

Public Human Resource Management in the Context of Agile Government

2021 GLOBAL PUBLIC HR CONFERENCE

DONG CHUL SHIM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, KOREA UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER 29, 2021

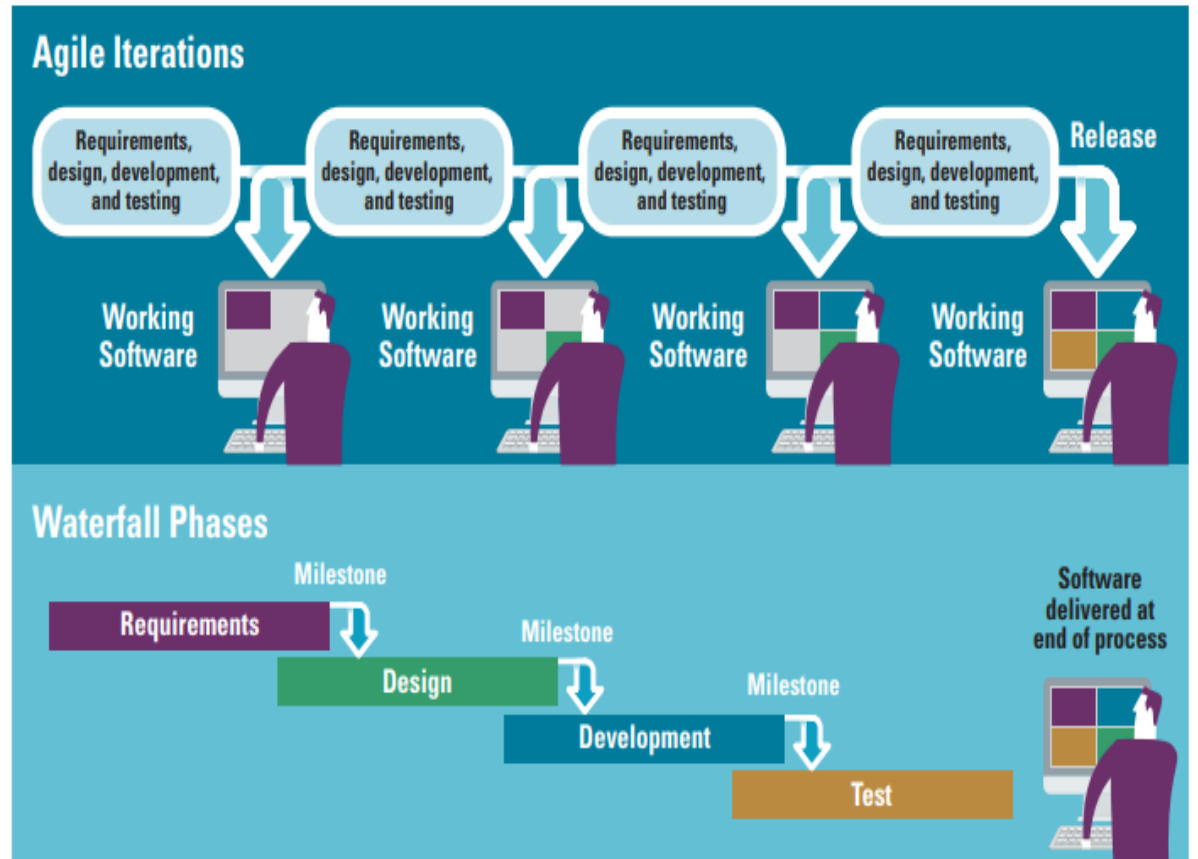


Outline of Presentation

1. Introduce agility as one of the important characteristics of the future government
2. Examines the potential roles of human resource management as a tool to enhance agility in government organizations
3. Review key mechanism for workforce agility and suggest talent management standards of agile public human resource management

What is Agility?

