



AGILE LEADERSHIP AT START-UP “CARA BICARA”

Oktavia Erlina Dwi Anggraini, Rita Mutiarni*
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi (STIE) PGRI Dewantara, Jombang
Correspondence *: ritam@stiedewantara.ac.id

Submitted: 20 March 2024, Revised: 5 April 2024, Published: 30 April 2024

Abstract

An agile leadership style is an approach that is responsive to business change, with transparency, collaboration, and adaptability. This leadership style suits current business conditions and is open to active and dynamic participation from all organization members. This research is intended to look at the application of Agile leadership in the “Cara Bicara” strategy. This research used a qualitative approach to obtain complete information about Agile leadership by leaders at the start-up “Cara Bicara.” Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, documentation, and interviews with 5 (five) informants who were leaders of the “Cara Bicara” team. From the research results, it can be seen that the leadership of “Cara Bicara” has implemented the Agile Leadership model well, which is reflected in 1) Providing individual Support, team trust, and conflict resolution; 2) Actively involved in decision-making; 3) Exploring team potential and team mentoring; 4) Manage differences of opinion in the team; 5) work efficiency and effectiveness using multitasking teams, priority scale, and agility and 6) Simulations in the field, project base, weekly meetings, and expertise to increase innovation.

Keywords: Agile Leadership, Start-Up, “Cara Bicara”

A. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HR) is a scientific discipline related to workforce management in an organization (Tamsah & Nurung, 2022; Amelia et al., 2022). The aim is to create a productive and efficient work environment and improve organizational performance through optimal human resource management.

As one of the important assets in an organization, human resource management should be carried out systematically and structured with supervision and command from company leadership. The role of leaders is considered necessary in managing human resources in an organization (Sihite & Saleh, 2019). Good leadership can give employees clear direction and motivate them to work effectively (Julianto & Carnarez, 2021).

Effective leadership can also help create a positive work culture and build good relationships between employees and management. With the current conditions of tight business competition, companies must carry out continuous checks, preparations, and improvements with direction from the leadership. This is where a leader's skill, agility, and agility are needed. One leadership style currently widely discussed in information technology-based businesses is agile leadership (Pardamean, 2022).

An Agile leadership style is an approach that promotes team member involvement in the product development process, results orientation, and continuous learning (Mike Cohn, 2010). The agile leadership style is an adaptive and responsive approach to changes in the business environment. This leadership style requires open, transparent leadership and can motivate team members (Fowler, 2006)

This leadership style emphasizes adapting to change, responsiveness to customer

and market needs, and effective team collaboration. Agile leadership also emphasizes transparency and open communication, fast decision-making, and innovative use of technology.

Agile leadership emphasizes top-down and adopts bottom-up by considering input from subordinates, thus providing delegation to the team to become more involved in decision-making (Wijoyo: 2022).

Agile leadership differs from participatory leadership; structurally agile leadership has a flat structure or no boundaries between superiors and subordinates. Meanwhile, structurally participatory leadership has hierarchical boundaries according to level or position. Agile leadership is more flexible, adaptive, and efficient in decision-making and task division.

Agile leadership can positively impact employee performance because this approach encourages active involvement and team participation in making decisions and achieving shared goals. Agile leadership has a moderate, positive, and significant moderating influence on the interaction between strategic flexibility to improve digital transformation (Olivia Fachrunisa, 2022). With an agile leadership style, employees feel they have more of a role in the organization, and this can increase their motivation and involvement in work. Besides that, agile leadership also prioritizes open and transparent communication so employees can easily convey input and feedback to the leadership and team. This can increase Trust and openness within the team and allow problems or obstacles to be identified and resolved quickly.

Agile leadership is a leadership approach suitable for start-ups because start-ups generally operate in very dynamic markets and change rapidly. The Agile leadership approach encourages close collaboration between teams and openness in communication, making it suitable for start-ups. The agile leadership approach encourages efficient and effective product or service development with minimal time and cost. This is very suitable for start-ups, which often have limited resources.

