An Empirical Emphasis on Employees' Perception Towards Agile HR Practices in Select Software Companies

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Abstract: The concept of agility has much more potential in the field of HR. Agile practices have become an important concern of study for HR practitioners owing to their potential significance in improving organizational performance in modern era wherein the conceptual and analytical focus on the same has been meagre. The present study tries to empirically explore the perception of employees towards Agile practices using relevant statistical tools and thereby come out with findings basis which few suggestions are drafted, which can be prosperously implemented to accelerate the effectiveness of Agile HR Practices.

I. INTRODUCTION

Workplace agility has become the most important implications of workplace services and infrastructure providers of modern era. The workplace agility can be defined as the reengineering of methods of work and layout, i.e., infrastructure of an organization for the purpose of customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. There should be an effective relationship between work and workplace for the implementation of agility concept. The concept of agility can be dynamically exhibited by any kind of organization if it is continuously responding to organizational changes. Implementation of agility concept in any industry leads to quick results and high performance delivery. The modern work systems are being dominated by the agile practices both in HR and operations.

'The HR function ability to give immediate response in time towards the changing scenario of workplace problems, business needs and employee expectations is known as HR agility'. The present paper tries to bring out the opinion of employees on the extent to which HR agility is being used in the organizations and also on the opinion of employees on further requirement of agility implementation in HR process.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Denning (2019) in a study titled 'lessons learned from mapping successful and unsuccessful agile transformation journeys' tried to identify the success and continuous innovation of organizations that implemented agile management.

The study further identified the of post bureaucratic models used by both successful and unsuccessful organizations. The findings of the study revealed that the organizations that adopted proper post bureaucratic practises were successful in delivering values to the ultimate and users and the valuable customers. Denning (2019) has conducted a study 'The ten stages of the agile transformation journey' and observed that many top-down approach organizations in the upcoming recent days not only undertake companywide agile working but also will implement their agile working practices to top level leadership initiatives and middle management operations. These to down approach organizations can implement agile working if they have a shift in their hierarchical methods of believing in power and attitude. Shrivastava and Rathod (2014) has conducted a review 'Risks in distributed agile development: A review' to consolidate and uncover the areas of existing studies on risks in distributed agile development (DAD). The study identified that lack o f communication and collaboration leads to the failure of agile and working and further viewed that there are more review studies on agile working and less empirical papers available. Joroff, Porter, Feinberg and Kukla (2003) in a study 'The agile workplace' tried to focus on the factors that lead to agile workplace making. The study revealed that introducing agility at work place requires an effective relationship between workplace and tools of work. Denning (2019) in a study titled 'The emergence of agile people management' tried to explain the importance of different types of management apart from the HR practices that brings value to their customer and creates talent by pioneering the work experience. The study discusses that talent deployment is more important in modern organizations that that are strategy led. Jaggars and Jones (2018) in a study 'Performance Measurement and Metrics' tried to describe the intention of implementing agile working that moves from strategic intent to realistic situations. The findings of the study were that agile manufacturing provides right sized adjustments and feeds the new information for future decision making. Agile working is a key to potential success. Denning (2018) in a research 'How major corporations are making sense of Agile' tried to identify the emergence and importance of agile manufacturing. Agile working the concept that is widely implemented in corporate sectors. Agile working brings out the creative talents of everyone and creates potentiality and makes the organizations profitable. Alaidaros, Omar and Romli (2019) in a review article

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'The Key Factors of Evaluating Agile Approaches: A Systematic Literature Review' aimed to identify the key factors and methodologies used to evaluate the proposed approaches in the Agile domain.

