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"YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT": EXAMINING EMPLOYEES' PREFERENCES AND JOB SATISFACTION IN AGILE TRANSFORMATIONS

Research Paper

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Abstract

Agile transformations cause fundamental changes to work designs. To better understand resistance to transformations, we shed light on employee preferences and the consequences of team and work organization changes for job satisfaction. Using the stated preference method "pairwise comparison-based preference measurement", we examine our hypothesis on job satisfaction in agile vs. traditional team and work organization. Furthermore, we relate job satisfaction to the gap between perceived and preferred forms of such organizations. In summary, we identified team organization as the most important dimension in agile transformations. For requirements engineering, the distance between employee preferences and the perceived status quo was particularly large. Further, we found evidence that a larger distance between team and work organization preferences and perceptions negatively influenced job satisfaction.

Keywords: Agile software development, Hybrid software development, Agile transformation, Job satisfaction.

1 Introduction

*Agile software development (ASD), which emphasizes intense collaboration and fast, continuous iterations of working software (Beck et al., 2001), has been implemented across all sorts of organizations and continuously gained popularity since its advent in the 1990s (Dybå & Dingsøy, 2009; West et al., 2010). Today, it is the de-facto standard for software development (Digital.ai, 2021). When agile methodologies are implemented in organizations and enterprises in so-called *agile transformations* – usually large-scale change programs introducing new tools, routines, and practices of working – essential characteristics of team and work organization are fundamentally changed in comparison to traditional software development practices (Dybå & Dingsøy, 2008; Nerur & Balijepally, 2007; Tripp & Armstrong, 2016).*

Previous research suggests that employees overall see agile transformations in a positive light due to perceived benefits such as increased effectiveness, quality, transparency, and satisfaction (Laanti et al., 2011). Nevertheless, several studies have indicated that *resistance* from the work force is one of the major challenges for agile transformations (Kalenda et al., 2018; Nerur et al., 2005; Mueller & Benlian, 2022). Thus, winning over employees to participate and support an agile transformation is one of its major success factors (Dikert et al., 2016).

Until now, we lack a clear understanding of how employees perceive agile transformations, which exact changes to more traditional forms of organizing employees resist, and why they do so. Partly, this is due to an imprecise and ambiguous definition of ASD that has regularly been named as an obstacle for ASD adoption by practitioners (VersionOne, 2021). Similarly, organizations struggle to identify those aspects of agile transformations that are most controversial among employees; we do not really know employees' *preferences*.

Understanding how changes to team and work organization impact and are perceived by the work force is crucial to allow organizations to follow the agile principle of inspecting and adapting to improve iteratively (Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001). Continuously integrating employee feedback into designing work processes and structures is fundamental to maintaining high employee involvement in the transformation and ultimately supporting its success (Dikert et al., 2016).

It is well-known that changing the work environment in organizational transformations influences job characteristics, and thereby employees' job satisfaction. As job satisfaction is one major predictor for turnover intention (Tett & Meyer, 1993) and job performance (Judge et al., 2001), it is imperative for organizations to maintain a high level of job satisfaction in the process of transforming team and work organization during agile transformations. Thus, we pose the two following research questions to gain an in-depth understanding of specific changes in agile transformations, employees' preferences, and the consequences of such transformations:

RQ1: Which characteristics of an agile team and work organization do employees perceive as important?

RQ2: How do agile transformations affect employee satisfaction?

To study our two research questions, we employed pairwise comparison-based preference measurement (PCPM; Schlereth et al., 2014; Scholz et al., 2010) to determine both (a) the importance that employees attach to certain dimensions of team and work organization that change in agile transformations and (b) the preference for traditional, hybrid, or agile forms of organization per dimension. Existing quantitative research mainly focuses on the effects of the use of agile practices on job satisfaction or fatigue (e.g., Tripp et al., 2016; Mueller & Benlian, 2022), but does not consider the preferences of employees. To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to measure the preferences of the employees and their willingness to work with agile methods. Thus, we depart from previous research, which mostly either focuses on the advantages of an organization and thereby neglects the employee perspective or investigates the negative effects without considering employees' preferences.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, we summarize prior research on ASD, agile transformations, and job satisfaction. We then describe our research design and model. Next, we present the findings of our analysis. Finally, we discuss our findings in terms of their relevance for both research and practice and point out the limitations of our work and future research directions.

