

RESEARCH

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Agile Leadership-Based Principal Leadership: Collaborative Culture Transformation and Its Impact on Improving Teachers' Adaptive Performance in The Era of Impactful Curriculum

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of Agile Leadership in enhancing teachers' adaptive performance in secondary schools through active participation, collaboration, and rapid feedback systems. The study was conducted to address the challenges of implementing the Impactful Curriculum, which requires teachers to act as reflective and innovative learners. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design, carried out in a senior high school that applies Agile Leadership principles. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and curriculum development team, observations of leadership practices and teacher collaboration dynamics, as well as document analysis of school policies. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the application of Agile Leadership fosters a collaborative and adaptive work environment through reflective forums and cross-subject teams. Teachers' participation in decision-making nurtures a sense of ownership toward school policies and reduces resistance to change. Moreover, the pedagogical experimentation culture built through the agile approach enhances teachers' adaptability and innovation, thereby strengthening a sustainable learning culture within the school. These findings highlight the importance of agile, participatory, and reflective leadership in navigating the dynamics of 21st-century education.

Keywords: School Leadership, Agile Leadership, Collaborative Culture Transformation, Teacher Adaptive Performance Improvement, Impactful Curriculum.

Introduction

In the midst of the dynamics of rapid changes in education, especially since the implementation of the Impact Curriculum, a new social phenomenon has emerged in the world of schools: the emergence of a leadership pattern of school principals based on agile leadership (Megawati, 2022; Saukah et al., 2021; Zubaidi et al., 2022). This leadership style requires principals to be adaptive, collaborative, and innovative leaders in the face of the complexity of educational change (Gonzales & Roberts, 2025). The principal is no longer just a single decision-maker, but plays the role of a facilitator who fosters a culture of cooperation and

continuous learning among teachers (Mahmudah et al., 2025; Noviana, 2025; Selvia et al., 2024). In practice, principals who implement agile leadership create a more dynamic work environment: meetings are short and solution-oriented, teachers across subjects collaborate with each other to create contextual learning, and new ideas are disseminated through the school's digital platform. As a result, there has been a cultural change in the school environment from rigid and bureaucratic to more open, communicative, and participatory. Teachers feel more valued, given room to experiment, and more quickly adapt to the demands of the new curriculum. The social impact is clearly visible: increased confidence and enthusiasm for innovation among teachers, the growth of a reflective culture, and reduced resistance to change (Gonzales & Roberts, 2025). However, on the other hand, challenges remain, such as managerial skills gaps between principals, lack of agile-based leadership training, and limited digital facilities. This social fact shows that agile leadership is not just a new leadership style, but a cultural transformation that shapes schools into an adaptive, collaborative, and competitive learning ecosystem in the modern education era.

In response to the dynamics of global education and the demands of a sustainable Impact Curriculum, the leadership focus of principals must transition from a hierarchical-bureaucratic model to a more Agile framework, a model that is essential for nurturing teachers' adaptive performance (Balasi et al., 2023; Yang, 2025). Recent studies on the international scene strongly support this view, showing that Principals who adopt the principles of agile leadership act as transformational catalysts, not just administrative managers. (Hofmann, 2024), emphasizes the creation of a "safe-to-fail" environment. This means that principals encourage rapid, repetitive pedagogical experimentation by teachers, providing ongoing feedback rather than rigid annual evaluations. This kind of environment eliminates the fear of failure, which is a major barrier to innovation. Thus, teachers feel empowered to test even new teaching methods that are risky and adapt immediately based on real results, a crucial mechanism to respond to the changing needs of students. In addition. Melewar (2023), highlighting that the role of the principal should be expanded to "Chief Collaboration Officer". In this role, the principal deliberately breaks down silos between departments or subjects, facilitating the formation of independent teacher work teams to conduct collective inquiry (Abbaspour et al., 2024; Yang, 2025). This process of intensive collaboration, which is reinforced by the cycle of rapid reflection (sprint review) as noted by Kenworthy (2025.), significantly increases teachers' self-efficacy and triggers their intrinsic motivation to innovate. Finally, in the context of digital literacy (Kenworthy 2023), found that agile leadership is effective in improving teachers' digital competencies not through passive training, but through the creation of digital collaborative platforms that allow teachers to share project-based best practices and solve technology problems in real-time. Collectively, these findings underscore that agile leadership is not just a trend, it is a leadership strategy that fundamentally transforms school cultures to be more collaborative, autonomous, and responsive, directly strengthening teachers' capacity to achieve high adaptive performance in an era of curriculum that demands constant change.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the transformation of collaborative culture in schools through the application of agile leadership-based leadership as the main strategy in improving teachers' adaptive performance in the era of impactful curriculum. So far, most research on principal leadership has still focused on conventional models such as transformational or democratic leadership, which emphasizes changes in vision and motivation, but has not touched on the aspect of agility in the face of rapid changes in the

world of Education (Corrigan & Merry, 2022; Siregar, 2023). This research comes with a new perspective that school principals are not just administrative leaders, but facilitators who build a flexible, open, and innovative collaborative ecosystem. Another innovation is in the context of implementing the impact curriculum, which requires teachers to adapt quickly to changes in learning approaches, evaluation, and strengthening students' character. Through an agile leadership approach, principals can create space for teachers to experiment, collaborate across subjects, and get quick feedback on their professional development (Barrett-Maitland et al., 2025; Galdames-Calderón, 2023; Meyer et al., 2023). This research also highlights how collaborative culture built through agile leadership can strengthen teachers' adaptive capacity, increase confidence, and foster a sense of ownership towards curriculum changes. In addition, the novelty of this research lies in the integration of agile concepts that are usually used in the industrial and technological world into the Indonesian education context which is still dominated by bureaucratic structures. As such, this research makes significant theoretical and practical contributions in understanding how agile leadership can become a relevant, effective, and contextual new leadership model for building resilient, collaborative, and adaptive schools to face the educational challenges of the 21st century.

