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Agilecation: Agile Leadership in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) during the Covid-19 Pandemic a Test Case

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Abstract

The current quantitative research examine how the leadership of a teacher training college in an Israeli Higher Education Institiostion (HEI) have dealt with the Covid19 crisis in an agile manner. This Perspectives presents a case study of agile leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic from the viewpoint of the college lecturers'. The Covid-19 outbreak was a 'Black swan' events for educational institutions in Israel. Following the unprecedented transition to distance learning. The pandemic forced higher education institutions to adopt agile leadership behaviors. Previous research has given scant attention to the relationship between running an academic institution and application of an agile leadership during a crisis. The Research Goals were:

1. To analyze key processes undertaken by the leadership of the College following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure the HEI continued functioning during the crisis.

2. To examine the evaluation (degree of approval) of the lecturers regarding the steps taken by the colleges leadership.

As seen from the findings: The lecturers were persistent in the remote teaching process. Their contact with the students was positive. They perceived the college's leadership as maintaining teaching processes in a highly positive way. They were aware of the ongoing training processes. They felt comfortable contacting those in official roles. The conclusions suggest that ensuring the continued functioning of an organization during a crisis requires agile leadership with skills and competencies multifaceted and direct channels of communication. If we want to sum it up in one word, it can be expressed as Agilication = agility + education + action in higher education.

Keywords: Coronavirus (Covid-19), agile leadership, crisis, teacher training.

1. Introduction

Leaders must be agile decision makers, critical self-reflection, integrate it with action, and

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collaborate with those who are diverse in considerable ways to be successful in a multifaceted global environment. (Taylor, 2017). This was written prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. The pandemic outbreak was a 'Black swan' events for educational institutions worldwide. It forced 1.5 billion pupils, students, and educators around the world to move to ERT (emergency remote teaching) within their homes (Mikuls et al, 2020: Nissim, Simon 2022). This was a change of huge proportions that was thrust upon both students and teachers at great speed, with the aim of maintaining regular ongoing learning and teaching processes (Bao, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). We call this process Agilecation- agile leadership in education.

In Israel, Since March 2020, the higher education institutions have had to deal with a widespread, ongoing disruption (Cohen, Davidovich, 2020; Nissim, Simon, 2021). For more than a year all the educational activity transitioned from face to face learning on campus to ERT and distance teaching and learning. All activities conducted remotely, in accordance with state guidelines.

Academic activities moved to distance learning for three consecutive semesters. Teacher training programs shift to distance learning closing their campuses gates. The pandemic forced numerous organizations to undergo significant transformations and changes. Reports testified that the educational system was unprepared to deal with rapid changes in teaching methods in Israel and throughout the world. (Alt, 2022). The current study examines the lecturers' evaluations regarding these leadership decisions (described in detailed in the appendix) and the transition to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). The study analyses these events and the resultant processes undertaken at the college. The central theory that helps in build the framework for this study is adaptive leadership (Heifetz, Linsky, 2009) and agile approaches based on which we will try to build a unique situational theory that results from this unique situation.

This research deepens our previous research (Nissim, Simon, 2021) It seeks to explore a new angle from a different perspective, evaluating the agile leadership in a teacher training college in Israel from the lecturers' point of view. It is a study of an HEI (Higher Education Institution) addressed the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study proceeds as follows, after the introduction, there is a theoretical background section consisted on a literature review on leadership and agility; following is the sample composition and methodology. In addition, the empirical results for this study are subsequently reported. In the end of this paper, we summarized the conclusions and insights.

Theoretical Background

Agility is now a commonly concept due to the pandemic. Leaders had to rethink key elements of their daily work processes and act in an agile manner. The use of technology increased in order to maintain operations while adhering to a changing landscape of new health guidelines and procedural regulations. Agility is especially needed in the constantly changing external environment during the pandemic.

Higher education institutions are routinely operating un a very complex environment that includes human resources lecturers, students, administrative staff, teaching and learning etc. There are frequent changes in academic life, technological, and bureaucratic realms. Even during routine times. There are many changes and stressful process creating pressure experienced in the Acdemia (Amirault, Visser, 2009). Moreover, HIS, in particular, need sustainable leadership to maintain their goals. (Taşçı, Titrek 2020). Therefore, we believe that leading such an institution requires an agile and supportive leadership strategy. Leading a teacher training college in the covid 19 outburst was like controlling a wild black swan.