2 Related Work

2.1 Agile Software Development and Agile Transformations

ASD is an umbrella term for a set of iterative software development approaches such as Scrum (Schwaber & Beedle, 2002) or eXtreme Programming (Mangalaraj et al., 2009) that have emerged over the past three decades. Initially, the methods have been developed to counteract the shortcomings of traditional, plan-driven software development, presenting an alternative to rigid up-front planning and top-down project management practices (Beck et al., 2001; Highsmith & Cockburn, 2001). Instead, ASD promotes light-weight processes and an ability to respond to changing requirements (Cohen et al., 2004).

ASD approaches are generally built around cross-functional, self-organizing, and autonomous teams (Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001). As such, they were initially introduced primarily in smaller organizations, often in single teams working on innovative projects (Boehm & Turner, 2003). Nowadays, ASD is regularly practiced in large organizations and in several teams (VersionOne, 2021) and is not limited to the software development domain (Niederman et al., 2018).

However, while agile approaches share principles and values (Beck et al., 2001), organizations implement ASD differently, drawing on many practices, techniques, and tools to varying degrees (Cao et al., 2009). This practice is also well-known as process or method “tailoring” – the change and adaptation of software development processes and methods to address the unique needs of the development context (Avison & Fitzgerald, 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 2006). As a result, the degree to which traditional ways of team and work organization are adjusted to a more agile way of working differs substantially between organizations. Often, the approach of combining traditional and agile aspects is called *hybrid*. Similar to agile approaches, there is no single hybrid approach to software development but numerous variations: organizations are free to choose which underlying assumptions, methods, practices, or roles they adopt from either traditional or agile concepts (Bick et al., 2018).

The adoption of ASD by a high number of individuals or teams is termed *large-scale agile* (Conboy & Carroll, 2019; Dikert et al., 2016). The exact definitions differ, but as an example, Dikert et al. (2016) have specified that the notion of large-scale applies to “software development organizations with 50 or more people or at least six teams”. When organizations engage in large-scale agile, leaving the pilot stage of implementing agile approaches behind and having a considerable number of teams adopting ASD practices, often tensions arise between the needs of agile teams and traditional organizational processes such as budgeting, resource allocation or certain HR practices (Conboy & Carroll, 2019; Dikert et al., 2016; Uludag et al., 2018). To reduce friction and enable agile teams to work effectively, organizations thus often engage in *agile transformations*, which are initiatives in which processes, structures, and roles can change considerably to implement ASD practices.

We know little about how employees perceive these transformation initiatives. We need a deeper understanding of the relationship between agile transformation and effects such as job satisfaction if we want to understand how organizations can successfully manage agile transformations.

2.2 Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

The concept of job satisfaction always has received considerable scholarly interest. Prior research on job satisfaction has differentiated between global job satisfaction (an employee’s overall satisfaction with their job as a whole) and facet job satisfaction (an employee’s satisfaction with a number of aspects of their job) (Dolbier et al., 2005). As one of the earliest studies on job satisfaction, Hoppock (1935) described the concept as a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances influencing an employees internal feeling of being content with her or his work. Similarly, Spector (1985) has identified nine facets that determine the degree to which an employee feels satisfied with her or his occupation. Those aspects include, for example, supervision, benefits, operating

procedures, co-workers, or the nature of work. This fundamental definition of job satisfaction as a multifaceted concept has not substantially changed in contemporary research, but there is little consensus on the optimal way to measure job satisfaction – researcher debate both the advantages of measuring global or facet job satisfaction and using single- or multi-item measurements (e.g., Dolbier et al., 2005; Nagy, 2002).

