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## Determinants of Effective Leadership in Agile Organization: A Case Study

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Artur Kwasek<sup>1</sup>, Maria Kocot<sup>2</sup>, Leonard Milewski<sup>3</sup>, Sylwia Szymanek<sup>4</sup>,  
Bartosz Błaszczak<sup>5</sup>, Arkadiusz Weremczuk<sup>6</sup>

### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The aim of this article is to identify the key determinants of effective leadership in organizations operating with agility in highly variable environments. Particular attention is given to analyzing the role of the leader in supporting the practical implementation of agility principles within the organization.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This article is based on a qualitative approach, incorporating a case study and a meta-analysis of empirical research. The data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and a review of scientific literature focusing on the relationship between leadership and organizational agility.

**Findings:** The research confirmed that effective leadership in agile organizations does not result from formal hierarchies, but rather from the ability to foster an environment based on trust, autonomy, and shared responsibility. It also demonstrated that a high level of adaptive capabilities and emotional intelligence in leaders significantly influences team engagement, innovation, and organizational learning.

**Practical Implications:** The research results form the basis for practical recommendations for companies aiming to develop leadership competencies that support agility, particularly in dynamic and unpredictable environments. The findings highlight the importance of a leadership style based on participation, transparent communication, and systemic thinking.

**Originality/Value:** The article contributes added value to the discourse on agile leadership by combining theoretical analysis with empirical data from diverse organizational contexts. It

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<sup>1</sup>Ph.D., Vistula University in Warsaw, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0003-4386-1444,  
e-mail: [a.kwasek@vistula.edu.pl](mailto:a.kwasek@vistula.edu.pl);

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D., University of Economics in Katowice, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0001-5150-3765,  
e-mail: [maria.kocot@ue.katowice.pl](mailto:maria.kocot@ue.katowice.pl)

<sup>3</sup>Ph.D., University of Technology and Economics, Warsaw, Poland,  
ORCID: 0000-0002-3742-5198, e-mail: [leonard.milewski@uth.edu.pl](mailto:leonard.milewski@uth.edu.pl)

<sup>4</sup>Mrs. Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Department of Hydraulic Engineering,  
Technology and Organisation of Works, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0001-6181-8541,  
e-mail: [sylwia.szymanek@sggw.edu.pl](mailto:sylwia.szymanek@sggw.edu.pl)

<sup>5</sup>Ph.D., Higher School of Professional Education Wroclaw, Poland,  
ORCID: 0009-0002-0457-4434, e-mail: [bartosz.blaszczak@wskz.pl](mailto:bartosz.blaszczak@wskz.pl)

<sup>6</sup>Ph.D., Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Department Economics and Economic Policy,  
Poland, ORCID: 0000-0002-6839-8508, e-mail: [arkadiusz.weremczuk@sggw.edu.pl](mailto:arkadiusz.weremczuk@sggw.edu.pl)

*proposes a comprehensive approach to understanding the mechanisms through which leadership supports organizational agility and resilience.*

**Keywords:** *Agile organization, leadership, organization.*

**JEL codes:** *I21, I23.*

**Paper Type:** *Research article.*

## **1. Introduction**

Contemporary organizations operate in conditions of constant variability, complexity, and increasing market uncertainty. These circumstances require a redefinition of traditional approaches to management and leadership. Dynamic transformational processes, technological progress, pressure to innovate, and ever-growing customer expectations contribute to the inadequacy of traditional models of team management.

These models are proving to be insufficient (Aftab, Khalid, Waheed, Aftab, and Adnan, 2022). In this context, the concept of organizational agility is gaining increasing importance. Agility is understood as an organization's ability to respond flexibly to change, adapt to new conditions, and seize emerging opportunities. A key role in developing this capability is played by leaders, whose attitudes, competencies, and actions are among the main determinants of organizational success (Hoda and Noble, 2017).

Addressing the topic of effective leadership in agile organizations is justified by the need to deepen our understanding of the mechanisms through which leadership can enhance adaptability, support team autonomy, and foster a culture of shared responsibility.

This article adds value by providing an empirical analysis of the factors that determine leadership effectiveness in agile environments and by identifying consistent leadership patterns across diverse organizational contexts. Linking theoretical foundations with the results of qualitative research and meta-analyses of available studies not only improves our understanding of agile leadership but also offers practical guidance for managers and decision-makers implementing agility principles in their organizations.