The global pandemic of Covid-19 poses multiple complex challenges to institutions of higher education (HEI), which were forced to function under conditions of uncertainty. Alongside the health concerns, it was necessary to ensure the continued proper functioning of institutions.

The Tel Hai College, the campus for teachers training (the former Ohalo College) is a higher education institution located in the northern part of Israel. Teacher training in Israel is an academic process based on theoretical, pedagogic studies and practicum. During their studies, they are developing different teaching skills, Increases the student readiness for the teacher's role (Maskit, Mevarech, 2013; Whitford, Barnett, 2016). Students attain a bachelor's degree and a teacher's certificate within four years (Zuzovsky, Donitsa-Schmidt, 2017). Until the pandemic distance, learning had a minor part in teacher training processes.

In mid-March 2020, the firs general closure was imposed in Israel. The colleges' campus leadership decided to continue all activities, while making the necessary adjustments in light of the state of emergency and restrictions. Teaching, learning, and all the practicum activity of the teachers training department moved within 48 hours, from campus learning to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). This agile transition affected the college management, 700 courses, 120 lecturers, 40 members of the administrative staff, and 1000 students.

Leadership

Leaders have an essential influence on their employees' perceived career success and their roles are considered most effective in assuring professional success in today's dynamic work environment of the academic world. Success is critical to building qualified employees and attaining organizational success (Al-Ghazali, 2020). Leaders' positive behaviors can establish a work environment that motivates and satisfied employees' (Tak et al., 2019).

A pre- Covid recent study noted that leaders in the HEI should act in an "authentic leadership" Empower their teams and their organization. This could contribute to the sustainable performance of universities (Tak et al., 2019). Furthermore, there should be autonomy in decision-making and a balance between change and stability: the pandemic reflected on agility and adaptive governance." Existing institutional structures and tools can enable adaptively and agility, which can be complimentary, approaches. Agility sometimes conflicts with adaptability, centralized and decentralized decision-making." (Dwivedi et al., 2020). The unpredictability disruption of the Covid-19 outbreak has made it challenging leaders to respond to it.

Leadership during a Crisis

Leadership is of particular importance during crises. In an unpredictable disruption that is an unconventional event that spreads uncertainty and shaken the organization's foundations and ability to act and achieve its goals and objectives .For leadership in a crisis, a system may lose its flexibility, because of failing to deal with a threat or responding ineffectively. The ability to function during the crisis may be diminished (Janis, 1989; Seeger et al., 1998). In a crisis, there is a need for a type of leadership, which enables others to lead. This means, "deepening" the organizational leadership, delegating authority, and overseeing use of human resources. Enabling continuation of the organization's activities, maintaining a positive mood, and offering tools for decision-making. In crises, the leader becomes an active partner with followers. This type of leader that has the power to empower followers, giving them the freedom to act and think and enables them to be mangers and "first among equals". Under certain conditions (Abolio, 1999). Similar approaches recommended using the emergency situation to leverage change and create a new reality for the benefit of the organization and the followers ((Harris, 2002; Tzur, 2004).

During an emergency, the leadership must deal with uncertainty in emotions and thoughts, the need for agile responses to the dramatic disruption. They must propose solutions. Leaders should minimize the impact of the crisis, maintain a sense of normalcy, making careful decisions, because their decisions involve risks and have consequences on the personal and, in some cases, the national level (Rosenman et al., 2014).

Leadership skills are critical to the survival of any organization, institution, or nation during an emergency there is a need for effective communication. Leaders should responses in order to improve the organizational outcomes, increase their team's safety and well-being. Effective leadership is associated with effective teamwork and more positive outcomes in emergencies and with improved staff engagement (Manning, 2016; Rosenman et al., 2014).

These processes relate to removing barriers to recognizing and understanding the crisis, knowing the organizational limitations, and assessing its psychological dimensions. Demonstrating leadership performance in times of crisis includes evaluating alternatives, making critical decisions, team building, and execution of decisions (Boin et al., 2005).