In Indonesia, start-ups are proliferating, and Indonesia is ranked fifth worldwide in the number of start-ups, reaching 2,502 start-ups operating in various fields in 2022. One example of a start-up company that implements Agile leadership is “Cara Bicara”, Ltd. Co. This company focuses on developing soft skills. Founded in 2022, the company enables collaboration between its teams and leaders, including the Founder & CEO, in strategic decision-making.

Even though it is still new, the Start-up “Cara Bicara” has performed excellently. This is thought to be because the management of the “Cara Bicara” start-up, which its leader implemented, was able to be implemented and followed by all employees/members of the “Cara Bicara” team well.

This research aims to examine the leadership style at the start-up “Cara Bicara” more deeply. It is hoped that the results of this research will be able to provide input for the management of “Cara Bicara”. Apart from that, it is also hoped that the results of this research will provide new insight into the development of Human Resources management science, especially discussions about leadership styles.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Human Resources Management

Human resource management is planning, organizing, directing, and supervising the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance of funds, and termination of labor relations intended to help the organization's goals, individuals, and

society (Suharyanto and Hadna 2005).

There are several functions of human resource management, according to Gary Dessler (2017), namely: 1) Human resource planning; 2) Procurement of human resources; 3) searching for and attracting the right people to meet the organization's workforce needs; 4) Human resource development; 5) Maintaining human resources: 6) managing and retaining employees to remain productive and motivated; 7) Performance management; 8) Compensation management; 9) determine and manage employee salaries & benefits, as well as develop incentive and bonus systems that encourage employees to achieve better performance.

2. Agile Leadership

Agile Leadership is a leadership approach that focuses on developing adaptive, innovative products that can handle uncertainty in a changing business environment. This leadership style is based on a framework that promotes collaboration, continuous improvement, and iterative and incremental product development. Agile leadership also requires openness, transparency, the ability to motivate and inspire team members, and an orientation towards results and continuous learning. Besides, agile leadership emphasizes involving team members in product development to produce high business value.

Sutherland (2014), one of the originators of the Agile Scrum method, identified several characteristics of the Agile leadership style, namely: 1) Focus on the team; 2) Active involvement; 3) Flexibility; 4) Collaborative decision-making; 5) Focus on delivering valuable products; 6) Continuous improvement.

3. Benefits of Agile Leadership

The agile leadership style has been developed to help organizations achieve the speed and flexibility needed to survive in a dynamic and rapidly changing business environment. Some of the benefits of the agile leadership style (Cohn, 2010) are 1) Increased efficiency and effectiveness, 2) Increased product quality, 3) Increased team engagement, 4) Increased adaptability, and 5) Increased innovation.

Fowler (2006) provides indicators of agile leadership style, namely: 1) Being a coach; 2) Having a service attitude; 3) Promoting team engagement; 4) Creating a safe environment; 5) Promoting openness and transparency; 6) Having speed and flexibility; 7) Motivate and inspire the team.

4. Employee Performance

Employee performance involves ability, motivation, working conditions, work results, and behavior. Employee performance can be measured through various factors such as productivity, work quality, attendance, and contribution to organizational goals. Muchinsky and Culbertson (2016) stated that several factors influence performance, namely: 1) Personality; 2) Abilities and skills; 3) Motivation; 4) Individual perception of the task; 5) Job satisfaction; 6) Social Support; 7) Environmental factors.

According to Dessler (2019), several employee performance indicators can be used by organizations, namely: 1) Technical capabilities; 2) Interpersonal skills; 3) Contribution to the Team; 4) Compliance with policies and procedures; 5) Productivity; 6) Quality of work; 7) Initiative; 8) Attendance; 9) Attitude towards work.

5. Start-Up

According to Paul Graham, start-up success indicators emphasize growth as the leading indicator. This is because growth can reflect how well the start-up's product or service is accepted and how significant the market potential is. However, other factors, such as customer satisfaction and the value created, are also essential to assess. Budiman (2022) states that working at a start-up has several benefits, including 1) Multi-tasking experience, 2) a Dynamic work environment, 3) Direct involvement in business success, 4) Flexible work culture, and 5) Fast career opportunities.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research is described by Creswell (2014) as a concept or phenomenon. People dealing with a phenomenon explore the structure of consciousness of human life experience. This research on applying agile leadership was carried out at one of the start-up companies engaged in human resource development centered on communication soft skills, namely "Cara Bicara," Ltd.Co, situated in Batu City, East Java.

