The influence of agile HRMS on the organizational performance: The case of Dubai government

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A B S T R A C T

In today's rapidly changing and interconnected world, governments are aware that they need to adapt their operations to effectively navigate the complexities they face. To address these challenges and operate more efficiently, governments must forge partnerships, embrace innovation, demonstrate effective leadership, and, most importantly, cultivate a skilled workforce. Recognizing this need, this study focuses on examining the impact of Agile HRMS on organizational performance within the Dubai government. To investigate this relationship, a survey was conducted involving 107 employees from various government departments in Dubai. The results of the survey revealed significant and positive correlations between all the dimensions of Agile HRMS (namely, Agile talent acquisition, Agile employee engagement, and Agile learning and development) and organizational performance. These findings underscore the significance of adopting Agile HRMS approaches in enhancing the professional development and effectiveness of government operations. Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers within the government sector adopt and integrate Agile HRMS practices, as doing so can create an environment conducive to increased productivity and success across these organizations.

1. Introduction

Over the past thirty years, there has been a growing interest in the field of HRM, driven by the convergence between HRM practices and related disciplines like organizational development and leadership. The link between HRM and organizational performance has also contributed to this increased focus (AlHamad et al., 2022). HRM research is centered around employment relationships and staff management, playing a central role in administrative management (Cristiani & Peiró, 2018). Unlike traditional personnel management, which focused primarily on administrative tasks such as record-keeping and payroll management, this new approach to worker management encompasses broader and more strategic perspectives. HRM research emphasizes the strategic significance of HRM programs and policies, including aspects such as employee work structure, recruitment processes, performance appraisal systems, job design, compensation, employee relations, development, and team building (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021; Alqudah et al., 2022; Otoo et al., 2019). These elements are seen as contributing to organizational business strategies and influencing HRM outcomes such as commitment, motivation, flexibility, and work quality (Akhorshaideh et al., 2023). This increased interest in HRM extends beyond private firms and has also become part of the public sector reforms known as new public management (Williamson et al., 2022; Schnell & Gerard, 2022). In the context of the agile public sector, HRM provides essential tools for policymakers to ensure strategic resilience by efficiently deploying human resources and adapting quickly to changing priorities.

According to Motalo et al. (2023), agility refers to the organizational efficiency in responding to ongoing changes by consistently adapting. This concept has been linked to research in organizational behavior within the context of HRM (Singh, R., & Ramdeo et al., 2023; Asfahani et al., 2021; Ambituuni et al., 2021). Moreover, Salmen and Festing (2022) specifically explored how training, reward systems, involvement, teamwork, and information systems contribute to promoting HRM

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agility. As a result, agility is no longer a novel idea but has become a new management strategy that significantly transforms work environments. However, the link between agility and HRM lies in creating a flexible, adaptable, and engaged workforce that can respond effectively to changing business dynamics (Subramanian & Suresh, 2022). By embracing agile principles and practices, HRM can support organizational agility, enhance employee performance and satisfaction, and contribute to overall business success (Li et al., 2023; Hanandeh et al., 2023).

Integrating agility into HRM practices involves aligning them with organizational strategy, specifically focusing on HRM functions such as adopting new technologies, modifying processes, reorganizing work objectives, and facilitating productivity and competency (Oehlhorn et al., 2020). The aim is to continuously develop, empower, motivate, and monitor employees (Asfahani, 2020). For instance, the Dubai Government Human Resources Department (DGHR) was established to enhance government performance and improve operational efficiency in the Emirate of Dubai. In 2018, the HRM strategy introduced several initiatives, including the option for Dubai government employees to work remotely and the opportunity to apply for internal vacancies and transfer without meeting promotion conditions if deserving. These measures were implemented to align HRM with the strategic objectives of Dubai Plan 2021 and foster organizational cohesion within the government institutions. The DGHR adopts innovative approaches to optimize HRM practices, fully utilize human resources, enhance government operations, and act as a catalyst for public service delivery.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Dubai Government

Dubai is one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The government of Dubai operates under a constitutional monarchy, where the ruler of Dubai, known as the Ruler of Dubai or the Sheikh, holds executive powers. The current ruler of Dubai is Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The government of Dubai has implemented various initiatives to promote economic diversification, infrastructure development, tourism, and innovation. The city is known for its impressive skyline, luxurious hotels, world-class shopping, and modern infrastructure. Dubai has established several free zones, which offer favorable business environments and incentives to attract foreign investment. These free zones are designed to facilitate international trade and provide various business advantages such as 100% foreign ownership, tax exemptions, and streamlined administrative processes.