Prior research has identified several antecedents and outcomes of job satisfaction. For example, scholars have shown that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of an employee's turnover intention (Tett & Meyer, 1993) and quits (Lévy-Garboua et al., 2007). Further, a meta-analysis concluded that job satisfaction significantly influences job performance (Judge et al., 2001).

Regarding agile approaches, it has been shown that ASD positively influences work attributes such as psychological safety (Hennel & Rosenkranz, 2021), psychological empowerment (Koch & Schermuly, 2021) or team effectiveness (Lee & Xia, 2010; Recker et al., 2017). First existing studies also have found a positive relationship between agile project-management and software-development practices and employees' perceptions of job characteristics and job satisfaction (Tripp et al., 2016). Recent studies also have shown that agile practices can have adverse, resource-draining effects (Mueller & Benlian, 2022). However, to our knowledge, no study has investigated employees' preferences for ASD practices regarding agile transformations and their direct effect on job satisfaction.

2.3 Hypothesis Development

Agile transformations impact job characteristics that heavily change how employees experience their day-to-day work environment (Tripp et al., 2016; Mueller & Benlian, 2022). For example, ASD approaches emphasize cross-functional teams; thus, introducing ASD often influences team composition and, by that, the specific colleagues that employees cooperate and communicate with daily. Moreover, as self-organizing teams, ASD teams have substantially more responsibility for team success compared to traditional approaches where planning and steering are mostly run by and the responsibility of project managers or team leaders (Moe et al., 2008). Those changes can be fundamental and change an employee's job characteristics to a considerable degree. Accordingly, job characteristics differ for the three forms of organizing – traditional, hybrid, and agile.

Prior research has found that perceived job characteristics influence job satisfaction (James & Jones, 1980). If agile transformations substantially change team and work organization characteristics, this should impact job satisfaction. Simultaneously, every employee has individual preferences for team and work organization that ranges from traditional over hybrid to agile forms of organizing. These preferences are not necessarily in line with the form of organizing that employees experience in their work environment. Prior research in the field of person-job fit theory indicates that matching employee preferences to work environments influence job satisfaction (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). We build upon this insight and argue that the degree to which job characteristics do not fit preferences is crucial; that means that the negative influence on job satisfaction is higher if the status quo represents the least-preferred form of organizing (as opposed to the second-best alternative).. Thus, we hypothesize:

***H1:** Job satisfaction is negatively related to the distance between employee preferences on team and work organization and the perceived status quo.*

3 Methodology

3.1 Study Design and Sample

We employed the self-explicated stated preference method PCPM (Schlereth et al., 2014; Scholz et al., 2010), which stands for pairwise comparison-based preference measurement, to investigate our two research questions. This method has the advantage over other self-stated preference methods, such as

discrete choice experiments (e.g., Keller et al., 2021), that it enables the analysis of preferences for each participant separately. It also requires only a few decisions per participant and thus is cognitively easy to administer because of its static cyclic design, as described in Scholz et al. (2010). In line with discrete choice experiments, all decisions are trade-off based, i.e., they exhibit a high level of discrimination.

We have conducted our study in a German organization in the financial services industry currently undergoing an agile transformation. The agile transformation started around 2016 when pilot teams first started using ASD methods in the IT department. While teams participated voluntarily first and drove the transformation bottom-up, management became more interested over time and assumed a central role in determining the course of change initiatives. At the start of 2019, adopting ASD methods was mandatory and entailed extensive changes to organizational structures and processes beyond the IT department. The data collection took place in 2021 while the organization was in the process of establishing ASD methods in cross-functional teams across the entirety of product development units. Starting in 2018, the organization issued an annual agile acceptance survey in which they captured employees' perceptions of the current state of the transformation.

