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ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY, PROJECT RESILIENCE, AND HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK PRACTICES: A RECIPE FOR PROJECT SUCCESS

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A dynamic business environment, characterized by fiercely competitive and fast-changing markets, has made the ability to respond quickly to change and manage uncertainty essential for organizational survival. Consequently, organisational agility has become imperative for achieving project success. Traditionally, project success was determined by the achievement of project goals within the constraints of time, budget, and scope. However, the perception of project success has evolved to encompass a multidimensional approach, considering the project's impact on the team, customer, business success, and capacity-building for the future. These dimensions should be used to measure project success in volatile environments. Project resilience, which refers to a project's ability to withstand and recover from unexpected events and disruptions, could act as a mediator between organisational agility and project success. Project resilience involves taking a holistic view of the organization and its ability to adapt to different scenarios, including various disturbances in the system. However, the concept of resilience still needs to be explored further in project studies. In this paper, the authors propose a research model for testing the relationship between organisational agility and project success, with project resilience acting as a mediating factor and high-performance work practices as a moderating factor.

Keywords: project success; Project Management; research model; organizational agility; project resilience

AGILIDAD ORGANIZATIVA, RESILIENCIA DEL PROYECTO Y PRÁCTICAS LABORALES DE ALTO RENDIMIENTO: UNA RECETA PARA EL ÉXITO DEL PROYECTO

Un entorno empresarial dinámico, caracterizado por mercados altamente competitivos y en constante cambio, ha hecho que la capacidad de responder rápidamente al cambio y gestionar la incertidumbre sea esencial para la supervivencia de las organizaciones. La agilidad organizativa se ha vuelto imprescindible para lograr el éxito de los proyectos. La percepción del éxito del proyecto ha evolucionado para incluir un enfoque multidimensional, considerando el impacto del proyecto en el equipo, el cliente, el éxito empresarial y la capacidad de desarrollo para el futuro. La resiliencia del proyecto, que se refiere a la capacidad de un proyecto para resistir y recuperarse de eventos inesperados y perturbaciones, podría actuar como un mediador entre la agilidad organizativa y el éxito del proyecto. También implica tener una visión integral de la organización y su capacidad para adaptarse a diferentes escenarios, incluyendo diversas perturbaciones en el sistema. Sin embargo, el concepto de resiliencia aún necesita ser explorado en mayor profundidad en los estudios de proyectos. Los autores proponen un modelo de investigación para probar la relación entre la agilidad organizativa y el éxito del proyecto, con la resiliencia del proyecto actuando como factor mediador y las prácticas laborales de alto rendimiento como factor moderador.

Palabras clave: éxito del proyecto; Dirección de Proyectos; modelo de investigación; agilidad organizacional; resiliencia de proyectos



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1. Introduction

In recent years, the concept of organisational agility has gained increasing attention as a critical factor in achieving project success (Ghina et al., 2021; L. S. Holbeche, 2018; Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2021; Project Management Institute & Forbes Instight, n.d.; Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018). Organisational agility refers to an organisation's ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and respond effectively to new challenges (Walter, 2021). Project resilience, on the other hand, refers to a project team's ability to bounce back from setbacks and continue to deliver results despite unexpected obstacles (L. Holbeche, 2019). Organisational agility and project resilience are essential to an organisation's success because they call for the capacity to react and adapt to shifting conditions (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2021). High-performance work practices were recognised as influential factors contributing to project success (Mansour et al., 2023; Rhee et al., 2020). By incorporating high-performance work practices into project management, organisations can create an environment that nurtures agility and supports the achievement of project success.

To better understand the relationship between these four constructs, several research questions have been proposed:

- RQ1: "What is the nature of the relationship between project resilience and organisational agility?"
- RQ2: "How does organisational agility impact project success?"
- RQ3: "Does project resilience act as a mediator between organisational agility and project success?"
- R4: "Does high-performance work practice act as a moderator between organisational agility and project success?"