The main purpose of this study is to describe and analyze how the application of agile leadership-based principal leadership is able to transform the collaborative culture of schools so that it has an impact on improving teachers' adaptive performance in the era of Impactful Curriculum. The foundation of this leadership value is in line with the words of Allah SWT in QS. Ali Imran verse 159 as follows:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا فَتًى رَحْمَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَلْزَمْهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ .
عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

It means: "It is by the grace of Allah that you are gentle towards them. If you are harsh and rude-hearted, of course they will distance themselves from your surroundings. Therefore forgive them, ask for forgiveness for them, and consult with them in the matter. Then when you have made up your mind, then trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who trust in Him."

This verse emphasizes that a true leader is one who is gentle, open to opinions, and willing to deliberate with the person he leads. This principle is very much in line with the values in agile leadership, namely leadership that is empathetic, collaborative, communicative, and adaptive to quality changes that are urgently needed by school principals in building a collaborative work culture in the era of impact curriculum. This goal is based on the argument that the world of education is currently moving towards a new paradigm that demands speed, creativity, and high adaptability from all school citizens, especially teachers. Rapid changes in education policies, technology integration, and competency- and character-oriented learning approaches require school principals to no longer just be administrative managers, but to be agile, inspiring, and collaborative leaders (Abedi, 2024; Rintaningrum, 2023; Zou et al., 2025). In this context, agile leadership is considered relevant because it emphasizes flexibility, open communication, teamwork, and the ability to innovate in the face of uncertainty. Through the application of agile principles, principals can create a work environment that encourages teachers to learn from each other, share good practices, and dare to try new learning strategies without fear of failure (Özgenel et al., 2022). The collaborative culture built from this leadership model is believed to be able to strengthen teachers' adaptive capacity both in responding to curriculum changes, adjusting teaching methods, and managing learning based on student needs (Özen & Yavuz, 2024; Sumiati et al., 2024). Therefore, this research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how agile leadership can be

an effective leadership strategy in creating resilient, innovative, and sustainable schools amid the challenges of 21st-century education transformation, while offering a new leadership model that is relevant to the needs of Indonesia's modern education system.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to deeply understand how agile leadership-based principal leadership forms a collaborative culture and improves teachers' adaptive performance in the context of an impactful curriculum (Hall & Liebenberg, 2024; Pyo et al., 2023; Younas et al., 2023). Informants were selected through purposive sampling, i.e. the individuals who best understood the phenomenon, according to the principles of Patton (2015) and reinforced the findings of Anderson & Kirkpatrick (2021) that the selection of strategic informants is important in educational leadership studies. Six informants were involved: the principal, three cross-map teachers, administrative staff, and one grade XII student who each provided a perspective on agile practices, collaboration patterns, communication, and their impact on learning. Semi-structured interviews are used as the primary instrument to obtain flexible but in-depth data, as recommended by Brinkmann (2020), the focus of data mining refers to the theory of Agile Educational Leadership (Tabassum et al., 2024). About adaptivity and the courage to experiment, Collaborative Professionalism 2.0 regarding trust-based collaboration and teacher adaptive performance theory related to teachers' ability to adjust teaching practices (Ma et al., 2024). Data analysis using the Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2014) model through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawn, enriched by Braun & Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis to find the main patterns of school cultural transformation (Cahyanto, 2025).

The data sources in this study come from primary and secondary data that complement each other to comprehensively describe how agile leadership-based principals form a collaborative culture and improve teachers' adaptive performance (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025; Antoniadis et al., 2023, 2024). Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with six key informants selected through purposive sampling, namely the principal, three teachers from different fields of study, administrative staff, and a grade XII student. The six informants provided direct data on agile leadership practices, collaborative experiences, internal communication dynamics, learning experiment spaces, and perceptions of learning climate change. In addition to interviews, primary data was enriched through non-participatory observation of collaborative activities such as team meetings, reflective discussions, and learning experiment activities, as well as internal school documentation in the form of meeting minutes, work programs, supervision results, and teacher performance evaluation reports. Secondary data were obtained from various education policy documents, scientific journals of the last five years on agile leadership, collaborative culture, and adaptive teacher performance, and other supporting literature (Porkodi, 2024; Udin, 2025). The combination of these data sources allows for rich, triangulative, and in-depth analysis to understand the transformation of school culture in the context of impactful curriculum (Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė & Barkauskienė, 2023; Sliwka et al., 2024).

Data collection in this study was carried out through in-depth interviews and non-participatory observation as the two main techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of agile leadership practices and their impact on collaborative culture and adaptive performance of teachers (Barrios et al., 2024). Semi-structured interviews are used because they allow for an in-depth exploration of experiences and meanings while maintaining a focus on the research topic, in accordance with Brinkmann's (2020) view that qualitative interviews are effective for exploring participants' perspectives in a reflective and contextual manner. Non-participatory observation is

used to capture real behaviors, collaborative interactions, communication patterns, and teachers' adaptation processes in authentic situations, in line with the view of Merriam & Tisdell (2016) that observation helps researchers understand phenomena as they take place in the field. These two techniques are carried out repeatedly to increase the depth of findings and enable triangulation between primary data sources in order to strengthen the credibility of the research.