The structure of the article includes a theoretical section that presents the definition and characteristics of organizational agility as well as the role of the leader in this management model. The following sections present the results of empirical research and case studies, highlighting the determinants of effective leadership in agile environments. The article concludes with a synthesis of key findings, practical

management recommendations, and a discussion of research limitations and potential directions for further study.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Assumptions Theoretical Agile Organization**

The contemporary turbulent business reality drives every organization to search for ways to consolidate its market position. Organizations today operate in the era of Industry 4.0, which requires the implementation of IT solutions across all areas of activity.

The rapid pace of innovation and technological advancement, along with progressing digitalization and growing customer expectations for personalized offerings, lead to highly dynamic changes in the market environment. Innovation has become one of the integral elements of implementing new solutions and ideas.

Therefore, organizations should undertake actions aimed at identifying sources of innovation. One such approach is the effective management of the organization based on the principles of organizational agility (agile) (Nerur and Balijepally, 2007).

In the subject literature, the concept of agility is understood in various ways. It is perceived as the ability to survive and operate successfully in a competitive, turbulent environment full of unpredictable changes, which requires fast and effective responses to market shifts. To meet this challenge, the organization must respond to customer needs by creating highly personalized offers. The concept of agility is also analyzed in terms of proactive actions undertaken by the organization, its adaptive capabilities in a turbulent market environment, flexibility, and rapid responsiveness. These characteristics reflect the organization's ability to strengthen its market position through intelligent and proactive identification of opportunities and emerging threats (Rulinawaty and Samboteng, 2020).

Undoubtedly, changing conditions and work requirements necessitate the development of agile behaviors at both the employee and organizational levels. These behaviors include the ability to rapidly identify market opportunities, promptly recognize environmental threats, assess situations as favorable or unfavorable, execute tasks efficiently while monitoring their progress, and effectively combine strategic vision with operational management. This involves the capacity to disseminate ideas while simultaneously embedding them in organizational processes, assess the adequacy of available resources, and acquire additional resources from the external environment (Sońta-Drączkowska, 2018).

Therefore, after a thorough analysis of the literature, it can be concluded that the term "agility" refers to an organization's ability to quickly evaluate situations as favorable

or unfavorable and, as a result, exploit opportunities and avoid threats (Rulinaway and Samboteng, 2020).

Organizational agility manifests itself in several key areas of organizational functioning (e.g., in building relationships with the environment or developing innovations). Furthermore, organizations operating in the era of Industry 4.0 should utilize IT systems that support management processes (Hoda and Noble, 2017).

## **2.2 The Role of a Leader in an Agile Organization**

The role of a leader in an agile organization is gaining new significance compared to traditional management models (Sochova, 2020). In the context of agile organizations, the leader primarily acts as a catalyst for change, a facilitator of processes, and a supporter of team autonomy. Their main task is to create conditions conducive to the development of flexible structures that allow the organization to respond quickly to changes in the market environment and customer needs (Theobald, Prenner, Krieg, and Schneider, 2020).

In an agile organization, the leader is responsible for fostering a culture of openness, trust, and continuous learning (Xu and Shen, 2018). The ability to experiment and learn from mistakes is regarded as an essential element of development. Leaders support teams in reflecting on their actions rather than focusing on rigid performance assessments. Instead of imposing decisions, the leader enables teams to make their own, acting in an advisory, inspiring, and supportive role (Attar and Abdul-Kareem, 2020).

Agile leadership is based on listening, empathy, and openness to dialogue. Therefore, the leader should demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence, be sensitive to signals from within the organization, and be able to adjust their actions to the individual needs of team members. Rather than dominating, the leader should build an atmosphere of shared responsibility and co-creation of goals and strategies (Aftab, Khalid, Waheed, Aftab, and Adnan, 2022).

In agile organizations, leaders play a crucial role in building intrinsic motivation (Golińska-Pieszyńska, Kocot, and Kwasek, 2024). This form of motivation stems from a sense of meaning in one's work, the ability to influence decisions, and opportunities for personal development. The leader's task is therefore to uncover the potential of team members and encourage them to take initiative. At the same time, the leader should eliminate obstacles that limit their independence and creativity (Delioglu and Uysal, 2022).

An agile leader is also required to have a systemic view of the organization as a whole (Neto, Penha, da Silva, and Scafuto, 2022). This includes not only being results-oriented but also having the ability to manage change, create a vision, and translate it into clear directions for the team. The leader should embody the organizational values

that promote agility, such as adaptability, transparency, collaboration, and customer focus (Gren and Lindman, 2020).

