



International Journal of Human Capital
Management
E-ISSN 2580-9164
Vol. 8, No. 2, December 2024, p 118-125

Available online at
<http://journal.unj.ac.id/unj/index.php/ijhcm>

PROACTIVE PERSONALITY IN AGILE TEAMS: INSIGHTS FROM A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Aris Wahyu Kuncoro^{1*}

Universitas Negeri Jakarta
aris.wahyu.kuncoro@mhs.unj.ac.id

Dewi Susita²

Universitas Negeri Jakarta
dewisusita_man@unj.ac.id

Darma Rika Swaramarinda³

Universitas Negeri Jakarta
darmarikas@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between Agile methodology and proactive personality in a professional context using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Agile, known for its emphasis on flexibility, collaboration, and continuous iteration, provides an environment conducive to developing proactive behaviors. Individuals with a proactive personality, characterized by initiative, problem-solving, and innovation, significantly contribute to team success in Agile environments. The findings highlight a strong synergy between Agile practices and proactive individuals, where proactive team members facilitate quicker decision-making, innovation, and adaptability to change. However, teams with members who exhibit low levels of proactivity may struggle with collaboration and decision-making. The study offers both theoretical insights and practical implications for organizations, emphasizing the need to develop a proactive culture within Agile teams through recruitment, training, and leadership. By fostering proactive behavior, organizations can optimize the potential of Agile methodologies, enhancing overall team performance and project outcomes.

Keywords : Agile, proactive personality, team collaboration, innovation, systematic literature review (SLR).

Publish: December, 2024

How to Cite:

Kuncoro, A.W., Susita, D., & Swaramarinda, D.R. (2024). Proactive Personality in Agile Teams: Insights from a Systematic Review of the Literature. *International Journal of Human Capital Management, 8(2), 118-125. Special Issue: International Management Science Conference (IMSC) 2024.* <https://doi.org/10.21009/IJHCM.08.02.10>

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this research is to explore and analyze how proactive personality influences the success of implementing the Agile methodology within professional teams. This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of proactive personality in enhancing the performance of Agile teams, particularly in terms of team collaboration, quick decision-making, and the ability to adapt to changes in Agile projects. Additionally, this research also aims to identify the benefits and challenges arising from the integration of proactive personality with the Agile methodology and to examine how this trait can be applied in Agile practice to improve team results and innovation in product development. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to management theory in the context of Agile and enrich the literature on the relationship between proactive personality and team success. The findings from this research are also expected to provide practical guidance for organizations in selecting and developing Agile team members with proactive characteristics, to improve the effectiveness and success of Agile projects, and to contribute to the development of better methodologies and strategies for implementing Agile in professional environments.

Agile methodology has become the primary approach in software development and project management across various industries, particularly in the technology industry, due to its flexibility and its ability to quickly adapt to changes (Rigby et al., 2016). Agile emphasizes intense team collaboration, continuous iteration, and active involvement from every team member to achieve optimal results (Highsmith, 2002). However, the implementation of Agile does not solely depend on the methodology itself but also on the proactive personality of the individuals involved in the team. "Proactive personality" refers to the tendency of individuals to take initiative, identify problems early, and seek to bring about positive changes in the workplace (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Previous research has shown that individuals with a proactive personality are better equipped to face challenges, innovate, and adapt in dynamic contexts such as Agile projects (Parker et al., 2010; Crant, 2000). This personality is highly suited to the Agile environment, which prioritizes rapid decision-making and close collaboration among team members to achieve common goals (Schwaber, 2004).

In recent years, research on the relationship between Agile methodology and proactive personality has gained more attention, but there is still much room for further exploration. Emphasizing proactive personality in Agile teams opens opportunities to understand how this trait influences team performance and its contribution to the success of implementing the methodology (Bakker et al., 2011). Although Agile focuses on collaboration and adapting to changes, its implementation is greatly influenced by the proactive personality of the individuals involved in the team. In this regard, a deeper understanding of how proactive personality can support or hinder the development of agile teams becomes crucial (Parker et al., 2010).