- Agility can be defined as “the capacity to sense opportunities and threats, solve problems, and change the organization’s resource base” (Winby & Worley, 2014, p.226).
- Agile principle was first developed from IT project to replace traditional “waterfall project.”
 - Sprint: Work is done in a series of time-boxed iterations (typically 2-3 weeks)
 - Scrum: Project development with close collaboration among stakeholders (product owner (PO), scrum master (SM) and the development team)



Source: Kraft (2018), *Agile Project Management on Government Finance Projects*,

Key Features of Agility

Scholars of organizational study adopted the concept and used it to emphasize **the dynamic capability** of an organization

■ Studies in business organizations (Bhatta & Thite. 2018; Kraft, 2018)

- Self-organizing and cross functional team
- Time-boxed iterations
- servant leadership
- Fully participating customers
- Minimal documentation
- Rapid feedback and openness to criticism
- Complete transparency

■ Studies in government organizations(PwC, 2015)

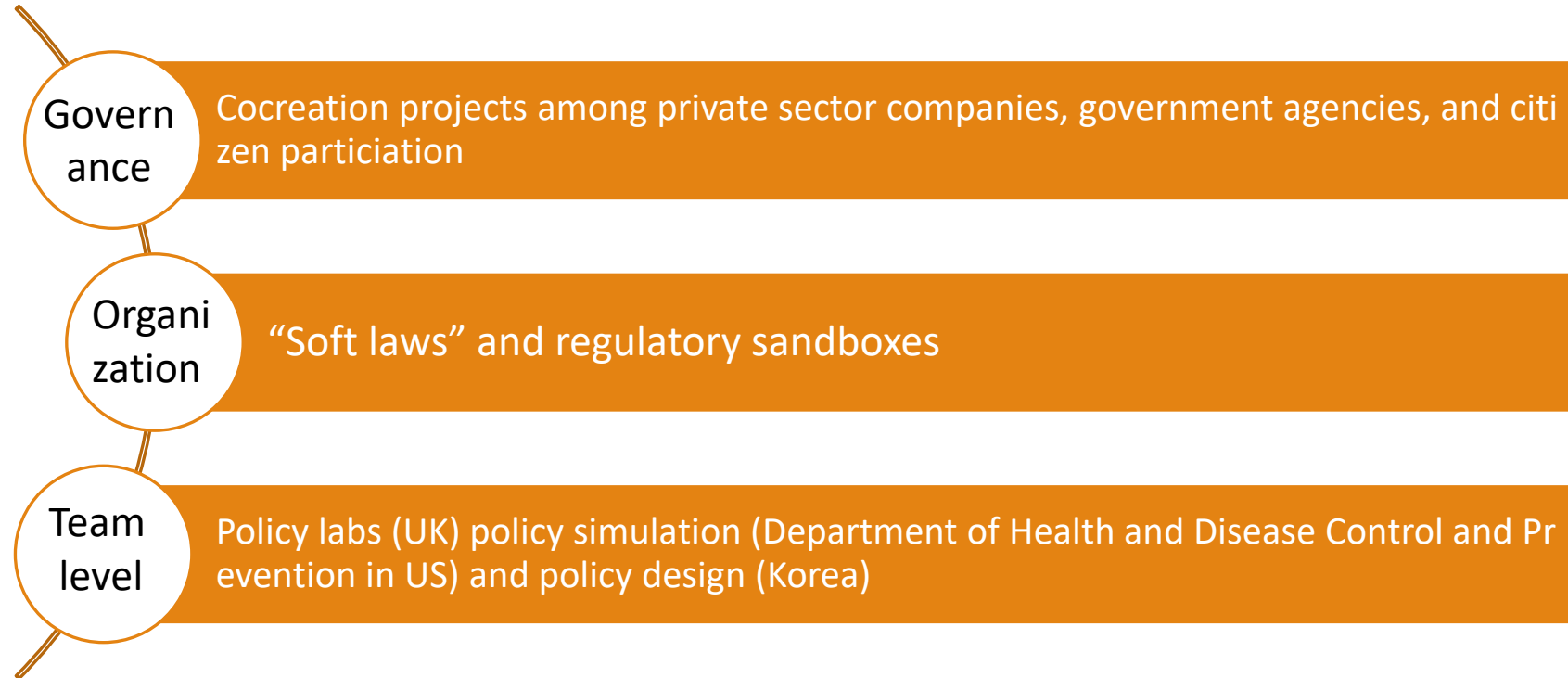
- Adaptability: the ability to adjust and meet changing requirements
- Innovation: the ability to generate and use new ideas, methodologies, and technologies
- Collaboration: the ability to leverage internal and external knowledge and resources to enhance the mission
- Visibility: the ability to create and maintain transparency to enhance fact-based decision-making
- Velocity: the ability to recognize and respond with the requisite speed to new circumstances and events).

Why Agility in Government?

