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TRADITIONAL, AGILE, OR HYBRID PROJECT MANAGEMENT? EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM A SINGLE FMCG ENTERPRISE

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The article examines perceived changes and current characteristics of project management practices in a selected large fast-moving-consumer-goods (FMCG) manufacturing enterprise. The study covers the period 2019-2024 and analyses whether contemporary project management practices are closer to traditional, agile, or hybrid project management. Particular attention is paid to the three dimensions of the project management triangle: schedule, scope, and cost. The study adopted an exploratory, single-enterprise research design and treated the organization in question as an information-rich case. The research was based on a literature review, secondary data analysis, a pilot study, and a survey conducted among experienced employees involved in project work. The final research sample included 31 respondents with at least five years of project experience. Their responses represented more than 460 cumulative project participations. The findings indicate that project management practices in the analysed enterprise combine traditional and agile elements. The strongest movement toward agile practices was observed in the schedule dimension, especially in more flexible meeting organization, real-time problem solving, and increasing team autonomy. In the scope dimension, stable success criteria, documentation, and milestones coexist with flexible roles and end-user involvement. The cost dimension remains the most traditional, as budgets are usually defined and controlled within specific expenditure categories. The results suggest that project management in the analysed enterprise is developing toward a selective hybrid model, adjusted to project type, operational context, and organizational requirements.

Keywords: cost, schedule, project management, scope, FMCG, hybrid project management, project management trends, project management triangle, agile, waterfall

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1. INTRODUCTION

Modern enterprises must continuously adapt to changing market demands. This applies to micro, small, medium, and large companies alike. Businesses seeking to remain competitive must constantly develop strategies to effectively manage innovations, including product-, process-, organizational-, and marketing innovations (Baez Palencia et al., 2023). Innovation has been widely discussed by scholars over the past century, and its effective use is consistently associated with strengthening a company's market competitiveness (Rammer, 2023). In practice, the implementation of innovation within companies is often carried out through projects. In recent years, the development of manufacturing enterprises has accelerated, a trend closely linked to the growing number of projects undertaken and their increasing complexity and interdependencies.

Non-standard activities within companies are typically executed through projects. For this reason, researchers pay particular attention to the relationship between project success factors and project management approaches described in the literature. In the context of managing multiple projects, traditional approaches are often associated with competency and skills management, as well as overall coordination. In contrast, agile management is more strongly associated with flexibility and iterative cycles (Riesener et al., 2023).

The aim of this article is to analyse perceived trends in project management practices between 2019 and 2024 and to identify the current characteristics of project management in a single large fast-moving-consumer-goods (FMCG) enterprise. The analysis is based on a survey conducted among employees with at least five years of project experience. The article also discusses selected practical recommendations based on the respondents' cumulative project experience, covering more than 460 reported project participations. The study does not aim to provide statistically representative conclusions for the entire FMCG sector. Instead, it offers an exploratory, single-enterprise empirical insight into how traditional and agile project management practices coexist in an operationally intensive organizational context.

Although the literature extensively discusses the differences between traditional and agile project management, less attention has been paid to how these approaches are combined in practice within manufacturing companies, especially in the FMCG sector. This sector is characterized by high operational intensity, strict quality requirements, cost pressure, and the need to implement multiple initiatives simultaneously. Therefore, understanding how project management methods evolve in such an environment may provide useful insights for both researchers and practitioners.

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- What perceived changes in project management practices occurred between 2019 and 2024 in the analysed FMCG enterprise?
- How are current project management practices in this enterprise reflected in the schedule, scope, and cost dimensions of the project management triangle?

Answering these questions allows for a better understanding of how traditional and agile approaches are combined in the specific context of an FMCG enterprise.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Traditional project management

The practice of management reveals a growing interest in effective project management, encouraging both scholars and business practitioners to search for efficient models. Project leaders have access to numerous standards and methodologies that can be applied in their work. One of the key responsibilities of the project manager is to achieve the expected outcomes and ensure their successful implementation. Regularly reviewing project management approaches and selecting the one that fits the type and scope of a given project may foster continuous improvement (Kapusta, 2022).