Another factor in crisis leadership is related to achievement. Leaders should perform their duties, and be a model of leadership to their followers, so they can become partners in the process (Kadibesegil, 2008). Crises present leadership opportunities, allowing "ordinary" people to move to the forefront, make unexpected contributions, and even develop into leaders. During a crisis, a leader is born as the need arises (Tutar, 2004).

The importance of leadership in times of crises is impressionistic, at best. It is well known that leaders can exacerbate a crisis by ignoring impending threats, making unwise decisions, or

taking careless actions (Boin, Hart, 2010). The leadership abilities are tested in times of crises. They have to demonstrate their confidence in the teamwork in order to get effective results in accordance with the organization vision. This should be the central outline in circumstances of uncertainty (González et al., 2020).

These approaches were mostly theoretical or based on short-term empirical cases such as natural disasters or wars, but not on an epidemic that lasted for such a long time. The pandemic is a "landscape scale" crisis: an unexpected event occurring at enormous and overwhelming speed, resulting in a high degree of uncertainty that gives rise to disorientation, a feeling of loss of control, and strong emotional disturbance (D'Auria, De Smet, 2020).

The pandemic proved that Leadership could be a double-edged sword. It can be valuable, extricating followers from the crisis, or it can be destructive and thoughtless, and even aggravate the crisis.

Agile and adaptive Leadership in Times of Crisis
Agile and Adaptive leaders are aware of leader-follower relationships, and consider factors in the environment within which leaders and followers operate (Glover et al., 2002).

Agile leaders do more than make changes. They recognize potential changes and carefully consider which the best path to positively affect the organization is. Adaptive and agile leadership involves behavioral changes that are appropriate to the changes in the situation (Mahsud et al., 2010). Agile leadership should give a special place to decision-making processes in a crisis; leaders must act quickly but also consider options, consequences and effects of their actions (Netolicky, 2020).

Adaptive leadership involves adaptation to an unusual situation that requires unconventional responses and tools that are not in usual toolbox. Adaptive leadership helps individuals and organizations adjust to and thrive in challenging environments. This approach is based on the research of Heifetz et al. (2009), which shaped the definitions and drew the outline for leadership training and development. In adaptive leadership, actions are based on broad, systemic thinking. Adaptive leadership does not refer to a single, authoritative leader, but rather a system that responds to changes in its environment. This is presented as the preferred path of action, based on systemic understanding, and leading to systemic change (Heifetz et al., 2009). Any person can act to promote systemic change. Anyone can take a position of adaptive leadership. This process involves risk for the person leading the change.

Agility
The leader role is to stage the organization for a learning process that facilitates strategic agility, adaptability, and flexibility (Ferraris et al., 2021). The term "agility". Is one of the most important factors in the survival and development of organizations in the current dynamic business environment, characterized by change and uncertainty .We see agility as a key concept in the analysis of the various situations that emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic and the leadership's responses to the crisis. Agility is a relatively new concept, originating in the high-tech industry, and applied in organizational theory and human resource management using a situational approach. The term "Agility" was coined in the field of software engineering, and later expanded into organizational studies (Overby et al., 2006). Agility refers to availability, flexibility, and speed of response. Agility in education refers to an approach that implements change, embraces innovation, and transcends traditional conservative patterns of conduct and thinking (Morien, 2018). Agility is vital for corporate survival in the contemporary dynamic social environment, which is characterized by change, uncertainty, rapid technological development, increased risk, globalization, and the anticipation of privatization. Agility in an organization synchronizes processes, people, and advanced technology. Agility is considered to be a systematic and strategic organizational value among leaders. Agility has been defined as an ability that requires active use (Goodarzi et al., 2018; Morien, 2018).

A recent study notes that technological developments of the 21st century have affected institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is important to focus on sustainable leadership in the higher education sector, highlight applied strategies for lifelong learning, sustainability practices, the difficulties faced, and the experiences shared (Taşçı, Titrek, 2020). Agility creates a competitive advantage, enabling success in the organizational environment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Agilecation

The Covid 19 pandemic is a call for new definitions on leadership. Ferraris et al. (2021) describes how the CEO, as the corporate leader, is there to set learning processes for strategic agility, adaptability, and flexibility (Ferraris et al., 2021). We define it in one word Agilication = agile leadership in education.

