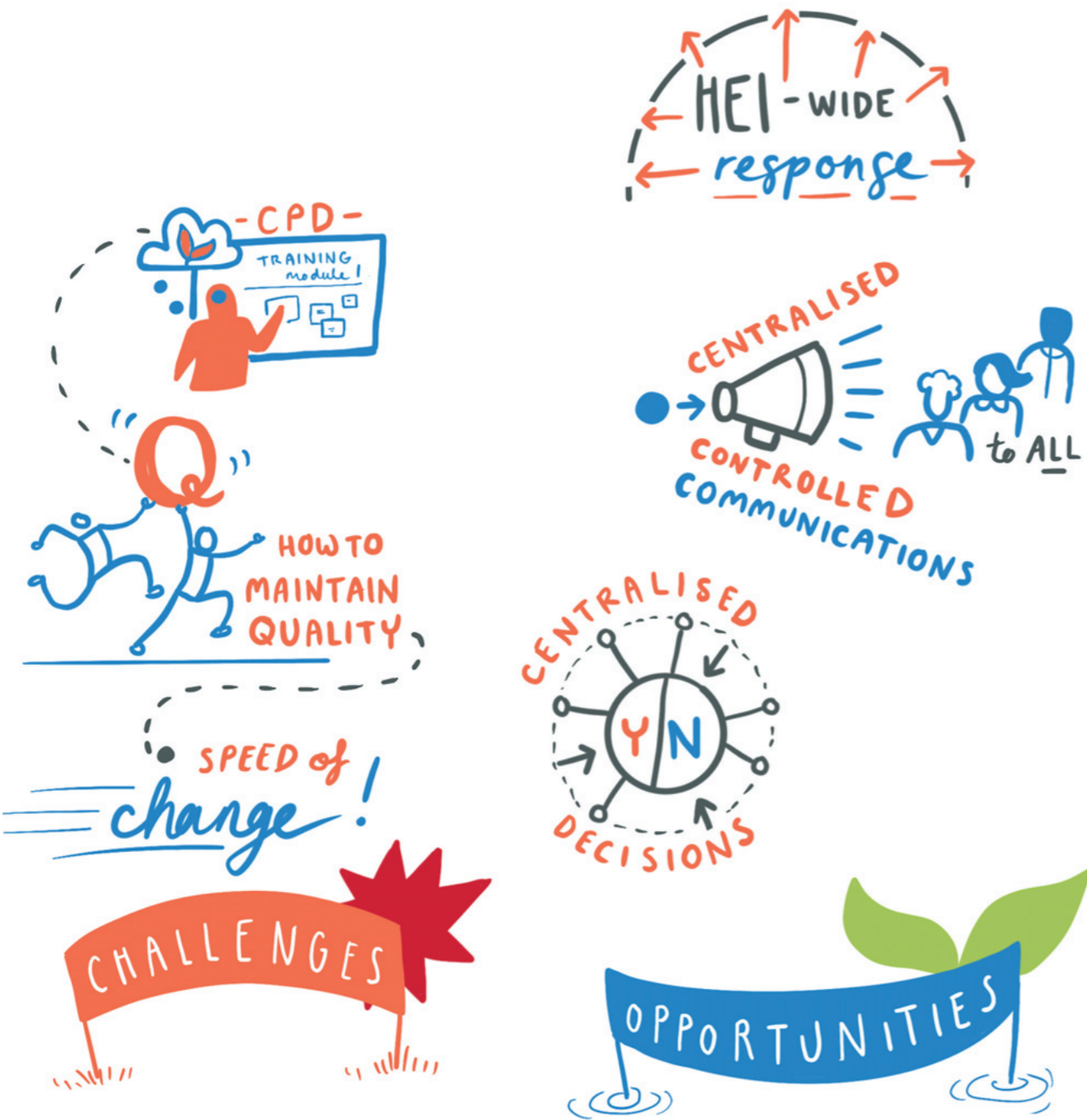


2 Agile by Design? A Critique of Dublin Business School's Response to the Pandemic-Driven Campus Closure in 2020 and the Implications for Academic Development



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Abstract

This study uses Dublin Business School's (DBS) transition to online teaching and learning in response to the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown as a window into the role of academic development in an agile higher education institute (HEI). Agility, or the ability to respond to dramatic change, is not normally associated with HEIs. However, an agile approach does appear to have common ground with neo-collegiality, an approach to management in higher education that attempts to bridge the gap between managerialism and collegiality. Agility is actively pursued by DBS, which is reflected in DBS's atypical organisational structure and the role of academic development within that structure. This study uses Wendler's (2014) Organisational Agility Maturity Model as the basis to survey faculty and conduct focus groups with academic leaders to assess DBS's agile response to the dramatic change brought on by the shutdown. The analysis of the data reveals that DBS did respond in an agile manner, which benefited academic development. However, there are areas where DBS could improve if it is to become more agile, and our research suggests academic development has a key role in facilitating that improvement.

