



The Urgency of Agile Leadership Training to Produce Competitive Startups in the Vuca Era

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ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, many types of start-up businesses or start-up companies have started to emerge and are growing very rapidly. We can easily find start-up companies in various sectors. Of these startups, some are expected to emerge from campuses through student startups that have big ideas and ideas and are supported by business incubators at each university. However, unfortunately, not all student startups can run smoothly. Many of them failed and were eventually forced to close. One of the reasons is the lack of guidance and training from the university where he attends. The important provision that must be given now is how to become an agile leader or entrepreneur in the current VUCA era. This research is aimed at answering the question of how training or guidance is provided by universities to startup management students, and how 'Agile Leadership' training is implemented. This is qualitative research with a case study approach at the XYZ campus in Jakarta. Data collection was carried out using semi-structured interviews with 15 startup management students. The results of this research show that "agile leadership" training is very important to be given to startup management students so they can understand how to deal with change and uncertainty in the VUCA era.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently one of the fastest growing countries. Various innovations and creative ideas continue to emerge from young entrepreneurs in the country. This will further strengthen Indonesia's position as one of Asia's technology and innovation centers. Indonesia is in fifth place in the world with 2,193 startups in 2019 after the US, India, UK and Canada. Even though it still needs to catch up with developed countries such as the United States (78 thousand startups) and India (16 thousand startups), Indonesia continues to show great potential with 2,566 startups by the end of January 2024. This figure has increased by around 37% per year,

shows that Indonesian entrepreneurs are increasingly working actively to innovate and develop their businesses.

These various startup companies are able to change the lifestyle of Indonesian people through their various convenient offerings. In fact, most startup founders are those from the millennial generation under the age of 40. Therefore, this startup business model is in great demand among young people in Indonesia. In the current digital era, many startups are starting to emerge, but of the many companies or organizations that develop startups in Indonesia, only a few are able to survive and succeed in generating profits.

Indonesia's startup business sector is also increasingly diverse. The largest is the general sector (32.7%), followed by content creators (16.5%), e-commerce (14.6%), fintech (8.5%), digital tourism (7%), edutech (6.4 %), media (4.9%), healthtech (3.2%), game developer (2.6%), agrotech (2.1%), and digital logistics (1.48%). This reflects the diversity of solutions offered by startups in Indonesia. In terms of business scale, most startups operate on a micro scale (48.1%), followed by small scale (28.2%), medium scale (18.5%), and the rest large scale (5.2%). Interestingly, most startups have less than 50 employees (72.5%), which shows that startups in Indonesia are still predominantly small in scale.

The profile of Indonesian startup employees is also interesting, with the majority being Gen Z (49.6%) aged 17-25 years, followed by Gen Y (46.9%) aged 26-39 years, and the remainder Gen 5%) who are over 40 years old. The establishment of a start-up company is not always smooth, some are successful and some are failed. In Indonesia itself, there have been many start-ups that have succeeded in achieving unicorn status, including Go-Jek, Bukalapak and Tokopedia. But of course, those who succeed are not as many as those who fail or go bankrupt. Some of the things that cause many startups to fail in Indonesia are the products being sold that do not match market needs.

As many as 23% of startups admit that they do not have the right team to build a business. Even though a solid team is the foundation for the company's success, losing in competition, incorrect pricing, there are startups that set prices too high but there are also those that are too low, lack of funding, not paying attention to customer satisfaction, difficulty getting investors, difficulty determining the business model appropriate, no experience in running a business, company culture has not yet been formed. However, an important factor in keeping a business running is the need for agile leaders. Agile leadership can increase the speed of responding to change. In an ever-changing business world, the ability to respond quickly to market and customer changes is critical.

Agile leadership in general is leadership that is able to navigate an organization to be more adaptive, productive and superior in all situations. Agile leadership is a style of agile leadership that differs from traditional management models, the most visible characteristics of which are speed and flexibility. This leadership style emphasizes collaboration, not command. Managers or organizational leaders work according to the principle of serving team members and customers, not managing and controlling (Zakaria et al., 2022).

Agile leadership has various characteristics that are very prominent compared to other leadership characteristics (Kusumawati & Arizqi, 2021). The characteristics of agile leadership can be divided as follows: (1). Leadership Based on Partnership. Partnership-based leadership refers to the way a leader works with his team. In agile leadership, a leader must be able to build strong relationships with his team members and work together closely. A leader must listen to

the views and ideas of his team and consider their input when making decisions (2). Leadership Based on Collaboration. Leadership based on collaboration is an important aspect of agile leadership. A leader must be able to facilitate good cooperation and communication between team members. In agile leadership, the leader must ensure that the team is able to work together to achieve the same goal. (3). Results-Based Leadership and Client Orientation. Results-based leadership and client orientation are other characteristics of agile leadership.