Qualitative interviews, observation, and documentation were used to collect data. The data analysis techniques used in this research include data reduction, data triangulation, source triangulation, theory triangulation, and conclusion. In this research, researchers will involve 5 (five) informants, namely: 1) Mr. DI as Founder and Chief Executive Officer; 2) Mr. SW as Co-Founder Chief Relations and Sales; 3) Mr. SW as Business and Development head; 4) Mr. AA as Class Admission Strategy; and 5) Mrs. DE as a Partnership and Business Enterprise.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, researchers used in-depth interviews with research informants. From the results of interviews and analysis, it can be explained as follows:

1. Focus On The Team

Leader of "Cara Bicara," Mr. DI focuses on individual development in his team. He provides examples and guidance related to various phases of working at a start-up, including how to overcome failure and learn from mistakes. DI also provides material and verbal Support to the team, assuring them they can overcome challenges. Team members, such as DE and AA, felt that Mr DI provided the opportunity to provide material and mentoring. Mr DI also provided field situation simulations to prepare the team to face various conditions. Mr. DI's Support is felt especially when team members think complicated or confused in carrying out their tasks. Mr. DI, as a leader, also provides an example first through field simulations, provides verbal and material Support, and provides flash classes or mentoring according to the needs of team members. This approach reflects Mr. DI's commitment to advancing individuals and teams in a dynamic work environment at a start-up.

It can be concluded that the individual Supports of the "Cara Bicara" leader for his team are: 1) Providing material support, 2) providing verbal Support, 3) Mentoring, and 4) Simulation in the field.

2. Build Trust In The Team

Building Trust within a team is a crucial foundation for effective leadership. This is especially visible from the "Cara Bicara" leader, who prioritizes building emotional bonds with their team to create strong company engagement.

AA team members also felt physically shocked because the leader always believed in his team. This opinion is also reflected in other team members' views, such as FB, who said that leaders build Trust by recognizing the team's abilities and giving them a sense of comfort and confidence so that the team can act with confidence.

In addition, DE team members add another dimension to building trust, namely through delegating tasks in projects and assigning strategic responsibilities, which gives team members a sense of respect and confidence in facing challenges.

It can be concluded that Mr. DI succeeded in building Trust in his team through: 1) Personal Engagement, 2) Company engagement, 3) Personal abilities, 4) Task Delegation, and 5) Comfortability.

3. Managing Conflicts That Arise In The Team

Focusing on the team is not only focused on the development process, growth, and trust in the team. However, a leader should also be able to manage conflicts that arise between teams. Mr. DI manages conflicts between teams with the presumption of innocence or impartiality (fair), listening to the opinions of each party, and for small teams preferring heart-to-heart to defend and stick together.

The role of leaders in dealing with conflict is also strengthened by the narrative from FB, which believes that conflict resolution is resolved through in-depth communication and listening. Researchers found facts and concluded that focusing on teams in leadership is very necessary. Empowering teams in a company can make them feel ownership of their work, learn from mistakes, and improve teamwork processes. This aligns with the theory put forward (Jeff Sutherland, 2014), which states that all team members must work together in a successful team to achieve a common goal.

It can be concluded that the methods of conflict resolution used by Mr. DI at the Start-up “**Cara Bicara**” are: 1) Prioritizing the principle of the presumption of innocence; 2) Fair; 3) Heart to heart; 4) Stick together; 5) Deep communication; 6) Listen.

4. Active Involvement Of Leadership To Explore Team Potential

A leader in a company needs to ensure the team's active participation in every project. Researchers found that recognizing the potential of team members and providing guidance (mentoring) when project results are not optimal is the key to increasing team involvement.

Mr. DI also showed this as the leader of “**Cara Bicara**,” confirmed by SW, who stated that Mr. DI was actively involved in team activities. This was due to DI's extensive experience in the business world. The “**Cara Bicara**” teams, DE and AA, also observed high levels of engagement from leaders in joint activities. They feel there is no distance between the leader and the team, so the leader is actively involved in discussions and decision-making, even stepping in to guide the team. Openness and flexibility of communication between team members and leaders help ensure focus on common goals, thereby achieving the best results for the company.