Keywords

Organisational Agility, Academic Development, Managerialism, Collegiality, Ireland



Introduction

How agile can higher education institutes (HEI) be? Agility is defined by Aaron De Smet, a leader of organisation design at McKinsey, as ‘the ability of an organisation to renew itself, adapt, change quickly, and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous, turbulent environment’ (Aghina et al., 2015). More specifically, organisational agility was defined by Tseng and Lin (2011, cited in Wendler, 2014) as ‘an effective integration of response ability and knowledge management in order to rapidly, efficiently and accurately adapt to any unexpected (or unpredictable) change’ (p. 1198). The concept of organisational agility is probably more closely associated with fast-paced industries with rapid-changing technological demands and customer expectations, such as the IT service industry (Wendler, 2014) rather than higher education. However, during 2020, Irish HEIs were unexpectedly forced to drastically change the way they operated and delivered teaching and learning in response to the ambiguous and turbulent environment brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dublin Business School (DBS) has a functional- and process-focused organisational structure designed to have the capacity to respond to change in an agile manner. The response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the drastic change to move teaching and learning online, offers an opportunity to see, from the faculty’s perspective, if that was the case. In this chapter, we describe DBS’s organisational structure within the context of the increasing level of managerialism in higher education in Ireland. A survey of DBS faculty and a focus group with academic leaders, both of which were informed by Wendler’s (2014) Organisational Agility Maturity Model, are used to examine DBS’s agility within the context of the quality of the learning environment during the shutdown. The outcomes of the survey and focus groups illustrate that the pursuit of agility served DBS well when responding to dramatic change, but that there are areas for improvement. It also illustrates that academic developers can be beneficiaries of a more agile approach, while also having a key role in ensuring that the areas for improvement are addressed.

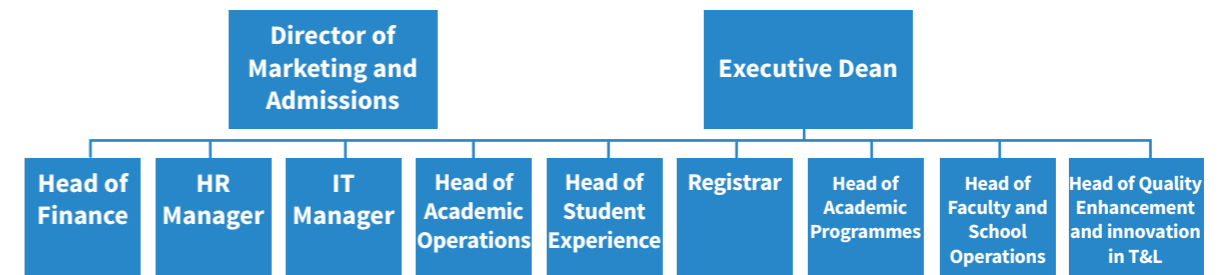
Context¹: DBS’s Organisational Structure Level Headings

DBS is Ireland’s largest independent college, with over 8,000 students and a comprehensive suite of programmes in a number of disciplines (DBS, 2019). DBS programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) are accredited through Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Governance at DBS is the responsibility of the Board of Directors, the Academic Board, and the Executive Board, also known as the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), which are related but distinct boards (DBS, 2019). The SLT is a decision making body, working in tandem with the Academic Board, to ‘ensure the effective operation and quality delivery of academic programmes alongside commercial viability of the College’ (DBS, 2019, p. 11).

DBS’s executive and academic structure is based on a functional model. The Executive Dean oversees a ten-person SLT, none of whom are discipline heads. Each role within the SLT, and the Academic Leadership aspect of the SLT, has an institute-wide brief that cuts across disciplines. As illustrated in Figure 1, heads of functions, such as Student Experience, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement, IT, Academic Operations and Academic Programme development and management, make up the executive team.

¹During 2020 DBS has undergone further organisational change that resulted in a number of job title changes. The Executive Dean is now the President of the College and Course Directors are now Academic Directors.

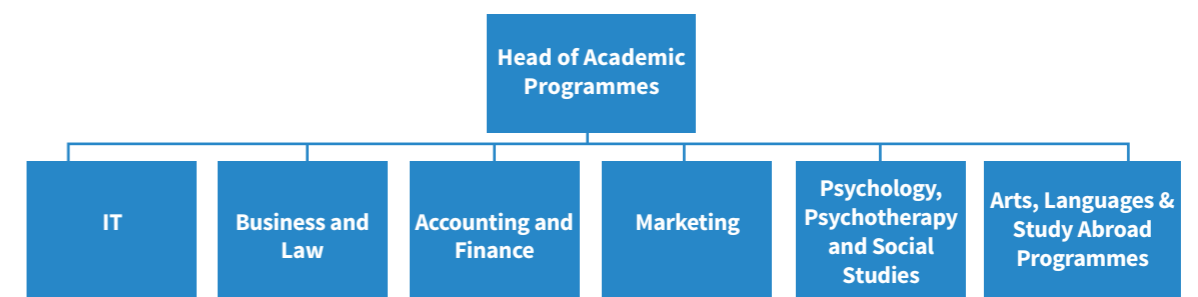
Figure 1: DBS Senior Leadership Team (DBS, 2019)