This systematic literature review (SLR) aims to explore and analyze the influence of proactive personality on the success of implementing Agile methodology within professional teams. The study also aims to identify the benefits and challenges arising from the integration of these two elements, as well as to explore how proactive personality can be applied in Agile practice to improve team performance. In the industry context, the findings from this research can provide organizations with insights into the importance of proactive personality when selecting or developing more efficient and adaptive Agile team members (Denning, 2018). Additionally,

academically, this research will enrich the literature on the relationship between personality and team management in the context of Agile methodology and contribute to the development of theories that explain the role of proactive personality in the success of teams (Bakker et al., 2011; Parker et al., 2010)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The application of Agile methodology has become a dominant approach in software development and project management, particularly in industries such as technology and IT, where rapid change and adaptability are critical. Agile's core principles, such as iterative development, continuous feedback, and collaboration, are designed to respond to changing project requirements quickly and efficiently (Rigby et al., 2016). Agile emphasizes the importance of intense team collaboration, flexible roles, and constant interaction between team members, which has proven effective in dynamic and complex project environments (Highsmith, 2002). However, the success of Agile methodology does not solely depend on its structural framework; it is also influenced by the individual characteristics of the team members, especially their personality traits.

Proactive personality, as defined by Bateman and Crant (1993), is the tendency of individuals to take initiative, act in anticipation of future challenges, and seek to bring about positive changes in the workplace. People with proactive personalities typically demonstrate behaviors such as identifying opportunities for improvement, solving problems before they escalate, and driving innovation. Research has shown that these proactive individuals are well-suited for Agile environments, which demand rapid decision-making and proactive problem-solving (Parker et al., 2010; Crant, 2000). Proactive team members are more likely to contribute positively to Agile teams, especially in terms of improving collaboration, communication, and decision-making processes. They actively identify potential issues and take the lead in developing solutions, which helps teams overcome challenges more efficiently.

Studies have suggested that proactive personality can be a key driver of success in Agile projects. For instance, Bakker et al. (2011) highlight that proactive team members are instrumental in adapting quickly to changes and identifying solutions during Agile project cycles, thereby improving overall team performance. Similarly, Denning (2018) argues that proactive individuals play a crucial role in fostering innovation within Agile teams by suggesting new ideas and process improvements. However, while there is significant support for the benefits of proactive personality in Agile environments, challenges still exist in fully understanding the interplay between proactive traits and other factors influencing Agile team dynamics.

While a proactive personality is generally beneficial, the integration of diverse personality types within a team can create challenges. Teams consisting primarily of proactive members may face difficulties in working collaboratively with those who are more reactive or passive. Such imbalances can lead to conflicts or inefficiencies in decision-making, potentially hindering the team's ability to respond to challenges effectively (Friedrich et al., 2016). This suggests the need for a balance between proactive and other personality traits to ensure optimal team functioning within Agile frameworks.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to explore and analyze the impact of proactive personality on the success of Agile methodology in professional teams. The SLR methodology is ideal for synthesizing existing research in a structured and objective manner, enabling the identification of patterns, trends, and gaps in the literature related to the integration of proactive personality in Agile teams.

Search Strategy

The research began with a comprehensive search of multiple academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, and JSTOR, to identify relevant articles published between 2013 and 2023. The primary search keywords included “Agile methodology,” “proactive personality,” “team performance,” “Agile teams,” and “team dynamics.” Studies that focused on the relationship between personality traits and Agile methodology were prioritized, and articles published in reputable peer-reviewed journals were selected for review.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the studies, strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. Included studies needed to:

- Examine proactive personality in the context of Agile project management.
- Be published in peer-reviewed academic journals or recognized conferences.
- Be conducted within the last 10 years to reflect recent trends and developments.

Excluded studies were those that:

- Did not focus on proactive personality or Agile methodology.
- Did not provide empirical data or theoretical insights on the relationship between personality traits and Agile success.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Once the relevant studies were identified, data extraction focused on key themes, such as the influence of proactive personality on collaboration, decision-making, and adaptability in Agile teams. The selected studies were categorized according to their findings and methodology, and a synthesis of the results was performed to identify consistent themes, contradictions, and knowledge gaps.