The data analysis in this study uses the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) model which emphasizes three main flows of activities that take place simultaneously: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. At the data reduction stage, the researcher conducts initial selection, grouping, and coding of the results of interviews and observations to find patterns of meaning that are relevant to the concept of agile leadership, collaborative culture, and adaptive teacher performance. This process is followed by data display, which is compiling thematic codes and categories into a matrix or narrative so that the relationships between findings are easier to understand, in line with Braun & Clarke's (2021) view on the importance of thematic organization in qualitative analysis. Furthermore, the drawing of conclusions is carried out through a repeated verification process to ensure that the themes that emerge are truly representative of the field data. This approach allows for a deep understanding of the transformation of school culture in a consistent and systematic manner.

The data source in this study consists of primary data obtained directly from the field and is the center of analysis to understand agile leadership practices, collaborative culture, and adaptive teacher performance. This primary data came from in-depth interviews with six key informants selected through purposive sampling, namely the principal, three teachers from different subjects, administrative staff, and a grade XII student. The informants provided a hands-on perspective on leadership dynamics, collaboration processes, inter-staff interactions, and changing learning climates. In addition to interviews, non-participatory observations are used as an additional data source to capture real behaviors and communication patterns in weekly reflection activities, collaborative meetings, and adaptive learning practices. The information from these two techniques is the main basis of the analysis, in accordance with the view of Merriam & Tisdell (2016) that primary data sources in qualitative research must accurately describe contextual reality in order to produce a deep and meaningful understanding. For more details see the following table:

Table 1. List of Research Informants

No	Informant Code	Position/Role	Main Interview Focus	Relevance to Research Questions	Additional Details
1	KS-01	Principal	Agile Leadership implementation and strategies to create a collaborative culture	Questions 1–4 and 7: The meaning of agile leadership, the steps of building an adaptive environment, encouraging teacher experimentation, and support for collaboration	A key leader of the school's cultural transformation; Practice weekly reflective forums
2	G-01	Indonesian Language Teacher	Implementation of team-based collaboration and professional development	Questions 5–8 and 10: Cross-mapping collaboration, principal support, and factors for the growth of open culture	Active in school literacy teams and cross-map projects
3	G-02	Math Teacher	Improvement of teachers' adaptive performance and	Question 3, 9–11: Learning experiments, adaptations to the	Developing a digital project-based learning

			the implementation of new learning methods	Impacted Curriculum, and feedback systems	model
4	G-03	PPKn Teacher	The impact of collaborative culture on teacher motivation and professionalism	Questions 6, 8, and 12: Collaboration, trust, and changes in teachers' work motivation	Coordinator of reflective activities and student council supervisor
5	TU-01	Administrative Staff	Changes in communication and decision-making systems under agile leadership	Questions 4 and 8: Communication patterns and open culture in school organizations	Become an administrative liaison between work teams
6	S-01	Grade XII Students	The indirect impact of agile leadership and collaborative culture on the learning climate	Questions 9 and 12: Perceptions of changes in learning and teacher enthusiasm in the classroom	Provide students with views on agile practices in the classroom

The selection of informants was carried out by purposive sampling to ensure that the data obtained was relevant to the focus of the research. Principals are the primary source of explaining the concept and application of agile leadership, while teachers are selected from different fields of study to illustrate the diverse collaborative dynamics and adaptive performance. Administrative staff and students are involved as supporting informants to strengthen the validity of the data, especially related to changes in communication, work culture, and learning atmosphere in schools. This combination of informants allows for a more in-depth and contextual analysis of the implementation of agile leadership at the high school level in the era of impactful curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Agile leadership succeeds in establishing a real collaborative culture

The research findings show that Agile Leadership-based principal leadership has succeeded in establishing a real collaborative culture in the high school environment. This transformation can be seen from changes in the pattern of interaction between teachers, open communication, and increased mutual trust in carrying out professional tasks. The implementation of agile leadership is not only a flexible leadership style, but also a real strategy to foster a spirit of cooperation across subjects and encourage teachers to adapt to the dynamics of an impactful curriculum that demands innovation and continuous reflection. The principal plays an active role as a facilitator who not only gives direction, but also creates a safe space for teachers to argue and experiment in learning.

The results of interviews with several teachers corroborate this finding. When asked about the meaning of Agile Leadership in the context of school leadership, one of the teachers said:

"For us, agile leadership means that the principal is willing to listen and quickly adjust decisions according to the situation on the ground and is not rigid."

This statement describes the paradigm shift in leadership from a top-down model to adaptive participatory leadership. On the second question about the principal's move to create a collaborative environment, another teacher explained that every week a reflective forum is held where teachers are free to share their learning experiences. In addition, the principal also gives full confidence to teachers to try new methods and provide feedback openly (Ng et al., 2025; Sarwar et al., 2022). In the last interview, the teachers agreed that communication is now more fluid and

decisions are taken through joint deliberation. This change fosters a sense of belonging to the school's vision and strengthens team solidarity (Deng, n.d.; Ndura & Bukuri Kambaye, 2025). Thus, Agile Leadership has been proven to not only strengthen collaboration, but also create an adaptive professional culture, relevant to today's educational challenges in the era of impactful curriculum (Känsälä & Tokumaru, 2023; Kucharska et al., 2026; Porkodi, 2024). The details are explained in the following table 2.

