

The Role of Agile Leadership at Digital Business Service Company

¹Hana Ayu Amalia*, ²Nabila Setio Lestari

Corresponding Author: *hanaayu.2022@student.uny.ac.id

¹ Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia

² Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine deeply agile leadership at digital business service companies. This research uses qualitative research methods with a case study approach. Data collection used semi-structured interviews. Research participants were selected by purposive sampling, which was selected based on certain characteristics: top managers or leaders in this company. This research involved assistant managers and team leaders. The results of this study show that agile leaders must be able to implement their role as leaders using two-way interactions with employees or work colleagues. Still, these interactions must also contain communicative and collaborative principles to produce agile leaders. Agile leaders are needed to face the challenges in the VUCA world and overcome challenges in working life. Employees must be encouraged and supported to gain new perspectives, generate more robust ideas, be creative, gain flexibility, and be ready to face challenges.

Keywords: Agility, Digital Organization, Leadership, VUCA.

Introduction

The development of the internet and digital technology is a new era increasingly influential in various aspects of life. This era can disrupt many activities, including in companies. In conditions like this, a leader in a company or organisation must be able to move quickly to make flexible and adaptive breakthroughs. VUCA era (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) describes the situation in a company or organisation today. In the VUCA Era, responding creatively to the fast-changing environment is very important.

According to Rigby & Sutherland (2016), the agile approach can accelerate efficient growth for organisations and create a new generation of potential and skilled. Therefore, the company's transformation into an agile organisation can no longer be avoided. Now organisations need a complete strategy to realise the implementation of organisational agility. According to the Agile Business 4 Consortium in 2017, organizational leaders also take a strategic role in shaping the culture of agility. Agile leaders will be real examples for employees, so they have a clear picture of the values of agility that need to be instilled.

Agility in the 21st century is no longer an option but a necessity for organisations or companies (Harraf et al., 2015). Continuous and unpatterned environmental changes cause organisational agility to be dynamic. Consequently, the organisation will have the "right" agility if each member is guided to remain agile (Alzoubi, 2012). Agile leaders have short-term to

long-term thinking, so agile leaders see employees as assets. Agile leaders believe that one of the strategies can be done by providing strategic capital to the company, especially in companies engaged in fields that face uncertain changes (Lestari & Rahma, 2020).

Teleperformance Indonesia is part of Teleperformance Group, a leading global company in digitally integrated business services. Teleperformance Indonesia has provided digital integrated business services and outstanding customer service to leading local and multinational companies. With expertise in many markets, Teleperformance Indonesia offers omnichannel support, customer experience excellence, and a multilingual workforce spanning English and Indonesian.

Teleperformance's motto is "Find flexible solutions for an unpredictable world." To face the VUCA era, leaders with an agile leadership spirit are needed to facilitate employees to create long-term agility in the company (Bulent Akkaya et al., 2022). Teleperformance Indonesia must have in-depth knowledge and experience to design solutions with advanced capabilities, such as AI and machine learning, and integrate back-office functions with customer experience first. Modern leadership today requires leaders who can adapt to face the times of new configurations, especially in companies.

Based on the phenomena above and the background of the researchers studying this matter, the researchers are interested in examining leaders who work at PT Teleperformance Indonesia in Yogyakarta. The author considers that research is needed to answer the question of the role of agile leadership as a competitive advantage for future leaders in the VUCA era. Therefore, the role played by agile leadership needs to be studied in more depth with a research entitled "The Role of Agile Leadership Digital Bussiness Service Company."

Material And Methods

Agility is the ability to survive and succeed in a sustained and unpredictable environment of competitive change by reacting quickly and effectively to market changes by controlling existing products and services (Yusuf et al., 1999). Agile organisations adapt and effectively respond to environmental changes (Huang & Nof, 1999). Shafer et al. (2001) write that agile organisations are responsive and ready to change. de Oliveira et al. (2012) state that "agility is manifested by factors such as continuous improvement, continuous delivery, communication, team maturity, and HR flexibility." Organisational agility can be seen as the leader's ability to predict future opportunities; leadership in agile organisations is called agile leadership. Agile leadership is an organisational leader with characteristics such as innovation, flexibility, and readiness to react to environmental changes, and is very resilient when facing problems and shortcomings (Rzepka & Bojar, 2020). Agile leaders always try to seize

opportunities and create stable conditions for their abilities and innovations (Habibzade et al., 2021).