- While agility is not an end itself, agility is could be used as a tool to transform public services to create public values by solving wicked public problems.
- “It is vital for governments to be agile to not only maintain, but even improve, public services, and the capacity of the public sector to answer tomorrow’s challenges in a time of fiscal restraint. Governments are facing multiple uncertainties, including financial market trends, changing demographics, globalization, climate change, risk of potential large-scale disasters are among the many others. Given these multiple challenges, it’s not enough to be “agile” and to foster adaptive capacity. Governments must be quick and responsive in strategic ways.” (OECD, 2015 p.16)
- The emergence of AI and outbreak of COVID-19 precipitated governments around the world to adopt agility to meet unprecedented new challenges (Moon, 2020).

Agility in Governments: Examples and Cases

- Agility of government in three different levels: 1) Team/ project level, 2) government agency and organizational level, 3) governance level (Hong and Kim, 2020)



Management of Workforce Agility

- “Organizations should value individuals and interactions over processes and tools” (Agile Manifesto, 2001)
- Because the existing model of HR functional specialisms could create silos that formed barriers to speed and agility, the reorientation of HRM in the public sector is needed.
- The HR’s mission and role should be changed into the more coaching and serving roles as talent-specialists (Gieles & van der Meer, 2017).

The Levels of Priority for Workforce Agility in OECD Countries

High priority (Current area of reform activity): 17 countries)	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States
Lower priority (Discussions at senior levels but not currently reforming) 13 countries	Chile, Estonia, France, Israel, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, Spain, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic
Not a current priority (no current need/interest in prioritizing this area) 8 countries	Iceland , Latvia, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland

Data Source: OECD (2016), “2016 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resource Management in Central/Federal Governments”,

New Talent Management Standards of Agile Public Human Resource Management

Traditional and Agile Talent Management Standard

Traditional HRM	Agile HRM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control and standardization• Individual focus• Stable service provision• Job classification and organization focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delegation and transparency• Team focus• Continuous learning and innovation• Person and project focus

-
- Many HRM decisions should be delegated to each government agency and HRM functions in each agencies should take more roles.
 - Ministry of Personnel Management (MPM) should check HRM practices of each agency and provide transparent information to the public.
 - MPM should construct HRM-related big data and provide consultive services for low performing agencies and team based on the data analysis.