It can be concluded that Mr DI explores his team's potential through: 1) Mentoring and 2) Staying close to the team.

5. Collaborative Decision Making.

Collaboration in decision-making is an approach that encourages various team members or parties involved in a project to work together to reach an agreement or

decision. All members share their information, thoughts, ideas, and views during this process. Leaders are important in facilitating collaborative decision-making by discussing essential matters in meetings.

At the Start-up “**Cara Bicara**,” collaboration in decision-making is highly emphasized. The “**Cara Bicara**” team, which included members from various levels, was allowed to participate in decision-making. Leaders believe every team member, even the most junior team members, has a valuable contribution. The ideas of the millennial generation are considered very adaptive and have high value.

The leader also involves the team in determining project strategy and communicates openly about it. This allows the team to feel involved and helps refine the project strategy. This approach is consistent with the Agile leadership concept applied by leaders in “**Cara Bicara**.” According to Jeff Sutherland (2014), Agile leadership should promote collaborative decision-making and consider input from the entire team. This aligns with practices in companies where leaders actively encourage collaboration in decision-making and utilize ideas from the whole team to achieve maximum results following company goals.

So it can be concluded that the way Mr. DI applies his decision-making method is by 1) Scaling / Leveling, 2) Urgency, 3) Collective Strategy Formulation, 4) Transparency, 5) Involving the Team, and 6) Collaboration.

6. Managing Differences Of Opinion

In a team, differences of opinion are normal. However, differences of opinion between the leader and his team must be managed so that disputes do not occur between team members. In managing differences of opinion, leaders level up based on their character. The use of leveling is based on the team understanding the structure within the company and maintaining that the highest decisions within the team do not shake. Even though the “**Cara Bicara**” team is free to discuss directly with the leader, the leader tries to confirm whether the matter has been discussed with superiors in the team. If not, the member must convey this to his superior so that it can be escalated to the leader.

In managing opinions, the leader is very open to input and consistently provides feedback if input does not follow what was conveyed by the team, so the “**Cara Bicara**” leader does not just leave the opinion alone but is directed at what is best for his team.

The team leader always hears their opinions, ideas, and concerns. DE felt the leader listened to his views, problems, and suggestions. However, he tended to wait when he really couldn't think before conveying this to the leader to raise awareness and provide recommendations for resolving his conflict.

Overall, “**Cara Bicara**” leaders can manage differences of opinion following the theory (Jeff Sutherland, 2014), which suggests managing differences of opinion with good collaboration and communication and focusing on results. Apart from that, several “**Cara Bicara**” teams have confirmed the ability to manage opinions. In managing the views of “**Cara Bicara**,” leaders must understand members based on character and continuously provide feedback or direction to team members.

It can be concluded that the ways Mr. DI, as the leader of “**Cara Bicara**,” manages differences of opinion are: 1) Leveling, 2) Character, 3) Feedback, and 4) Listening to the Team's Opinion.

7. Evaluate The Success And Effectiveness Of Work.

In companies, evaluating the success and effectiveness of decisions is a critical element of team management, enabling leaders and team members to assess achievements and identify areas requiring improvement. This approach also supports increasing decision effectiveness (Jeff Sutherland, 2014). Even though “**Cara Bicara**” has not formally implemented a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) or Balanced Scorecard, DI leaders evaluate team performance substantially and measurably, not based on subjective assessments. The interview method is also considered valid and can be accounted for by leaders.

The success and effectiveness of decisions in “**Cara Bicara**” are evaluated by considering testimonials and distribution of the post-event or project job description. It is integrated into the team's weekly meeting routine, making it possible to discuss and improve results proactively. SW, Co-founder of “**Cara Bicara**,” brings an optimistic approach to evaluating decisions. Building a positive image that decisions made through collaboration will bring success while recognizing the possibility of challenges and obstacles.