The Dubai government has also focused on developing sectors such as finance, real estate, tourism, aviation, logistics, and technology. The city is home to global events like the Dubai Expo, which showcases innovation, culture, and business opportunities. In terms of governance, Dubai has various government departments responsible for different sectors and services. These departments include the Dubai Police, Dubai Municipality, Dubai Health Authority, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, Dubai Road and Transport Authority, among others. Each department has specific responsibilities to ensure the smooth functioning of the city and the well-being of its residents and visitors.

Under the Agile Dubai Government initiative, government entities are encouraged to embrace agile practices such as scrum, kanban, and design thinking (Senapathi & Drury-Grogan, 2021). This involves breaking down projects into smaller tasks, establishing cross-functional teams, fostering collaboration, and frequently delivering value through incremental releases (Chathuranga et al., 2023). The agile approach allows the government to be more responsive to changing requirements, gather feedback from users during the development process, and continuously improve its services (Mergel et al., 2021). By adopting agile methodologies, the Dubai government aims to enhance its service delivery, promote innovation, and create a more customer-centric and efficient government.

2.2 Agile HRMS

Agile HRMS (Human Resource Management System) refers to the application of agile methodologies and principles in the management of human resources within an organization (Rogiers et al., 2020). It involves adopting agile practices to improve HR processes, increase collaboration, and enhance employee experience (Alzoubi et al., 2022). Agile HRMS argues the implementation of agile methodologies in the design, development, and execution of HR systems and processes (Rogiers et al., 2020). It emphasizes flexibility, adaptability, and customer-centricity, enabling HR teams to iteratively improve HR practices, engage employees, and align HR strategies with organizational goals in a rapidly changing business environment (Khandelwal et al., 2021). Traditional HR management systems often follow a linear and rigid approach, with predefined processes and fixed timelines (Burke & Morley, 2023). In contrast, Agile HRMS brings flexibility, adaptability, and continuous improvement to HR functions (Kosheleva & Bordunos, 2018). It focuses on iterative and incremental approaches, frequent feedback loops, and close collaboration between HR teams, employees, and stakeholders (Helms, 2021).

Implementing Agile HRMS in government settings can bring various benefits. Firstly, improved service delivery, Agile HRMS allows government agencies to enhance their service delivery to citizens and employees (Salah et al., 2022; Hammouri et al., 2022). By adopting iterative and incremental approaches, agencies can continuously improve HR processes, respond to changing needs, and provide more efficient and effective services (He et al., 2022). Secondly, enhanced employee engagement, Agile HRMS focuses on employee-centric practices, fostering higher levels of engagement among government employees (Mtetwa, 2019). Through regular feedback, collaborative work environments, and personalized HR services,

employees feel more valued, empowered, and motivated to contribute their best to public service (Mutonyi et al., 2020). Thirdly, Agility in talent management, Agile HRMS enables government entities to adapt their talent management strategies to evolving requirements (Kandukuri, 2023). It facilitates agile recruitment practices, performance management, and learning and development initiatives, ensuring the government workforce remains skilled, motivated, and aligned with organizational goals (Elayan, 2021). Fourthly, streamlined administrative processes, by implementing Agile HRMS, governments can streamline and automate administrative tasks, reducing bureaucracy and paperwork (Thite, 2018). This allows HR professionals to spend less time on routine administrative work and more time on strategic HR initiatives, resulting in improved efficiency and productivity (Islam, 2016). Finally, data-driven decision making, agile HRMS provides governments with data analytics and reporting capabilities (Salah et al., 2022). This enables evidence-based decision making, as HR departments can gather and analyze data on employee performance, engagement, and workforce trends (Kaur & Fink, 2017). It helps identify areas for improvement, optimize HR policies, and ensure better allocation of resources (Damer, 2020).

