

# Students' self-awareness of learning agility: a case-study

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# Context

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- The VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) world
- **The labour market is constantly changing:** fundamental changes in Global Economy, Technology and Demographics
- **Employers expect an increasingly better qualified workforce**
- Students need to develop strong employability skills to compete in the job market



Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity

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“The pace of **change in the workplace** is ever increasing, so graduates need to ensure they are **developing the skills and abilities** that will not only **empower** them to land the **job** of their choice, but also allow them to **thrive** as their **career develops**.”

STEPHEN ISHERWOOD, CEO OF THE ISE (2019)

Companies are requesting graduates with attributes such as:

“(...) communication, teamwork, problem solving, technological skills, creativity, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, self-management and flexibility/adaptability”

M. OSMANI et al. (2015)

# Context

1

Problem-solving



2

Teamwork



3

Communication



4

Adaptability



5

Interpersonal skills



“It is becoming more and more vital that universities also prepare graduates for the world of work. This means that the development of **soft skills**, like team-playing and resilience, often becomes as important as the **technical skills** and **knowledge** acquired during a degree.”

Nunzio Quacquarelli CEO, QS

# Context





# Context



Source: De Meuse, K. P., Dai, G., Zewdie, S., Page, R. C., Clark, L. P., & Eichinger, R. W. (2011, April). *Development and validation of a self-assessment of learning agility*

## How assess learning agility?

There are **five main characteristics** that can be assessed to determine an individual's learning agility.

**Mental Agility** — how comfortable are they in dealing with complexity?

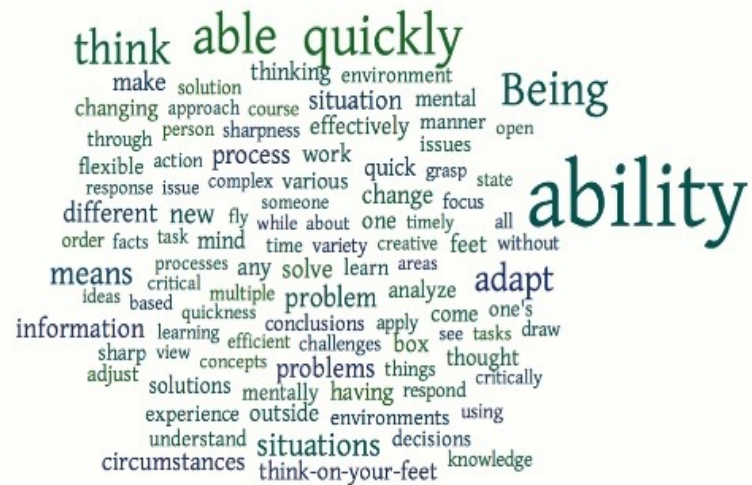
**People Agility** — are they skilled communicators who can work with diverse people?

**Change Agility** — do they like to experiment? Are they not afraid to be at the forefront of change?

**Results Agility** — can they deliver results in first-time situations?

**Self-Awareness** — do they recognise their own strengths and weaknesses?

## What is Mental Agility?



Source: Siegfried Group Survey Response







*People*

Those with this type of

**agility...**

**Understand** others.  
Are skilled **communicators**.  
Enjoy **helping others** succeed.  
Are **comfortable with diversity**.  
**Handle conflict** constructively.  
**Use others effectively**.

# Study

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Baccalaureate degree in Engineering 20/21 -1<sup>st</sup>semester

Theoretical classes – online



Practical classes – face-to-face

Active learning strategy – TPS, Buzz, “eduscrum”

Survey:

Mental Agility and People Agility

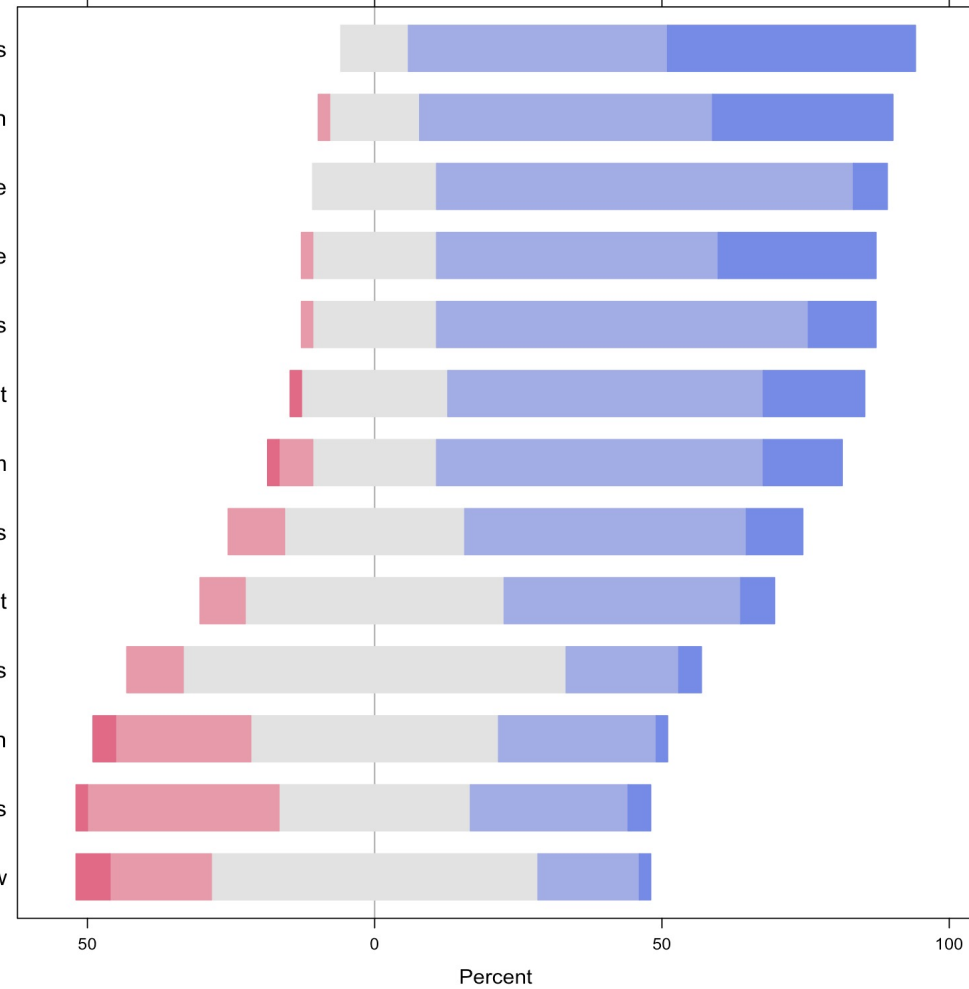
Respondents:

51 students – 23  28 

# Results

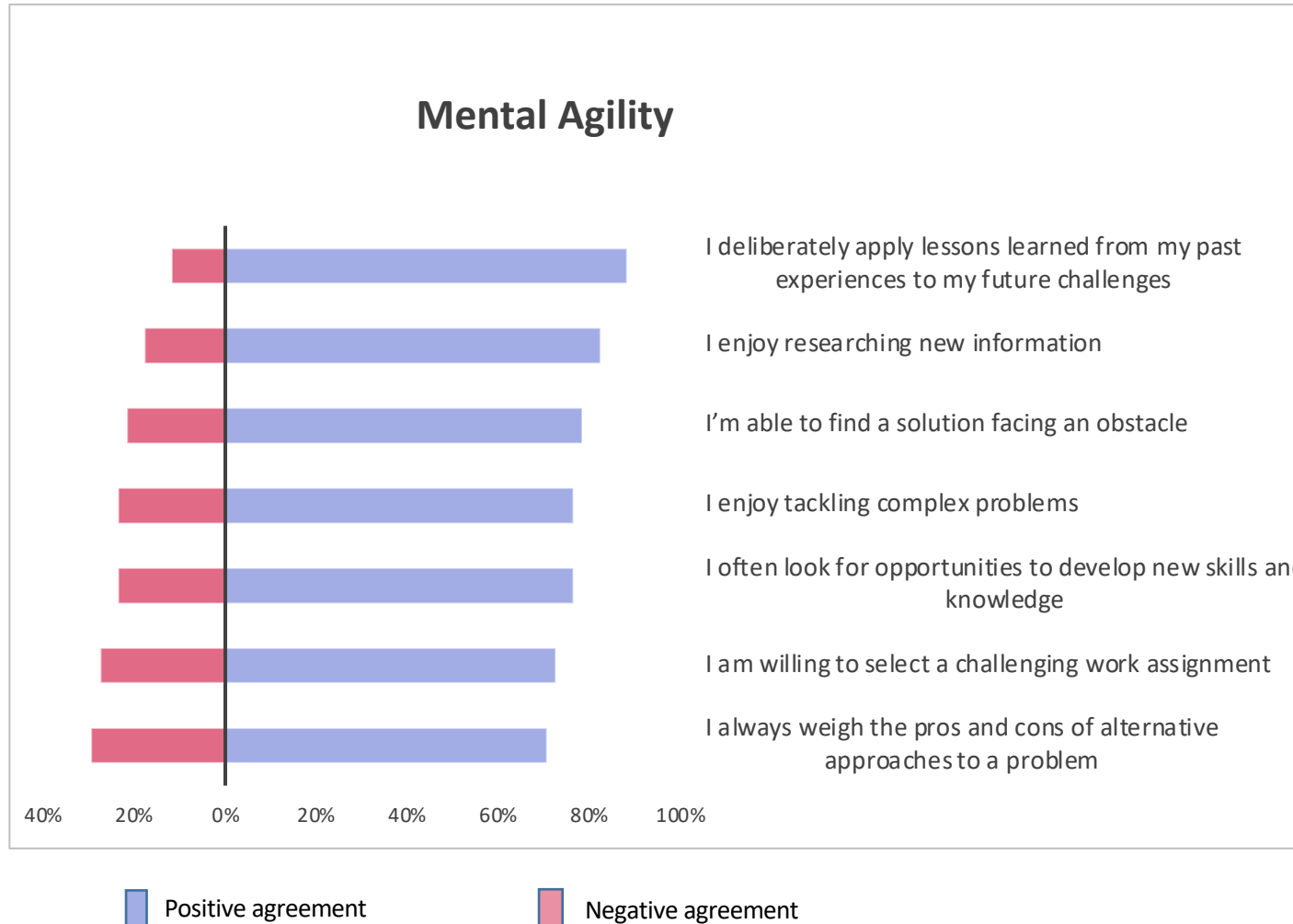
## Mental Agility

- I deliberately apply lessons learned from my past experiences to my future challenges
- I enjoy researching new information
- I'm able to find a solution facing an obstacle
- I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge
- I enjoy tackling complex problems
- I am willing to select a challenging work assignment
- I always weight the pros and cons of alternative approaches to a problem
- I try to avoid situations that are ambiguous
- I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent
- I am able to deal properly with abstract concepts
- I try to avoid problems that don't seem to have only one "best" solution
- I tend to solve similar problems in different ways
- I do well in situations when I don't know everything, I need to know