Traditional project management, commonly known as the waterfall method, is defined by several key characteristics and practices (Lalmi, Fernandes, Sassi Boudemagh, 2022; Thesing, Feldmann, Burchardt, 2021):

- It is based on detailed linear, sequential planning of all project phases from start to finish, with each subsequent phase beginning only after the previous one is completed.
- Requirements, understood as expected outcomes, are defined by the client or end user at the beginning of the project and rarely change throughout the process.
- There is a clear division into phases, including requirements definition, design, implementation, testing, and maintenance.
- Due to the project's sequential nature, changes are usually considered difficult and costly. Any deviation may lead to significant delays or additional costs.
- Emphasis is placed on extensive documentation, which serves as a reference point for both clients and the project team.
- The project structure is stable: once a rigorous and well-organized project plan is established, it rarely changes, which provides predictability.
- Responsibilities are clearly defined, with each team member assigned tasks corresponding to specific project phases.

The increasing complexity of projects across social, economic, and technological systems may render traditional project management (TPM) insufficient to address today's challenges. However, this does not mean that waterfall project management should be rejected as a management practice. Over the years, TPM has been modified, while its foundations remain strongly connected with the “iron triangle” of constraints: time, cost, and scope (Spalek, 2020). Cost estimation is also increasingly discussed in the context of digital and AI-supported project management. Recent studies indicate that machine learning, deep learning, regression, and

hybrid models may improve cost predictions and resource optimization, especially in complex and dynamic project environments. This perspective is relevant to the cost dimension of the project management triangle, although the present study focuses on project management practices rather than AI-based estimation methods (Shamim et al., 2025). At the same time, traditional project management increasingly emphasized change management and knowledge management as important areas supporting project execution. In this context, change management is relevant because changes may influence project performance and require appropriate management policies (Ansari, 2019), while knowledge management supports the transfer and use of project-related knowledge within traditional project management approaches (Masciadra, 2017).

2.2. Agile project management

In recent years, project management has been characterized by uncertainty and volatility, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers have identified several categories of challenges related to project management during the pandemic. The most significant included human resource management, organization, prioritizing user requirements, out-of-scope demands, communication, and coordination. Agile methodologies were indicated as potential responses to these challenges due to their flexibility and dynamic project execution. Scope and change management, while sometimes overlooked in research, may lead to delays and high costs if not properly controlled. Agile methodologies are also valued for their capacity to support continuous improvement and implementation readiness (Marnada et al., 2022).

Projects are among the most commonly used tools for implementing changes in enterprises. The success of capacity expansion, new product implementation, new technology introduction, or innovation may directly strengthen a company's competitiveness and financial performance. In this context, agile project management enables companies to adapt more quickly to changing market conditions and customer demands. Methodologies such as Scrum and Kanban are commonly used in projects that require rapid decision-making in response to evolving circumstances.

For projects managed using agile methodologies, the following characteristics and practices can be noted (Lalmi, Fernandes, Sassi Boudemagh, 2022; Marnada et al., 2022; Smickova et al., 2021; Thesing, Feldmann, Burchardt, 2021; Zielske, Held, 2022):

- Iterative and incremental development, meaning that work is divided into smaller sections, often called “sprints”, during which short work cycles are conducted. This allows for flexible changes and frequent progress assessments.
- Client or end-user involvement is important at all stages, as it allows requirements to be assessed and adjusted throughout the project. This increases the likelihood of project success.

- Agile methodologies provide high adaptability and flexibility in response to changing conditions, without the need for costly and time-consuming corrective actions.
- Transparency and openness to change enable project participants to track progress and address issues in real time.
- Continuous improvement allows for ongoing testing and refinement of the product or project outcome. Subsequent iterations enable consultation with the client and adjustment of outcomes to their needs.
- Risk management is treated as an ongoing process in agile projects, with a focus on the continuous identification, response, and mitigation of risks that may affect project execution.