Jeff Sutherland (2014) described that assessment based on team performance fits the practice in “**Cara Bicara**,” where leaders use performance outcomes as parameters to assess the effectiveness of decisions. While the SW optimism approach, although not directly related to Sutherland's theory, has a positive impact in motivating teams and reducing doubts in facing challenges, it is noted that teams must also be able to manage risks and changes that may occur.

It can be concluded that how to find out the Effectiveness Evaluation and Success of the Start-up “**Cara Bicara**” through 1) Based Interviews, 2) Based on Performance, 3) Weekly Meetings. Meanwhile, to increase work efficiency and effectiveness, Mr. DI does: 1) Multitasking Team, 2) Priority Scale, and 3) Agility.

8. Increased Innovation

Increasing innovation in a team is the main focus of effective leadership. Leaders like Mr DI from “**Cara Bicara**” hold the key to creating an environment that supports innovation. DI shows his dedication by taking to the field, leading by example, and being directly involved in team tasks. This allows team members to experience challenges and adversity, sparking a passion for innovation in strategy and products.

Mr. DI's experience and expertise in managing teams in previous companies have become a strong foundation for increasing innovation at “**Cara Bicara**.” With a solid background, DI has mastered the approaches and strategies to lead teams effectively. The critical informant, SW, confirmed that DI's ability to lead was based on extensive experience and achievements in the business world. Another method “**Cara Bicara**” leaders use to foster innovation is assigning project responsibility to team members. They are free to develop their creativity but still receive direction and guidance from the leader. Weekly meetings are also essential for expressing ideas, problems, and innovations from the entire team. It can be said that Mr. DI from “**Cara Bicara**” applies a direct approach and empowers team members to innovate. The leader's expertise and experience are essential to creating an environment that supports innovation. This method allows the team to produce creative ideas and innovative solutions to advance the company. It can be concluded that Mr. DI's ways of increasing innovation in the Start-up “**Cara Bicara**” are: 1) Simulation in the field; 2) Project Base; 3) Weekly Meetings; 4) Expertise.

E. CONCLUSION

From the research results of researchers regarding agile leadership at start-up Cara, it can be concluded that leaders at the start-up “**Cara Bicara**” emphasize individual Support, team trust, and conflict resolution. The “**Cara Bicara**” leader is also actively involved in decision-making by exploring the team's potential and mentoring the team, which is carried out directly by the leader. There is no distance, and the leader is close to the team, actively participates, and always sees the process in every project entrusted to team members. In the decision-making process, the “**Cara Bicara**” leader tries to manage differences of opinion in the team. In decision-making, the emphasis is on scaling or leveling, urgency, collective strategy formulation, transparency, involving teams, and collaboration. “**Cara Bicara**” focuses on team multitasking, priority scale, and agility to increase work efficiency and effectiveness. To improve innovation, the Start-up Leader “**Cara Bicara**” focuses on simulations in the field, project base, weekly meetings, and expertise. This can help the “**Cara Bicara**” team to be more innovative and creative in managing the projects delegated to them.

From the conclusions above, it is recommended that start-up leaders and management of “**Cara Bicara**” do several things, such as measuring company performance and achievements. Leaders can use OKR (Objectives and Key Results) or KPI (Key Performance Indicators) to set clear and more precise targets that are measurable and provide a basis for management to make optimal decisions.

In the project delegation process, it is hoped that the leader can provide detailed direction and transparent rules and that not everything is left to the team members. So that when a team member experiences a stuck condition, he can continue to walk according to the directions. Leaders should also pay attention to working hours, effective communication, and flexible working hours to avoid reducing team productivity and job performance of “**Cara Bicara**.”