An entrepreneur who has agility will be obsessed with providing value to customers. Agile leadership can be interpreted as agility/nimbleness in influencing other people and making desired changes (Sanatigar, Peikani, & Gholamzadeh, 2017). Agility is considered one of the key skills for today's managers and an agile manager who possesses multiple skills with flexibility and speed can facilitate the achievement of greater organizational success, by being ready to meet the challenges of today's world (Buhler, 2010). So it can be concluded that agile leadership is leadership that has agility and nimbleness in guiding the team and continues to influence team behavior to always provide value to customers by having many skills, flexibility and speed that can facilitate the achievement of greater organizational success and always be ready to meet world challenges. At the moment.

Of course, to be able to produce agile startup leaders, serious efforts are needed from all stakeholders, from the government to the private sector. The founders and managers of startups are generally millennials who are young and have no experience in entrepreneurship. There are still many startup leaders who do not understand that the current demand is to become agile leaders. In this VUCA era, several traditional leadership styles are considered no longer appropriate for their time. In leading a company, a special strategy is needed to survive in conditions that continue to develop in order to anticipate VUCA situations.

Based on the description above, this research is aimed at answering the question of whether agile leadership has been implemented by startup founders and managers and how agile training should be implemented so that businesses can continue to run amidst intense leadership competition in the VUCA era.

METHODS

This is a qualitative study. According to Sugiyono (2018:213) qualitative research methods are research methods based on philosophy that are used to research scientific conditions (experiments) where the researcher is the instrument, data collection techniques and qualitative analysis emphasize meaning. This method is used to research natural object conditions, (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument. Data source sampling was carried out purposively and snowball, the collection technique was triangulation (combination), data analysis was inductive or qualitative and the results of qualitative research emphasized meaning rather than generalization.

This research uses a case study approach. Case studies are empirical investigations that investigate contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts (Yin, 1981a, 2009). According to Creswell (2014), a case study is a research strategy for carefully investigating something by collecting complete information using various data collection procedures. Apart from that, case studies are also carried out to gain an in-depth understanding and analyze more intensively something about an individual, group or situation.

Data collection in this research was through an interview process using a semi-structured interview method with a number of informants. This type of interview is included in the in-depth interview category, where its implementation is freer compared to structured interviews (Sugiyono, 2020: 306). Researchers used semi-structured interviews with the aim of finding problems more openly, where the parties invited to interview were asked for their opinions and ideas. In this research, researchers interviewed 10 students managing startups at the private university XYZ located in Jakarta.

The data analysis technique in this research uses the analysis technique from Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2020: 246) which states that activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continue continuously until completion. According to Miles & Huberman (Sugiyono, 2020:246) analysis consists of three streams of activities that occur simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions/verification. More details regarding these three flows are as follows:

1. *Data Reduction*. Data reduction is defined as the process of selecting, focusing on simplifying, abstracting and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes in the field. Data reduction occurs continuously throughout a qualitative research-oriented project. During data collection, the next stages of reduction took place (summarizing, coding, exploring themes, creating clusters, creating partitions, making memos).
2. *Data Presentation*. Miles & Huberman defines a presentation as a collection of structured information that provides the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action. They believe that better presentations are the main means for valid qualitative analysis, including: various types of matrices, graphs, networks and charts.
3. *Drawing conclusions*. According to Miles & Huberman, drawing conclusions is only part of one activity of a complete configuration. Conclusions were also verified during the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of interviews with startup management students show data that before taking part in the training they did not understand what is meant by 'agile leadership' and what the benefits are for startup managers. However, after completing the training, it turned out that a lot of knowledge regarding strategies for managing startups was gained, so that the business would not fail even if it was run in the era of disruption or VUCA.

