HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

ADVANTAGES OF APPLYING AGILE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGIES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23043473

Abstract. This article investigates the theoretical and practical aspects of applying Agile and Project Management methodologies to improve the effectiveness of human resource management in educational institutions. In the modern education system, effective management of human resources, development of employees’ professional competencies, strengthening of teamwork, and ensuring flexibility in management processes are among the important priorities. The study analyzes the principles of Agile methodology, including adaptive management, rapid communication, collaborative decision-making, and continuous improvement, as well as the capabilities of Project Management methodology in setting objectives, planning tasks, managing resources, controlling deadlines, and evaluating performance. Furthermore, the article examines the possibilities of integrating these methodologies into the processes of staff recruitment, onboarding, professional development, performance evaluation, and career development within educational institutions.

Keywords: educational institution, human resource management, human resources management, Agile methodology, Project Management, project management, adaptive management, human resource potential, employee motivation.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of rapid technological development, changing labor market requirements, and increasing organizational complexity, effective human resource management has become one of the key factors determining the sustainable development of educational institutions. Educational institutions are not only centers for knowledge and skills development but also complex organizational systems in which the professional competence, motivation, collaboration, and adaptability of employees directly influence institutional performance. Therefore, the modernization of human resource management approaches is becoming increasingly important for improving the quality and efficiency of educational services.

Recent international evidence demonstrates that educational systems face significant challenges related to attracting, retaining, developing, and effectively managing qualified personnel. According to the OECD Education at a Glance 2025, in 19 countries and economies with available data, an average of 6.5% of fully qualified teachers from pre-primary to upper secondary education left the profession during the 2022/23 academic year. The report emphasizes that teacher shortages and workforce attrition are closely connected with broader challenges in recruitment, professional development,

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working conditions, and workforce planning. These trends demonstrate that traditional personnel management mechanisms alone may not always be sufficient to respond rapidly to changes in the educational environment. The importance of effective leadership and human resource management in educational institutions is also emphasized by UNESCO's 2024/5 Global Education Monitoring Report. The report identifies four important dimensions of effective educational leadership: setting expectations, focusing on learning, fostering collaboration, and developing people. It also emphasizes that educational leaders require sufficient autonomy and appropriate management competencies to make effective decisions concerning human and financial resources. Consequently, contemporary human resource management in education increasingly requires approaches that promote collaboration, employee development, decentralization of decision-making, continuous feedback, and institutional adaptability.

In this context, Agile methodology represents an approach that can contribute to the transformation of traditional management practices. Originally developed in the field of software development, Agile has increasingly attracted attention in organizational management because of its emphasis on adaptability, iterative processes, collaboration, continuous feedback, and rapid response to changing requirements. A systematic review published in Human Resource Management Review in 2025, which synthesized 74 studies on agile teams, identified shared leadership, empowering behavior, collaboration, psychological safety, and team orientation as important factors associated with agile team effectiveness. The findings also indicate that agile approaches are particularly relevant for teams operating under conditions of uncertainty and changing requirements. Project Management methodology, in turn, provides a structured framework for defining objectives, planning activities, allocating resources, managing deadlines, monitoring implementation, and evaluating results. Its application in educational institutions can support the systematic implementation of organizational changes, professional development programmes, recruitment initiatives, digital transformation projects, and other institutional activities. Combining the structured nature of Project Management with the flexibility of Agile methodology may therefore create conditions for a more responsive and result-oriented human resource management system. The relevance of this approach is further strengthened by the changing nature of educational work. The OECD's Education Policy Outlook 2024 notes that technological development, including the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence, and broader socio-economic changes are increasing the need to support teachers and educational professionals in adapting to new requirements. The report also highlights the importance of improving institutional leadership, career development, working conditions, professional learning, and employee retention.

Agile methodology in human resource management of educational institutions

The transformation of human resource management in educational institutions requires a shift from predominantly administrative approaches towards more flexible, collaborative, and development-oriented management models. In this regard, Agile methodology can be considered as an organizational approach that emphasizes adaptability, continuous communication, teamwork, rapid feedback, and incremental improvement. Although Agile was initially developed within software development, its principles have gradually been applied to organizational management and human resource practices, particularly in environments characterized by uncertainty and rapidly changing requirements.

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The relevance of flexibility in educational human resource management is reinforced by current international evidence. According to the OECD Education at a Glance 2025, an average of 6.5% of fully qualified teachers across 19 countries and economies with available data left the profession during the 2022/23 academic year. The OECD also reports that teacher recruitment and retention remain important challenges for education systems. This situation increases the importance of developing management systems that can identify employee needs, respond to organizational problems promptly, support professional development, and strengthen employee engagement.