REFERENCES

- #1000StartupDigital. (2023, April 6). Khawatir Karyawanmu Tidak Bekerja saat flexible work? Ini Yang Perlu Kamu Lakukan. 1000 Startup Digital. <https://1000startupdigital.id/khawatir-karyawanmu-tidak-bekerja-saat-flexible-work-ini-yang-perlu-kamu-lakukan/4> Komponen Dalam Scrum framework. (2022, May 22). harisenin.com: Tips Sukses. <https://tipsukses.harisenin.com/scrum-framework>
- Amelia, A., Manurung, K. A., & Purnomo, D. B. (2022). Peranan Manajemen Sumberdaya Manusia Dalam Organisasi. *Mimbar Kampus: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Agama Islam*, 21(2), 128-138.
- Bakhtiar Abbas, & H. Mahmudin A. Sabilalo. (2022). Pengaruh pengaturan kerja Yang flexibel, keseimbangan kehidupan kerja Dan keterikatan karyawan terhadap loyalitas kerja karyawan pada perusahaan properti Di Kota Kendari. *Journal Publicuho*, 5(4), 1061-1090. <https://doi.org/10.35817/publicuho.v5i4.46>

- Hani Dewi Ariessanti 2020. MODUL PENGEMBANGAN PERANGKAT LUNAK (CPL 230) MODUL 1 AGILE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT. Jakarta: Universitas Esa Unggul.
- Jagoan Hosting Team. (2022, September 15). APA ITU Metode Scrum? Pengertian, Peran, Manfaat & Tahapan. Blog Jagoan Hosting | Tutorial Website & Web Hosting Indonesia. <https://www.jagoanhosting.com/blog/apa-itu-scrum/>
- Jeff Sutherland and the Agile education program powered by Scrum Inc.™ [Video]. (2021, January 26). YouTube. <https://youtu.be/itvI1LHFv9E>
- Jeff Sutherland on leadership invitation. (2022, May 5). <https://www.agileboston.org/jeff-sutherland-on-leadership-invitation>
- Jeff Sutherland. (2023, June 16). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved July 28, 2023, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Sutherland
- Julianto, B., & Carnarez, T. Y. A. (2021). Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Organisasi Professional: Kepemimpinan, Komunikasi Efektif, Kinerja, Dan Efektivitas Organisasi (Suatu Kajian Studi Literature Review Ilmu Manajemen Terapan). *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen Terapan*, 2(5), 676-691.
- Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland (2020). Panduan Scrum Panduan Definitif untuk Scrum: Aturan Permainan. Kenali APA ITU Metode Scrum dalam project management [Video]. (2023, 3). Sekawan Studio. <https://sekawanstudio.com/blog/metode-scrum/>
- Pardamean, M. (2022). BEST PLANTER PRACTICE KELAPA SAWIT: Praktik Pengelolaan SDM Perkebunan agar Kompeten untuk Daya Saing Perusahaan. Penerbit Andi.
- Primayana, K. H. (2015). Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia Dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Di Perguruan Tinggi. *Jurnal Penjaminan Mutu*, 1(02), 7-15.
- Rahmatullah, I. (2015). Aset Hak Kekayaan Intelektual Sebagai Jaminan dalam Perbankan. Deepublish.
- Scrum MENINGKATKAN PRODUKTIVITAS Dua Kali LIPAT - mizanstore. (n.d.). Toko buku online terpercaya dan terlengkap | [Mizanstore.com](https://mizanstore.com/SCRUM_MENINGKATKAN_PRODUKTIVITAS_DUA_KALI_LIPAT_58). https://mizanstore.com/SCRUM_MENINGKATKAN_PRODUKTIVITAS_DUA_KALI_LIPAT_58
- Sihite, M., & Saleh, A. (2019). Peran Kepemimpinan dalam meningkatkan daya saing perguruan tinggi: tinjauan konseptual. *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen METHONOMIX*, 2(1), 29-44.
- Sisephaputra, B., & Alit, R. (2022). Pengukuran Tingkat Keberhasilan Penerapan Metode SCRUM Dalam proses Pembelajaran mata Kuliah Pemrograman Di Lingkungan Jurusan Teknik Informatika Fakultas Teknik Universitas Negeri

Surabaya. *Journal of Advances in Information and Industrial Technology*, 4(2), 47-56. <https://doi.org/10.52435/jaiit.v4i2.249>

Tamsah, H., & Nurung, J. (2022). *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia*.

Widhiastuti, S. (2016). Peran Mediasi Kinerja Keuangan terhadap Hubungan antara Aset Tidak Berwujud terhadap Kinerja Pasar. *Media Riset Akuntansi, Auditing & Informasi*, 16(1), 15-38.