Researchers have demonstrated that project management is becoming increasingly flexible in response to a rapidly changing and challenging business environment. For examples, in one study, project managers and experts frequently recommended implementing agile project management not only in the software industry but also beyond it (Ciric et al., 2019). Communication patterns within project teams may also vary depending on the project management approach adopted. In hybrid software teams, agile-developed projects showed more communication related to execution, monitoring, and control, while informal channels supported more collaborative interactions than in waterfall-developed projects. Although these findings refer to software development, they are relevant to the broader discussion on how agile and traditional approaches shape coordination, communication, and responsiveness in project teams (Ly et al., 2025).

2.3. Hybrid project management in FMCG enterprises

Implementing lean, agile, or green methodologies has a significant impact on the performance of FMCG enterprises (Udokporo et al., 2020). This is particularly important because enterprises in this sector operate in a dynamic environment and often implement multiple projects simultaneously. The relevance of hybrid thinking in the FMCG sector is also visible in research on competitive strategies, where hybrid strategies are associated with adaptability to diverse consumer preferences, cost effectiveness, and product distinctiveness (Panchal, Chand, 2025). These projects may concern capacity expansion, new product implementation, new technology introduction, process standardization, continuous improvement, supply chain resilience, or organizational change. Recent research on FMCG supply chains also indicates that contingency planning, collaboration, information sharing, and agility are important capabilities for responding to disruptions and strengthening operational resilience in highly volatile conditions (Hasan, Dowla, Ahmmed, 2026).

Researchers emphasize that project management models are not a one-size-fits-all solution for every type of project. Any procedural model should be well suited to specific project criteria. If these criteria are ignored or only partially met,

the chosen approach is likely to fail. Hybrid approaches can therefore enrich project management by combining predictability and control with flexibility and responsiveness.

Hybrid approaches are also discussed in the context of technology-based product and service development, where companies combine agile and traditional project management practices to achieve greater agility. Prior research indicates that such approaches may help organizations address diverse organizational cultures, specific internal processes, customer contractual requirements, and project-specific conditions (Azenha, Reis, Fleury, 2021).

A similar conclusion appears in research on hybrid project management approaches, where project management practices are treated as elements selected and adjusted to the specific project and organizational context. Hybrid project management may therefore distinguish between common practices required for governance and optional practices dependent on whether a waterfall or agile approach is adopted. Such an approach supports the view that hybrid project management should not be understood as a fixed methodology, but rather as a context-specific configuration of practices (Fernandes et al., 2018).

Hybrid project management methodologies can also be interpreted as instruments supporting organizational ambidexterity, as they combine predictive and agile elements. This is relevant to organizations operating under uncertainty, where project management needs to ensure both the stability of current operations and flexibility in responding to changing conditions (Titov, Titova, 2022).

Recent scoping review findings also show that hybrid project management is typically understood as a combination of traditional and agile methodologies that leverages the strengths of both while mitigating their weaknesses. However, the practical implementation of hybrid project management in organizations remains insufficiently explored, especially in specific organizational and sectoral contexts (Székely, Késmárki-Gally, Lakner, 2025). Taken together, these studies suggest that hybrid project management should be analysed not as a single predefined methodology, but as a context-dependent configuration of practices shaped by project requirements, organizational conditions, and environmental uncertainty.

In the context of large FMCG manufacturing enterprises, this combination may be particularly relevant. Such organizations usually operate under high production volumes, cost pressure, strict quality requirements, production continuity constraints, and the need to implement many initiatives simultaneously. Their project portfolios may include capacity expansion, automation, new product implementation, production line and machine projects, process standardization, continuous improvement, and organizational or system-related initiatives. For this reason, some project elements require stability, documentation, budget control, and milestone management, while others require faster decision-making, flexibility, and adaptation to changing operational conditions. The present article therefore focuses on

a single large FMCG manufacturing enterprise and examines how traditional and agile practices coexist in project management within this type of operationally intensive organizational context.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

The research methodology was developed to identify perceived changes and current characteristics of project management practices in a selected enterprise from the fast-moving consumer goods sector. The study focused on the period 2019-2024 and examined how project management practices evolved over time and how they are currently reflected in the dimensions of the project management triangle: schedule, scope, and cost.