Equally important is the leader's role in knowledge management and in supporting innovation (Rzepka and Bojar, 2020). An agile organization evolves through continuous learning, iterative process improvement, and rapid hypothesis testing. Understanding the value of these mechanisms, the leader should create an environment that fosters knowledge sharing, interdisciplinary collaboration, and experimentation with new solutions (Golińska-Pieszyńska, Kocot, and Kwasek, 2024).

In conclusion, the role of a leader in an agile organization revolves around creating space for team autonomy, strengthening a culture of trust and openness, and enabling the continuous development of both individuals and the organization. This role is more about supporting than managing, and more about inspiring than controlling. It requires a fundamental shift in thinking about leadership and workplace relationships (Neto, Penha, da Silva, and Scafuto, 2022).

### **2.3 Determinants of Effective and Agile Leadership**

The determinants of effective and agile leadership are embedded in the dynamic context of modern organizations, which must operate under conditions of constant variability, complexity, and uncertainty (Rzepka and Bojar, 2020). The effectiveness of leadership in such an environment depends not only on hard competencies but above all on adaptive capacity, reflectiveness, and the ability to build relationships based on cooperation (Porkodi, 2024; Saeed, 2024).

A key competence is the ability to quickly assimilate feedback and integrate it into decision-making processes. This enables flexible responses to change while remaining aligned with the long-term vision of the organization (Akkaya, Panait, Apostu, and Kaya, 2022).

One of the fundamental factors shaping agile leadership is systemic awareness, understood as the ability to perceive the organization as a whole functioning within a network of mutual interdependencies (Jintian, Sukamani, and Kusi, 2022). Such awareness enables the leader to recognize the consequences of their own actions and understand how changes in one area affect other elements of the organization. This perspective supports strategic decision-making that promotes development and coherence of operations (Şahin and Alp, 2020).

Another important determinant is the ability to build relationships based on partnership and authentic engagement (Sumadireja, Dachyar, Farizal, Ma'aram, and Park, 2025). Agile leadership is grounded in trust and consistency, which are essential for building credibility (Yan and Rafiq, 2025). In this context, consistency between declared values and everyday actions becomes especially meaningful.

Authenticity and transparency in communication can be seen as the foundation of enduring influence—one that does not rely on coercion but stems from the voluntary commitment of team members who follow the leader by choice (Akkaya and Bagieńska, 2022).

An indispensable aspect of effective agile leadership is psychological resilience and readiness to act in uncertain conditions with incomplete information (Grześ, 2023). A leader must be capable of making decisions despite uncertainty, managing risk, and accepting the possibility of failure as a natural part of the learning process. This demands courage as well as humility—understood as the ability to recognize one's own limitations and remain open to others' perspectives (Husein, Salim, Nurhayati, and Riyanto, 2023).

Another essential competence is the ability to manage diversity—both in terms of skills and culture. Agile teams often work in interdisciplinary and cross-functional models, so it is crucial to create an environment in which different ways of thinking are accepted and actively leveraged. Leadership in such an environment requires a high level of cultural intelligence and the ability to mediate between diverse working styles and expectations (Sasanti, Patiro, and Maharani, 2024).

The determinants of effective agile leadership should not be considered in isolation from the organizational context. Of key importance is the ability to build a sense of community around shared meaning and to inspire collaborative effort that transcends previous limitations (Prokopowicz and Matosek, 2023).

An agile leader attentively responds to signals emerging during the work process. In this way, the leader becomes a cohesive force—integrating dispersed efforts into a unified whole and enabling effective and sustainable action, even in the most demanding conditions (Özgenel, Yazıcı, and Asmaz, 2022).

### **3. Methods and Materials**

#### **3.1 Methods**

The aim of the article is to analyze the determinants of effective leadership in agile organizations from an empirical perspective, with particular emphasis on the mechanisms by which leadership influences team performance and the adaptability of organizational structures. An attempt was made to understand how the characteristics and behaviors of leaders support the implementation of agility principles in the work environment, as well as what internal and external conditions strengthen or hinder this process.

A research hypothesis was formulated, stating that effective leadership in agile organizations is determined not so much by formal structure, but by a management style based on participation, open communication, and the support of team autonomy.

It was also assumed that the influence of leaders on organizational agility is manifested primarily in their ability to build an environment conducive to learning, operational flexibility, and sustained employee engagement.

To verify the stated hypothesis, research questions were posed regarding what specific actions taken by leaders contribute to the effective implementation of agility principles, what competencies teams expect from their leaders in the context of dynamic change, and how leaders influence the creation of an organizational culture that supports agility.

The analysis refers to previously conducted empirical studies, including both qualitative case studies and meta-analyses of existing scientific research. This approach enabled a synthetic view of the phenomena and the identification of consistent patterns of agile leadership across various industry and organizational contexts.