Within the SLT, there is a distinction between operational and academic processes, with the Head of Faculty and School Operations responsible for ‘academic staff leadership, management and development’ (p. 36), whereas the Head of Programmes (Figure 2) is responsible for the ‘leadership, development and management of all academic programmes’ (p. 35) and, as such, is responsible for the day-to-day academic management and delivery of the programmes. Academic development is one of the core functions of the Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning (HoQEITL). As a senior leader, with an institute-wide cross-discipline brief, the HoQEITL works with the Course Directors (CDs) and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment subcommittee of the academic board to determine the direction and scope of academic development initiatives, with institute-wide teaching and learning academic development taking priority over discipline-based academic development. Under this structure, academic development is a function of the executive team, with the ability to introduce institute-wide change. One of the mantras often heard in relation to any aspect of academic development is the need for executive buy-in to support change. What DBS has done is make academic development an executive function, which means that all proposed academic development initiatives come with executive buy-in by default.

The distinction between operational and academic carries deeper into the organisational structure. Faculty managers, who report to the Head of Faculty and work across disciplines, are responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the academic staff, whereas the CDs, who report to the Head of Academic Programmes (Figure 2), are responsible for the day-to-day academic management and delivery of the programmes.

Figure 2: DBS Course Directors (DBS, 2019)



This distinction between academic and operations also extends into communication with students. The operational and administrative interactions with students, such as timetabling or attendance, are managed by programme coordinators, who report to the Head of Academic Operations, whereas student queries on the academic content or teaching and assessment strategy are the responsibility of course directors, who report to the Head of Academic Programmes.

De Smet et al. (2015) claim that agility requires the ability to act fast from a stable foundation (Aghina et al., 2015). Separating the operational from the academic, and focussing on the institute-wide function rather than the discipline, is DBS's approach to the challenge of being able to respond quickly while providing a stable foundation. For academic development, that means that DBS should have the capacity to instigate fast institutional change.

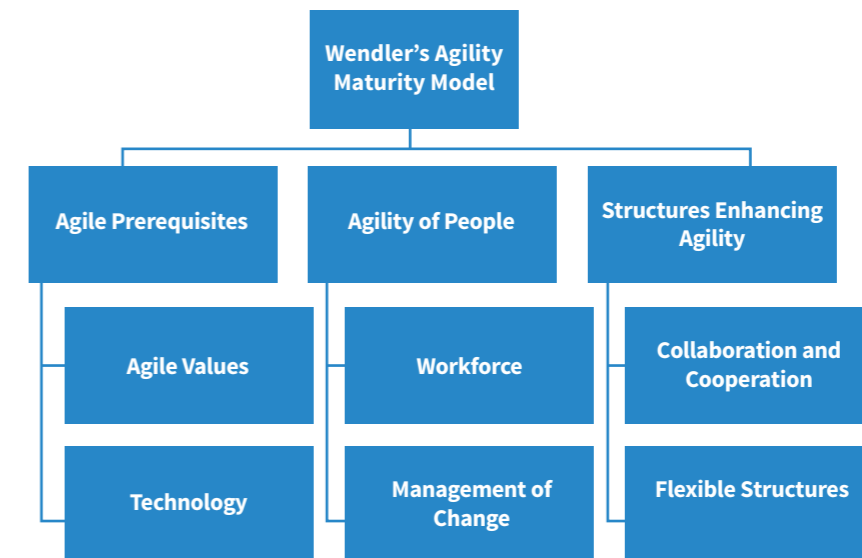
Managerialism, Collegiality and Neo-Collegiality in Higher Education

The move to a more centralised function-focused approach to management in HEIs can be seen as reflective of a more managerial approach that, it has been argued, has been creeping into the traditionally collegial approach to management in HEIs in Western countries over the past 30 years (Deem, 1998; Burnes et al., 2013). A collegial HEI will have a decentralised structure, with an emphasis on academic freedom, where decisions tend to be made collectively by academics (Sahlin, 2012; Tight, 2014). Collegially managed academics tend to be more likely to act independently of each other (Hedley, 2010), regarding teaching as a private affair (Trowler, 2010) and giving their loyalty primarily to their discipline rather than their HEI (Elton, 1995). In contrast, a managerialist approach leads to the centralisation of power away from the academic departments (Alford & Hughes, 2008; Bacon, 2014), where decisions are made by managers (Tight, 2014). This managerial-collegial dichotomy can be seen being played out in the development of Teaching and Learning Centres which, by the start of the 21st century in many universities in America, Australia and Europe, had started to take an institutional-wide approach to academic development that was aligned to strategic goals and focussed on teaching efficiency and effectiveness, in contrast to the 'collegial' model, which saw educational development as collaborative peer-review projects among faculty (Fraser, Gosling & Sorcinelli, 2010). It has been argued that centralising decision-making can be seen as undermining the role of the academic disciplines. Managerialism for academics can mean reduced freedom and autonomy and more structure and monitoring (Kolsaker, 2008). Burnes et al. (2014) expressed concern that going from a scenario where academics had virtually total involvement in decision-making to one where they had almost none has been shown to result in poor decision-making, delayed and failed change and the demotivation and de-professionalisation of staff.