The review found that three evaluation factors to check the effectiveness of agile approaches implemented in the organizations are applicability, effectiveness, and efficiency. Hodgson (2013) in a study 'Controlling the uncontrollable: 'Agile' teams and illusions of autonomy in creative work' tried to empirically examine the modes of control which operate on and through project teams in creative settings. The agile team working can be brought by principles of having motivated individuals, reliance on trust, internal communication and internal reflection, dialogue and adjustment. Huzooree and Ramdoo (2015) in a study 'Review of Effective Human Resource Management Techniques in Agile Software Project Management' reviewed the way through which the core challenges of agile software project management can be solved by using the human resource management techniques. The study identified an framework for agile organizational change and adoption strategies. The study further identified that the human resource agility drives organizations to sustain a promising paradigm based on lessons learned towards going agile in software project management. Högfeldt and Lindwall (2018) in a case study 'Human Resources' Role in an Agile Transformation – A Case Study at Volvo Cars' tried to examine the main challenges of agile transformation like people's response towards change for it and also the initiatives where HR can increase their support within the transformation. The study discussed the ten initiatives for HR that can be done for smooth implantation of agile manufacturing. They are (i) map the current competence to reach the future needs of an organisation; (ii) soft values including leadership-styles, group dynamics, and feedback should be trained for leaders; (iii) create an information hub that is cross-sectional;(iv) enable an information package process;(v) identify unspoken demands to predict future requirements; (vi) facilitate knowledge-sharing events; (vii) facilitate the creation and utilisation of education packages; (viii) identify and eliminate governing control mechanisms; (ix) lead by example through increased presence and visibility in the organisation; and (x) identify and implement necessary rules to enhance desired behaviour.

Khan and Madhavapeddy (2016) have undertaken a study 'Agile Future of Human Resource Management'. The study identified that the future HR of organizations can be characterized by diversity, power and consequences. These lead to four values i.e., adaptability, transparency, simplicity and unity that cause of agile development. The HR role in future for brining agile manufacturing into reality is through having an integration of implementation of programs, strategies and systems that builds expertise, collaboration and decision-making. Dingsøyr, Nerur , Balijepally and Moe (2012) in a review 'A decade of agile methodologies: Towards explaining agile software development' tried to draw attention of analyzing the myriad implications of agile software development.The study identified that agile software is of keen interest in software engineering in the recent days.The study identified that more research has to be done on agile working. Agile development helps for better software project development. Holbeche (2018) in a research 'Organisational effectiveness and agility' tried to search the extent of encouragement of the notion of agility and resilience towards innovation in thinking about future organisation effectiveness. The study identified that organizations are moving at a greater speed towards agility. The central theme of agility to bring organizational effectiveness depends upon five hard output measures. They are i) technological elements; ii) financial results; iii) shareholder value; iv) HR discipline and v) cultural practices. The study further identified that the practices such as giving importance to shareholder value thinking and related practices, traditional long-term employee value propositions that are ill-matched with current employee desires for self-management of data, fair pay and opportunities for development, and more accessible styles of management and leadership still exist. There should be different outcomes for the three different employee segments of influential and high-skilled employees, a squeezed middle of white collar and professional staff, and low-skilled workers.

Joroff, Porter, Feinberg, and Kukla, (2003) in a study 'The agile workplace' focused explaining the concept of work place agility and identifying the concepts that lead to agile workplace making. The article further introduces the business and technology forces that force and facilitate agile work.

III. Objectives of the study

1. To study the opinion of employees on extent of implementation and usage of agility methods in HR.

IV. Methodology of the study

Data Source and method of data collection: The study has been mainly by collecting the primary data .The questionnaire consisted of 17 statements. The questionnaire was distributed among the IT sector employees of various organizations, namely, VIVA USA INC in USA, DR Indicator in UK kingdom, Global foundries in Singapore.

Sample Size and Sampling: 55 employees were approached for the study and only 25 employees were included as being complete in all aspects. The sample 25 respondents included in the study had a distribution of 3 different private sector organizations; 8 respondents in the age group of 30-34, 9 respondents in the age group of 35-40, 8 respondents in the age group of 41-45.Similarly all the respondents are post graduates.

Table 1: Details of demographic profile of respondents

Category	Sub-Categories	No. of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	15	60%
	Female	10	40%
Total		**25**	**100%**
Work Segment	Private Sector	25	100%
Total		**25**	**100%**
Age group	30-34	8	32%
	35-40	9	36%

	41-45	8	32%
Total		**25**	**100%**
Educational Qualification	Post graduate	25	100%
Total		**25**	**100%**

Tools and Techniques used: The study has been done by simple bar chart diagrams to collect the opinion on agile HR implementation.

Sample units: From IT sector 3 different organizations in 3 different countries, namely, VIVA USA INC in USA, DR Indicator in United kingdom, Global foundries in Singapore has been taken for the study.

V. Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in opinion of employees towards implementation and usage of agile HR methods in organizations.