Agile leadership is a leadership approach that can manage chaotic environments, crises and adapt to developments. It is defined as effective leadership behavior in the face of rapid change, uncertain and challenging situations (Breakspear, 2017). Agile leadership can be explained by the theory of learning agility. It's based on the ability to adapt to new situations using experiential learning (De Meuse, 2019) agile leadership has been addressed independently of learning agility and its positive reflections on the organization have been revealed by various researches (Akkaya, Üstgörül, 2020; Cestou, 2020; Fitaloka et al., 2020; Gren, Lindman, 2020).

Figure 1 describes the development process from the state of shock to the normal routine.
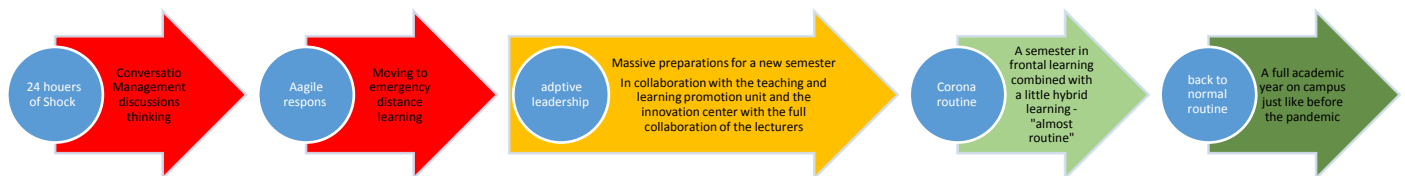
Fig. 1. The surprise followed by the agile response. The Agile Leadership Model:
from "Shock" to routine

Research Goals

1. To analyze and evaluate the processes undertaken by the leadership of the College through the degree of satisfaction from the lecturers' point of view.

2. Research Questions

1. How the lecturers did perceive the colleges' agile leadership?

2. What are the key insights that can be deduced from this study on agile leadership of an HEI during a crisis?

2. Methodology
Research Methods

This is a quantitative study offers to understanding the key processes undertaken by the college's leadership. Examine the research questions from the lecturers' point of view. We used quantitative measures. Based on an attitude questionnaire constructed especially for the current study. The questionnaire underwent face validation by four experts holding doctorates in education. It was distributed to a convenience sampling via Google Drive to all of the s lecturers (N = 120). The questionnaire asked for the perspectives of the lecturers and their evolution of the actions undertaken by the college's leadership. In order to establish the reliability of the data and the quantitative findings both authors of this article separately performed the measurement of values, using statistical tests (ANOVA, Pearson). Then compared their results, examined the questionnaire responses. *In variance tests (Anova) we performed a-parameter tests of the Kruskal

Wallis (KW) type on the seven research indicators. Since these indices are not normally distributed (the results are in Table 3).

In order to increase the reliability of the questionnaire, a large number of statements (17) were constructed, as detailed below. In each category we identified the reliability of internal consistency and high correlation was found between the items (Cronbach's alpha (α) = 0.819).

We tested the reliability of the first three indices: maintaining direct contact with the colleges leadership (8 statements); managing the training and practicum processes (4 statements); and persistence in distance teaching and communication with students (2 statements). Cronbach's alpha (α) measures were found to be high, with a high degree of stability and consistency in the statements for each of the indices.

Research Process

The data was collected via google drive. The distribution of the questioner was a single-stage procedure among a convenience sample. Responses were anonymous. Statistical analysis was conducted on the findings, as presented in the tables. It examines the degree to which the lecturers were satisfied with the college's leadership's performance. The research is supported by a documentary review. The authors of the article were involved in leading the processes described, and therefore their personal and professional experiences are considered.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on previous researches on leadership and adaptive leadership during crises. The literature review together with the quantitative findings collected and the researchers' experience as leaders of the researched situation and the documentary review provide a triangulation for the validity and reliability of the study.