Table 2. Interview Results: Agile Leadership and the Formation of a Collaborative Culture

No	Interview Questions	They report	Summary of Answers	Direct Citation (Proof of Findings)	Interpretation of Findings
1	How do you interpret the concept of agile leadership in the context of leadership in this school?	Teacher A (English)	"Agile leadership is defined as leadership that is flexible, open to change, and quickly responds to the needs of teachers and students. The principal is considered to be able to adjust policies according to field conditions."	"For us, agile leadership means that the principal is willing to listen and quickly adjust decisions according to the situation on the ground and is not rigid."	Leadership is no longer hierarchical, but participatory and adaptive to school dynamics.
2	What steps do principals take to create a collaborative and adaptive work environment?	Teacher B (Mathematics)	Principals regularly hold weekly reflective forums where teachers share learning experiences and ideas. Teachers are given space to experiment and get open feedback.	"Every week we have a reflective forum. The principal encouraged us to share our teaching experiences, even giving us space to try new things."	School principals become facilitators of a collaborative culture that fosters teachers' courage to innovate and reflect.
3	How do principals encourage teachers to dare to experiment in learning?	Teacher C (PPKn)	The principal gives full trust to teachers to innovate learning, without fear of being blamed if the results are not optimal.	"He said, if you want to move forward, you have to have the courage to try. Failure is part of learning."	A reflective and experimental culture began to grow among teachers as a result of supportive leadership.
4	Have there been any changes in communication and decision-making patterns under this leadership?	TU Staff	Communication patterns are changing to be bidirectional and more fluid. Every decision is now taken through deliberation, not a single order.	"Now all decisions are discussed together. We feel more valued and involved."	Participatory culture replaces the old bureaucratic system, reinforcing a sense of belonging to the school's vision.

From the results of the interview, it can be concluded that the implementation of Agile Leadership has succeeded in creating significant organizational culture changes. School principals play the role of facilitators of collaboration, not just policy controllers. Communication becomes more open, teachers are more confident in experimenting, and deliberation-based decision-making is replacing top-down systems (Krüger et al., 2023; Mauri et al., 2024; Torfing et al., 2024). This transformation fosters mutual trust and strengthens solidarity among teachers (Abbaspour et al., 2024; Ghamrawi et al., 2024; Nasir & Nazar, 2026). These findings confirm that Agile Leadership is able to create an adaptive, reflective, and learning-oriented work environment according to the demands of the Impactful Curriculum in the modern education era.

The interpretation of the findings at the high school (SMA) level shows that the implementation of Agile Leadership by school principals has created a collaborative, adaptive, and innovative work culture amid the demands of the Impact Curriculum. Principals now play the role

of facilitators of change that foster the spirit of cooperation across subjects, no longer just policy controllers from above (Lundqvist & Westerlund, 2024; Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler, 2025). This transformation is evident in the dynamics of schools that are more open to ideas, reflection, and continuous learning. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Mulyani & Supriyanto (2023) who stated that agile leadership is able to strengthen the flexibility of school organizations and foster a collaborative culture among teachers. In addition, Rahman & Lestari (2022) emphasized that adaptive and participatory leadership can increase teachers' intrinsic motivation to innovate and reflect on learning practices. In the high school where this research was conducted, the implementation of weekly learning circles, peer reflection, and digital forums for sharing learning ideas became real practices that strengthened the culture of collaboration and mutual learning. Teachers feel more confident and given space to experiment without fear of failure. This is in line with the Agile School Leadership theory from Hughes et al. (2023) which emphasizes the importance of collaboration, speed of adaptation, and empathy in leading a learning community. Thus, the results of this study show that Agile Leadership in high school is not just a flexible leadership model, but a transformational strategy that is able to build a school ecosystem that is resilient, reflective, and ready to face rapid changes in the world of education in the 21st century.

Teachers' adaptive performance is improved through experimentation rooms and quick feedback

This study shows that teachers' adaptive performance at the high school level is significantly improved through the implementation of experimental spaces and rapid feedback systems facilitated by Agile Leadership-based leadership. In the context of Impactful Curriculum, teachers play the role of not only teachers, but also learners who continue to develop themselves from the practices they carry out (Finnanger & Prøitz, 2024; Park et al., 2023). Principals play an important role in creating psychological safety, which is a safe environment for teachers to experiment without fear of making mistakes. Weekly reflective forums and the use of digital platforms such as Google Classroom Feedback and Padlet Review allow teachers to obtain direct feedback from peers and students (Rath, 2025; Rofiah et al., 2023). This process accelerates professional learning, strengthens reflective abilities, and fosters continuous innovation. These findings confirm that the experiment space and quick feedback are the main catalyst for the formation of responsive teacher adaptive performance that is responsive, reflective, and in line with the spirit of the Impact Curriculum. The interview results are in the form of the following table:

Table 3. Interview Results and Findings

Informant Code	Key Quotes	Meaning of Findings	Analysis and Discussion
KS-01 (Principal)	"We provide space for teachers to experiment in the classroom without fear of making mistakes. Every week there is a reflection forum to share the results."	The principal created psychological safety and a system of quick reflection.	Agile leadership places the principal as a facilitator of collective learning. This strategy strengthens the culture of innovation and accelerates teachers' professional learning in the high school environment.
G-02 (Mathematics Teacher)	"We are used to trying new methods and immediately getting input from colleagues through digital reflection groups."	Teachers are active in real-time feedback based on digital platforms.	Quick feedback is the main mechanism of adaptive learning, accelerating correction, and strengthening the reflective abilities of high school teachers in the digital age.
G-01 (Indonesian Language)	"From the cross-map forum, I learned to adjust	Cross-map collaboration	Collaborative practice between fields expands the pedagogical

Teacher)	the method according to the character of the students. It makes me more flexible in teaching."	strengthens teachers' adaptive and innovative abilities.	horizons of high school teachers and hones flexibility in dealing with students' different learning styles.
G-03 (PPKn Teacher)	"In the past, we tended to work alone. Now each experiment is discussed together. It boosts confidence and enthusiasm for learning."	Peer reflection builds trust and professional motivation.	Reflective culture encourages teachers to become active learners and adaptive to changes in the independent curriculum and the dynamics of the needs of high school students.