The adopted analytical approach made it possible to capture the relationships between leadership attitudes and the effectiveness of agile implementation. These findings provide a basis for further theoretical and practical considerations in the field of managing complexity in modern organizations.

### **3.2 Results**

In the study conducted by Sunil Kumar Suvvari (2024), the implementation process of agile leadership in the international technology company GlobalTech Inc. was analyzed. The objective of the case study was to identify the factors that enable effective leadership in the context of profound organizational transformation carried out in accordance with agile principles.

The analysis was based on qualitative data, including 25 in-depth interviews with employees and participant observations conducted over a two-year period. The research showed that leaders played a fundamental role in creating an environment based on trust, transparent communication, and a shared sense of purpose.

The transition to the agile model was made possible through the consistent support of grassroots initiatives, modeling of desired behaviors, and the promotion of a mindset that embraces experimentation and learning from mistakes. Leaders acted as facilitators and mentors, encouraging team autonomy and responsibility (Suvvari, 2024).

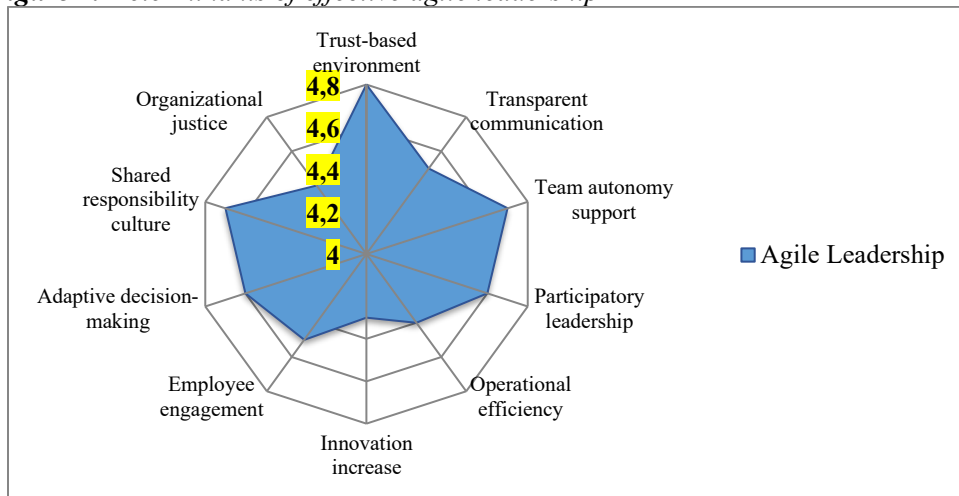
Similar conclusions emerged from a meta-analysis of empirical studies published in the *\*Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation\**, in which a research team analyzed 24 scientific articles focused on the relationship between leadership and organizational agility. The findings showed that agile leaders contribute not only to increased operational efficiency, but also to enhanced innovation and employee

engagement. Key determinants of effective leadership included flexibility in decision-making, openness to change, and the ability to foster a culture of shared responsibility.

Importantly, it was observed that organizational trust and justice mediate the positive impact of leadership on organizational outcomes, strengthening internal relationships and supporting the sustainability of transformation processes (Kozłowski, Nowicka, and Schmidt, 2024).

Both the case study and the meta-analysis indicate that effective leadership in agile organizations requires moving away from hierarchical management models in favor of participation, empathy, and a focus on team development. Leadership is a relational process. Its strength lies not in formal authority, but in the ability to create meaning in action, inspire growth, and respond adaptively to environmental complexity.

**Figure 1.** *Determinants of effective agile leadership*



**Source:** *Own study.*

Figure 1, based on empirical data, presents the key determinants of effective leadership in an agile organization. The chart illustrates the evaluation of ten areas identified as the most important for effective leadership in the context of agility. The values of individual determinants are high, ranging from approximately 4.3 to 4.8 on a five-point scale, which confirms their critical importance in organizational practice.

The highest-rated factors include the creation of an environment based on trust, the support of team autonomy, and the development of a culture of shared responsibility. This indicates that leadership effectiveness results from the leader's ability to empower employee independence and to create a space conducive to development and collaboration. Equally important is transparent communication, which enables teams to better understand objectives and make informed decisions in dynamic conditions.



Slightly lower scores were observed for factors related to operational efficiency and innovation. This may suggest that such outcomes are the result of prior leadership actions rather than direct starting points. The added value of Figure 1 lies in its ability to capture the relationship between leadership style and the organization's capacity for adaptation, continuous learning, and employee engagement—factors that directly translate into measurable outcomes.