This paper aims to develop a conceptual model and propose hypotheses for future research. The introduction outlines the article's purpose and introduces four research questions that guide the literature review. The second section briefly overviews the methodology used in this research and delves into the theoretical foundations of organisational agility, project resilience, high-performance work practices and project success. In section three, we answered the research question posed in the introduction. Hypotheses and a research framework were proposed based on the literature review and answering the research question in section four. The conclusion summarises the findings and provides directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

To build the foundation and establish relationships for defining the research model, the authors of this paper seek to answer the research questions proposed in the introduction. The most influential papers covering literature on organisational agility, project resilience and project success was selected and extracted from the Elsevier Scopus database, one of the largest scientometric databases in the world.

Table 1 shows the research flow; three key phrases were searched within the article title, abstract and keywords to establish their connection. The research strings used for the search can be seen in the table, including limitations in the document type, language and year of publication, and the final number of observed papers. From the final number of documents selected from the Scopus database, authors perceived just highly cited documents as the most relevant sources for answering the research questions and proposing the research model.

Research topic	Research Phrases	Limitations	Time span	Number of publications
Organisational agility	"organisational agility" OR "organisational agility")	Document type: Journal articles, Conference Papers Language: English	2023:2018	370
Project resilience	"project resilience" OR "project resiliency"	Document type: Journal articles, Conference Papers Language: English	2023:2018	38
High- performance work practices (HPWPs)	"high-performance work practices" OR "high performance work practices"	Document type: Journal articles, Conference Papers Language: English	2023:2018	122
Project success	"project success"	Document type: Journal articles, Conference Papers Language: English	2023:2018	2083

Table 1. Research flow

2.1 The Concept of Organisational Agility in the Contemporary Business Landscape

Companies that want to survive and thrive in today's VUCA (Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014) environment, where speed and innovation are most important, increasingly calling for organisational agility (L. S. Holbeche, 2018). A general definition of organisation agility is an "organisation's ability to react, quickly adapt and thrive in a changing environment" (L. Holbeche, 2019; L. S. Holbeche, 2018).

Understanding the paradigm of organisational agility is a very complex and confusing topic in the academic literature (Walter, 2021), which challenges understanding its components. Anna-Theresa Walter (2021) provides a definition that examines the holistic perspective of this concept by identifying agility drivers, enablers, capabilities, and dimensions as agility components: "Organizational Agility is a learned, permanently-available dynamic capability that can be performed to a necessary degree quickly and efficiently, and whenever needed in order to increase business performance in a volatile market environment".

In 2017, PMI (Project Management Institute) and Forbes Insight conducted a cross-industry global study of over 500 senior executives. The results show that 92 percent of executives believe that organisational agility is critical to business success, and 84 percent agree that organisational agility is necessary for success in digital transformation (Project Management Institute & Forbes Instight, 2017). The essence of digital transformation extends beyond the mere integration of new technologies and encompasses the formulation of a strategic plan to ensure their successful adoption (Basulo Ribeiro et al., 2023; Miloradov et al., 2022).

The traditional management approach in digital technologies hinders project work and frequently prevents its successful completion due to challenges in gathering information, lengthy coordination times at every stage of the project's life cycle, and lack of experience in executing similar projects and utilizing existing technologies (Zozulya et al., 2021). Project management