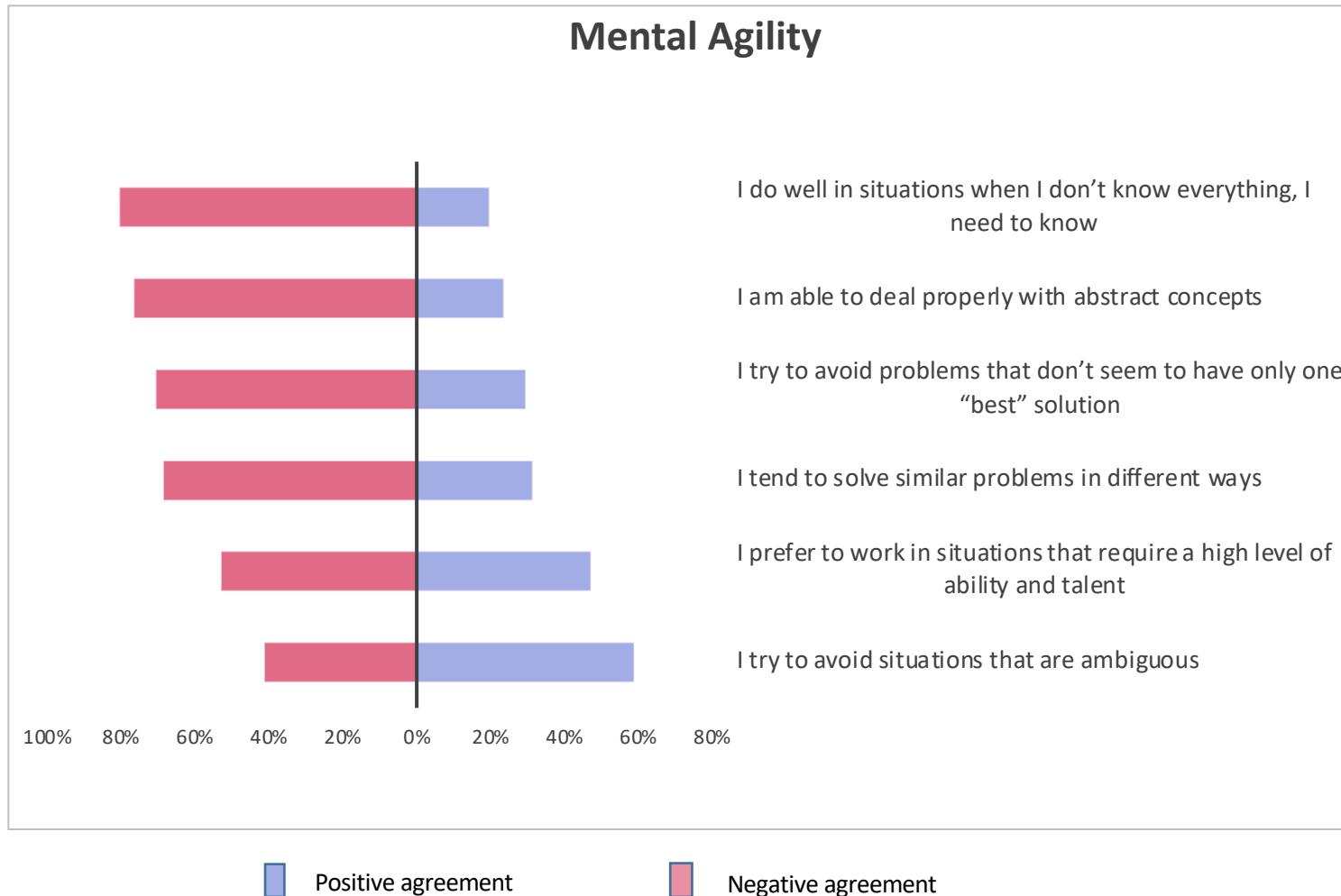


Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

# Results



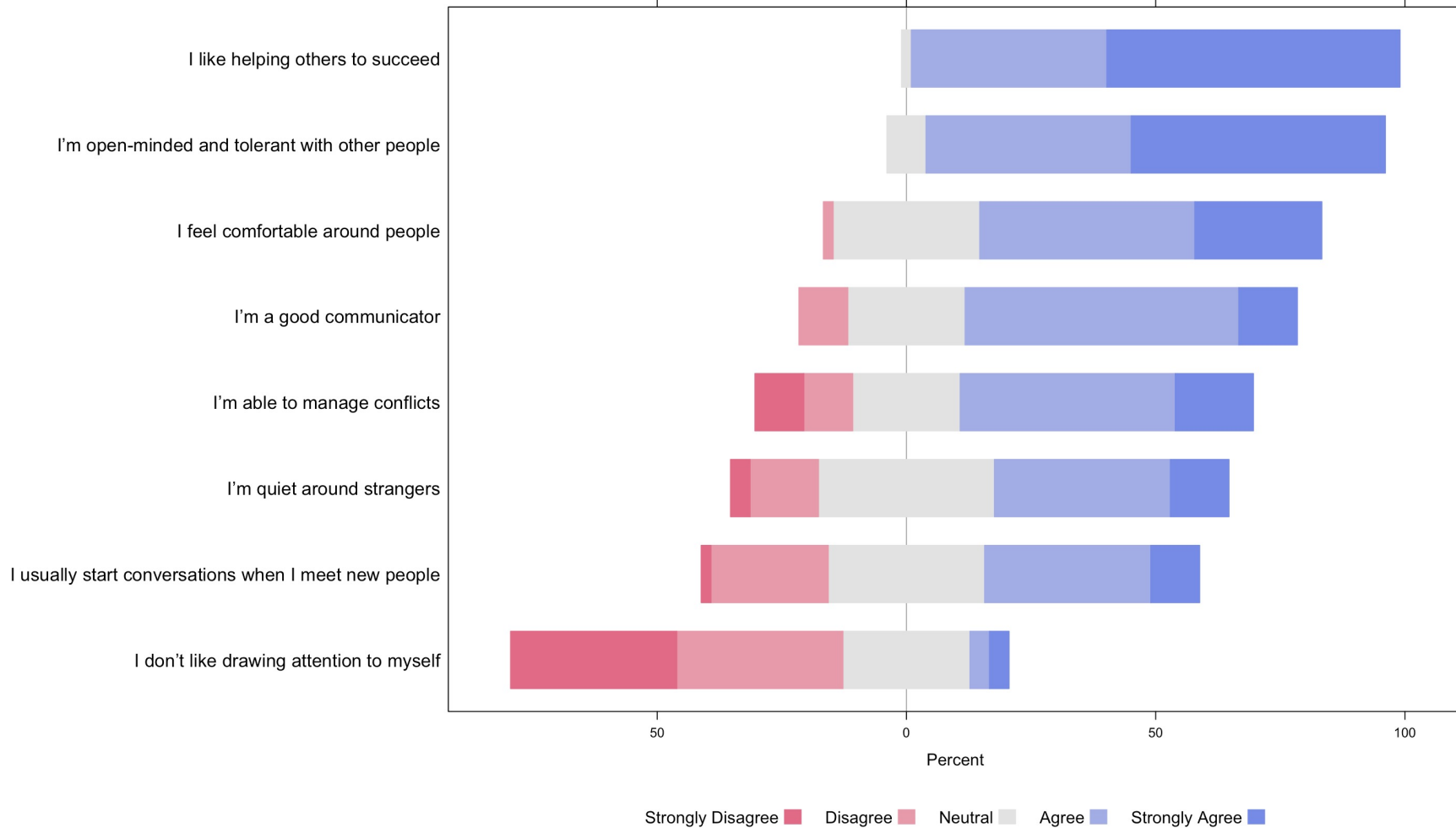
# Results





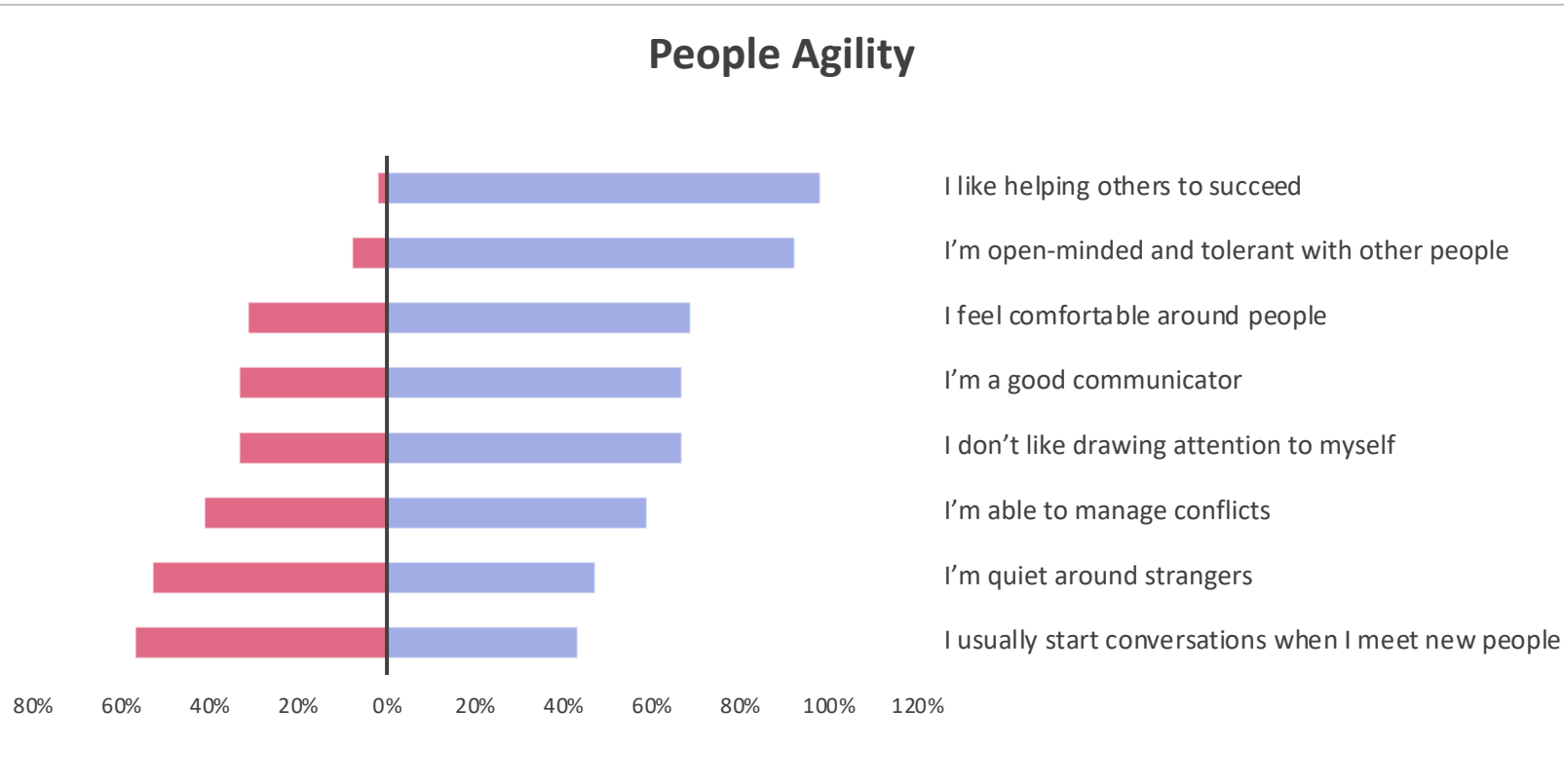
# Results

## People Agility



# Results

## People Agility



Positive agreement

Negative agreement

# Results

	N	Mean	Std deviation
Mental Agility	51	3,606	0,309
People Agility	51	3,821	0,358
	t	p-value	
t.Test paired samples	-4,153	0,000	

The students feel they are significantly more "people agile" than "mental agile"

# Conclusions

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- Students look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge.
- Students enjoy delving into new information.
- Students apply past experience knowledge to future challenges.
- Students feel they are open-minded, tolerant and like helping others.
- Positive impact of active-learning in the development of learning agility.



Success today requires the agility  
and drive to constantly rethink,  
reinvigorate, react, and reinvent.

*Bill Gates*

AZ QUOTES