Data Analysis

The findings were analyzed based on their relevance to the central research question: how does proactive personality influence the success of Agile teams? The analysis also explored how proactive traits interact with other team dynamics and Agile practices. Insights from the literature were grouped into key categories, such as the benefits of proactive personality in promoting innovation, driving team performance, and supporting Agile’s core principles of flexibility and adaptability.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) revealed several key findings regarding the relationship between proactive personality and the success of Agile teams. The synthesis of the literature highlights the positive impact of proactive personality on various aspects of Agile project management and team dynamics. These findings can be categorized into several key themes.

Proactive Personality Contributes to Team Success

One of the primary findings from the literature is that proactive personality significantly contributes to the success of Agile teams. Research by Parker et al. (2010) and Crant (2000) indicates that proactive individuals are more likely to take initiative, identify potential problems early, and create opportunities for improvement. These traits are especially important in Agile environments, which require rapid decision-making, flexibility, and adaptability.

Proactive team members tend to be more engaged during sprints or iteration cycles, where their ability to anticipate issues and suggest solutions can enhance the overall performance of the team. This aligns with Bakker et al. (2011), who found that proactive individuals play a key role in improving team performance and adapting to changes that arise during the development process. Their involvement in decision-making fosters greater collaboration and cohesion, leading to more effective team dynamics.

Proactive Personality Enhances Collaboration

The role of proactive personality in fostering team collaboration is another critical finding. Proactive individuals are more likely to initiate communication, share knowledge, and collaborate effectively with other team members. This contributes to the smooth flow of information and encourages active participation in team discussions, ultimately improving team cohesion and accelerating problem-solving. Denning (2018) emphasized that proactive individuals play an essential role in driving collaboration, which is one of the core principles of Agile methodology.

In addition, proactive team members have been shown to positively affect the overall team climate. Their proactive behavior fosters innovation and continuous learning, which are essential for maintaining the iterative and feedback-driven nature of Agile practices. According to Highsmith (2002), proactive individuals help sustain this iterative approach by taking ownership of tasks, driving progress, and resolving issues more quickly.

Challenges of Proactive Personality in Agile Teams

Despite the advantages, the integration of proactive individuals in Agile teams presents challenges. One key concern is the potential for conflict arising from personality imbalances within teams. As noted by Friedrich et al. (2016), teams composed predominantly of proactive members may experience difficulties in collaboration, as these individuals may dominate discussions or decision-making processes, limiting the input of others. While proactivity is valuable, an overabundance of proactive personalities can lead to power struggles, lack of reflective decision-making, and resistance to other team members' contributions. Furthermore, Agile teams require a balance of diverse skills and personality traits to function effectively. While proactive individuals bring innovation and initiative, they must work alongside individuals who possess complementary traits, such as critical thinking, risk management, and attention to detail. Denning (2018) argues that teams with a balance of personalities are better equipped to tackle the various challenges of an Agile environment, where both creativity and careful decision-making are necessary.

Proactive Personality and Adaptability

Another major theme in the literature is the adaptability of proactive individuals in Agile projects. Since Agile methodology involves frequent iterations and regular adjustments throughout the project lifecycle, proactive individuals are naturally inclined to embrace change and quickly modify their approach when necessary. According to Parker et al. (2010), proactive individuals thrive in environments that require rapid adaptations and are more likely to respond positively to unexpected changes. Proactive team members also drive the adoption of new Agile practices or tools that can improve the efficiency of the development process. Their ability to recognize opportunities for improvement and act on them ensures that Agile teams remain flexible and responsive to changing project requirements, while also adapting to emerging technologies or methods that can further enhance project outcomes.