The main research hypothesis predicts that a positive relationship will be found between the college's agile leadership and the degree of satisfaction expressed by the lecturers. What will point out the process of Agilication = Agile educational leadership.

Study Participants

The study participants included N= 48 subjects. Of these About two thirds (38) were lecturers in the field of education (79.2 %), 5 were lecturers in the school of physical education (10.4 %) and 5 were lecturers in a variety of other disciplines (10.4 %). Ten of the lecturers have seniority of less than 5 years (20.9 %), 19 lecturers have 5-9 years of seniority (39.6 %), and 19 lecturers have seniority of 10 years or more (39.6 %).

Research Tools

A questionnaire was specifically constructed to address the research questions and goals. The questionnaire included 17 statements (1-5 Likert scale), in which a high value represented a high degree of agreement or satisfaction with the statement. The statements were associated with seven categories: the direct contact with the leadership. Management of the students training and experience. Persistence in maintaining contact with students during ERT. Degree of personal difficulty lecturers' desire to be involved in leadership decisions. Perspective regarding the consistency over time of the changes enacted and frequency of use of overall resources. The mean of each participant's responses to the statements in these seven categories was calculated, and thus the seven indices of the study were verified.

Following the first phase of shock and uncertainty in the first semester (from, March-June 2020), the college had entered a year of "Corona Routine". At this time, we assessed the performance of the leadership and how the lecturers evaluated the decisions, the leadership made. Key findings are given in the following Tables. Table 1 will demonstrate the general traits of the college's leadership as expressed from the lecturers' perspectives

Table 1. General Traits of college's leadership. The Research Indices (N = 48)

Index	Number of Statements	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	α
contact with colleges leadership	8	2.38 - 5.00	4.02	.71	.861
training and experience processes	4	3.50 - 5.00	4.43	.50	.710

| distance learning and contact with students	2	2.50 – 5.00	4.61	.53	.648
Degree of personal difficulty	1	1.00 – 5.00	2.35	1.04	--
Lecturers' desire to be involved	1	1.00 – 5.00	3.27	1.36	--
Position regarding the preservation of changes over time	1	1.00 – 5.00	3.26	1.11	--
The use of colleges resources	1	1.00 – 5.00	3.68	.98	--

The reliability of the first three indices, as measured by Cronbach's alpha (α), was found to be high. This attests to a high degree of stability and consistency in the statements within each of the categories.

Table 2 presents the mean of the respondents' answers to each of the 17 statements.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Survey questions and statements (N = 48)

Sub categories	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication flue	4.27	.74
Involvement	3.27	1.36
Listening to needs	4.09	.95
Communication	4.23	.90
Awareness to lecturer training processes	4.33	.78
Persistence in distance teaching	4.73	.57
Persistence of leadership in conducting studies	4.48	.62
Maintaining a sense of togetherness	3.83	.95
feeling of support from the leadership	4.19	1.00
feeling of support from your colleagues	4.15	1.17
Personal difficulty in uncertain situation?	2.35	1.04
Assessment regarding the preservation of the changes in the future	3.26	1.11
Rate the conduct of the college leadership in directing the various processes during the second semester.	4.17	.75
Rate your conduct with the students.	4.50	.65
Rate the conduct of the college.	4.11	.79
the college's resources availability for lecturers	3.29	1.32
Personal dialogue: lecturers, colleagues, and college officials?	3.68	.98

Figure 2 presents the mean of the respondents' answers to each of the 17 statements.
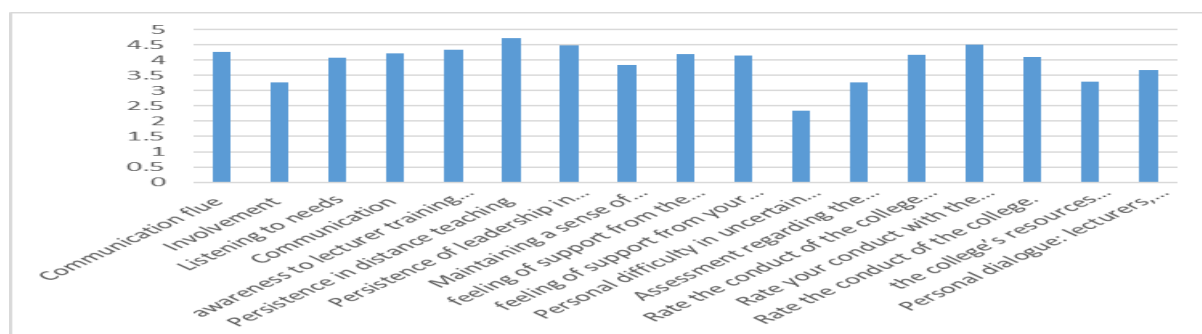
Fig. 2. The Survey questions and statements (N = 48)