The study adopted an exploratory, single-enterprise research design. This approach was selected because the aim was not to test statistically representative relationships for the entire FMCG sector, but to gain empirical insight into project management practices within one complex organizational context. The analysed enterprise was treated as an information-rich case in which different types of projects were implemented under comparable organizational conditions, procedures, and governance mechanisms.

The research process was guided by two main research questions:

- What perceived changes in project management practices occurred between 2019 and 2024 in the analysed FMCG enterprise?
- How are current project management practices in this enterprise reflected in the schedule, scope, and cost dimensions of the project management triangle?

The research process included six main stages:

- 1) Literature analysis and critique.
- 2) Design of the survey study.
- 3) Conducting a pilot study.
- 4) Updating the research tool based on pilot study feedback.
- 5) Conducting the main survey.
- 6) Analysis and interpretation of the results.

The applied research approach combined a literature review, secondary data analysis, a pilot study, and survey research. This made it possible to connect theoretical assumptions concerning traditional, agile, and hybrid project management with empirical data collected from experienced employees involved in project work. The research design therefore supported the exploratory character of the study and allowed the findings to be interpreted as context-specific empirical evidence rather than as statistically generalizable results. Table 1 presents the methods, techniques, and research tools used in the study.

Table 1. Research methods, techniques, and tools

Method	Technique	Tool
Literature review and desk / secondary research	Literature analysis and critique	Literature database
Pilot study	Conventional pilot	Survey questionnaire
Survey research	CAWI	Survey questionnaire

Source: own elaboration.

The combination of a literature review, pilot study, and survey research was selected to ensure methodological coherence between the theoretical framework and the empirical part of the study. The literature review supported the identification of traditional, agile, and hybrid project management characteristics, while the pilot study helped refine the questionnaire before the main survey. The CAWI survey made it possible to collect standardized responses from experienced project participants and to analyse perceived project management practices in a structured way.

3.2. Scope of empirical research

The empirical research was conducted in the first quarter of 2024 at a large FMCG manufacturing enterprise employing approximately 700 people and located in Poznań. The enterprise was purposively selected as an information-rich case of a large FMCG manufacturing organization that had recently undergone a significant expansion and operated with a complex and diverse project portfolio. The organization in question implemented multiple projects between 2019 and 2024, including automation, new product implementation, production line and machine projects, process standardization, continuous improvement, factory expansion, and organizational or system-related initiatives. This made it possible to collect data from employees with practical and diverse project experience within one coherent organizational context.

The location in Poznań was not treated as a regional sampling frame, but as the location of the selected organizational case. The aim of the study was not to compare enterprises from different regions, but to analyse project management practices within one large manufacturing site characterized by high operational intensity, strict quality requirements, cost pressure, production continuity constraints, and the simultaneous implementation of multiple initiatives.

The research focused on identifying current characteristics and trends in project management practices. The participants were specialists and employees involved in project work, including team members, project leaders, support staff, coaches, and project sponsors. Table 2 presents the scope of the empirical research.

Table 2. Scope of empirical research

Scope of Research	Characteristics
Subject	Trends and characteristics of project management
Participants	Specialists with at least five years of project experience
Timeframe	Research conducted in the first quarter of 2024, covering project experience from 2019-2024
Location	Purposively selected large FMCG manufacturing enterprise located in Poznań, treated as one information-rich organizational case rather than as a regional sample

Source: own elaboration.