New, or neo-collegiality, has been promoted as an alternative approach to the extremes of managerialism and collegiality. Bacon (2014), building on the work of Elton (1995), states that neo-collegiality seeks to incorporate bringing together the centralised decision-making of managerialism with local control of collegiality. Neo-collegiality acknowledges the necessity of some aspects of managerialism in order to facilitate the massification of higher education

participation, but attempts to ensure that the voice of faculty that was the staple of collegiality is not lost (Bacon, 2014) in a more centralised functional approach to higher education. This merging of centralised and local decision-making can be seen as being mirrored in Tseng and Yin (2011) definition of agility, with the idea of being able to rapidly respond through knowledge management. The Wendler (2014) Organisational Agility Maturity Model, which is used in this study as a mechanism to assess agility in DBS, is composed of three dimensions, Agility Perspectives, or the extent to which the people working in an organisation see agile values as important; Agility of People, or the ability of the organisation's people to turn those values into actions and Structures Enhancing Agility, which describes the ability of an organisation to adapt to change and the nature of the culture to support that change through collaboration at every level.

Figure 3: Adapted from the Dimensions and Sub-dimensions of Wendler's (2014) Model



There appears to be an overlap in these aspects of the dimensions of agility identified by Wendler (2014) and the acknowledgement within the concept of neo-collegiality that the centralised decision making of managerialism needs to be balanced by retaining the voice of faculty at all levels of the college. The Structures Enhancing Agility dimension talks to supporting change through collaboration at every level and the Agility of People dimension talks to how employees 'should be able and willing to learn from each other to improve themselves continuously, communicate in a trustful way with each other, and take responsibility' (Wendler, 2014, p. 1200). As noted above, there has been a move toward a more centralised model for academic developers supporting faculty development. Given the overlap between agility and neo-collegialism, there may be value in academic developers championing the agile approach in an effort to ensure that the faculty voice, some fear can be lost in the move toward a centralised structure, is prioritised in a more neo-collegial approach to academic development. Examining DBS's response to the Covid-19 shutdown and assessing its agility through the eyes of faculty and academic leaders could illustrate the value of an agile approach to academic support and development.

DBS Responds to Covid-19

The institute-wide view of DBS operations can be seen prior to the Covid-19 shutdown when the members of the SLT were tasked with putting together a Business Continuity (BC) Framework and Business Continuity Plan in 2019. The Head of Academic Operations and Head of IT led work with the other members of the SLT to discover what DBS's response would be to situations that posed a significant risk to DBS staff and students or its ability to deliver teaching and learning. The solution to a number of the scenarios considered in the Business Continuity Plan involved putting some or all of the teaching online. The online development team, led by the HoQEILT was consulted in the construction of the Business Continuity Plan. The continuity plan was published internally in February 2020, at the same time that the Executive Dean of DBS made the SLT aware that DBS, in all probability, would be shutting down and moving all teaching and learning online as part of the government's mandated response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Business Continuity Plan detailed a Crisis Management Team (CMT), of which an operational subgroup comprising the Head of Faculty, Head of IT, Head of Operations and Director of Marketing and Admissions, met frequently over the coming month to work through the logistics of the response to the need to close all the DBS buildings. Working with the Business Continuity Plan, the following decisions were made by the CMT and approved by the SLT, prior to the shutdown:

- > All communication with faculty would come from one source, the Head of Faculty and School Operations.
- > All communication with learners would come from one source, the Head of Academic Operations.
- > Classes with ratios of over 25 would take place online using the Panopto lecture capture application.
- > Classes with ratios of under 25 would take place online using Zoom as the teaching platform.
- > For ratios of over 25, academics were given the option to pre-record their lectures using Panopto.
- > No online teaching applications other than Zoom or Panopto were to be used.
- > All classes, with a few exceptions, were to be recorded.
- > All teaching activities and content, including recorded classes, would be made available to learners via the VLE, Moodle.