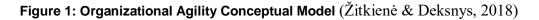
professionals understand that various projects require distinct approaches to project management (Savkovic et al., 2022). When faced with high levels of requirement ambiguity, extensive customer involvement in the final product, and limited experience with the tools and techniques used in the development environment, a more flexible and adaptable project management method becomes necessary (Ćirić & Lalić, 2016; Zozulya et al., 2021). An agile organisation is a mindset where the principles of agile management philosophy are shared by the company culture's formal and informal aspects (Dakovic et al., 2020; Lalic et al., 2022; Oliva & Kotabe, 2019). Agile companies constantly strive to deliver customer value through knowledge and innovation (L. Holbeche, 2019). This requires a strong commitment to comprehending and prioritising the consumer's demands (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2021; Joiner, 2019). Due to their close ties, these businesses can share knowledge and collaborate effectively, which is crucial for delivering value to customers(Oliva & Kotabe, 2019). They also strongly emphasise experimentation and co-creation with clients to produce new knowledge and innovative goods (L. Holbeche, 2019). Finally, agile businesses are ruthless in eliminating any component of the company that does not advance the objective of giving consumers the most value possible (Green & Sergeeva, 2019). The concept of agility helps a business meet the volatility of customer demand, build innovative capabilities, enhance market share, simplify entry into new markets, and boost profitability and cost reductions (Altay et al., 2018; Barlette & Baillette, 2022; Grover et al., 2018). The ability of an organisation to swiftly acquire knowledge and introduce innovative products through agility enables them to launch a growing range of new products promptly, thereby building a foundation for future growth and contributing to the well-being of all stakeholders (Shahzad et al., 2020).

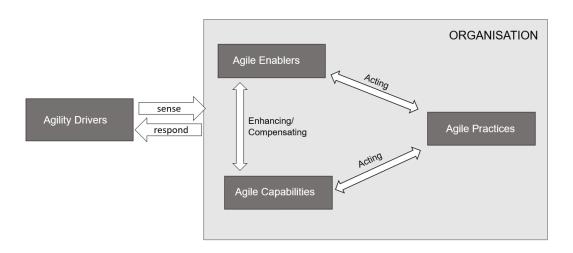
In 2018, Rima Zitkiene and Mindaugas Deksnys introduced the Organizational Agility Conceptual Model shown in **Figure 1**. In this paper, we will adopt this model as a basis for analysing the variable of organisational agility, drawing on insights from the author Anna-Teresa Walter (2021) and the relevant literature reviewed in this paper (from the timespan 2018:2023). Both authors agreed that organisational agility depends on the agile drivers, enablers, capabilities and practices (Walter, 2021; Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018). The conceptual framework consists of the four organisational agility components and can be applied as a process roadmap for decision-making. Each component was explained in detail by adopting the component categories and definitions from the most influential authors, shown in **Table 2**.

Component	Component categories (adopted by Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018)	Definition (adopted by Walter, 2021)
Agility drivers	 changes in the market; competition; customers; technologies and social factors. 	"Environmental changes that put organisations in a new, vulnerable position and necessitate searching for competitive advantages."
Agility enablers	 structure and organisation; processes; technology; human resources; network. 	"Methods, tools, practices and crucial technologies facilitating organisational agility."
Agility capabilities	 Sensing capabilities (Awareness, competence); Response capabilities (Reconfiguration, learning, coordination, cooperation). 	"Specific abilities for providing the required power and competence to react to changes."

Table 2. Components of the conceptual framework (Walter, 2021; Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018)

Agility practices	 Organisational practices (structure, processes, resources, etc.); 		
	 Employee empowerment practices (skill sharing, learning, motivation, etc.); 	The author defines agility providers	
	 Customer enrichment practices (value proposition, competitive advantage, product flexibility and features, etc.); 	and practices also as agility enablers.	
	 Cooperation practices (supply chain speed, outsource flexibility, distribution, etc.). 		





2.2 Project Resilience: A Vital Element for Success or a Transient Management Buzzword?

As unpredictability and unforeseen events become more common in projects, developing competencies that cultivate resilience and effectively navigate such circumstances is essential. Crosby (2012) defined project resilience as "building strength and the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change" (Crosby, 2012; Wiegrd et al., 2021). Eleven years later, project resilience is still an underdeveloped concept in project management (Naderpajouh et al., 2020), also confirmed by the limited number of publications shown in Table 1. Nevertheless, researchers have increasingly shown interest in this topic in recent years (Wied et al., 2021), showing a powerful sign of the novelty of this concept (Rahi et al., 2021).