In order to examine whether there is a relationship between the lecturer's seniority and their views regarding distance learning, variance tests (Anova) were performed on the seven research indicators. Since these indices are not normally distributed, a-parameter tests of the Kruskal Wallis (K-W) type were performed. Here are the results in Table 3.

Table 3. Research indicators according to seniority and various test results (N = 48)

Seniority	up to 5 years (N=10)		5-10 years (N=19)		More than 10 years (N=19)		
	SD.	Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.	Mean	K-W
contact with colleges leadership	6.9	3.55	.63	4.24	.70	4.05	5.59
training and experience processes	0.41	4.18	.48	4.55	.55	4.43	4.41
distance learning and contact with students	0.79	4.30	.26	4.74	.52	4.63	3.04
Degree of personal difficulty	0.92	2.80	1.01	1.84	.96	2.63	7.60*
Lecturers' desire to be involved	1.16	3.30	1.50	3.16	1.38	3.37	0.28
Position regarding the preservation of changes over time	0.16	2.70	1.20	3.61	1.13	3.21	6.49*
The use of colleges resources	1.07	3.40	1.06	3.78	.87	3.74	1.44

As shown in Table 3 it was found that the degree of personal difficulty of lecturers with a seniority of up to 5 years (2.80), as well as of lecturers with a seniority of over 10 years (2.63) is greater than lecturers with a seniority of 5-10 years (1.84) and clearly: K-W(2) = 7.60, p < 0.05. It was also found that the position regarding maintaining changes over time of lecturers with 5-10 years of experience (3.61) is more positive than that of lecturers with more than 10 years of experience (3.21) and of lecturers with up to 5 years of experience (2.70) and clearly: K-W(2) = 6.49, p < 0.05.

No significant differences were found in the other indices

All the findings indicate a high level of evaluation in most of the indices examined. The respondents were highly persistent in the distance teaching processes (average 4.73). They rated their communication with the students positively (4.50). In their opinion, the college's leadership preserved the teaching processes in a positive way (4.48). The respondents highly rated their degree of awareness regarding the existence of ongoing training processes (4.33). They felt comfortable contacting those in official roles (4.23). And did not indicate experiencing a high degree of personal difficulty in the time of uncertainty during the Covid-19 crisis (only 2.35).

Correlations between Research Indices

Pearson tests were performed to examine the correlations between the research indices, as shown in Table 4.

Table 1. Pearson Correlations between Research Indices (N = 48)

Index	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Maintenance of direct contact with leadership	–					
2. Management of training and experience processes	.747**	–				
3. Persistence in distance learning and contact with students	.035	.293*	–			
4. Degree of personal difficulty	-.244	-.173	-.114	-–		

5. Lecturers' desire to be involved	-.230	-.071	.059	.335*	–	
6. Perception of the preservation of changes over time	.443**	.411**	.095	.031	.192	–
7. Frequency of use of overall resources	.469**	.431**	.094	-.118	.073	.296*

* p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01

Summing up the main findings:

There are moderately positive correlations between the maintenance of direct contact with the college's leadership, managing training and experience processes, perception of the preservation of changes over time, and the frequency of use of overall resources.

Positive correlations of medium intensity between the management of the training and experience processes, persistence in distance teaching, contact with students, perception of the preservation of changes over time, and the frequency of use of overall resources. In addition, moderately positive correlations were found between the degree of personal difficulty and the desire of the lecturers for involvement, as well as between the perception of the preservation of changes over time and the frequency of use of overall resources.