Agile methodology offers several principles that can be adapted to these requirements. First, continuous feedback allows managers and employees to regularly discuss performance, difficulties, professional needs, and possible improvements rather than relying exclusively on periodic formal evaluations. In an educational institution, this principle can be applied through regular meetings between administrators and teachers, short performance reviews, peer feedback, and professional development discussions. Second, Agile emphasizes team-based work and shared responsibility. Educational institutions are inherently collaborative organizations in which teachers, administrators, academic departments, support staff, and other stakeholders must coordinate their activities. A systematic review of 74 studies on agile teams published in Human Resource Management Review in 2025 identified shared leadership, empowering behaviour, collaboration, psychological safety, and team orientation as important factors associated with agile team effectiveness. The review also emphasizes the relevance of collaboration and egalitarian interaction for teams working under conditions of uncertainty. Third, Agile promotes employee involvement in decision-making. Instead of concentrating all decisions at the managerial level, institutions can create cross-functional teams in which employees participate in identifying problems and developing solutions. This can strengthen employees' sense of responsibility and ownership over institutional objectives. Such an approach is particularly relevant to educational organizations because teachers and academic staff possess direct knowledge of teaching processes, student needs, curriculum implementation, and professional challenges.

Application of Project Management principles to personnel management

Project Management provides a more structured framework for organizing human resource activities. Its fundamental principles include defining objectives, identifying tasks, assigning responsibilities, determining deadlines, allocating resources, monitoring implementation, managing risks, and evaluating results. These principles can be applied not only to construction or technological projects but also to organizational and educational development initiatives.

In human resource management, Project Management can be used for such activities as recruitment campaigns, employee onboarding, professional development programmes, certification processes, implementation of performance evaluation systems, digital transformation of HR processes, and development of institutional training programmes. For example, when an educational institution introduces a professional development programme, Project Management allows administrators to establish a clear project objective, identify the target group, determine required competencies, develop a schedule, allocate financial and human resources, assign responsibilities, monitor implementation, and evaluate the achieved results. Consequently, professional development becomes a systematic process rather than a set of isolated training activities. Project-based management is also important for institutional change. Educational reforms frequently require coordinated actions from different

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departments and employee groups. Without clearly defined responsibilities, deadlines, and performance indicators, even strategically important initiatives may experience implementation difficulties. Project Management principles provide a mechanism for converting strategic objectives into measurable activities and assigning responsibility for their implementation.
Integration of Agile and Project Management in educational HR management
Agile and Project Management should not necessarily be viewed as competing methodologies. Their principles can complement one another when applied appropriately. Project Management provides structure and strategic coordination, while Agile contributes flexibility and continuous adaptation. For example, an educational institution may establish an annual project for improving employee professional development. Project Management can determine the overall objective, budget, schedule, responsible departments, expected outcomes, and evaluation criteria. Agile principles can then be applied during implementation through short development cycles, regular team meetings, continuous feedback, employee participation, and adjustment of activities according to emerging needs.
This integrated approach can be represented conceptually as:
Agile and Project Management in employee recruitment and onboarding
One of the important areas for applying these methodologies is staff recruitment and onboarding. Traditional recruitment may focus primarily on filling vacant positions. However, a modern HR approach should also consider professional competencies, organizational culture, teamwork skills, adaptability, and long-term development potential. An Agile-oriented recruitment process can include continuous communication among HR specialists, institutional managers, and representatives of the relevant academic department. Candidate requirements can be reviewed and adjusted according to actual institutional needs. After recruitment, onboarding can be organized as a series of short stages involving orientation, mentoring, feedback, competency assessment, and gradual integration into the team.

Project Management, in turn, can establish the recruitment project's objectives, timeline, responsibilities, selection criteria, documentation requirements, and expected outcomes. The combination of these approaches can make recruitment and onboarding more transparent, coordinated, and responsive to institutional needs.
The importance of systematic recruitment and leadership development is also reflected in UNESCO's 2024/5 Global Education Monitoring Report. The report emphasizes the importance of open and competitive recruitment processes and highlights the need for leadership development, professional learning, collaboration, and capacity development within educational institutions.
Professional development and employee motivation
Employee professional development is another area where Agile and Project Management principles can be effectively integrated. Instead of treating professional development as a one-time training activity, institutions can establish continuous development cycles based on identified competency gaps and employee feedback. For instance, an institution can conduct an initial competency assessment, formulate an individual development objective, organize training activities, evaluate progress, obtain feedback, and then modify the development plan. This cycle corresponds closely with the Agile principle of continuous improvement.
The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report emphasizes that developing people is one of the core dimensions of effective educational leadership. It also identifies collaboration and staff development as important elements of institutional leadership. However, UNESCO reports that only 18% of the reviewed leadership preparation and training programmes covered all four core dimensions