The participants were generally members of agile teams or worked close to agile teams in the focal organization. The web-based questionnaire was sent out to 498 employees, and a reminder was issued two weeks after the initial invitation. Participation was anonymous. In total, 176 participants completed the questionnaire, corresponding to a response rate of 35.7%.

3.2 Data Collection

Our questionnaire consisted of three major parts: in the first part, we assessed participants' preferences for team and work organization using PCPM (Schlereth et al., 2014; Scholz et al., 2010) as an instrument from marketing research to evaluate complex products. PCPM builds on systematically chosen paired comparisons to evaluate complex products or services. The appeal of this method is that it uses analytic hierarchy process techniques to infer the decision in paired comparisons that a participant has not evaluated. Thus, this method enables individual participants' preference analysis without exhausting the survey. We have chosen PCPM as an instrument to measure preferences in our study, as the multitude of characteristics makes the decision between complex products similar to a decision between traditional, hybrid, or agile work organization. Further, it allows us to gain insights into how different factors or dimensions of work organization influence employee preferences.

We measure five dimensions of team and work organization: team organization (the manner in which teams and managers share responsibilities for team-internal processes), task planning (the timeframe and flexibility of planned work items), division of tasks (the manner in which team members share responsibilities for individual work items), requirements engineering (the entity that represents the customer and influences prioritization) and team composition (the degree to which teams are cross-functional). For each dimension, participants could choose between three forms – a traditional, hybrid, or agile form of organizing. The dimensions were defined as follows: first, characterizations of ASD from both practitioners (e.g. (Beck et al., 2001; Digital.ai, 2021) and scientific studies (e.g. Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001; Dybå & Dingsøy, 2008; Nerur & Balijepally, 2007) were gathered and sorted by themes. The themes were refined and reorganized until we could form a set of dimensions and their three forms. The dimensions and forms were then validated by scholars well-versed in research on ASD and a group of practitioners. We integrated their feedback into a final version of the dimensions and forms. We paid close attention to the wording of the forms in this step: our goal was to describe the forms in as few words as possible to avoid a high dropout rate in the PCPM part of our survey. In this process, we eliminated a sixth dimension focusing on documentation practices from the final set because it was discussed controversially. Table 1 summarizes the resulting five dimensions and forms.

The preference measurement proceeded as follows: the participants performed an initial rating per dimension on a 11-point rating scale: they chose their most and least preferred alternative form (traditional, hybrid or agile), which were then assigned the highest and lowest rating. They then rated the remaining form relative to the most and least preferred form. In a second step, participants were

provided with ten pairwise comparisons: for each comparison, participants were asked to imagine a scenario in which they could choose between two projects. The project characteristics differed in one aspect: for each dimension in the pair, the most preferred form was chosen instead of the least preferred form. Following Scholz et al. (2010), participants had to decide on a 7-point scale, in which dimension the change from the least to the most preferred form was more important. Thereby, we reduced the number of pairwise comparisons by using the two static cyclic approaches, as proposed in Scholz et al. (2010). We also asked participants for their perception of the status quo: for each dimension, participants were asked to indicate which form of organizing was currently practiced in their work environment. We assessed the status quo for each of the five dimensions separately – as opposed to a single-item question on the work mode of the participant’s team – to account for differing modes of organizing per dimension since a team is seldomly fully practicing agile, hybrid, or traditional forms of organizing.

In the second part of our survey, we assessed participants job satisfaction and turnover intention. For job satisfaction, we chose a single-item measure ("How satisfied are you in your current job?") rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Prior research has concluded that a single-item measure provides adequate reliability and validity while avoiding survey fatigue and high dropout rates (Dolbier et al., 2005). Similarly, we used single "yes-no" questions to assess both internal and external turnover intention. Participants were allowed to provide no answer to the two questions.