The results of research at SMA Darussalam show that the application of Agile Leadership through experiments and rapid feedback systems has proven to be effective in improving teachers' adaptive performance. School principals play a central role in building a psychological safety safe environment for teachers to innovate without fear of failure (Chen et al., 2022; Robinson et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2025). Through weekly reflection forums and digital platforms such as Google Form Feedback, Padlet Review, and reflective WhatsApp groups, the learning evaluation process becomes faster, more transparent, and more participatory. Teachers at this high school show a paradigm shift from just curriculum implementers to learning designers who actively experiment and collaborate across subjects. Cross-map collaboration facilitated by schools has been proven to foster creativity in designing contextual and differentiating learning. In addition, peer reflection forums strengthen mutual trust and foster professional motivation among teachers.

These findings confirm that Agile Leadership is not just a managerial style, but a transformational strategy that forms an adaptive ecosystem in schools. The principal plays the role of a learning coach, not just a supervisor. Teachers become autonomous, creative, and reflective learning subjects. Thus, the adaptive performance of teachers at Darussalam High School has increased significantly as evidenced by their ability to adapt learning strategies to changes in the curriculum and the needs of 21st century students.

This research strengthens the theory of organizational agility (Fullan, 2024) that the agility of educational organizations is born from a reflective culture, a quick feedback system, and the courage to experiment sustainably. The conceptual model of teacher adaptive performance in the form of a visual flow diagram model is as follows:

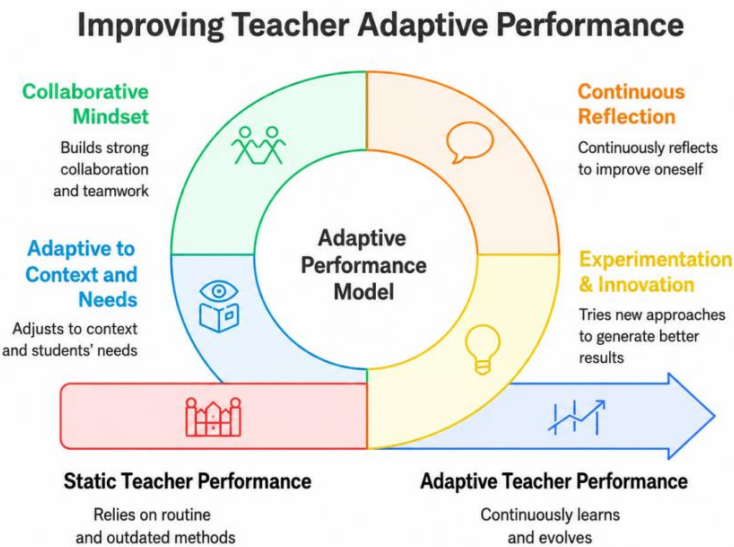


Figure 1. Improving Teacher Adaptive Performance

Based on the image above, the Teacher Adaptive Performance model rotates in a continuous cycle between experiment spaces, rapid feedback, cross-map collaboration, and a safe reflective culture. This model shows that the improvement of teachers' adaptive performance does not occur bilaterally, but rather through dynamic processes that reinforce each other. When teachers are given space to experiment without fear of failure, they receive direct feedback from peers and students, and then process it in reflective and collaborative forums (Eckstein et al., 2023; Li & Li, 2024). This cycle creates a professional learning culture that is agile, innovative, and aligned with the spirit of Agile Leadership in 21st-century schools (Barrett-Maitland et al., 2025; Crnogaj et al., 2022; Samodien et al., 2024).

The results of this study show that the improvement of teachers' adaptive performance in high school is greatly influenced by the existence of an experiment room and a quick feedback system developed through the principle of Agile Leadership. When principals create psychological safety, teachers become more courageous to try new methods, reflect on the results, and learn from peer and student feedback (Higgins et al., 2022; Qu et al., 2024). This process is in line with the theory of organizational agility put forward by Heydari Amin et al (2024) that the agility of educational organizations is born from a reflective culture and a continuous rapid improvement mechanism. In addition, these findings are supported by the concept of growth mindset from (غلامحسين, 1385), which emphasizes the importance of an environment that values the process of learning from failure. The practice of using Padlet Review and Google Feedback strengthens the theory Al-Mansouri (2024) about the importance of real-time feedback in improving teachers' adaptive abilities. Thus, the experimental space and the quick feedback system proved to be the main catalyst for the formation of resilient, reflective, and innovative teachers in facing the demands of the Impact Curriculum in the 21st century education era.

Teacher Participation in Decision Making, Ownership, and Resistance Reduction

This study reveals that teachers' participation in decision-making plays an important role in fostering a sense of ownership while reducing resistance to change in Darussalam High School. Principals who implement Agile Leadership act as facilitators who encourage teachers to be actively involved through weekly reflective forums, cross-subject meetings, and collaborative teams (Ruiz-Rojas & Acosta-Vargas, 2026). Teachers feel that the decisions taken are not just instructions, but the result of a mutual agreement that they take part in forming. This increases the motivation and readiness of teachers to try innovation in learning.