DBS already had an institute-wide license for Panopto lecture capture and had been using Zoom for the delivery of online professional non-accredited diplomas. In the weeks before the government's announcement to close campuses on 12 March, additional Zoom licenses were bought and intensive training of lecturers on the use of Panopto and Zoom took place, conducted by the online development team but coordinated by the Faculty Managers. Online teaching and learning for all classes started on 15th March, 2020. All learning activities from the end of March through to the end of August 2020 were delivered online.

The Registrar and the Exams office worked with Academic Operations and the online development team to coordinate all online exams. Decisions about how the exams were to be conducted, for example that all exams were to be open books, were taken by the Registrar, following consultation, and then applied across the college. A team of administrative, exams office and library staff set up an exam section on all the Moodle pages of all the modules, regardless of discipline or level. Similarly, the HoQEILT organised support for online teaching in cross-discipline sessions. Feedback from lecturers and learners across the college was captured after the first few weeks of online teaching, which formed the basis for support for academics teaching online that was applied across the college, regardless of discipline. All logistical and operational communiques continued throughout the shutdown to come through the Head of Faculty and School Operations, with all student communiques coming from the Head of Academic Operations. In July, a Return to College Working Group was established with representatives from the different functions to set about planning for a college-wide approach to the post-shutdown teaching environment.

This centralised approach to managing the change to online learning, teaching and assessment allowed for a level of consistency and clarity that, it can be argued, would have been more difficult to achieve if approached on a discipline basis. Similarly, the ability within DBS to distinguish clearly between functional and academic concerns facilitated a functional approach to the operational crisis of being forced to shut down the college's physical buildings. It could be argued that this centralised, flatter organisational structure enabled DBS to eliminate internal complexities and empower collaboration amongst colleagues. Moreover, it could also be argued that buy-in from managers through a flat structure eliminated smaller spans of control and enabled managers to become involved in the broader aspects of the business. The centralised, single message on change enabled academic development to be focussed and unified and not reactive to disparate decision making. Resources built locally to support academic development were relevant and applicable across the whole institute. Moreover, the messages on academic development and teaching and learning solutions could be consistently delivered from one source to faculty and learners. To what extent, however, did faculty evaluate DBS's response to going online? Was it agile and, if so, what are the implications of a more agile approach to academic development?

Evaluative Methodology

In seeking to consider these questions, the authors selected a mixed methods approach, using a questionnaire to capture lecturers' views and a focus group with the CDs. Wendler's (2014) Organisational Agility Maturity Model formed a basis for the survey and the focus group questions. The model, which was designed to address the perceived lack of a framework for explaining agility, is composed of the three dimensions of agility – Agility Prerequisites of values and technology; Agility of People of workforce and management of change and Structures Enhancing Agility of collaboration and cooperation and flexible structures – along with four levels of agile maturity, Non Agile, Agility Basics, Agility Transition and Organisational Agility. The stage an organisation is at on the four-stage maturity model is determined by the average score in each sub-dimension of the categories.

Questionnaires allow for a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2014). The survey, which consisted of 49 questions, was sent out to 261 lecturers on a DBS mailing list, and 50 responses were received. Respondents were not asked to identify in which discipline they taught. Focus groups are a stilted

interview scenario but they allow for a triangulated research approach to the theme of agility. This triangulation allowed for the identification of specific patterns and generic themes to emerge organically and to elaborate on the questionnaire responses. Focus groups allow for a variety of views and opinions, similarities and differences (Colucci, 2007). In this case, the focus group offered new insights into agility in the workplace (Krueger and Casey, 2015; Oates and Alevizou, 2018). The CDs were selected for the focus group because of their responsibility for academic leadership of the programme(s) within their discipline. The focus group questions explored each dimension of Wendler’s (2014) Organisational Agility Maturity Model. The focus group responses from the CDs were transcribed with anonymous responses. The ability to draw on the quantitative data of the questionnaire and the qualitative data from the focus group enabled the researchers to look for a correlation when identifying which aspects of Wendler’s themes were dominant.

Access to conduct internal research was granted by the Registrar and ethical approval for the study was granted by the DBS Ethics Committee with amendments that addressed concerns over guarantees of anonymity and the positionality of the questions and interview protocol because of the subjective nature of the topic. A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire before going live, and this enabled the authors to ascertain the validity of the questions.

Wendler’s themes identified within the responses and colour coded for thematically analysed. The themes composed of the three dimensions of agility – Agility Prerequisites of values and technology; Agility of People of workforce and management of change and Structures Enhancing Agility of collaboration and cooperation and flexible structures – along with four levels of agile maturity, Non Agile, Agility Basics, Agility Transition and Organisational Agility. The expressed views and opinions could then be reviewed in terms of a correlation of opinion and reflection between the stakeholders.

Analysis

Respondents were asked to consider statements pertaining to each of the six sub-dimension of Wendler’s Agility Maturity Model (2014) model (Figure 3) and select how often the statement occurred, to what extent the statement was true, or how pervasive the statement was across the organisation by a rating scale of 1-5 (Appendix A).