Table 1. Startup Managers' Knowledge in Agile Leadership

No	Aspects of Agile leadership	Knowledge of Startup Manager's in Agile Leadership
1.	Context Setting Agility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Learning to be more visionary. b. Learning to be more sensitive in recognizing the environment and prepare yourself to face changes c. Thinking out of the box, and can influence others
2.	Stakeholder Agility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Learning to understand who the main stakeholders are, internal and external b. Building good communication with stakeholders to get support for the business they are building c. Finding strategies for collaborating with internal and external stakeholders

- 3. Creative Agility
 - d. Motivating team members and employees to be passionate about developing the business
 - a. Being more creative with new ideas for business development
 - b. Being able to turn complex problems into something useful
 - c. Being able to identify new opportunities
 - d. Learning from failure
 - e. Learning from other people's experiences
- 4. Self Leadership Agility
 - a. Improving good time management
 - b. Improving skills both in leadership and in business
 - c. Carrying out self-reflection so you can quickly make improvements
 - d. Maintaining consistency to make dreams come true
 - e. Encouraging positive behavior, and suppress negative behavior
 - f. Motivating yourself to do better and be better.
 - g. Being able to build good communication with all stakeholders

From the data above, it can be concluded that after attending the training, the students' ability to manage startups became better. This is in line with the opinion of Joiner and Joseph (2007) who stated that there are 4 competencies possessed by agile leaders, namely context setting agility, stakeholder agility, creative agility and self-leadership agility. This "agile leadership" training was previously held at XYZ University. The first training was also organized by student organizations by inviting internal lecturers to teach startup management students. However, what is felt is that the results are not optimal. The participants were dissatisfied with many factors, ranging from the training methods provided, which were considered boring, material that was not interesting, classrooms that were not arranged according to training needs, to inappropriate training times. The following is a comparison of what startup management students feel, as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Comparison between "Agile Leadership" training held internally by XYZ University and training in collaboration with professional training institutions.

No	Aspects	Internal Training from the University	External Training in Collaboration with Professional Training Institutions
1.	Trainer	Trainers are teachers from within the university, who are invited by the Student Executive Board	Pelatih adalah trainer dari Lembaga Training Profesional. Trainer atau narasumber diundang oleh Badan Executive Mahasiswa.
2.	Materials/ Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The material provided is no different from the material for regular lectures, presented in book form and with lots of theory. b. The material is too thick and not suitable for training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The training material provided to participants is made very interesting, and different from the material for lectures which contain more theory. b. The materials/modules are made to be very interesting, and very

No	Aspects	Internal Training from the University	External Training in Collaboration with Professional Training Institutions
			suitable for training activities.
3.	Training Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The training method was not different from regular lectures. b. The method was only one-way and not interactive. c. There was no ice-breaking session as is usually given in training. d. No Role Play. e. Participants were not given a chance to do a presentation. f. There was no Focus Group Discussion g. This one-way and unvaried method made participants bored and sleepy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The training method was very different from regular lectures. b. It had a very interactive method. c. Ice-breaking was given periodically during the training, so that participants did not get bored. d. Participants had an opportunity to do a Role Play. e. Participants were given the opportunity to do presentations. f. There was a Focus Group Discussion session g. This varied methods did not make participants feel bored or sleepy, and remain enthusiastic about following the training until the program ends.
4.	Training Schedule	The training schedule was held after lecture hours, where most participants were tired so they were less focused on the training	The training schedule was held specifically during semester breaks and there are no lectures, so that participants could focus on taking part in the training.
5.	Venue	Training was held in campus, in the classrooms with a seating arrangement layout like classes during regular lectures.	Training was held in the classrooms with different seating arrangements, namely in the form of Letter U and small group discussions, unlike classes during regular lectures. This seating arrangement has a great influence on the interaction between participants and trainers, as well as the activity between fellow participants during training.
6.	Teaching Aids	No teaching aids were used during the training. The teacher only showed a power point presentation, with several videos.	Trainers provide teaching aids that were used during the training, so that participants understand more about the material presented.

The interview results show that there is a difference between training organized internally by universities and training in collaboration with the Professional Training Center. Judging from the trainer's perspective, learning methods, learning materials/modules, training time, training location, and teaching aids, the "Agile Leadership" training which was held in collaboration with professional training institutions, showed more optimal results. The participants become more focused in participating in the training and feel happier and more comfortable, do not feel bored or sleepy, so that the targets and objectives of the training can be achieved. This is in line with what was stated by Mangkunegara (2013).

CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that to improve the quality of startups managed by students, a special training related to Agile Leadership is needed, so that startup managers can lead their companies according to the demands of the VUCA era. Startup managers in the VUCA era cannot just rely on existing capabilities without improving the required competency aspects, namely context setting agility, stakeholder agility, creative agility, and self-leadership agility. These four competencies can be obtained through effective "Agile Leadership" training. However, to carry out effective training it is necessary to consider things such as the quality of the trainer, the material delivered, the methods applied, the time and place of the training and the tools or training tools used. If these factors are implemented according to the objectives, then "Agile Leadership" training can provide optimal results. For further research, the researcher suggests conducting research related to the implementation of training for startup management students with a different approach.

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