Comparison of HR Practices between Traditional HR and Agile HR

Agile HR Practices in the HRM Life Cycle

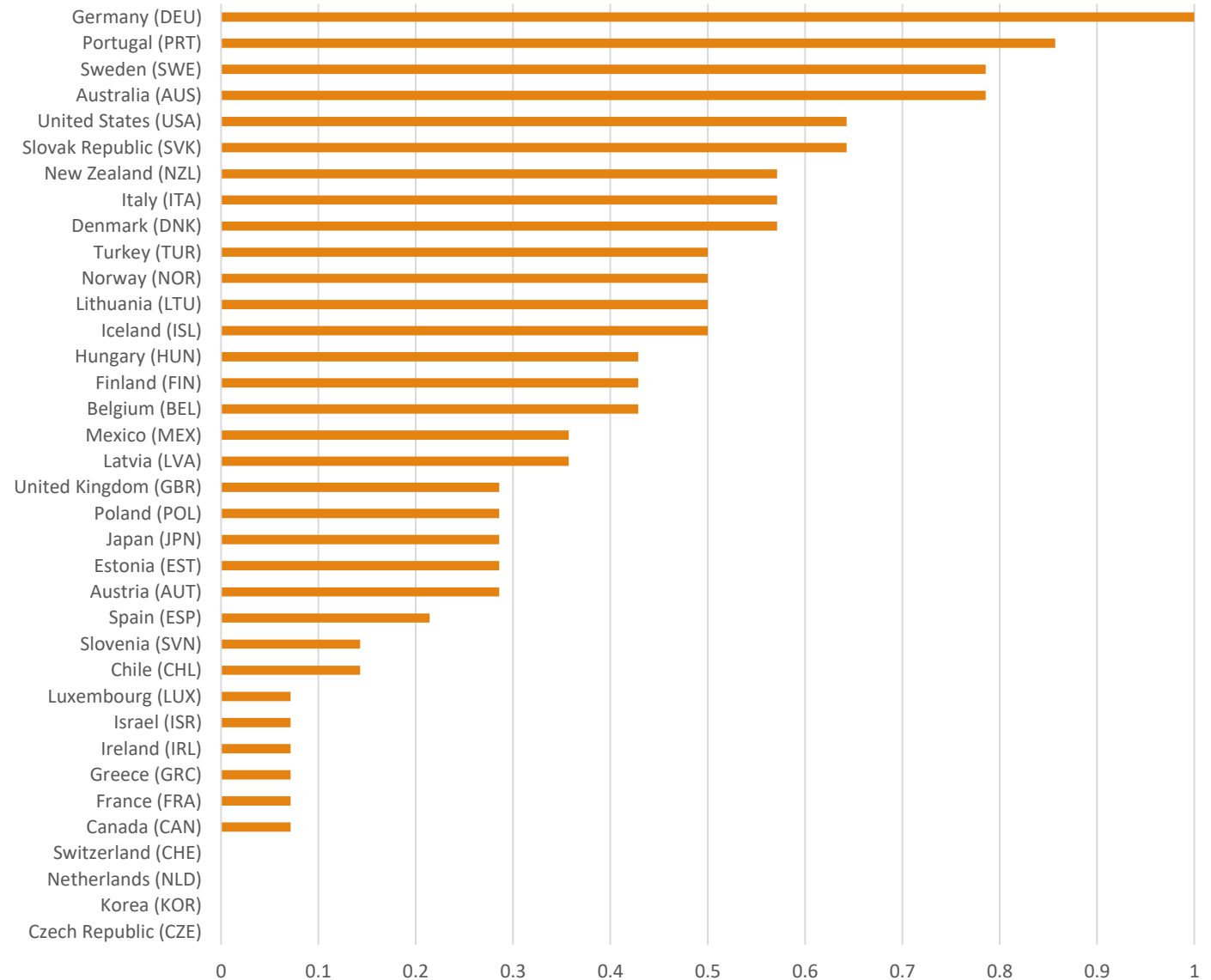
- Agile HR is basically based on strategic human resource management
- Constructive feedback, coaching, and employees' initiative with self-leadership are being more emphasized rather than performance appraisal and executive leadership.
- Employees under agile workforce development are encouraged to be a generalist rather than specialist

	Traditional HR	Agile HR
Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centralization - Closed selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decentralization - Open selection
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goal setting from top-down - Periodic evaluation - Lack of feedbacks and feedback-seeking behavior - Relative evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goal setting from bottom-up - Coaching and continuous feedback - Developmental evaluation
Reward and Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Person-based rewards - Monetary rewards and extrinsic motivation focus - Organizational mission-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team-based rewards - Intrinsic rewards related to autonomy, competency, and relatedness - Meaning of work and public value creation
Career Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vertical career path - Job rotation within a function - Organization-led career plan - Leadership program for few 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lateral career path - Flexible and broader rotation - Individual-led career plan - Self-leadership program for many
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General competency Training - Pre-programmed collective education - Lecture-centered and explicit knowledge-based training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social network-based real-time training - Project-based training

(Source: Adapted from Jung (2019), *Agile Company* p.206)

Challenges in Sustaining Workforce Agility in Governments (1): Rigidity of HRM Process