The analysis of the 50 responses initially examines the weighted averages across the six sub-dimensions. It continues by analysing the highest and lowest scoring sub-dimensions as well as the highest and lowest scoring individual statements. The focus group data is included where appropriate throughout to contrast the views of the CDs with those of faculty.

Across the sub-dimensions, DBS faculty responses showed remarkable consistency:

Table 1: DBS Scores Across Wendler’s (2014) Subdomains

Sub Dimension	Agile Values	Technology	Workforce	Management of Change	Collaboration	Flexible Structures
Score	3.54	3.61	3.7	3.6	3.59	3.57

The weighted averages ranged by just .16 from highest to lowest. This suggests DBS faculty regarded the college’s ability to respond with agility to the Covid-19 closure to be high, if not perfectly consistent, across all of Wendler’s sub-dimensions. The survey revealed DBS scored highest in the sub-dimension of ‘Workforce’ with a 3.7 weighted average of 5. These questions pertained to employees’ ability to perceive opportunity and freedom to act upon it. Somewhat paradoxically, the lowest sub-dimension was ‘agile values in the organisation’ with a weighted average of 3.54. The single lowest scoring statement was, ‘Our organisation values a culture that accepts and supports decisions and proposals of employees.’ with a score of 3.22. Interestingly, the highest scoring individual statement was ‘Our employees are self-motivated.’ with a score of 4.02. When considered together, the highest and lowest scoring statements suggest staff are highly self-motivated in an organisation they perceive to not greatly value their suggestions.

Agile Values

The first Wendler ‘agility prerequisite’ sub-dimension of ‘agile values’ was the lowest scoring area examined by the survey. Themes such as teamwork and experimentation received average scores, while supporting employee decisions and reactive responses to crises, rather than proactive continuous improvement, scored lowest in the sub-dimension. For example, survey statements including ‘Our organisation values a culture that accepts and supports decisions and proposals of employees’ scored 3.22 of 5 and ‘Our organisation prefers a proactive continuous improvement rather than reacting to crisis or fire-fighting’ scored 3.26 of 5. However, statements such as ‘Our organisation values a culture that harnesses change for competitive advantages’ (3.84 of 5) and ‘Our organisation values a culture that considers changing customer-related requirements as opportunities’ (3.8 of 5) score highly. These results suggest faculty experiences were consistent with principles of managerialism – an agile, centralised response to change while, at the same time, there is a perceived lack of faculty involvement in decision making.

The CD focus group responses consistently reflected the theme of agility in terms of response to the closure including, ‘(In DBS’s senior team) ... there’s a very quick decision making process ... and decisions are refined all the time ... We are good at managing and coping and refining.’ and ‘We were proactive in having systems in place – of communication strategies in place, decision making bodies in place, governance in place.’ As such, the CD experience with regard to decision-making stood in contrast to the broader faculty survey. The faculty response was markedly lower, which is perhaps to be expected due to the seniority of CDs and their contrasting autonomy. Focus group statements include, ‘we work with our teams ... and there’s not really that many questions and ruminations about whether we’re doing the right thing or not. We just do it and we modify our process.’ (CD1) and ‘I did feel like I could deviate away from (the standard approach) where necessary’ (CD1).

Information Systems and Technology

The second 'agile prerequisite' dimension in the survey examined information systems and technology. Faculty and CDs lauded the appropriateness and availability of systems. Survey statements included 'Our organisation has Information Systems and Technologies that make organisational information easily accessible to all employees.' (3.74 of 5) and 'Our organisation has Information Systems and Technologies that are appropriate to our needs and allow us to be competitive in the marketplace.' (3.72 of 5). CDs concurred asserting, 'I saw and understood the type of investment that the college made in the type of technology that we invested in. That allowed us to make an easier transition to the online environment' (CD2) and 'We did have an awful lot of support from Ed Tech in terms of training and support' (CD3).

This sub-dimension also revisits decision making in the survey with the statement 'Our organisation has Information Systems and Technologies that enable decentralisation in decision making.' (3.32 of 5). This again suggests the faculty concern in this area is that the IT systems are not designed to enable decentralisation of decision making, but rather to deliver online teaching and learning as a unified singular experience across DBS.

Workforce Agility

The first 'agility of people' sub-dimension in the survey examines the workforce's ability to learn and respond to new challenges. Of the six survey sub-dimensions, workforce agility has the highest average score (3.7 of 5). The two highest scoring individual statements across the entire faculty survey were 'Our employees are self-motivated.' (4.02 of 5) and 'Our employees use a broad range of skills and can be applied to other tasks when needed' (3.96 of 5) are contained within this sub-dimension. Both statements can be viewed as attributes that pertain to individuals.