According to Dyer & Shafer (2003), three main aspects need to be cultivated in leaders to become agile individuals including (1) Proactive, who likes to initiate activity in the organisation. Proactive leaders consistently demonstrate a great sense of responsibility. In addition, proactive individuals have the confidence and effort to make continuous improvements to implement the process and achieve optimal results; (2) Adaptive, a person who dares to take on simultaneous roles in the organisation. Adaptive leaders respond more to changes that demand quick and informed decision-making. Adaptive personality allows for effective collaboration within a team and adapts well to uncertain environments; and (3) Generative, a person who desires to continue learning new things. In this context, leaders are expected to have specific and in-depth competencies and skills, but they also like to learn new things to improve their self-quality.

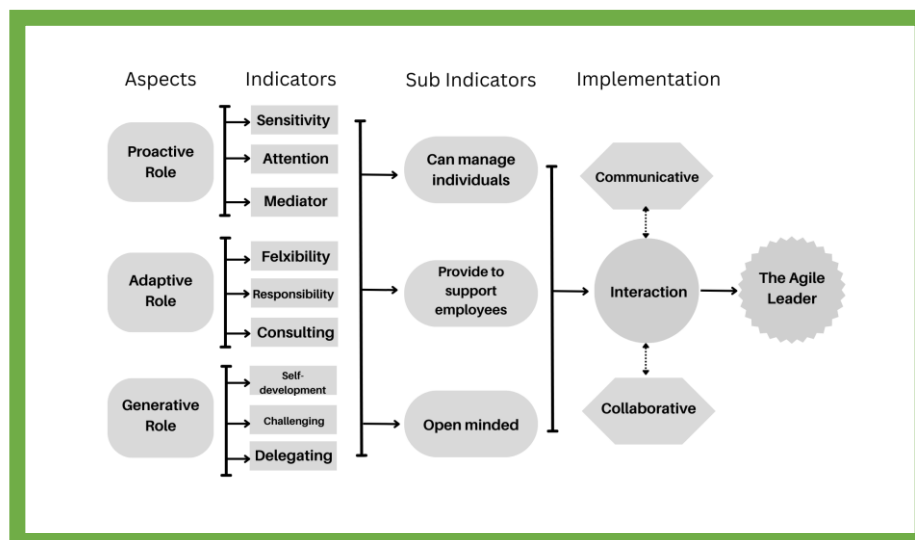
The VUCA concept found its whole meaning after the 2008 financial crisis and was later adopted to describe a chaotic, volatile, and rapidly changing business environment (Doheny et al., 2012). Explanation of the VUCA concept: (1) Volatility refers to changes that often occur without predictable patterns (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). This indicates the inconsistency of the situation at hand, which can progress very quickly towards variable amplitude (Brunet & Longcôté, 2018); (2) Uncertainty, indicating a lack of knowledge related to the frequency and significance of environmental changes (Brunet & Longcôté, 2018). This refers to the difficulty of predicting the future. A truly uncertain environment does not allow any predictions. According to Brunet & Longcôté (2018), uncertainty means not being able to understand the situation objectively, establish cause and effect relationships, predict the consequences of decisions; (3) Complexity, that is, the number of parameters that affect situations, their interdependence and interaction. It is difficult to identify the components and their behaviour and to decipher the different relationships between them (Silberzahn, 2017; Brunet & Longcôté, 2018); and (4) Ambiguity, referring to the lack of clarity on how to interpret a situation (Silberzahn, 2017). More generally, it refers to vagueness and vagueness in ideas and terminology. The more ambiguous the world, the harder it is to interpret.

This study aims to describe the role of agile company leaders. Therefore, this study uses qualitative research methods. Researchers use a case study approach to explore how a digital business service company leader applies agile leadership. Research sources are taken by purposive sampling techniques, namely sampling techniques of data sources with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2016). The reason for using this technique is that not all samples from data sources have criteria according to the phenomenon to be studied by the researcher.