In the third part of the survey, participants provided their age, gender, education level, employment form, organizational unit, and job title. We implemented and executed the questionnaire using the online survey platform DISE (Schlereth and Skiera 2012).

| | Traditional | Hybrid | Agile |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Team organization | Organized by the supervisor or project manager, no involvement of the team | Organized by the supervisor or project manager, with the involvement of the team | Organized by the team itself, with no involvement of supervisor or project manager |
| Task planning | Long-term planning, no changes anticipated | Long-term planning, changes anticipated | Short-term planning, changes anticipated |
| Division of tasks | Strictly separated tasks | Often shared responsibility for tasks | Always shared responsibility for tasks |
| Requirements engineering | Mainly from internal stakeholders | From both internal stakeholders and customer feedback | Mainly from customer feedback |
| Team composition | All team members with similar functional background | Mainly team members with similar functional background, some exceptions | Team members with very different functional backgrounds |

Table 1. Dimensions and forms of team and work organization

3.3 Data Analysis

We calculated the preferences and importance weights for the five dimensions of work and team organization, using the analytical hierarchy process, respectively eigenvector technique as described in Scholz et al. (2010). Then, we tested whether the importance weights per dimension differed depending on participants' age and job titles using t-tests.

Further, we used the detailed PCPM results to calculate two variables manually: First, we analyzed which form of organizing was chosen as the most preferred alternative on average. Therefore, we coded the traditional form as 1, hybrid as 2, and agile as 3. We calculated the mean of the most preferred form across dimensions, resulting in a value between 1 and 3. We refer to this variable hereafter as *BestMean*. Then, we assessed how the most preferred form of team and work organization (traditional, hybrid, or

agile) compares to the perceived status quo across all dimensions. We, therefore, calculated the distance (*DistanceMean*) between preference and status quo as a value between 0 (no distance; most preferred form is status quo) and 1 (highest distance; least preferred form is status quo).

We used these variables to answer our second research question and test our hypothesis. Specifically, we performed linear regressions to evaluate how the degree to which preferences and perceptions match (*DistanceMean*) relates to employees' job satisfaction.

4 Findings

4.1 Participant Descriptives

In the following, we present demographic statistics on our participants. Of all 176 participants, a majority is male (63.6 percent), 33.5 percent indicated that they are female, and 2.8 percent chose the option "other". Most participants were between 45 and 54 years old (46 percent), 23.3 percent between 35 and 44, 10.8 percent were 34 or younger, and 19.9 percent were 55 years old or older. Most participants were employed full-time (89.8 percent). Over two-thirds of the participants (70.5 percent) worked in the IT department, while all other business units ranged between 0.6 and 8 percent. Most participants (84.1 percent) are team members (software engineers, specialists, business analysts, and Scrum-specific roles). In comparison, 7 percent worked in some form of management role and 8.5 percent of participants chose the option "other".

4.2 Preferences on Team and Work Organization

The survey included two tasks to assess the validity of participants' preference measurement results. For the first task, we asked participants to pick one of four graphs depicting importance weight distributions between the five dimensions of team and work organization. While one of the graphs was based on the actual results of the PCPM, three other graphs were generated randomly. Overall, 62.5 percent of the participants chose the correct graph. Overall, this is in line with the hit rates of prior studies using PCPM and outperforms several alternative self-explicated approaches for preference measurement (Schlereth et al., 2014). For the second validation task, we presented the correct graph and participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale how well the graph reflected the importance they attach to each of the five dimensions. On average, participants rated the quality of the importance rates as comparatively high (mean: 5.03). The results of the second validation task also indicate that the importance weights are valid and very similar to validation task success in prior PCPM studies (Schlereth et al., 2014).

