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ABSTRACT NO. 27

Balancing Innovation Demands and Workforce Sustainability: Rethinking Agile in High-Pressure Tech Environments

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ABSTRACT

Agile frameworks are widely adopted in modern software development due to their promise of speed, adaptability, and team collaboration. However, in the African tech context, especially in high-growth environments, the intense pressure to deliver breakthrough innovations can sometimes lead to unintended consequences for workforce well-being. This conceptual paper draws insights from the experience of Njuguna Mureithi, a Kenyan developer who led a high-stakes project and later transitioned to building his own tech company. Using this experience, the paper explores how Agile practices, when applied under pressure, can fall short of supporting both innovation and human sustainability. It proposes five enhancements—Human-Centered Velocity, Leadership Inclusion Reviews, Collaborative Planning Circles, Workload Equity Mapping, and Agile Value Reflection—to help tech firms innovate responsibly while sustaining their talent.

Key Words:

Balancing Innovation Demands, Workforce Sustainability and High-Pressure Tech Environments