The concept of resilience can be viewed differently depending on the context. Rahi (2019) identifies critical contexts, such as environmental, organisational, engineering, psychological, and socio-ecological (Rahi, 2019). By examining the various contexts in which resilience is discussed in the literature, Rahi has concluded that it comprises two main components: awareness and adaptive capacity. The project's ability to close the gap between available and required resources is related to its awareness, while its ability to recover from disruptive events is related to its adaptive capacity (Rahi, 2019; Rahi et al., 2021; Rahi & Bourgault, 2022a). Resilience can help sustain project performance in project management by utilising adaptable, systemic, and context-sensitive strategies (Altay et al., 2018; Rahi, 2019; Rahi et al., 2019). When confronted with disruptive events or circumstances, resilience emphasises the importance of maintaining project

performance and efficiently utilising resources (Gondia et al., 2022). Resilience involves continuously evolving and realigning processes, methodologies, organisational structures, and other factors to address disruptive events effectively (Rahi, 2019). Therefore, achieving resilience involves continuously monitoring a project's complexity and level of uncertainty throughout its life cycle.

2.2.1. Organizational Agility and Project Resilience: Parallels and Distinctions

Rahi (2021) presents a new conceptual framework for the comparative analysis of risk, vulnerability, project agility, and resilience, highlighting the interplay between organisational agility and project success. According to Rahi, organisational agility addresses the needs and demands that can lead to disruptive events, while project resilience addresses them when they occur. In his study, the author explains that agility has a tendency to disregard the organisational context and prioritise reactive actions. In contrast, resilience emphasises ongoing interaction with the environment and incorporates both proactive and reactive capacities(Rahi et al., 2021).

Resilience at the organisational level depends on several factors that contribute to the strength and durability of an organisation (L. Holbeche, 2019; L. S. Holbeche, 2018; Liu et al., 2021). These factors include the ability to anticipate and plan for potential challenges, a shared sense of purpose among members, active participation and rejuvenation, continuous learning and the application of knowledge, the cultivation of professional networks, the fostering of employee engagement and well-being, as well as the adoption of an appropriate level of risk and effective risk management practices (L. Holbeche, 2019). Melis Attar and Aleem Abdul-Kareem (2020) argue that resilience is a critical factor in achieving long-term success and assert that successful companies today require highly adaptable and motivated leaders who can develop teams capable of navigating unexpected turbulence (Attar & Abdul-Kareem, 2020; Chernova et al., 2022). According to Medinilla (2013), an agile employee embraces and embodies agile concepts and principles and is willing to promote them throughout the organisation (Medinilla, 2013). Project resilience is the capacity of a project to continue operating in the face of setbacks or unforeseen circumstances (L. Holbeche, 2019). It entails implementing adaptable, context-specific tactics, continually keeping an eye on complexity and ambiguity, and being ready to adjust organisational structures, processes, and procedures as needed. The shared objective of enhancing an organisation's capacity to respond and adjust to changing conditions is the basis of the link between project resilience and organisational agility (Kim & Chai, 2022; Piperca & Floricel, 2023; Rahi et al., 2021). The ability of a project to withstand setbacks and overcome difficulty is known as project resilience. On the other hand, organisational agility refers to a company's capacity to rapidly and efficiently adjust to changing conditions. The ability for projects to continue operating in the face of disturbances like delays, setbacks, or unforeseen occurrences improves organisational agility.

2.3. Achieving Organizational Excellence through High-Performance Work Practices

Despite the expanding body of research on High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), there remains a lack of consensus regarding a precise definition or a specific characterisation of the practices that can be identified as constituting HPWS(Manresa et al., 2021). High-performance work practices (HPWPs) are a component of the organisational strategy to address the employment agreement (Manresa et al., 2021; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). Through a unique fusion of activities, HPWPs seek to increase employee productivity by enhancing their knowledge, inspiration, engagement, cooperation, flexibility, and involvement (Mansour et al., 2023). The three characteristics of HPWPs that impact organisational excellence are: increasing worker knowledge, skills, and capabilities; empowering and involving workers in decision-making and problem-solving processes; and incentivising workers to work harder and more devotedly(Kooij &

Boon, 2018). The essential tenet of HPWPs is that access to information is necessary for employees to perform their duties efficiently (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). When organisational strategy, performance, and productivity align with HPWPs in the HPWS, overall effectiveness is increased (Rhee et al., 2020).