Interestingly, the lowest scoring statement in the sub-dimension 'Our employees communicate with each other with trust, goodwill, and esteem.' (3.4 of 5) deals with teamwork. The CD focus group responses broadly concur with statements such as 'We took care of all the issues and did the coordination internally' (CD2). This statement was made in the context of solving problems in each individual CD area of responsibility rather than broader CD collaboration. The Workforce Agility sub-dimension analysis appears to suggest that, individually, faculty are highly motivated and have a broad range of skills and that there is collaboration within, if not necessarily across, CD discipline areas.

Management of Change

The lowest scoring statements in this sub-dimension covered management style and the sharing of information with employees (3.38 of 5). Top scores were reserved for broader strategic considerations including making investments from a company-wide perspective and recognising future competitive advantages, which link to IT investments from a company-wide perspective (3.76 of 5) and the SLT recognition of future competitive advantages that may result from innovations in products, services and/or processes (3.72 of 5). Similarly, the CD focus group responses would indicate that management style was directionally 'superbly prepared' and 'quite adaptable and nimble' (CD1). It does, however, contradict the lower score around sharing information 'I see this with all the colleagues I spoke with, everybody was always very well informed and supported by management' (CD2). It could be suggested that the rapidity of information flowing to faculty was too much 'we're able to communicate quickly and act quickly, we're quite nimble and agile like that' (CD3). The analysis of the management of change sub-dimension suggests that the SLT are strategically focused with regards to IT infrastructure and to future proofing the business against using bold decision-making competitors, but do not necessarily always share this information with employees.

Collaboration and Cooperation

Scores varied with regard to collaboration of faculty and processes. A focus on student needs and student feedback were clear, with a joint highest score of (3.78 of 5) for aligning activities to customers (student) requirements and working closely to collaborate and encourage fast feedback from customers (students). This is in line with the core ethos of DBS as articulated in its strategic plan (DBS, 2020). The lowest scores again addressed integrated decision making and working across departments, in which different functions and/or departments had early involvement in the new product or service offered to students i.e. the VLE virtual learning environment (3.34 of 5). This concurs with CD1's comments that from the 'feedback that was negative, I could see from the students who didn't feel comfortable online' and the limited space for flexibility other than using online tools to promote engagement in the new means of delivery.

Flexible Structures

The results varied with regard to flexible structures. The ability to anticipate change and correspondingly update the business strategy was acknowledged to be high, especially around anticipating change and updating business strategy accordingly (3.72 of 5). More granular structural issues such as changing authorities and updating processes scored relatively lower, especially around changing authorities when tasks change (3.32 of 5). CD comments would tend to agree 'they're not hugely flexible,' according to (CD4) who added 'embedding of a culture that says, you know, we're going to be flexible, we're going to fix these issues as they come up'. This might suggest that reaction trajectory is responsive, but perhaps less so whenever tasks change during the day-to-day activities.

Conclusion

The common theme across each of the six sub-dimensions appears to be that there was a decisive, supported and centralised response to the transition to online teaching and learning at DBS, which was a unified singular experience across the college, but that a highly self-motivated faculty did not perceive themselves as being involved in the decision making. These themes would also suggest that DBS has the capacity to respond ‘rapidly, efficiently and accurately to adapt to any unexpected (or unpredictable) change’ (Tseng and Lin, 2011 cited in Wendler, 2014, p. 1198). However, there are aspects of agility that DBS would appear to need to develop further, notably supporting change through collaboration at every level identified in the Structures Enhancing Agility dimension and the learning from each other, taking responsibility and continuously communicating with each other in a trustful manner aspects of the Agility of People dimension (Wendler, 2014). Within the larger concept of managerialism and collegiality, the identified need to further develop supporting change through collaboration at every level and learning from each other and taking responsibility for continuously communicating with each other would suggest that a move toward greater agility for DBS is also a move toward neo-collegiality. Agility, rather than being another indicator of increasing managerialism in higher education, can be seen as helping direct a HEI toward a more neo-collegial approach that challenges the discipline-based silos associated with collegiality while trying to ensure that the faculty voice is not lost in the centralised functional model that allows a HEI to adapt and change quickly.

What does this mean for academic developers? Academic development appears to have benefited from the centralised decision making aspect to DBS’s agility, being able to respond consistently across the institute made supporting dramatic changes in teaching and learning easier and more effective. Academic developers have a key role in the institute because they are able to coordinate the activities from a number of different organisational stakeholders and, therefore, perfectly positioned to drive the required ‘greater collaboration at every level’ and the ‘learning from each other’ identified in this study. Rather than purport Wendler’s Model as the exemplar, this study attempts to reframe the value of agility in the drive to neo-collegiality and the key role of academic developers in that journey.

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Appendix A

Adapted from Wendler's (2014) Organisational Agility Maturity Survey.