Informants in this study consist of primary informants and secondary informants who have certain criteria by the research objectives and are limited. They are (1) Primary informants of company leaders, namely assistant managers of PT Teleperformance Indonesia, and (2) Secondary informants of people who are subordinates of primary informants, namely Team Leaders of PT Teleperformance Indonesia. Data collection in this study uses natural settings, primary data sources, and data collection methods through interviews and documentation.

Results

From the data analysis obtained from the interviews with each respondent, the researcher formulated a model of agile leadership role analysis schema at PT. Teleperformance Indonesia is a digital business service company. The result can be explained in the following schema.



Source: researcher

Fig. 1. Agile Leadership Role Analysis Schema

The leader's adaptive role from the schema produces sensitivity, attention, and mediator function indicators. Then the adaptive role of the leader creates indicators of flexibility, responsibility, and consulting functions. The generative role of the leader produces hands of self-development, love of challenges, and delegating functions. From some of these indicators, agile leaders are expected to have more complex behaviour with the acquisition of sub-indicators, there can manage individuals, provide support to employees, and are expected to have an open-minded attitude. These sub-indicators must be implemented as leaders through two-way interaction with employees or work colleagues. However, these interactions must also contain communicative and collaborative principles to produce agile leaders.

In line with previous research (Lukić et al., 2022), internal communication is essential for the successful functioning of any organisation operating in the digital economy. It represents any kind of communication that relies on modern information and communication technologies such as email, phone calls, video conferencing, instant messaging, web chat, etc. In this paper, it is pointed out that to achieve effective communication in all directions, agile leaders must be agile enough to establish appropriate communication, stimulate creative and critical thinking and new ideas, share information and knowledge, and provide real and constructive feedback, education, and training of employees.

In research conducted by Akkaya (2023), agile leaders can inspire, collaborate, motivate their teams, and strengthen them by informing them about technology and the environment. Agile leaders create collaborative and systematic teams, knowing collaboration can achieve agility. Organisations based on agile concepts can be said to be organisations responsive to change, innovative, collaborative, and process-oriented. From the explanation of the elegant image, the key to agile is high motivation through good communication between fellow human resources (Adhikersa et al., 2022).

Therefore, agile leaders are needed to face the challenges in the VUCA world and overcome challenges in working life. Employees must be encouraged and supported to gain new perspectives, generate more robust ideas, be creative, gain flexibility, and be ready to face challenges. This leadership style will be formed by applying agile leadership and its principles. Agile leaders can think flexibly in changing environmental conditions to perfectly adapt the organisation to these changes and strive to minimise their adverse impact on the organisation. Organisations incorporating agility into their processes will improve (Attar & Abdul-Kareem, 2020).

Conclusion

Organisational agility can be seen as the leader's ability to predict future opportunities. Leadership in agile organisations is called agile leadership. Agile leadership itself is an innovative and flexible organisational leader for changes that occur from time to time. There are three main aspects to becoming an agile leader. There are proactive, adaptive, and generative. In the proactive role of leaders, one of them is leading a company must have a caring nature by supporting employees. While in adaptive roles, leaders must have balanced flexibility to work, so agile leaders are expected to be solutive leaders for their employees. In the generative role, one of the attitudes of leaders that must be possessed is to be enthusiastic and confident in facing new challenges. To implement those roles as leaders through two-way interaction with employees or work colleagues, these interactions must also contain communicative and collaborative principles to produce agile leaders.

In the end, agile leaders must be able to implement their role as leaders through two-way interactions with employees or work colleagues. However, these interactions must also contain communicative and collaborative principles to produce agile leaders. Agile leaders are needed to face the challenges in the VUCA world and overcome challenges in working life. Employees must be encouraged and supported to gain new perspectives, generate stronger ideas, be creative, gain flexibility, and be ready to face challenges.

Limitation and Suggestions

This study has limitations in the availability of respondents. Therefore, it is expected that further researchers can take more respondents to improve the data. Then this study only takes the subject of business digital service companies, so it is expected that further researchers can take companies in other sectors, for example, start-up companies or telecommunications companies.

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