Umer Zaman and others (2022) were the first to introduce and empirically examine the relationship between project governance, project management innovation, project success, and high-performance work practices. They confirmed that high-performance work practices positively moderate project management innovation and project success (Zaman et al., 2022). High-performance work practices refer to a set of human resource management practices designed to improve organisational performance by enhancing employee skills, motivation, and involvement (Posthuma et al., 2013).

By interpreting agile drivers (which Walter (2021) defines as belonging to the same category as practices), we can assume that there is a strong connection between these components and high-performance work practices. It is particularly noteworthy to focus on one of the categories of agile practices defined by Žitkienė & Deksnys: employee empowerment practices. Employee empowerment is a specific practice that can significantly contribute to high performance, and both concepts are rooted in the field of human resources.

2.4. Paradigm Shift: Reconceptualizing Project Success

It used to be very simple to evaluate a company's business success - the primary goal of every company was to maximise profits, and the best way for a company to contribute to the environment was through its growth and development and the achievement of financial goals. The evaluation of business success has changed, which indicates that the way of doing business in today's companies must change. Companies have begun to see multiple and long-term consequences of their actions, affecting their reputation and financial results (Carvalho & Rabechini, 2017).

Traditionally, project success was defined based on predefined scope, time, and cost parameters. The traditional perception of project success has evolved to a multidimensional approach, which includes the project's efficiency, business impact, client satisfaction and building for the future (Shenhar & Dvir, 2007). These are only a few of the dimensions that could be used to evaluate a project's success in an unstable environment. However, the authors of this paper suggest that we need to reconsider these dimensions to transform how we measure project success in the future. In addition to traditional measures such as completion within scope, time, and cost, a more comprehensive set of measures should include factors such as client impact, efficient resource utilisation, goal attainment, reduction in disengagement and conflicts, and stakeholder satisfaction (Hussein, 2019; Jitpaiboon et al., 2019). While some define project success as the degree of transformation achieved, others propose a multi-dimensional assessment that considers stakeholder satisfaction alongside traditional measures (Carvalho & Rabechini, 2017; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007). Project success dynamics should be aligned with the business's strategic perspective, and stakeholder expectations should guide the evaluation of project success.

According to the 2017 Pulse of the Profession In-Depth Reports by the Project Management Institute, organisations with greater agility have a higher rate of achieving their project objectives and meeting their business goals. The report suggests that organisational agility is directly related to project success rates. Organisations aiming to be more adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to delivering successful projects.

3. Answering the Research Questions

The first research question investigated the nature of the relationship between project resilience and organisational agility. Resilient projects effectively reduce risks and mitigate the impact of uncertainties, ensuring that organisations can continue to achieve their objectives (Rahi et al., 2021). On the other hand, organisational agility provides the flexibility and adaptability required to respond to changes in the external environment, such as market shifts, technological advancements, and regulatory changes (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2021). The arguments and evidence presented in this article affirmatively support a robust association between organisational agility and project resilience.

The second research question focuses on how organisational agility impact project success. It has been established that both project resilience and organisational agility are crucial for an organisation's success as they require the capacity to react and adapt to shifting conditions (Kim & Chai, 2022; Piperca & Floricel, 2023; Rahi et al., 2021). Previous studies have emphasised the importance of enhancing an organisation's ability to respond and adjust to changing conditions, thus linking project resilience and organisational agility.

The mediating role of project resilience between organisational agility and project success is examined to address the *third research question*. Project resilience is closely interconnected with project success in project management. Resilience enables project teams to effectively manage unforeseen obstacles and mitigate risks, thereby influencing project success (Liu et al., 2021; Piperca & Floricel, 2023; Rahi & Bourgault, 2022b; Zou et al., 2022). A resilient project can stay on track and avoid costly delays by having a well-conceived plan to address potential issues and remaining adaptable to changing circumstances. Integrating strategies for project resilience and success into project planning and management enhances the team's ability to accomplish objectives and deliver value to stakeholders.