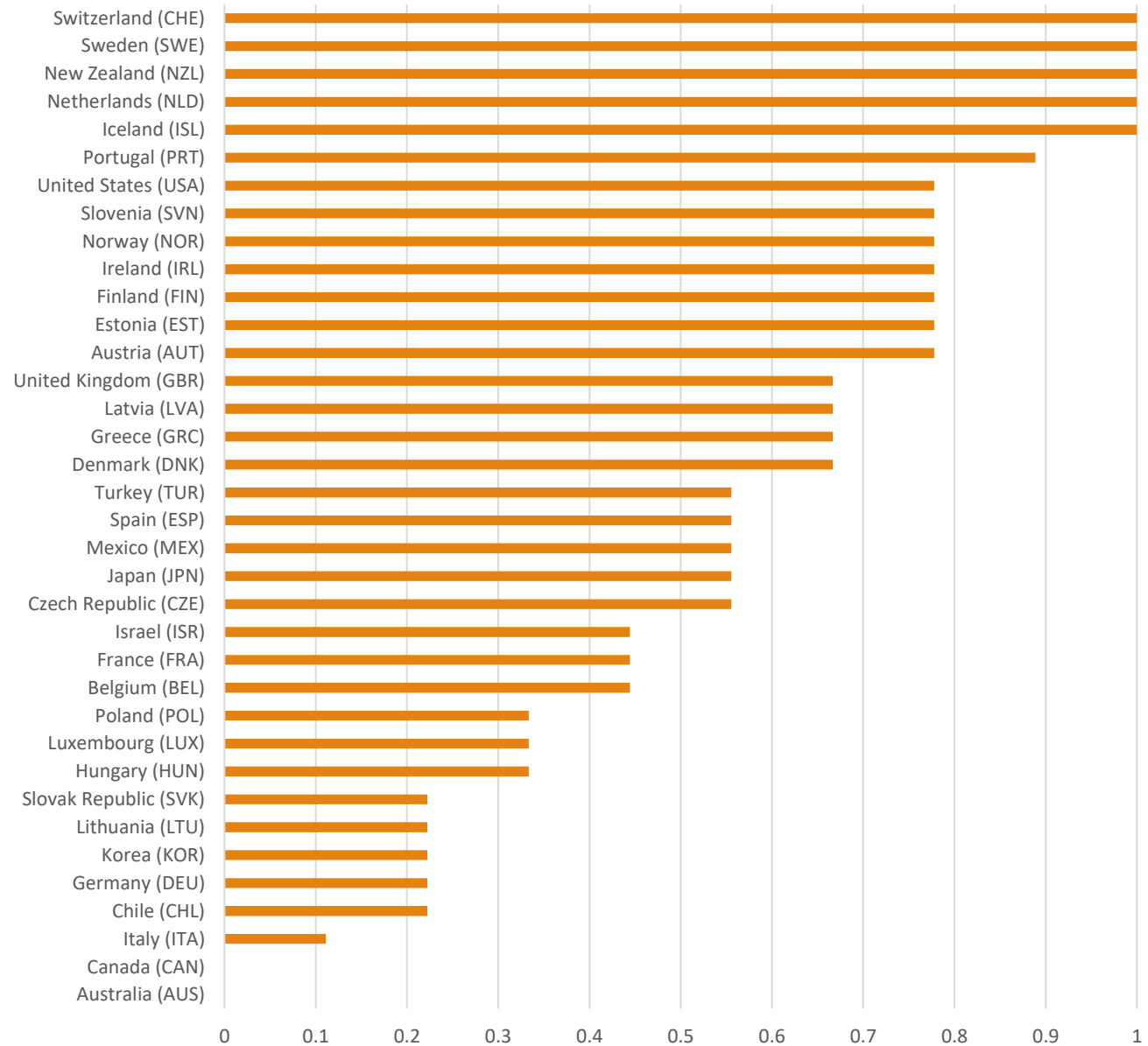
Levels of Decentralization in HRM Units among OECD Countries



Data Source: OECD (2016), "2016 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resource Management in Central/Federal Governments", OECD, https://qdd.oecd.org/subject.aspx?Subject=GOV_SHRM

Challenges in Sustaining Workforce Agility in Governments (2): Lack of Integrative HRM Policies

Levels of Integrative Employment Frameworks between Civil Servants and Others



Data Source: OECD (2016), "2016 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resource Management in Central/Federal Governments", OECD, https://qdd.oecd.org/subject.aspx?Subject=GOV_SHRM

Challenges in Sustaining Workforce Agility in Governments (3): Institutional Constraints

- 1. Legal Formalism:** “Excessive use of internal administrative processes to frame the work of the administration, so that more attention is paid to these processes than to underlying policy work, including HR policies.” (OECD, 2015: 76)
- 2. Hierarchical Structure:** “The pyramidal structure is in tension with the transversality advocated by agile methods since each department has to follow its own hierarchy. Furthermore, leaders in governments are reluctant towards the concept of scope flexibility as it is perceived as a loss of control on projects (Simonofski et al. 2018: 7)
- 3. Media and Political Pressure:** “Externally, concerns about both media and political pressure also contribute to creating a risk averse culture that is the natural default position. In many countries there is an extremely low public tolerance of failure, particularly in an environment of close scrutiny by the media and parliamentary opposition.” (Parker and Bartlett, 2018:19)

Creating Agile Workforce: Key Mechanism

- The Key mechanism to promote agility is to change the bureaucratic culture into one to encourage the competition of ideas, which requires innovation, creativity, and the willingness to take risks (OECD 2015).
- HRM practices can encourage and facilitate the development of these skills by soliciting creative solutions to workplace challenges and by involving employees in identifying improvements.
- The key mechanism to enhance creativity in a government organization is to imbue employees' intrinsic motivations defined as work engagement and establishing cultural competence related to employees' proactive behaviors

