

Adapting to Change: A Theoretical Framework for Agile HR in Recruiting

Diana Ivana¹

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the IT industry and made agile HR procedures necessary to meet changing corporate objectives and fluctuating staffing demands. Agile HR, which draws inspiration from Agile approaches in software development, places a strong emphasis on adaptability, teamwork, and reactivity in order to improve organizational resilience and employee engagement.

In order to fill the gap in the literature on Agile HR, this article offers a conceptual framework for putting Agile HR methods into practice, with an emphasis on hiring in the IT&C sector. Iterative, data-driven, and collaborative approaches to talent acquisition are highlighted in the study using qualitative data from three IT businesses. As a framework to help businesses navigate today's dynamic business climate, the findings show how Agile HR improves organizational performance, productivity, and adaptability.

Keywords: Agile HR, IT&C sector, conceptual framework.

JEL Classifications: M12, M15, M54

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1. Introduction

The changes brought about by the pandemic in the IT sector, through a unique dynamic in projects and working methods, led to the reorganization of HR activities in an agile manner to meet clients' staffing demands. After the epidemic flipped our worlds upside down, we soon realized how important contactless communication was. As organizations' demands evolved and new methods of operation were needed, business goals shifted and corporations swiftly shifted (Goldberg, 2023). Today, the concept of agility is increasingly associated with achieving business success. Project management is simply one aspect of it; agility components are also necessary for success in the fast-paced commercial world of today (Revutska and Maršíková, 2021). HR practitioners' interest in agile HR is growing as a result of calls for more organizational agility in the face of environmental unpredictability. Conversely, agile HR has received very little attention in the academic HR literature, suggesting a gap between the goals of HR practitioners and strategic HRM research (McMackin and Heffernan, 2021). Through this paper, we aim to address this gap in the literature and offer a

¹ Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, diana.ivana@econ.ubbcluj.ro

theoretical model to support companies, particularly in the IT&C industry, in implementing agile HR practices. The reason the software industry was chosen is because companies in this sector have distinct objectives, but the changing business world of today poses many dangers and uncertainties, particularly when it comes to the usage of remote teams (Adzgauskaite, Tam and Martins, 2025).

2. Review of the scientific literature

These days, the idea of agile is becoming more and more linked to business success. Agility is not limited to project management; its elements are equally vital for success in today's dynamic corporate landscape. (Revutska and Maršíková, 2021). Organizations are realizing more and more how important it is to respond quickly to these changes in order to stay competitive in this dynamic environment (Revutska and Maršíková, 2021). In response, the idea of Agile Human Resources (HR) has surfaced, highlighting the necessity of HR procedures that are flexible and sensitive to the changing demands of the company (McMackin and Heffernan, 2021).

This research explores, from this point of view, the significance of Agile HR plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges of rapid business transformations, enabling organizations to adopt flexible HR strategies that strengthen employee engagement, enhance organizational resilience, and drive sustainable success.

As working definition, agile HR practices would be defined as those practices, that emphasize flexibility, teamwork, and iterative methods to satisfy the changing demands of contemporary businesses, marking a paradigm shift in traditional HR management (Ghauri, Strange, and

Cooke, 2021). Agile HR, which has its roots in the Agile technique frequently used in software development, promotes adaptability, reactivity, and customer-centricity in HR procedures and guidelines (Decker, et al., 2020). Translating human resource principles into people operations that drive networked, automated, and agile businesses is known as agile HR. Its objective is to establish a common value among the client, business, and staff. (Dank and Hellström 2020.)

Moreover, Agile HR emphasizes the importance of cross-functional teams, iterative planning, and continuous feedback loops as key components (Nargis, Brastoro, and Fuad, 2024). HR departments may improve employee onboarding experiences, expedite hiring procedures, and enable smooth organizational structure migrations by adopting Agile concepts. (Saks, 2022). A 2017 Deloitte survey found that 80% of worldwide managers view Agile performance management as a top organizational priority, and 94% of businesses believe that collaboration and agility are essential to their success. (Deloitte 2017).

Bersin (2019) asserts that agile is more of a mentality. Employee motivation, experimentation, test-driven decision-making, and customer co-creation are all key components. Agile HR can employ a number of tools in its operations. Among the Agile technologies, techniques, and approaches that improve Agile HR include Scrum, KanBan, and the hybrid approach. Agile HR, on the other hand, goes beyond that since it is a human approach that aims to put people first at work (Sandhu, 2021).