The fourth research question explores the moderating role of high-performance work practices between organisational agility and project success. Empowering employees and implementing high-performance work practices create an environment conducive to agility. Empowered employees with the necessary skills and resources can better adapt to changing project requirements, overcome challenges, and make informed decisions, thereby positively impacting project success (Mansour et al., 2023; Rhee et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2022). Previous studies have demonstrated the positive influence of high-performance work practices on project outcomes, including improved project performance, higher-quality deliverables, increased productivity, and better adherence to project timelines and budgets.

4. Hypothesis and Research Framework

Drawing upon the findings from the literature review and confirmed research questions, we propose three hypotheses and a conceptual model in this section:

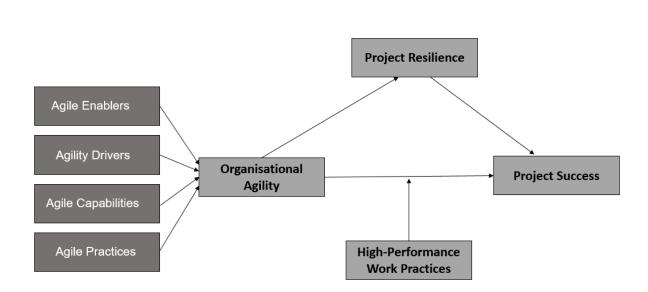
H₁: Organisational agility and project success have a significant positive correlation.

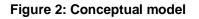
 H_2 : The positive impact of organisational agility on project success is mediated by project resilience.

 H_3 : High-performance work practices enhance the positive relationship between organisational agility and project success.

Figure 2 illustrates our research framework that proposes the following hypothesised relationships: (1) the direct effect of organisational agility on project success; (2) the mediating effect of project resilience; (3) the moderating effect of high-performance work practices.

After reviewing the literature and exploring the relationship between project success (dependent variable) and organisational agility (independent variable), we propose the first hypothesis, which suggests a direct positive impact of organisational agility (including its components) on project success. Furthermore, we observed the mediating role of project resilience in the relationship between project success (dependent variable) and organisational agility (independent variable), leading to the proposal of a second hypothesis.





In this scenario, the moderator variable (High-performance work practices) influences the relationship between the independent variable (organisational agility) and the dependent variable (project success). If employees are not aligned with HPWP, the project success may be less impacted by organisational agility. However, if employees are focused on HPWP, improvement in organisational agility may have a much greater impact on project success.

5. Conclusion and Further Research Directions

This article aims to propose a research framework that investigates the interrelationships among organisational agility, project resilience, high-performance work habits, and project success, developed through a literature review and findings from previous studies. Furthermore, three hypotheses were developed: (H1) assumes a significant positive relationship between organisational agility and project success, (H2) assumes a mediating effect of project resilience between organisational agility and project success, and (H3) assumes a moderating effect between organisational agility and project success.

Future research should focus on selecting research instruments and empirical testing of the proposed hypotheses in various settings and contexts to further validate these results. By

conducting empirical studies that apply the proposed research framework, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of these interrelationships and their implications for project management. The findings can also provide valuable insights for practitioners and organisations in enhancing their project success by fostering organisational agility, cultivating project resilience, and promoting high-performance work habits.

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Alignment to Sustainable Development Goals



- SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth aims to foster continuous, equitable, and sustainable economic progress, alongside full and productive employment and decent working conditions for all. Achieving this goal requires implementing high-performance work practices that can enhance job satisfaction, employee engagement, and overall productivity.
- SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure aims to promote sustainable industrialization, innovation, and infrastructure development. Organizational agility is a crucial factor that supports innovation and infrastructure development, enabling effective project management and driving growth in the industrial sector. By adopting agile practices and investing in innovative technologies and infrastructure, organizations can create new opportunities for growth while supporting long-term sustainability.