Dimension	Assessment Items	Scale
Agility Prerequisites: Agile Values [val1-5, pref1,5]	<p>Our organisation values a culture that. . .</p> <p>. . . harnesses change for competitive advantages.</p> <p>. . . considers team work as an integral part.</p> <p>. . . accepts and supports decisions and proposals of employees.</p> <p>. . . is supportive of experimentation and the use of innovative ideas.</p> <p>. . . considers changing customer-related requirements as opportunities.</p> <p>Our organisation prefers. . .</p> <p>. . . a proactive continuous improvement rather than reacting to crisis or 'fire-fighting'.</p> <p>. . . market-related changes (e. g. new competitors, preferences) to generate news opportunities.</p>	<p>1: not at all</p> <p>2: little</p> <p>3: partly</p> <p>4: mainly</p> <p>5: completely</p>
Agility Prerequisites: Technology [tech1-6]	<p>Our organisation has Information Systems and Technologies that. . .</p> <p>. . . make organisational information easily accessible to all employees.</p> <p>. . . provide information helping our employees to quickly respond to changes.</p> <p>. . . are appropriate to our needs and allow us to be competitive in the marketplace.</p> <p>. . . enable decentralisation in decision making.</p> <p>. . . are integrated amongst different departments and/or business units.</p> <p>. . . are standardised or comparable amongst different departments and/or business units.</p>	<p>1: not at all</p> <p>2: little</p> <p>3: partly</p> <p>4: mainly</p> <p>5: completely</p>

Dimension	Assessment Items	Scale
Agility of People: Workforce [capemp1-11]	<p>Our employees. . .</p> <p>. . . are able to act with a view to continuous improvement of our products, services, processes, and/or working methods.</p> <p>. . . are able to sense, perceive, or anticipate the best opportunities which come up in our environment.</p> <p>. . . are able to meet the levels of product and/or service quality demanded by our customers.</p> <p>. . . use a broad range of skills and can be applied to other tasks when needed.</p> <p>. . . communicate with each other with trust, goodwill, and esteem.</p> <p>. . . are ready to learn and are prepared to constantly access, apply and update knowledge.</p> <p>. . . are in general always willing to continuously learn from one another and to pass their knowledge to others.</p> <p>. . . obtain and develop appropriate technological capabilities purposeful.</p> <p>. . . can re-organise continuously in different team configurations to meet changing requirements and the newly arising challenges.</p> <p>. . . are self-motivated.</p> <p>. . . take responsibility and think in a business-like manner.</p>	<p>1: none</p> <p>2: few</p> <p>3: some</p> <p>4: many</p> <p>5: all</p>
Agility of People: Management of Change [capman1-7]	<p>Our Senior Leadership Team members. . .</p> <p>. . . maintain an informal management style with focus on coaching and inspiring people.</p> <p>. . . understand the value of IT investments from a company-wide perspective.</p> <p>. . . have the knowledge and skills necessary to manage change.</p> <p>. . . are able to quickly implement changes in products and/or services.</p> <p>. . . are able to recognise future competitive advantages that may result from innovations in products, services, and/or processes.</p> <p>. . . are able to flexibly deploy their resources (material, financial, human, . . .) to make use of opportunities and minimise threats.</p> <p>. . . manage the sharing of information, know-how, and knowledge among employees appropriately.</p>	<p>1: none</p> <p>2: few</p> <p>3: some</p> <p>4: many</p> <p>5: all</p>

Dimension	Assessment Items	Scale
Structures Enhancing Agility: Collaboration and Cooperation [actorggen6,7,9,10,12-16]	<p>In our organisation, we. . .</p> <p>. . . jointly and intensively operate throughout different functions and/or departments for strategic decisionmaking.</p> <p>. . . encourage early involvement of several departments and/or functions in new product and/or service development..</p> <p>. . . inform ourselves systematically about information technology innovations.</p> <p>. . . strategically invest in appropriate technologies and have a clear vision how IT contributes to business value.</p> <p>. . . monitor the performance of our partners and subcontractors very closely.</p> <p>. . . select our partners and subcontractors by quality criteria (rather than pure cost-based decisions).</p> <p>. . . align all our activities to customer requirements and needs.. . . encourage compilation and internal dissemination of information on customers' needs.</p> <p>. . . closely collaborate with and encourage fast feedback from our customers.</p>	<p>1: never</p> <p>2: seldom</p> <p>3: sometimes</p> <p>4: often</p> <p>5: always</p>
Structures Enhancing Agility: Flexible Structures [actor gen1-5]	<p>In our organisation, we. . .</p> <p>. . . scan and examine our environment systematically to anticipate change.</p> <p>. . . react to approaching changes by immediately updating our business strategy.</p> <p>. . . react to approaching changes by immediately updating our processes.</p> <p>. . . are quick to make appropriate decisions in the face of market- and/or customer-related changes</p> <p>. . . change authorities when tasks change.</p>	<p>1: never</p> <p>2: seldom</p> <p>3: sometimes</p> <p>4: often</p> <p>5: always</p>