The literature emphasizes that organizations lacking agility struggle to adapt their processes and routines to align with changes in the environment signaled by new foundations (Cegarra, Soto-Acosta, and Wensley, 2016). This underscores the critical role of agility in organizations. Franco and Landini (2022) propose that higher levels of agility are associated with greater employee engagement, fostering creativity and innovation.

This makes it feasible to see how crucial it is to implement projects and actions that adhere to agile HR concepts. Nevertheless, agile team usage originated in the software development sector and is arguably standard practice there (Hoda et al., 2017). Software development teams are increasingly choosing agile approaches, as demonstrated by Persson et al., who pointed out that Agile greatly aids in achieving project objectives.

Organizations implementing Agile HR often achieve enhanced customer satisfaction and improved adaptability to challenging circumstances. However, the adoption process is frequently met with resistance. Agile HR requires a significant shift from traditional practices, demanding profound organizational transformation and a break from established paradigms. This makes it a complex and demanding endeavor for HR management and professionals alike (Gomes Coelho, Ribeiro and Leite, 2024).

Also, scholarly works also endorse the growing use of agile teams in a variety of settings. In particular, these articles emphasize the use of agile teams in a variety of settings, including government, education, research and development, service delivery, human resources, marketing, and retail (Steegh, Van De Voorde and Paauwe, 2024).

According to the article *HR Goes Agile* from *Harvard Business Review*, various tools have been adopted across industries such as software and pharmaceuticals to address the demands of agility, applied to different HR functions such as recruitment, performance reviews, and onboarding (HBR, 2018).

Therefore, through this article, we aim to develop a framework for implementing HR practices in an agile environment, with a particular focus on the software industry, while remaining applicable to other sectors as well.

3. Research methodology

In the first part of the article, data from the specialized literature regarding the usefulness and application of agile HR strategies in companies were presented. In this section, the article aims to highlight a theoretical framework for the implementation of agile HR strategies. Thus, qualitative data were collected from three IT companies through participation in discussions with three HR managers, where two questions based on Sandhu (2021) were addressed:

- 1) In which areas were agile HR principles implemented? and
- 2) What practical strategies were used?

Additionally, presentations, internal data, and statistics from the three companies were analyzed concerning the impact of agile HR on HR practices, particularly in the areas of recruitment and retention. Based on the discussions held and the data analysis, we have developed a conceptual model that can serve as an implementation framework for companies where traditional HR practices are no longer effective due to the dynamic nature of the business environment.

The focus of our approach is on Agile Recruitment and Selection, as the recruitment of digital talent is critical (Dan et al., 2024).

Agile Recruitment and Selection emphasizes iterative and collaborative hiring practices rather than relying solely on traditional linear methods. This approach involves creating cross-functional hiring teams, conducting frequent candidate assessments and feedback sessions, and employing techniques such as pair interviewing or trial periods to evaluate candidate fit (Mirji, Patil, and Mane, 2023).

4. Results and discussion

In structuring the theoretical model for Agile HR practices in the recruitment process, the article is based on the framework developed by Mirji, Patil, and Mane (2023), which encompasses the following components: Agile HR practices in recruiting, Agile culture, and organizational effectiveness.

With recruiting as a key component, Figure 1 shows the relationships between agile HR practices and organizational effectiveness. It outlines the four main tenets of agile recruiting: data-driven decision-making, collaborative and dynamic interviews, an iterative recruitment process, and the formation of cross-functional recruitment teams. By encouraging an agile mentality, transparency, open

communication, teamwork, decision-making participation, empowerment, and customer focus, these techniques help to create an agile culture.

When combined, these components improve organizational effectiveness, which is demonstrated by four important outcomes: talent retention, financial performance, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement.