The visualization provides a synthetic overview of the key characteristics of an agile leader and helps to understand the foundations of effective management in complex and volatile environments. It serves both as a summary of the research results and as a practical tool for reflecting on the directions for leadership competency development in modern organizations.

### **3.3 Discussion**

The considerations presented lead to the conclusion that effective leadership in an agile organization is grounded in the reinforcement of team autonomy, the creation of a culture of trust and shared responsibility, and the promotion of transparent communication.

The role of the leader is redefined as supportive, inspiring, and development-oriented. Leadership effectiveness stems from the ability to foster an environment that encourages learning, operational flexibility, and a shared sense of purpose in team activities. The findings confirm that organizational agility serves as an essential mechanism for adapting to dynamic and unpredictable business environments.

Leaders function as facilitators of change, integrating dispersed team efforts into a coherent strategic direction. Leadership traits such as the ability to build relationships based on partnership, manage diversity, and demonstrate psychological resilience in situations of incomplete information were rated as particularly important.

It was also shown that effective agile leadership contributes to increased employee engagement, enhanced organizational innovation, and improved risk management capabilities.

The research confirms that the successful implementation of agility principles is only possible in organizations where leadership is understood as a relational rather than a purely formal process. Therefore, the development of leadership competencies—such as flexibility, empathy, authenticity, and systemic thinking—is fundamental to strengthening organizational agility in response to the challenges of the modern world.

## **4. Conclusions**

Based on the formulated conclusions, the following recommendations can be made for companies seeking to enhance their organizational agility and operate effectively

in a constantly changing business environment. Organizations should invest in the development of leadership competencies focused on flexibility, empathy, emotional intelligence, and the ability to build relationships grounded in trust and shared responsibility.

It is advisable to shift away from hierarchical management models in favor of a participatory style that supports team autonomy and enables independent decision-making. Companies should foster a culture of continuous learning, experimentation, and acceptance of mistakes as part of the development process. To support this, it is recommended to implement mechanisms that encourage transparent communication, knowledge sharing, and reflective practices.

Furthermore, organizations should design management structures that promote interdisciplinarity and diversity, recognizing these factors as resources that support innovation and adaptability. It is also important to cultivate a work environment that welcomes different thinking styles and cultural contexts of team functioning. Leaders should act as facilitators and inspirers rather than supervisors, supporting the development of team competencies and removing barriers that limit creativity and autonomy. At the same time, they should serve as integrators of organizational strategy and team-level operational activities.

Companies should also implement management systems that facilitate agility. These include iterative design approaches, digital tools enabling rapid response to change, and feedback systems that incorporate insights into decision-making processes. It is recommended to foster an organizational culture centered on purpose and engagement, as this helps sustain employees' intrinsic motivation and long-term commitment to achieving strategic goals, even in uncertain conditions.

Future research could focus on quantitatively verifying the relationship between leadership style and the level of organizational agility across various sectors of the economy. Such studies would allow for broader generalizations and the identification of sector-specific conditions. It also seems valuable to extend the research scope to examine the long-term effects of agile leadership on employee satisfaction, engagement, and the success of implemented projects.

It would be worthwhile to include the perspectives of customers, business partners, and other external stakeholders in future studies. This would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how agile organizations function. Additionally, the impact of cultural and regional factors on the effectiveness of Agile implementation, as well as the role of digital tools in creating work environments that foster flexibility and shared responsibility, remains a promising area for further investigation.

From the standpoint of management theory development, it is justified to deepen the reflection on the integration of agility with other paradigms—such as knowledge management, innovation, or sustainable development. This could lead to the

emergence of new theoretical models and practical recommendations for organizations operating under conditions of constant change.

## **5. Limitations**

The limitations of the research presented in this article stem primarily from the nature of the applied methodology, which was based on case studies and qualitative data analysis. This type of approach limits the possibility of fully generalizing the results to a broader population of organizations.

Additionally, the analysis focused on selected examples of leadership functioning within a specific industry and organizational context, which may affect the representativeness and transferability of the findings. It is also necessary to acknowledge that the data collected from interviews and observations may have been influenced by respondent subjectivity and the interpretative nature of the researchers' conclusions.

The study did not include perspectives from customers or other external stakeholders. Including such viewpoints could have broadened the contextual assessment of agile leadership effectiveness.

Finally, due to the dynamic nature of the business environment, the research results may be time-sensitive. Consequently, they may require updates in response to changing conditions affecting how organizations operate.

## **6. Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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