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of leadership: setting expectations, focusing on learning, fostering collaboration, and developing people. This evidence indicates that professional development should be integrated into the broader institutional management system rather than being treated as an isolated HR function. Agile practices can support this process by establishing regular feedback and learning cycles, while Project Management can ensure that development programmes have defined objectives, resources, schedules, and measurable outcomes.
Performance evaluation and continuous improvement The integration of Agile principles can also transform employee performance evaluation. Traditional performance appraisal systems frequently emphasize periodic assessment, whereas Agile management encourages continuous feedback and improvement. In educational institutions, this can involve regular discussions concerning teaching performance, participation in institutional projects, professional development, teamwork, and achievement of agreed objectives. Such an approach does not eliminate formal performance evaluation. Instead, it complements formal evaluation with continuous communication. Employees receive information about their progress earlier, allowing them to address identified difficulties before the end of an evaluation period. Project Management contributes by establishing measurable performance indicators for specific institutional projects. For example, an academic department implementing a new digital learning system can define indicators related to staff participation, training completion, implementation deadlines, user adoption, and achieved educational outcomes. This creates a direct connection between employee activities and institutional objectives.

Organizational advantages of the integrated methodology
The combined application of Agile and Project Management methodologies can create several organizational advantages for educational institutions.
First, it can increase management flexibility, enabling institutions to respond more rapidly to changes in educational requirements and workforce needs.
Second, it can strengthen internal communication, because Agile practices encourage regular interaction, feedback, and information sharing among employees.
Third, it can promote employee participation and shared responsibility. UNESCO emphasizes that educational leadership should foster collaboration and develop people, while shared leadership can strengthen decision-making, accountability, and institutional resilience. Fourth, Project Management can improve resource and time management by connecting human resource activities with defined objectives, responsibilities, deadlines, and performance indicators.

Fifth, the integration of both approaches can support continuous institutional improvement. Agile provides mechanisms for learning from implementation experience, while Project Management provides a structured framework for planning and measuring results. Thus, the application of Agile and Project Management in educational human resource management should be understood not simply as the introduction of new management terminology, but as a potential transformation of organizational processes. The effectiveness of such an approach depends on the institutional context, management capacity, organizational culture, employee competencies, available resources, and the degree of autonomy granted to managers and teams. UNESCO's evidence particularly emphasizes that educational leaders need sufficient authority and capacity to manage human and financial resources effectively. Overall, the theoretical analysis indicates that Agile and Project Management can complement one another in educational HR management: Agile contributes adaptability, collaboration,

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employee involvement, and continuous feedback, whereas Project Management contributes structure, planning, resource coordination, risk management, and measurable performance control. Their appropriate integration can therefore provide an organizational foundation for developing more responsive and development-oriented human resource management practices in educational institutions.

Conclusion

The conducted theoretical analysis demonstrates that the application of Agile and Project Management methodologies can provide a relevant organizational framework for improving human resource management in educational institutions. The transformation of the educational environment, increasing requirements for professional competencies, technological changes, and the need for continuous institutional development require human resource management systems to become more flexible, collaborative, and focused on continuous improvement.
The analysis shows that Agile methodology can contribute to strengthening communication between employees, increasing their participation in decision-making, developing teamwork, introducing continuous feedback mechanisms, and adapting management processes to changing organizational requirements. These principles are particularly relevant to educational institutions because their effectiveness largely depends on the professional development, motivation, collaboration, and adaptability of teachers and other employees. Recent research on agile teams also identifies shared leadership, empowering behaviour, collaboration, psychological safety, and team orientation as important factors associated with effective agile teamwork. Project Management, in contrast, provides a structured mechanism for translating institutional objectives into specific activities. Its application in human resource management makes it possible to define objectives, distribute responsibilities, establish deadlines, allocate resources, identify risks, monitor implementation, and evaluate achieved results. This approach is especially relevant when educational institutions implement recruitment programmes, employee onboarding systems, professional development projects, digital transformation initiatives, or new performance evaluation mechanisms.
For Uzbekistan, the introduction of modern management approaches into educational institutions should be linked with the broader processes of improving the quality of education, developing professional competencies, strengthening institutional autonomy, and increasing the effectiveness of human resource management. The use of Agile and Project Management principles can therefore be considered as one of the possible organizational mechanisms for supporting these processes. In conclusion, the combination of Agile flexibility and Project Management structure can contribute to the formation of a modern human resource management model in educational institutions. However, successful implementation depends not only on the formal introduction of methodologies but also on management competence, organizational culture, employee readiness, institutional autonomy, digital infrastructure, and the establishment of a continuous professional development system.

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