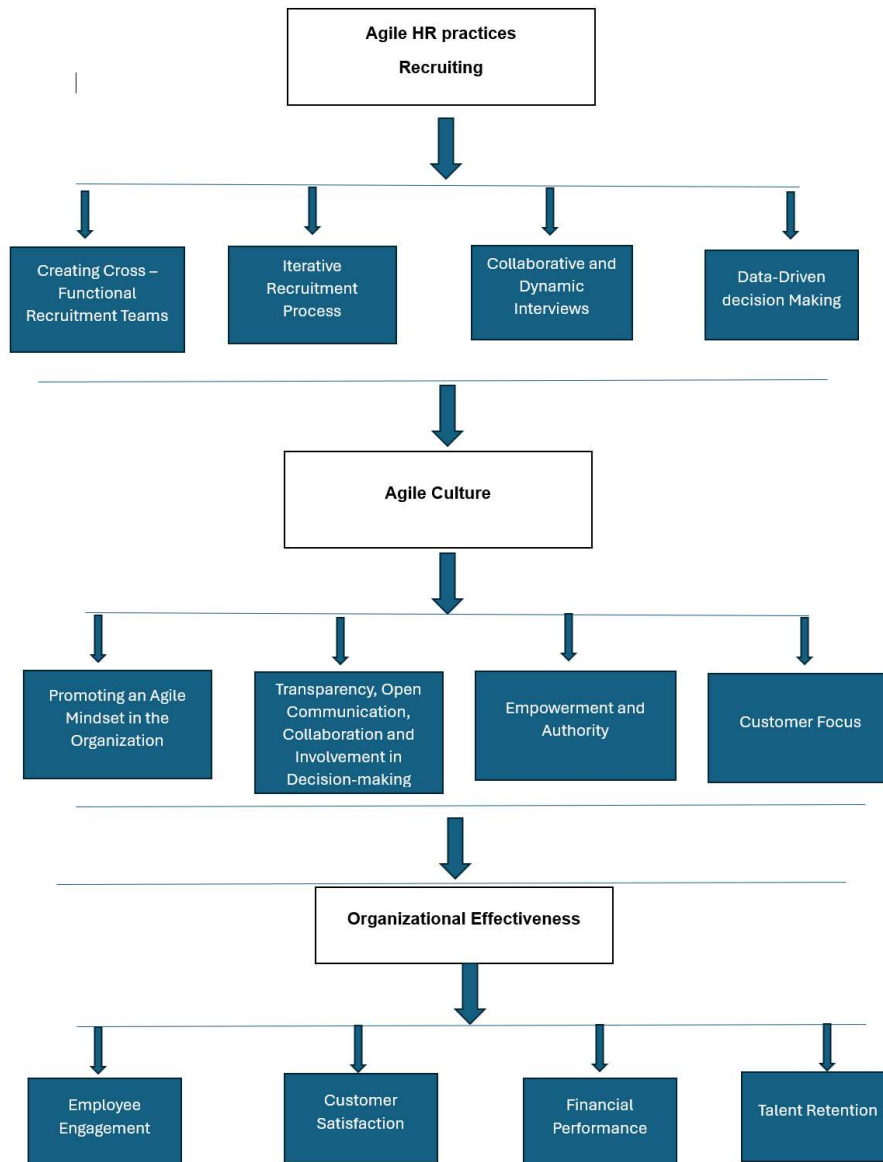
Moreover, the introduction and adoption of Agile HR practices brings a range of benefits to the organization:

- Greater Adaptability ;
- Enhanced Cooperation;
- Enhanced Employee Engagement and Quicker Decision-Making ;
- Improved Talent Recruiting ;
- Increased Productivity;
- Shorter Recruitment time;
- Stronger Organizational Culture through a Customer-Centric Approach.

Also, for the practices regarding the recruiting process, one could bring the following observations for each component:

- **Creating Cross - Functional teams:** this means engaging team managers, technical experts and HR professionals in the hiring process to assess the candidates from both perspectives HR and technical. Also, this underlines that the process enhances a better fit between technical need and organisational culture.
- **Iterative recruitment process:** brings to the fore the idea of dividing the process into short sprints (conducting HR and technical interview, providing feedback, using a common database like for example SuccessFactors). There could be used a KANBAN board to track each candidate progress from application to hiring.
- **Collaborative and Dynamic Interviews:** means conducting pair interviews (for example technical interviews and HR representatives work together to assess candidates).
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** using recruitment analytics to identify better candidates, improve job postings and effectiveness of hiring strategies.

Figure 1. Agile HR framework for Recruiting Process



5. Conclusions

This study highlights the importance of Agile HR practices in developing and managing the dynamic challenges of today's business environment, especially in software companies. The proposed conceptual model focusing on rapid recruitment and selection highlights the ways in which data-driven collaborative and iterative approaches can improve employee engagement, organizational agility, and talent a they will have it effectively emphasized

Agile HR methods not only address the shortcomings of traditional HR methods, but also help build an organizational culture that prioritizes customer needs, encourages flexibility and productivity even if the results show more profit and organizational performance over time. To conclude, this study provides a solid foundation for companies looking to transition to Agile HR, enabling them to be flexible and competitive in the rapidly evolving global marketplace.

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