Figure 3 describes a model of the ecosystem in which the agile leadership operated during the pandemic as seen from the data above.
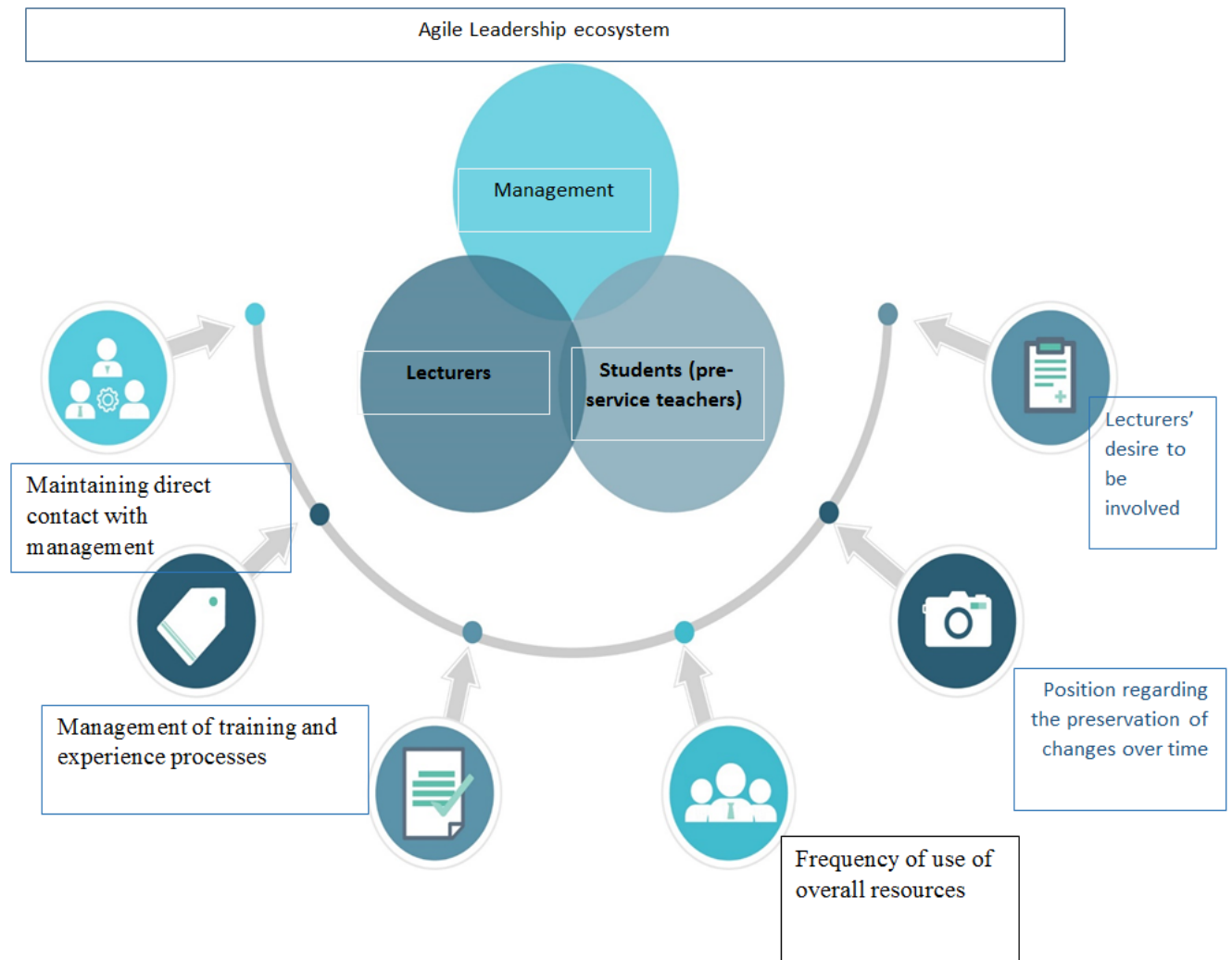

Fig. 3. Agilication ecosystem

3. Discussion

This study focused on the agile leadership of an academic institution for teacher and educator training in northern Israel. The research asked to reveal the perceptions of this special situation as seen from the lecturer's perspective. Since the outburst of the Covid pandemic, from March 2020 and until September 2021, it was essential to continue the organizational activities. Under state regulation for more than 140 days, "Five waves" and three lookdowns all, the college's activity transitioned from face to face learning on campus to ERT and distance teaching and learning from home. All activities conducted remotely, in accordance with state guidelines.