Table 2 presents the importance weights of the five dimensions of team and work organization as determined by PCPM. The importance weight values add up to 1 and can thus be interpreted as percentages. Overall, participants considered team organization to be by far the most important dimension (0.268), followed by requirements engineering (0.199). The two least important dimensions are the way tasks are divided between team members (0.176) and the degree to which teams are cross-functional (0.175).

| Dimension | Mean | Std. |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| Team organization | 0.268 | 0.136 |
| Task planning | 0.182 | 0.110 |
| Division of tasks | 0.176 | 0.102 |
| Requirements engineering | 0.199 | 0.136 |
| Team composition | 0.175 | 0.101 |

Table 2. Dimension importance weights

Table 3 summarizes the participants' preferences on the form in which team and work organization are implemented. The mean ratings range from 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest possible value.

| Dimension | Mean rating per form | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Traditional | Hybrid | Agile |
| Team organization | 1.26 | 8.09 | 8.72 |
| Task planning | 3.35 | 8.52 | 6.56 |
| Division of tasks | 5.15 | 7.84 | 5.08 |
| Requirements engineering | 2.65 | 9.81 | 6.49 |
| Team composition | 3.51 | 6.97 | 7.48 |

Table 3. Preferences for the form of team and work organization

Overall, there is no dimension in which a traditional form of organizing is preferred. Nevertheless, the other side of the spectrum – an agile form of organization – is only preferred in two dimensions: team organization (i.e., a team organizes itself, with no involvement of supervisors or project managers) and team composition (i.e., cross-functional teams). Participants, on average, preferred a hybrid approach for task planning, the division of tasks, and requirements engineering. Interestingly, a traditional form of dividing tasks (i.e., strictly separated tasks) is preferred over an agile approach (i.e., shared responsibilities), while the opposite is true for all other dimensions. For all dimensions besides the division of tasks, the distance between the rating for the most preferred and the second-most preferred form – in all four cases a hybrid and an agile form – is much smaller than the distance to the least preferred alternative (traditional form).

In Table 4, we present participants' perception of the status quo form of organizing that is currently practiced in their work environment. Overall, the preferences and perceptions of the status quo match for two dimensions: a hybrid approach is preferred and currently perceived as practiced for task planning and the division of tasks. Most participants indicated that their work environment is organized in a hybrid form for both team organization and team composition, while an agile approach is preferred on average. Nevertheless, the mismatch between the preferences and the perceived status quo is relatively small as only a very small percentage of participants indicated that their work environment currently follows a traditional approach as the least preferred form (6.3 and 13.1 percent). Concerning the dimension of requirements engineering, the mismatch is most profound. Most participants indicated that

they currently practice a traditional approach (60.2), which had an overall low preference rating. This mismatch is especially noteworthy since requirements engineering had the second-highest importance weight across the five dimensions (see Table 2).

| Dimension | Perception of status quo (in percent) | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| | Traditional | Hybrid | Agile |
| Team organization | 6.3 | 59.1 | 34.7 |
| Task planning | 11.9 | 55.1 | 33.0 |
| Division of tasks | 26.1 | 67.0 | 6.8 |
| Requirements engineering | 60.2 | 38.1 | 1.7 |
| Team composition | 13.1 | 48.3 | 38.6 |

Table 4. Perceptions of the status quo

4.3 Hypothesis Testing for Effects of Preferences on Job Satisfaction

We created and inspected a scatterplot to ensure that a linear relationship between our dependent and independent variables exists.

We then tested our hypothesis for the second research question with linear regression. We assessed the influence of our independent variable (DistanceMean) on job satisfaction. Since our sample size is large ($n = 176$), we do not need to test for normality. Table 5 summarizes the results of our analysis.

| Variable | Unstand. | Stand. | Std. |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|
| Constant | 5.74*** | | |
| DistanceMean | -0.98* | -0.155* | 0.215 |
| | | | |
| R ² | 0.024 | | |
| Corrected R ² | 0.019 | | |
| F (df=2, 175) | 4.31* | | |
| *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001 | | | |

Table 5. Influence on job satisfaction

Overall, the regression was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.02$, $F(2, 175) = 4.31$, $p = 0.04$). We found a significant negative relationship between DistanceMean and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.98$, $p = 0.039$). The results indicate that a larger distance between the preferred and perceived characteristics of team and work organization leads to lower job satisfaction. Thus, H1 is supported.