One of the Indonesian language teachers (G-01) revealed:

"We feel appreciated when school principals ask for input before determining policies. It makes us more motivated to try new methods of learning."

Observations show that teachers involved in decision-making are more open to accepting change, more confident in implementing new methods, and more responsive to feedback from peers and students (Hebbecke et al., 2022; Watkins & Manz, 2022).

Table 4. Thematic Findings of Teacher Participation

Tema Utama	Subtheme	Description of Findings	Impact on Teachers and Schools
Teacher Ownership	Active participation in decision-making	Teachers participate in developing learning policies and programs	Increased sense of ownership, higher motivation and loyalty to the school
Resistance Reduction	Joint decisions and reflective forums	Teachers are more receptive to change because decisions are	Resistance to new policies decreases, innovation is

Adaptive Performance	Collaboration and pedagogical experimentation	born from consensus Teachers try new methods and share cross-map strategies	easier to implement Adaptability increases, collaborative culture is formed
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The findings of this study show that the active participation of teachers in decision-making not only strengthens the sense of ownership of school policies, but also becomes the foundation for the emergence of a collaborative and innovative culture. Through reflective forums and open discussions, teachers feel their voices are valued, so the resulting decisions are more inclusive and easy to implement in (Geurts et al., 2024; Siegel-Stechler, 2023). When policies are born from a shared process, resistance to change decreases because teachers feel part of the new direction of the school. In this context, adaptive performance naturally grows teachers to be more courageous to experiment with learning methods, share strategies across subjects, and show true learners. Overall, this engagement encourages the creation of a dynamic, responsive, and continuous improvement-oriented school environment. The conceptual model of the flow of teacher participation and the impact of agile leadership in the form of diagram drawings are as follows:

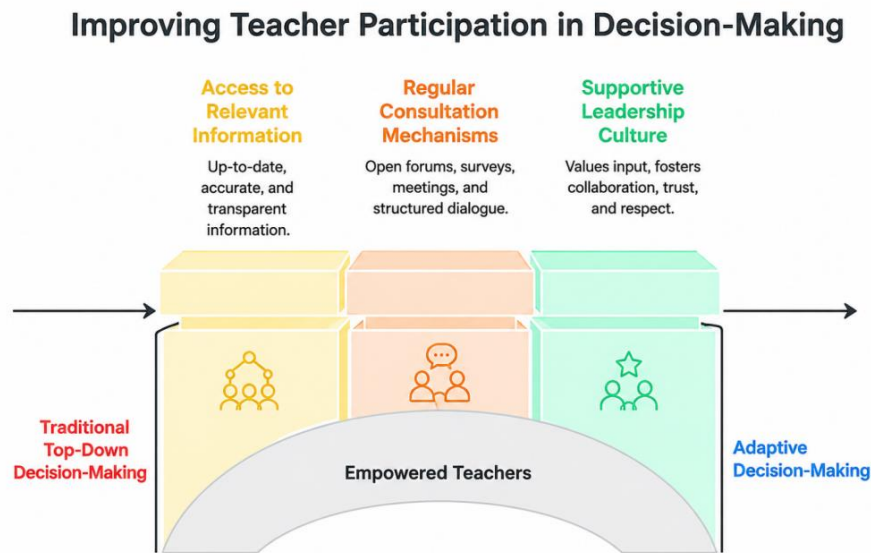


Figure 2. Improving Teacher Participan in Decision-Making

Based on the image above, the flow of teacher participation in decision-making under Agile Leadership-based leadership. The process starts from the role of the principal who applies the principles of agile leadership, which are flexible, collaborative, and change-oriented. From there, collaborative forums and cross-subject teams are formed as a forum for teachers to discuss, design programs, and evaluate school policies. Through this mechanism, teachers actively participate in the decision-making process, so that a sense of ownership of the policies made arises. This sense of ownership then reduces resistance to change, as teachers feel part of the process. Finally, these conditions encourage adaptive performance and strengthen a collaborative culture in the school environment, creating a dynamic and innovative learning organization.

This study confirms that teacher participation is not just a formal procedure, but an important mechanism to increase teachers' sense of ownership of school policies and programs, reduce resistance to change, especially the implementation of impactful curriculum and strengthen adaptive performance and learning innovation. These findings are in line with the international literature on distributed leadership and teacher agency, which emphasizes that active teacher

involvement in decision-making is key to the adaptive and sustainable transformation of modern schools (Polatcan, 2024).

The interpretation of the results of this study shows that teachers' participation in decision-making plays a strategic role in shaping an adaptive, collaborative, and innovative school culture. Under Agile Leadership-based leadership, teachers are not only policy implementers, but also decision-makers who contribute to the development of learning programs and innovations. This involvement fosters a strong sense of ownership towards the direction of school change and reduces resistance to new policies. These findings are in line with research by Lin et al. (2022) which confirms that distributed leadership strengthens teachers' creativity and innovation through increased professional collaboration. Similarly, a recent study by Song et al. (2025) found that teachers' involvement in decision-making increases their motivation and loyalty to school organizations. Overall, the results of this study confirm that participatory and agile leadership is an important foundation in creating a reflective and sustainable learning environment and encouraging teachers to become agents of change in the dynamic era of education.