VI. Data analysis and Interpretation

1. **Does your organization implement agile methods?**

Table 1 Adoption

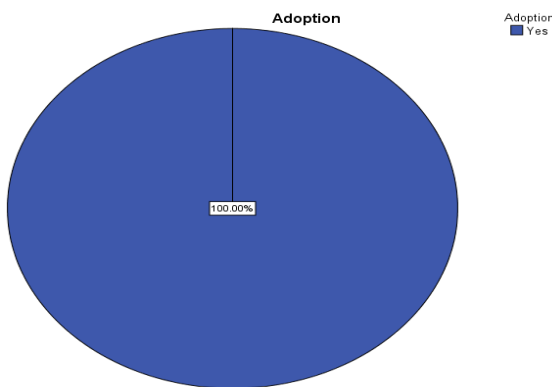|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	100.0	100.0	100.0

Fig 1.1

As observed from the Table 1, out of the 25 respondents taken for the study the 25 respondents agree that the organizations VIVA USA INC, DR Indicator, Global foundries has been taken for the study implement agile HR practices.

2. **Up to what extent your organization uses agile HR methods?**

Table 2 Extent

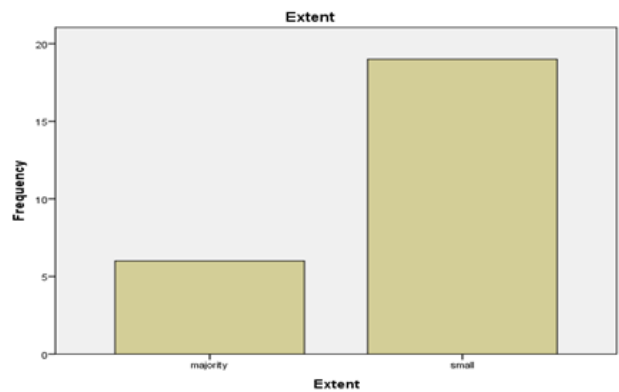|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	majority	6	24.0	24.0	24.0
	small	19	76.0	76.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Fig 2.2

Interpretation 2: As observed from the above table 2, out of 100% of the employees only 24% of the employees agree that to a large extent agile HR practices are being implemented in their organizations and 76% of the employees agree that only to a minor extent agile HR practices are being implemented in their organizations.

3. **What you think are the limitations of Agile HR methods?**

Table 3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	lack of budget	5	20.0	20.0	20.0
	documentation lacking	20	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Fig 3.3

Interpretation 3: As from Fig 3.3, out of the given options like lack of upfront planning , budget constraints, lack of predictability , 20% of the employees view that lack of budget allocation by the top management is one of the consideration for lack of proper implementation of agility methods and majority of the employees view that lack of proper documentation is a drawback for implementation of agile methods.

4. **What is the overall success rate of your agile HR projects?**

Table 4 Success

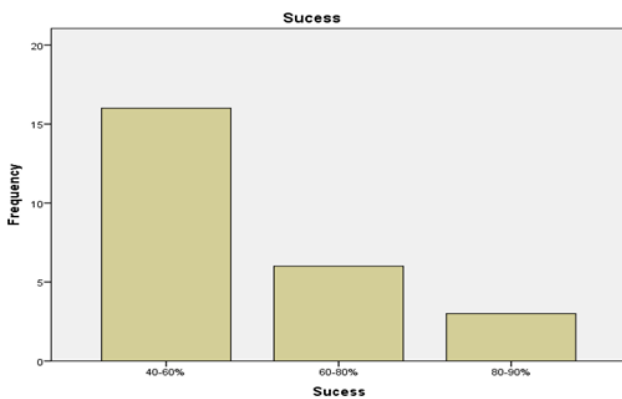|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	40-60%	16	64	64	64
	60-80%	6	24	24	88
	80-90%	3	12	12	100
	Total	25	100	100	

Fig 4.4

Interpretation 4: As present in table 4.4, 64% of employees have an opinion that agile HR practices bring 40-60% of success towards organization;3% of employees of employees view that agile HR practices bring 80-90% of success towards organization; and 24% of employees view that agile HR practices bring 60-80% of success towards organization.

