, unable to accept criticism, constant blame other for their mistakes and lack of empathy.

In contrast to study results of Roter, (2016), found that nurses worked at Chicago Metropolitan hospitals have a high level of narcissistic leadership as most nurses are highly distrustful, self-involved and preoccupied with their own importance.

Regarding organizational cynicism, the study revealed that studied nurses have a low level of organizational cynicism at both hospitals. It is due to when the majority of nurses think about their hospital they not feel a sense of anxiety, aggravation, tension or angry, the hospital reward nurses for their performance, nurses look to each other in a meaningful way when their hospital mentioned and they have a little tendency to criticize the practices and policies of the hospital to people outside the hospital.

On the same line with study results of Sungur, Özer, Saygili, & Uğurluoğlu, (2019) concluded that nurses working in a public hospital in the city of Mersin, Turkey have a low level of organizational cynicism due to fair, ethical, honest, and friendly work environment among nurses. Leaders know their staff closely, creating a family atmosphere in the workplace and protecting their staff like a family.

Also, Topcu, Karadal, & Yildirim, (2017) found that health professionals who work in Istanbul hospitals have lower levels of organizational cynicism as they develop a negative attitude and behaviors against their institutions due to their unfulfilled expectations, lack of motivation, increase in the patient dissatisfaction, intense workload at hospitals and being under constant

pressure by the physicians and in contact with patients and patients' relatives.

In contrast to study results of **El-liethiey, & Atalla, (2021)** concluded that nurses working at Alexandria Main University Hospital perceived a moderate organizational cynicism. The obvious reason for this expectation was related to lack of job security, the poor work environment, low salaries, inadequate supervision and guidance by head nurses, scarce human and material resources, intense workload, rotating shifts, long hours, stressful working environment and non-constructive feedback system on their performance.

Regarding Meaningful Work, the study revealed that studied nurses have a low level of meaningful work at both hospitals because of the majority of nurses believe that they have not found a meaningful career, their work not contributes to their life's meaning, discovered that their work not has a satisfying purpose, view their work not contributing to their personal growth.

On the same line with study results of **Ghislieri, Cortese, Molino, & Gatti,(2019)** concluded that nurses worked at north-west of Italy hospital perceive low meaningful work due to they not experience joy in their work, their supervisor not encourage them to personal growth and developing new skills and abilities, believe that their work not give a meaning to their life, unable to use their gifts and talents in their work and feel that they undervalued .

As well, **Pace, Sciotto, & Russo, (2022)** found that nurses working in both public and private health facilities throughout Italy lack a sense of duty and sacrifice, sense of belonging and dedication to patient care, having too many responsibilities and not enough authority, which interfere with their own role effectiveness.

In contrast to study results of **Pavlish & Hunt, (2012)** concluded that nurses working at southwestern United States hospital have a high meaningful work as nurses connect to others and contribute in a positive way for patient improvements, presence of cohesive teamwork, nurses highly valued and appreciated by others, good working relationships with colleagues and supervisors in workplace and nurses have the opportunities to express themselves.

Correlation between narcissistic leadership and meaningful work, the study revealed that there was a negatively correlation between narcissistic leadership and meaningful work but not significant at both hospitals. As working under narcissistic leadership makes nurses

feel unwelcome in their work place which makes it difficult to accomplish their jobs successfully, and the task loses its meaning and purpose which destruct the meaning of their work.

On the same line with study results of **Ghislieri et al., (2019)** who conducted the study on nurses worked at north-west of Italy hospital found that there was a negative correlation between narcissistic leadership and meaningful work and concluded that narcissistic leaders' behaviors have negative consequences for their followers. As leaders self - interest and the lack of concern for others negatively interact with the meaning of the nursing profession as those leaders taking care of themselves rather than their staff.

In contrast to study results of **Kayani et al., (2019)** who conducted the study on nurses worked in Pakistan hospital found that there was a statistically significant correlation between narcissistic leadership and meaningful work ($P \leq 0.01$). As such selfish leaders do not understand the needs, value, desires, and feelings of their followers and make difficult for the followers to make sense of work meaningfulness.

Correlation between organizational cynicism and meaningful work, the study revealed that there is no statistically significant correlation between organizational cynicism and meaningful work at both hospitals. When the work environment is filled with hatred, hate, gossip, ridicule, cynicism and negative attitudes toward the hospital the work loses its importance, significance a, purpose and becomes meaningless.

This study was agreed with study results of **Cartwright & Holmes, (2006)** who concluded that there was no statistically significant correlation between organizational cynicism and meaningful work as existence of toxic atmosphere, abusive leaders, unethical behavior and negative beliefs about the work place such as lack of alignment between policies and practices and inequitable compensations policies lead to nurse's loss a sense of purpose, sense of efficacy and sense of self-worth which makes their work meaningless.

6. Conclusion:

Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that there was a negative non-significant relationship between narcissistic leadership and meaningful work at main Mansoura university hospital and Mansoura general hospital . There was no statistically significant relationship between organizational cynicism and meaningful work at both hospitals. Narcissistic leadership at Mansoura general hospital was higher than at main Mansoura

university hospital. While, organizational cynicism at main Mansoura university hospital was lower than at Mansoura general hospital. Further, meaningful work at main Mansoura university hospital was lower than at Mansoura general hospital.

7.Recommendations:

Based on the findings recommended to:

- Conduct regular training sessions about leadership skills and organizational inclusion that positively impacts leaders' behavior and stimulate their openness to other views.
- Include nurses in decision-making process as nurses are more likely to be cynical about decisions when they were unable to participate in making those decisions.
- Provide performance incentives, promotions, and bonuses for nurses to make their work more meaningful.

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