Agile Leadership Builds a Collaborative Culture that Becomes the Foundation for Adaptive Performance and Teacher Participation

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of agile leadership at the high school level has been a major catalyst for the formation of a strong collaborative culture, which then becomes the foundation for increasing adaptive performance and teacher participation in decision-making. School principals no longer play the role of bureaucratic figures who dominate policy direction, but as facilitators who open spaces for dialogue, reflection, and pedagogical experimentation (Raelin, 2013). This transformation brings about a fundamental change in professional dynamics: teachers are more willing to try new methods, give each other feedback, and work across subjects to find joint solutions to the challenges of implementing the impactful curriculum. A psychologically safe work environment characterized by trust, openness, and two-way communication encourages teachers to actively engage in weekly reflective forums, collaborative project teams, and decision-making discussions. This involvement not only strengthens the sense of ownership of the school's curriculum, but also decreases resistance to change, as each policy is understood as the result of collective deliberation, rather than top-down instruction (Adeoye et al., 2025).

Agile Leadership Drives Positive Change in School Culture

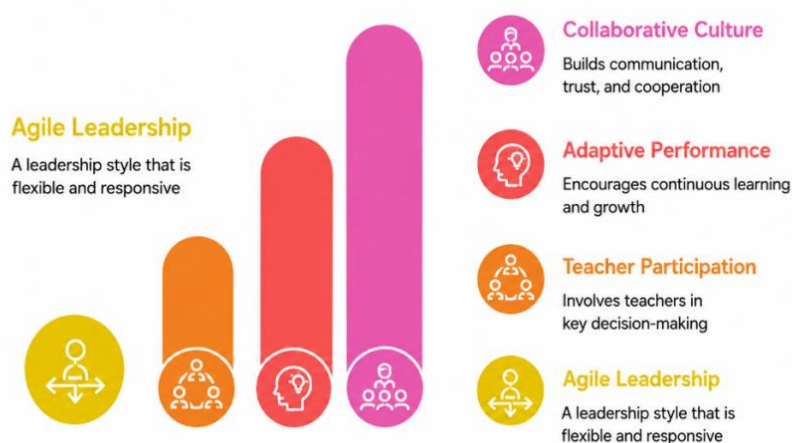


Figure 3. Agile Leadership Drives Positive Change in School Culture

Thus, agile leadership in schools not only gives rise to a collaborative culture as a social value, but also as a work mechanism that strengthens organizational agility, increases professional motivation, and moves teachers to become agents of change. These findings confirm that a systemically constructed collaborative culture is an important prerequisite for the birth of teachers' adaptive performance and active participation in decision-making in 21st-century schools.

The diagram illustrates how Agile Leadership is the main driver of change in work culture in schools. When principals are flexible, responsive, collaborative, and empathetic, a collaborative culture is created that encourages two-way communication, trust, and a safe space for teachers to reflect and work across subjects. This culture then gives birth to two main impacts: increased teachers' adaptive performance through pedagogical experimentation and rapid feedback, as well as increased teacher participation in decision-making. These two elements strengthen the agility of school organizations so that they are able to respond to the demands of the Impact Curriculum more effectively and sustainably (Jackson, 2022)

Table 5. In-Depth Interview Findings: The Relationship between Agile Leadership, Collaboration, Adaptive Performance, and Teacher Participation

Main Dimensions	Key Informant & Collection	Meaning of Findings	Empirical Evidence	Academic Implications
Agile Leadership	KS-01: "We give room to experiment without fear of being wrong."	The principal creates psychological safety, the foundation of collaboration.	Weekly reflective forum routine.	Supports the theory of agile school leadership (Hughes et al., 2023).
Collaborative Culture	G-01: "Reflective forums keep us from working alone."	Collaboration becomes a professional, not an administrative practice.	Cross-map collaboration & peer reflection.	In line with collaborative professionalism (Fullan, 2024).
Quick Feedback	G-02: "We can get input directly through the digital group."	Real-time feedback accelerates teacher learning.	Use of Google Form, Padlet Review, WA is reflective.	Supporting the concept of the rapid learning cycle (Al-Mansouri, 2024).
Teacher Participation	G-03: "The decision is now discussed together."	Collective decision-making increases a sense of belonging.	Collaborative meetings & policy discussions.	Strong in distributed leadership theory (Lin et al., 2022).
Adaptive Performance	G-01: "I'm more flexible in adjusting the method."	Teacher adaptivity arises from experimentation & repetitive reflection.	Pedagogical innovation, method differentiation.	In line with the theory of organizational agility (Heydari Amin et al., 2024).

The findings of the interviews in the table above show that Agile Leadership in schools builds a psychologically safe work ecosystem, so that teachers dare to experiment and are not afraid to innovate. The collaborative culture formed through weekly reflective forums makes cooperation not just an administrative routine, but a professional practice that strengthens the capacity of teachers (Jackson, 2022). The fast feedback mechanism through the digital platform accelerates the learning cycle and improves learning. In addition, teachers' involvement in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership that increases participation (Uzorka et al., 2024). All of these dynamics encourage the birth of adaptive performance that characterizes agile schools in the era of Impact

Curriculum.