5. **How have Agile approaches affected your organization's overall performance?**

Table 5 Performance

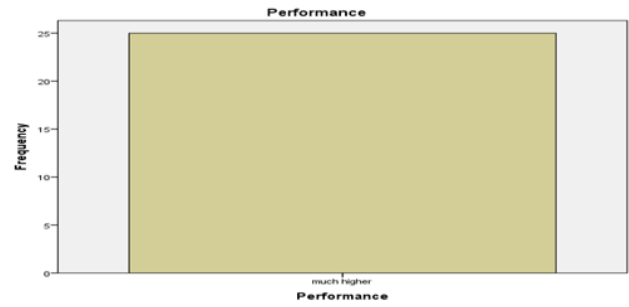|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	much higher	25	100.0	100.0	100.0

Fig 5.5

Interpretation 5: From the above table 5, it can interpret that all the respondents taken i.e., 25 employees view that by implementing agile HR practices there can be higher improvement in the performance of the organization.

6. **How have agile hr approaches affected the cost of Project development?**

Table 6 Cost

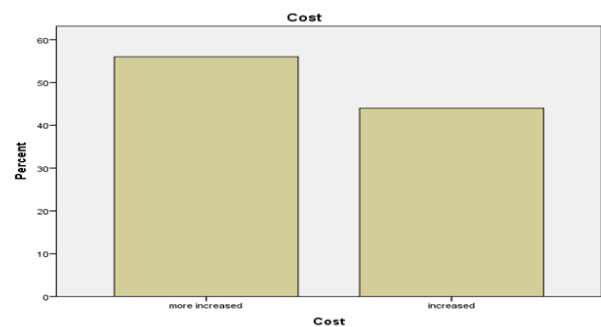|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	more increased	14	56	56	56
	increased	11	44	44	100
	Total	25	100	100	

Fig 6.6

Interpretation 6: As from the above table 6, 54% of the employees view that by implementing agile HR practices the cost burden on organization has more increased and 44% of employees view that the cost burden has normally increased by implementing agile HR practices.

VII. Findings

1. The implementation of agile HR work practices lead towards overall efficiency of the organization.
2. Majority of the employees view that agile HR work practices are cost burden towards organization but they yield better output and improves efficiency of HR towards organization.

3. Agile Hr practices facilitate immediate response to workforce fluctuations and cause responsiveness and adaptability.

VIII. Suggestions

1. Organizations need to be more adaptive towards implementation of agile HR practices.

IX. Conclusion

Based on the review and analysis it can be it can be concluded that there is an effective relationship between the implementation of agility in HR practices and productivity. Agility in HR practices is not being implemented in many organizations. Thus, all the organizations are further recommended for implementation of agile HR practices.

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Appendix

Section I
About Yourself

This section collects some personal details that help to classify your answers

1. **Designation:**_____

2. **Age group:**
   (i)   25-30 years   ☐   (ii) 31-35 years   ☐
   (ii)   36-40 years   ☐   (iv)41-45 years   ☐

3. **Which organization do you work for?**

_____

4. **Which country do you belong to?**

_____

5. **How long have you been working in the present organization?**

(i)	< 3 years	☐	(ii) 3-5 years ☐
(ii)	5-10 years	☐	(iv)> 10 years ☐

Section II

There are 6 statements. Please do mark your answer on a 4 point scale.

1. **Which of the following best describes your current occupation?**

   (i)   Software Development   ☐

   (ii)   Professional Agile   ☐

   (iii)   Professional software maintenance   ☐

   (iv)   Management Occupations   ☐

2. **Up to what extent you are using Agile methods?**

   (i)   Majority of projects   ☐

   (ii)   Large number of projects   ☐

   (iii)   Small number of projects   ☐

   (iv)   In learning phase   ☐

3. **What you think are the limitations of Agile Methods?**

   (i)   Lack of planning   ☐

   (ii)   Lack of documentation   ☐

   (iii)   Budget constraints   ☐

   (iv)   Lack of predictability   ☐

4. **What is the overall success rate of your Agile Projects?**

   (i)   < 20%   ☐

   (ii)   20-40%   ☐

   (iii)   40-60%   ☐

   (iv)   60-80%   ☐

5. **How have Agile approaches affected your organization's overall**

performance?

(i)   Much Higher

(ii)   Higher

(ii)   No change Perceived

(iii)   Lower

6. How have agile approaches affected the cost of Project development?

(i)   Much Increased

(ii)   Increased

(ii)   No change Perceived

(iii)   Decreased

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

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