2.3 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the overall effectiveness and efficiency with which an organization achieves its goals and objectives (George et al., 2019). It encompasses various aspects, including financial performance, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, innovation, and market competitiveness (Turner, 2019; Hammouri et al., 2023). A high level of organizational performance indicates that the organization is successful in delivering value to its stakeholders, meeting, or exceeding expectations, and sustaining a competitive advantage in its industry or sector (Alsayegh et al., 2020). However, Nica (2022) noted that a clear and well-defined strategy aligned with the organization's mission and goals is crucial for driving performance. It provides a roadmap for decision-making, resource allocation, and goal attainment (Joseph & Gaba, 2020). Therefore, a strong and effective leadership plays a vital role in guiding the organization, setting a vision, motivating employees, and fostering a positive culture that supports high performance (Madi Odeh et al., 2023). Furthermore, Pathiranage (2019) indicated that a healthy and positive organizational culture that promotes collaboration, innovation, continuous improvement, and employee engagement can significantly impact performance. Moreover, meeting customer needs and expectations, delivering high-quality products or services, and building strong customer relationships are critical for achieving positive performance outcomes (Alshurideh, 2022; Raed et al., 2023). In addition, the ability to innovate, adapt to changing market conditions, and embrace new technologies or business models can drive competitive advantage and long-term performance (Vaníčková & Szczepańska-Woszczyna, 2020; Hanandeh et al., 2021).

Several empirical studies confirmed that Agile HRMS has a positive significant impact on organizational performance (AlNawafleh et al., 2022; Abdullah et al., 2020; Ghevira & Trinanda, 2022). An Agile HRMS enables organizations to develop and nurture an agile workforce (Dhuper, 2022). By implementing flexible work arrangements, cross-functional training, and skill development programs, organizations can enhance employees' adaptability, responsiveness, and agility (Karman, 2019). This agile workforce can better meet changing business needs, contribute to innovation, and drive overall organizational performance (Gibson, 2021). Moreover, an Agile HRMS can improve talent acquisition and retention efforts by adopting agile recruitment practices (Kandukuri, 2023). This includes leveraging technology for efficient candidate sourcing, utilizing agile methodologies in candidate assessment, and focusing on competencies and potential rather than rigid qualifications (Rogiers et al., 2020). Agile HRMS promotes a shift from traditional performance management to more agile approaches (Shalan & Algarni, 2020). This involves regular feedback, continuous goal setting, and ongoing performance conversations (Elayan, 2021). Agile HRMS supports continuous learning and development within the organization (Dhuper, 2022). It provides platforms and tools for online learning, on-demand training resources, and skill-building opportunities that align with the dynamic needs of the organization (Mohamed et al., 2022; Hammouri et al., 2021; Hammouri & Abu-Shanab, 2017). Furthermore, Agile HRMS facilitates agile decision-making within HR processes (Elayan, 2021). It enables HR teams to gather real-time data, analyze workforce trends, and make data-driven decisions (Madid, 2023). Agile HRMS ensures that HR practices and policies are aligned with the organization's strategic goals, it also helps an organization to create a cohesive and aligned workforce (Ghatak, 2022).

3. Methodology

The objective of this study is to investigate how the implementation of Agile HRMS influences the performance of the Dubai government. The research adopted a quantitative approach, utilizing questionnaires to assess the impact of Agile HRMS on employees within the Dubai government. This methodology was chosen to enable the collection of measurable data and facilitate statistical analysis to evaluate the connections between different variables.

3.1 Research Instrument

The study presents a model comprising a single factor that potentially impacts organizational performance, and the data will be gathered through an electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three sections, with the initial section providing an introduction to the study to ensure that respondents have a comprehensive understanding of the research aims and objectives. The second section gathers demographic details, including gender, age, experience, and education. The final part of the survey incorporates items designed to measure the two factors proposed in the research model. Data collection employed an online approach to facilitate accessibility for respondents and employed a Likert scale with five measurement options.

3.2 Sample and Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a specific group of individuals, known as a sample, from a larger population for a research study (Bhardwaj, 2019). In this study, the sampling technique employed is known as judgment sampling. This method involves the researcher handpicks individuals who are believed to be most relevant, representative, or knowledgeable about the topic under investigation. The target population for this research consists of all employees within the Dubai government. A total of 124 questionnaires were distributed, and 107 questionnaires were received and considered valid for analysis. The collected responses were then keyed and entered into the SPSS for further examination. Table 1 provides an overview of the sample's demographic characteristics.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics

Measure	Category	Count	Percentage
Age	18 – 25 years	8	7.5
	26 – 33 years	25	23.4
	34 – 41 years	22	20.5
	42 – 49 years	34	31.8
	Above 49 years	18	16.8
Education Level	Bachelor	65	60.8
	Master	24	22.4
	PhD	18	16.8
Gender	Male	78	72.9
	Female	29	27.1
Experience	Less than 5 years	11	10.2
	6 – 10 years	21	19.6
	11 – 15 years	39	36.5
	More than 15 years	36	33.7