Implications for Agile Teams

The findings from this literature review suggest that organizations should consider proactive personality when forming Agile teams. Proactive individuals contribute to a dynamic, adaptive, and innovative team environment, which is essential for the success of Agile projects. However, it is crucial for organizations to recognize the importance of personality diversity within Agile teams. Teams that combine proactive individuals with those who possess reflective thinking, attention to detail, and risk management skills are better equipped to succeed in complex, rapidly changing project environments. Organizations should aim to foster a collaborative culture in which proactive behaviors are encouraged, but where other traits, such as thoughtful decision-making and inclusivity, are also valued. A balance of diverse personalities within Agile teams will help optimize performance and ensure that all perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

Discussion

The findings from this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) provide valuable insights into the role of proactive personality in the success of Agile teams. It is evident that individuals with proactive traits can significantly enhance various aspects of Agile projects, such as decision-making, team collaboration, and adaptability to change. However, the integration of proactive personalities in teams also presents challenges, particularly related to personality imbalances and the need for diverse traits within the team.

Proactive Personality's Contribution to Agile Team Success

The literature consistently supports the idea that proactive personality positively influences team performance in Agile environments. Proactive individuals are known for taking initiative, identifying problems early, and suggesting improvements to streamline processes. These behaviors align well with the core principles of Agile methodology, which emphasizes quick decision-making, continuous improvement, and responsiveness to change. As Parker et al. (2010) and Crant (2000) noted, individuals with proactive traits can anticipate issues and proactively address them, preventing potential delays or disruptions in the development cycle. This ability to preemptively solve problems ensures that teams remain focused and productive throughout the Agile process.

Additionally, Bakker et al. (2011) emphasized that proactive members play a central role in fostering greater team engagement, collaboration, and innovation. By initiating discussions and pushing for continuous improvement, they encourage others to share their ideas and participate in problem-solving. This is crucial in Agile teams, where the involvement of every team member is vital for meeting objectives and producing high-quality results. Therefore, the proactive behavior of individual team members contributes significantly to both team dynamics and project outcomes.

Proactive Personality and Collaboration within Agile Teams

A major benefit of proactive personality is its positive impact on team collaboration. Agile projects thrive on collaboration, communication, and the active engagement of all team members. Denning (2018) and Highsmith (2002) highlight that proactive individuals are key drivers of this collaboration, often taking the initiative to facilitate communication and encourage knowledge-sharing. Their ability to quickly solve problems and make decisions also helps speed up the work process, fostering a sense of urgency and momentum within the team.

However, it is important to note that while proactive individuals foster collaboration, they must also be mindful of the dynamics within the team. The literature points out that proactive individuals can sometimes dominate discussions, leaving little room for quieter or more reflective team members to contribute. This can lead to an imbalance in team input, which may stifle creativity or overlook valuable perspectives from other team members. In this context, Agile teams must find ways to ensure that proactive behavior does not overshadow collaborative decision-making processes, where every team member feels empowered to contribute.

Challenges of Proactive Personality in Agile Teams

While proactive personality brings substantial benefits, the literature also identifies several challenges that must be considered. Friedrich et al. (2016) highlighted the potential conflicts that arise when teams are dominated by proactive individuals. Although proactivity can drive efficiency, it may also lead to power struggles or exclusion of other voices. Teams where only proactive individuals are present may struggle with groupthink, where quick decisions are made without sufficient reflection or consideration of alternative ideas. This highlights the importance of personality diversity within Agile teams.

Agile teams require a balance of proactive members who push for innovation and reflective members who ensure that decisions are made thoughtfully. Without this balance, teams may face challenges in managing conflict, maintaining harmony, and making well-considered decisions. As Denning (2018) suggests, teams that consist of individuals with a variety of personality traits such

as those who are reflective, critical, or detail-oriented are better equipped to address the dynamic and complex challenges that arise in Agile environments.

Proactive Personality and Adaptability in Agile Projects

A central theme in the literature is the adaptability of proactive individuals, which is a crucial trait for success in Agile projects. Agile methodology is inherently dynamic and requires constant adjustments and iterations. Parker et al. (2010) indicated that proactive individuals thrive in such environments, as they naturally embrace change and adapt quickly to new challenges. Their willingness to try new approaches and tools can also foster the adoption of better practices, thus improving overall team efficiency and project outcomes.