5 Discussion

Our objective in this study has been to shed light on changing team and work characteristics in agile transformations, employees' perception of these changes, and their influence on job satisfaction. Using PCPM as a well-established instrument for evaluating complex products helped us make the concept of agile transformations more tangible by explicitly formulating five dimensions related to agile approaches' impact on work design. The research process resulted in both importance weights for our five dimensions of team and work organization and average preferences for traditional, hybrid, or agile forms of organizing.

Concerning our first research question, we identified team organization as the most important dimension. Combined with the high preference rating for both a hybrid and an agile form of team organization, we conclude that employees attach great importance to attaining a degree of self-organization and a greater say in planning the team's work. For the dimension of team composition, we find a similar picture. Nevertheless, while employees generally prefer a cross-functional team, this aspect is less relevant. In the remaining three dimensions – task planning, division of work, and requirements engineering – the agile form of organizing is overall rated lower than the hybrid model. Thus, we note that an agile transformation may be more popular among employees if some compromises between traditional and agile forms of organizing – hybrid approaches – are implemented regarding these three dimensions. Hybrid approaches appear to be the least controversial options as they are always rated as the best or (close) second-best option. As such, organizations could start their agile transformations by adopting hybrid approaches first and adapting as they see fit, because the choice of a hybrid form of organizing, initially at least, would put off employees less that prefer either an agile or a traditional approach.

Concerning our second research question, we could find supporting evidence that a higher distance between employee preferences and perceptions of team and work organization leads to lower levels of job satisfaction. This finding particularly serves as a reminder for organizations that they may want to take their employees feedback on team and work organization into consideration and adjusting the forms of organizing according to the work force's preferences. In this way, organizations can increase job satisfaction and respective related positive outcomes such as a reduced turnover rate or higher performance.

In this paper, we have analyzed employees' preferences for team and work organization in agile transformations and their effect on job satisfaction. This study represents the first part of a larger research projects. Moving on from here, we intend to shed light on the relationship between a general preference for agile, hybrid, or traditional forms of organizing and job satisfaction for organizations in the midst of an agile transformation. Our analysis of the status quo suggests that the focal organization does not exclusively use agile forms of organizing yet. This could be a sign that the organizational change is not progressing as fast or rigorously as proponents of agile forms of organizing might prefer. We found further evidence on this claim in the comments that participants could enter at the end of the survey. Some comments stated that while participants generally preferred agile forms of organizing, they did not like the form of ASD that is practiced in their organization. Further research into this dynamic may provide new insights on how to engage especially those employees that support agile transformation and may thus act as drivers for change.

Currently, our study is limited by the fact that we only have data on employee preferences at a single point in time. Our analysis would benefit greatly from a longitudinal study that assesses how preferences and perceptions of the status quo change over time. Additionally, our data source is a single organization. While this allows us to control for organization-specific factors such as the industry, business model, or market segment, our hypothesis and PCPM results must be tested in additional contexts.

Further, a qualitative research approach could enrich our findings and help us understand, on the one hand, why and in which time frame the focal organization did change the form of organizing, and on the other hand, why employees perceive and prefer the forms of organizing as they do.

6 Conclusion

This study ought to deepen our understanding of how agile transformations influence an organization's workforce. Notably, we wanted to generate a more fine-granular view of the introduction of ASD methodologies and the importance that employees attach to certain aspects of working agile. We did so by successfully adopting an instrument from marketing research and translating it for our context – not the evaluation of products or services, but of team and work organization and its dimensions. Thereby, we answered our first research question and created an early warning system for organizations that currently undergo an agile transformation: our tool can be used to sense employee resistance and scepticism early on so that organizations can react in a timely and targeted manner. In a second step, we built upon the PCPM results to evaluate how perceptions and preferences of team and work organization in agile transformations influences job satisfaction. Further research is necessary to enrich our findings and test our hypothesis in different contexts.

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