4. Data Analysis and Results

In this section of the analysis, the coefficients for all variables indicate a significant positive association between Agile HRMS variables and organizational performance. This conclusion is drawn based on the valuable responses provided by the participants. The standard deviation (SD) values give us an idea of how much agreement there is among the respondents regarding the measures tested. Descriptive research is essential as it provides important information about the research variables before further investigations are conducted (Vaismoradi et al., 2023). The mean and standard deviation values presented in Table 2 consistently show a high level of quality, with mean scores ranging from 3.64 to 4.01. Most of the items reflect a positive attitude towards Agile HRMS and organizational performance. Additionally, the low variability in the data, as indicated by the standard deviation values, suggests that the participants have a good understanding of the value of organizational performance.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation

Variable	Item Code	Mean	SD
Agile Talent Acquisition	ATA1	4.01	0.715
	ATA2	3.66	0.609
	ATA3	3.91	0.792
Agile Employee Engagement	AEE1	3.90	0.651
	AEE2	4.00	0.780
	AEE3	3.68	0.683
Agile Learning and Development	ALD1	3.79	0.697
	ALD2	3.88	0.750
	ALD3	3.69	0.741
Organizational Performance	OP1	3.93	0.609
	OP2	3.64	0.726
	OP3	3.81	0.639
	OP4	3.78	0.612
	OP5	3.86	0.598

4.1 Reliability Test

In this study, the internal reliability of the sample measure in capturing the learning variables was assessed to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire before it was distributed to participants. The concept of internal reliability was used, with Cronbach's alpha value serving as the primary measure of reliability. Different confidence coefficients ranging from 0 to 1 have various interpretations, but higher coefficient values generally indicate greater reliability (Bruton et al.,

2000). Moreover, Hair et al. (2009) established a minimum acceptable value of 0.70 or higher for this test, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.6 or higher indicating good reliability (Taber, 2018). The results of the internal consistency test, presented in Table 3, demonstrate that all the measures in this study met the objective criteria for acceptable reliability.

Table 3
Reliability Test

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Agile Talent Acquisition	3	0.815
Agile Employee Engagement	3	0.799
Agile Learning and Development	3	0.834
Organizational Performance	5	0.881

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

The research model and proposed hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression is a robust statistical method that examines the relationship between several independent variables and a single dependent variable (Wondola et al., 2020). The coefficient table for the multiple regression analysis is displayed in Table 4. The results of the multiple regression test showed that the research model accounted for 47.3% of the variation in employees' organizational performance when applying Agile HRMS (adjusted coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.473$). Among the major constructs, three factors significantly contributed to the explanation of this variation: Agile talent acquisition (Beta = 0.543, $p < 0.01$), Agile employee engagement (Beta = 0.487, $p < 0.01$), and Agile learning and development (Beta = 0.367, $p < 0.01$).

Table 4
Multiple Regressions Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Supported
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	0.399	0.318		2.429	0.167	
Agile Talent Acquaint	0.219	0.054	0.543	5.510	0.000	Yes
Agile Employee Engagement	0.412	0.076	0.487	3.768	0.000	Yes
Agile Learning and Development	0.188	0.089	0.367	1.606	0.000	Yes

⬥ Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

5. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of Agile HRMS, specifically Agile talent Acquisition, Agile learning and development, and Agile employee engagement, on the organizational performance within the context of the Dubai Government. Through a survey conducted among 107 government employees, significant and positive relationships were found between these dimensions of Agile HRMS and organizational performance. The findings highlight the importance of adopting Agile HRMS practices in the Dubai Government to enhance organizational performance. Agile talent acquisition enables the government to attract and select talent efficiently, while Agile learning and development ensures continuous skill enhancement and adaptability. Agile employee engagement fosters a collaborative and innovative work environment, leading to increased productivity and performance.

5.1 Managerial Implications

These results emphasize the significance of embracing Agile HRMS as a strategic approach for improving organizational performance in the Dubai Government. Policymakers and leaders within the government sector are encouraged to adopt and integrate Agile HRMS practices, recognizing the potential for enhanced workforce performance and overall success. By doing so, the Dubai Government can navigate the complexities of an ever-changing environment, promote a culture of agility, and effectively manage uncertainty.

5.2 Limitations and Future Work

The limitations include the sample size and the focus on a specific government sector, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. It is important to note that this study focused specifically on the Dubai Government, and further research could explore the influence of Agile HRMS across different government sectors and in various geographical contexts. Additionally, future studies could delve deeper into the specific mechanisms through which Agile talent acquisition, Agile learning and development, and Agile employee engagement impact organizational performance, providing actionable insights for government entities aiming to optimize their performance and effectiveness.

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