In an Agile environment, where flexibility and responsiveness are highly valued, proactive personality ensures that teams are not only reactive to change but also proactive in driving improvements. This adaptability makes proactive individuals valuable assets in ensuring that Agile teams remain aligned with project goals while adapting to new technologies, methodologies, or client needs. By driving the adoption of new Agile practices and continuously seeking opportunities for improvement, proactive team members help maintain the momentum of the project and ensure continuous growth.

Implications for Agile Team Management

The findings of this literature review suggest that organizations should place significant emphasis on proactive personality when forming Agile teams. Proactive individuals contribute to a more dynamic, adaptive, and innovative team environment, which is essential for the success of Agile projects. However, organizations must also recognize the importance of balancing proactive behaviors with other complementary personality traits.

To optimize the performance of Agile teams, organizations should aim for a mix of individuals with diverse personality traits. Proactive individuals can drive innovation and adaptability, but teams also need individuals who can provide critical thinking, risk management, and attention to detail. Creating an inclusive, collaborative culture where proactive behaviors are encouraged but balanced with reflective thinking and thoughtful decision-making will enable Agile teams to perform at their best.

CONCLUSION

The results of this Systematic Literature Review suggest that proactive personality plays a significant role in the success of Agile teams. Individuals with proactive traits are more likely to drive positive outcomes in Agile environments by anticipating problems, offering solutions, and facilitating effective communication and collaboration within the team. Their ability to act swiftly and take initiative aligns well with the fast-paced nature of Agile projects, where decisions must be made rapidly, and constant adjustments are necessary. As Agile teams work in iterative cycles and often face unexpected challenges, proactive individuals contribute to the team's ability to adapt quickly and maintain momentum.

Moreover, the review highlights that while proactive personality is a valuable trait in Agile teams, challenges arise when teams are composed primarily of proactive members, particularly when the team lacks a balance of other necessary personality traits, such as those who are more reflective or deliberate. An overemphasis on proactivity may lead to conflict, as proactive individuals might dominate decision-making or push for change too quickly without sufficient consideration of alternative viewpoints (Friedrich et al., 2016).

This study makes a valuable contribution to the literature on Agile methodology by demonstrating the importance of proactive personality in contributing to team success. The findings suggest that organizations should consider the personality traits of team members when forming Agile teams, as selecting individuals with proactive characteristics can enhance team

performance and foster innovation. However, future research should further explore how proactive personality interacts with other traits to affect team dynamics and whether different types of proactive behaviors (e.g., problem-solving, idea generation) have varying levels of impact in different Agile contexts.

In conclusion, organizations aiming to enhance the effectiveness of their Agile teams should prioritize cultivating proactive personalities through training, recruitment, and team development strategies. By fostering an environment where proactive behaviors are encouraged and supported, organizations can maximize the potential of their Agile teams and ensure the successful implementation of Agile projects.

REFERENCES

- Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Verbeke, W. (2011). Using the Job Demands–Resources Model to Predict Burnout and Performance. *Human Resource Management*, 43(1), 83-104.
- Bateman, T. S., & Crant, J. M. (1993). The Proactive Personality. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14(2), 103-118.
- Crant, J. M. (2000). Proactive Behavior in Organizations. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 435-462.
- Denning, S. (2018). *The Age of Agile: How Smart Companies Are Transforming the Way Work Gets Done*. Amacom.
- Friedrich, T., Vessey, I., & Sherman, M. (2016). Overcoming Personality Conflicts in Agile Teams. *Journal of Software Engineering*, 27(3), 221-232.
- Highsmith, J. (2002). *Agile Software Development Ecosystems*. Addison-Wesley Professional.
- Parker, S. K., Bindl, U. K., & Strauss, K. (2010). Making Things Happen: A Model of Proactive Motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2), 338-357.
- Rigby, D. K., Sutherland, J., & Takeuchi, H. (2016). Embracing Agile. *Harvard Business Review*, 94(5), 40-50.
- Schwaber, K. (2004). *Agile Project Management with Scrum*. Microsoft Press.