Major Findings from Empirical Studies

1. Leadership is important in enhancing innovative behaviors both at the team and individual levels (Ryu & Shim, 2020; Shim, Jung & Park. 2020; Shim, Park, Keum & Kim,2021).
1. Ethical climate and employees' public service values are important in imbuing employee engagement and team creativity (Kim, Shim & Park, 2017; Park & Shim, 2019; Shim, Park, Keum & Kim,2021)
2. Performance management and cutback management based on New Public Management (NPM) might not be a panacea in enhancing team innovative behaviors (Shim, Park & Jeong, 2019; Shim, Jung & Park. 2020).

Conclusion and Future Study Directions

1. Agility is one type of attribute that government should have to secure the effectiveness of the organization.
2. Steps for change should be carefully designed, and a common understanding of agility should be made before jumping into workforce agility.
3. More studies are needed to understand how the agile approach work within a bureaucratic organizational structure (Mergel, Gong & Bertot, 2018).

References

- Bhatta, N. M. K., & Thite, M. (2018). Agile approach to e-HRM project management. In *e-HRM* (pp. 57-72). Routledge.
- Gieles, H. & van der Meer, W. (2017). Talent management as the beating heart of an Agile organisation. <https://www.scrum.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/prowarenesswhitepaper-agile-talent-hannekegieles.pdf>
- Hong, K. P., & Kim, P. S. (2020). Building an Agile Government: Its Possibilities, Challenges, and New Tasks. *Halduskultuur*, 21(1), 4-21
- Kraft, C. G. F. M., & PMP, P. A. (2018). Agile project management on government finance projects. *The Journal of Government Financial Management*, 67(1), 12-18
- Mergel, I., Gong, Y., & Bertot, J. (2018). Agile government: Systematic literature review and future research.
- Moon, M. J. (2020). Fighting COVID-19 with agility, transparency, and participation: wicked policy problems and new governance challenges. *Public administration review*, 80(4), 651-656.

References

OECD (2015), Achieving Public Sector Agility at Times of Fiscal Consolidation, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264206267-en>

PwC Canada (2015). Agile government: Responding to citizens' changing needs. Canada's Public Policy Forum

Ryu, G. P & Shim, D. C (2020) Developmental leadership, skill development, and work engagement, *International Review of Public Administration*, 25:1, 64-79.

Shim, D. C., Park, H. H., & Jeong, S. Y. (2019). Government Employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior Amid Organizational Resource Decline: Can They Work More With Less?. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 39(2), 209-231.

Shim, D. C., Park, H. H., Keum, J., & Kim, S. (2021). Street-Level Bureaucrats' Work Engagement: Can Public Managers' Servant-Leader Orientation Make a Difference?. *Public Personnel Management*, 50(3), 307-326.

References

Shim, D. C., Park, H. H., Keum, J., & Kim, S. (2021). Street-Level Bureaucrats' Work Engagement: Can Public Managers' Servant-Leader Orientation Make a Difference?. *Public Personnel Management, 50*(3), 307-326.

Simonofski, A., Ayed, H., Vanderose, B., & Snoeck, M. (2019). From traditional to agile e-government service development: Starting from practitioners' challenges. In *Americas Conference on Information Systems, Boston* (pp. 1-10).

Winby, S., & Worley, C. G. (2014). Management processes for agility, speed, and innovation. *Organizational Dynamics, 43*(3), 225-234.

김선희, 심동철, & 박현희. (2018). 섬김의 리더십, 레드테이프, 공공봉사동기가 업무열의에 미치는 영향. *한국조직학회보, 15*(3), 29-61. (KCI)₩

김영은, 심동철 & 김상묵 (2018) 공공기관의 조직가치가 공공봉사동기와 업무열의에 미치는 영향. *한국행정학회보. 52*(4), 55-85. (KCI)

References

박정화, & 심동철. (2018). 윤리적 리더십이 공공조직 구성원의 업무열의에 미치는 영향: 절차적 공정성과 공공봉사동기의 매개효과를 중심으로. 한국인사행정학회보, 17(2), 59-91. (KCI)

정재상 (2019) 애자일 컴퍼니 클라우드나인 출판