It was necessary to response in a rapid, agile, and flexible manner. To create solutions and stability under the conditions of uncertainty. Colleges' leaders had to operate in an agile and adaptive manner. We coined it in the innovative term: Agilecation.

The main goal underlying the college's activities was to adopt goals suitable to an "agile" organization in a time of a crisis. The speed with which this transition took place was unprecedented. The practices described above can be linked to the theory of agile and adaptive leadership, as presented by Heifetz et al. (2009). They reflect decisions that move in both directions along the axis between adaptive leadership and organized implementation. During the crisis, issues that were at the core of the organization received the most attention from all stakeholders: leadership, lecturers, and students. Multiple meetings and conversations were held with all stakeholders, in order to give them an opportunity to express their point of view. The role of the leadership was to respond to the newly arisen situation, and to evolve organizationally as the situation developed. This approach is consistent with Akkaya et al. (2022) that describes agile leadership as an important managerial function, responsive and innovative for the development and success of any organization in the uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this kind of agile leadership creates learning situations that can develop internal leadership and makes the leader an active partner with followers, being able to empower followers, give them intellectual and executive independence. It is necessary for leaders to perform their duties, and to model the characteristics of leadership to their followers, so they can become partners in the process (Kadibesegil, 2008).

This is a significant type of leadership in which leaders possess an ability to take quick and correct decisions, cope with stress and psychological pressures while managing crises (Çobanoğlu, Demir, 2022).

4. Conclusion

At the outset of the study, we hypothesized that a positive relationship would be found between the decisions the colleges leadership made and the satisfaction of the lecturers, in terms of whether the training provided and the leadership's conduct were beneficial to the students and faculty. This hypothesis was confirmed by the findings, as presented.

The results show there was a high level of satisfaction on the part of the lecturers regarding the conduct of the college agile leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is despite the fact that the lecturers were facing challenges and unusual changing requirements, which greatly deviated from their normal pre-pandemic routine. They had to teach online using technologies, attend Zoom meetings, and in general adapt to a new disruptive situation that required a significant investment of time and efforts beyond what would have been considered acceptable previously.

As seen from the findings: The lecturers were persistent in the remote teaching process. Their conduct with the students was positive. They perceived the college's leadership as maintaining teaching processes in a highly positive way. They were aware of the ongoing training processes. They felt comfortable contacting those in official roles.

What are the main insights that can be learned from this study? In order to create agile leadership under conditions of a crisis and uncertainty leaders should set goals for the short and long term. This is important in order to act as an "agile" organization in response to the crisis. In the particular case described in this study: to shift all the activates: administrative, teaching, and other educational activities from a frontal format of teaching and learning to an online form, especially using the Zoom platform.

The speed with which this transition took place was unprecedented. For these processes to occur effectively, it was necessary to apply skills and capabilities of agile leadership = Agilication to

face the crisis. There was a need to adopt channels of direct, selfless communication, to allow other people to take initiative and participate in leadership.

Leadership in an institution of higher education requires special traits. This can be seen as being in alignment with theoretical approaches that include: shaping and imparting a vision, encouraging learning, encouraging collaboration, building meaning, imparting knowledge, providing opportunities for creativity, disseminating viewpoints and values, enabling ongoing dialogue, and maintaining and managing reflective processes in a collaborative and up-to-date climate (Schneider, Monsonego, 2010). We believe that in times of crisis, these traits need to be even more strongly expressed, so that the leader is operating in accordance with the framework and is suited to the situation. Moreover, HEI should activate Agilication.

5. Study limitations
The study is based on a small representative sample (48 out of 120) lecturers.

The researchers were involved as the leaders of the processes described. Therefore, the subjectivity of the researchers in light of their professional roles affected the choice the research methodology. The research is based on a limited base of previous research's that deals directly with the situation under investigation, namely leadership of an HEI during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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