The interpretation of these findings shows that Agile Leadership implemented by school principals is the main driver for the formation of a collaborative ecosystem in schools, which in turn becomes the foundation for adaptive performance and active participation of teachers. This leadership approach is flexible, responsive, collaborative, and empathetic creating a psychological safety that allows teachers to experiment and share practices without fear of failure. This is in line with the concept of adaptive leadership as discussed by Imamah et al. (2024), who explain that adaptive leadership is key in building a relevant and sustainable hybrid organizational model. A collaborative culture formed through weekly reflection and cross-subject interaction strengthens the collective professionalism of teachers, in line with the idea of shared leadership which states that leadership is no longer centralized, but divided and collaborative (Yenti & Nurzen, 2025). The rapid feedback mechanism through digital platforms reflects the rapid learning cycle principle in which rapid iteration and direct evaluation accelerate adaptation (as adopted in adaptive leadership research in the digital age). Teachers' involvement in decision-making demonstrates a high distribution of authority and a sense of ownership, supporting a distributed leadership theory that emphasizes collective participation in decision-making processes. Finally, all these dynamics show that Agile Leadership is not just a managerial style, but a transformational strategy that allows schools to improve organizational agility, namely the organization's capacity to respond to changes in the Impactful Curriculum quickly and sustainably. This interpretation reinforces that for 21st-century schools to be successful, cultural and structural transformations must be led through an adaptive, collaborative, and learning-centered leadership model (Ahsan, 2025).

Experiment Space and Rapid Feedback as Key Mechanisms That Result in Adaptive Performance and Strengthen Teacher Participation

The findings of the study show that the presence of *an experimental room*, which is a safe area for teachers to try new methods without fear of being judged as a failure, and *the rapid feedback mechanism* has been the main driver of increasing teachers' adaptive performance in designing and implementing learning. In the context of schools that are accelerating innovation, these two mechanisms not only strengthen creativity, but also increase teachers' participation as they feel valued, supported, and given space to develop (Haim & Aschauer, 2024). As one teacher expressed in an interview, *"When we are given the opportunity to try without fear of making mistakes, we actually become more daring to innovate."*

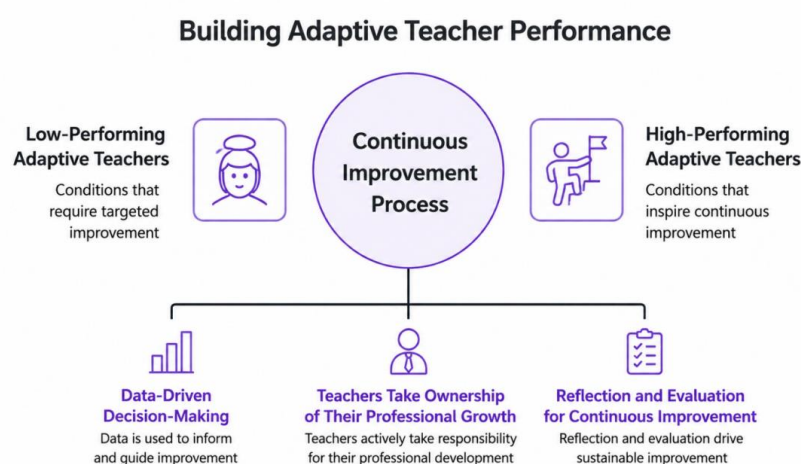


Figure 4. Building Adaptive Teacher Performance

This quote is strong evidence that a culture of trust and structural support has a direct effect on adaptive behavior. As depicted in the conceptual diagram figure 4 as follows

An interpretation of the findings of this study shows that the existence of experimental spaces in schools is a psychologically safe area for teachers to try new methods without fear of failure along with rapid feedback mechanisms, forming an important foundation for the emergence of teachers' adaptive performance. Experimental spaces create a sense of security that allows teachers to take professional risks, while quick feedback from peers or digital platforms facilitates continuous reflection and improvement (Savolainen, 2023) This cycle of trying, receiving feedback, reflecting, improving strengthens the teacher's sense of competence and empowerment. As a result, teachers are more motivated to innovate and actively participate in the innovative learning process, as they feel valued and supported. Thus, the culture of trust and structural support provided by the school not only increases creativity, but also strengthens the commitment and participation of teachers, which ultimately presents adaptive performance as a tangible manifestation of the school's institution's agility in the face of change.

Theoretically, these findings are closely related to psychological safety theory, which states that individuals in organizations will be more courageous to take risks and express new ideas if they feel safe from social punishment or negative consequences for failure (Mert et al., 2022). Research in the context of agile teams, for example, shows that psychological safety increases reflexivity and team performance. In addition, the theory of organizational trust is also relevant: the results show that teachers' collective trust in peers, school leaders, and institutions also increases teachers' innovative behavior. Furthermore, the theory of adaptive leadership in learning organizations reinforces this path: adaptive leadership can increase organizational innovation through the teacher's belief (change self-efficacy) in the face of change.

By combining psychological safety, organizational trust, and adaptive leadership, the findings of this study present a strong and theoretical conceptual framework: teachers' innovation and adaptive performance grow not out of pressure or coercion, but because of structural and cultural support that enables experimentation, failure, learning, and growth

Conclusion

This research confirms that the application of Agile Leadership in the high school environment is able to transform organizational culture to be more collaborative, adaptive, and innovative. The principal no longer plays the role of a policy controller, but as a facilitator of collective learning that creates psychological safety, experimental space, and a quick feedback system for teachers. Through weekly reflective forums, cross-subject collaboration, and the use of digital platforms, teachers not only become curriculum implementers, but also develop as learning designers and agents of change.

Teachers' active participation in decision-making strengthens the sense of ownership of school policy direction and significantly reduces resistance to change. This participatory culture breeds trust, openness, and a sustainable reflective spirit. The results of this study strengthen the theory of organizational agility (Fullan, 2024) that the agility of educational organizations grows from a system of quick feedback, the courage to experiment, and adaptive leadership.

Overall, Agile Leadership is proving to be a transformational strategy that builds a resilient and responsive school ecosystem to the demands of the Impactful Curriculum and the dynamics of 21st-century education. This leadership model is relevant to be adopted globally in the context of education reform that demands collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning.

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