The scope of the empirical research reflects the exploratory and single-enterprise character of the study. The selected organization was not intended to represent all FMCG enterprises or the Poznań region. Instead, it was treated as a coherent organizational case that facilitated the analysis of project management practices in a large manufacturing environment with a diverse project portfolio. This scope made it possible to interpret the results in relation to the specific organizational conditions under which the projects were planned and implemented.

3.3. Pilot study and research tool development

Before conducting the main survey, a pilot study was carried out with two purposively selected employees of the analysed enterprise. The pilot study was not intended to generate empirical findings, but to verify the clarity, logical structure, and practical relevance of the questionnaire. The selection criterion for the pilot respondents was practical participation in at least 10 major FMCG projects over the previous five years. This criterion ensured that the pilot feedback was provided by employees with broad project experience and familiarity with different types of project work in the organization studied.

The aim of the pilot study was to check whether the questionnaire was understandable for potential respondents, whether the questions reflected real project management practices in the enterprise, and whether the response options were clear and sufficient. Particular attention was paid to the consistency between the research questions, the structure of the questionnaire, and the project management characteristics identified in the literature review.

After completing the pilot version of the questionnaire, the respondents provided comments and suggestions regarding the structure and content of the research tool. Based on this feedback, the questionnaire was revised. The number of questions was reduced, selected items were reformulated, and logical connections between

questions were introduced to reduce data redundancy. As a result, the final version of the questionnaire included 14 questions with additional sub-questions.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections:

- Questions examining the current characteristics of project management practices.
- Questions identifying changes and trends in project management based on project experience from 2019-2024.
- Demographic and contextual questions supporting the interpretation of the results.

The main survey items referred to respondents' project experience, project roles, project team size, frequency of project meetings, current project management characteristics, and perceived changes in project management practices between 2019 and 2024. The items concerning current project management characteristics were organized according to the project management triangle and covered three dimensions: schedule, scope, and cost. Within these dimensions, respondents assessed statements referring to selected traditional and agile project management practices, such as fixed or needs-based meetings, team self-discipline, escalation of urgent issues, sequential or incremental project execution, role stability or role adaptation, documentation, milestone-based management, end-user involvement, treatment of deviations, and budget definition or budget flexibility.

Different response formats were used depending on the type of question. Demographic and contextual questions used categorical response options. The items concerning current project management characteristics used agreement-type responses: "I agree", "I do not agree", and "I do not know / it is hard to say". The items concerning perceived trends between 2019 and 2024 required respondents to assess whether selected project management practices had changed compared with the past. For these items, responses included agreement or disagreement with the proposed change, no observed change, or no opinion.

The questionnaire was designed to be anonymous. The questions did not require respondents to provide personal data. Respondents were informed that the collected data would be analysed and presented only in an aggregated form.

3.4. Research sample and data collection

The final version of the questionnaire was distributed to more than 50 employees of the analysed enterprise. The main inclusion criterion was at least five years of practical project experience. This criterion was introduced to ensure that the respondents were able to assess project management practices on the basis of repeated participation in projects, rather than on the basis of incidental or limited exposure to project work.

A total of 46 responses were received. However, 15 responses were excluded from further analysis because the respondents did not meet the required

experience criterion. This exclusion was an important methodological step, as the study was focused on experienced project participants rather than on the general employee population. As a result, the final research sample included 31 respondents, all of whom declared possessing at least five years' project experience across various roles.

The respondents were treated as knowledgeable project participants because they had practical experience in project work carried out in the analysed enterprise between 2019 and 2024. Their importance for the study resulted not only from the number of respondents, but also from the depth and diversity of their accumulated project experience. Based on respondents' declarations, the final sample represented more than 460 cumulative project participations. This means that the empirical material reflected a broad range of project experiences, including participation in projects of different scale, type, and organizational complexity.

The sample included employees who had participated in projects from different perspectives, including team members, project leaders, support staff, coaches, and project sponsors. This diversity of roles was important because it allowed the study to include both managerial and execution-level perspectives. Respondents were therefore able to assess project management practices not only from the point of view of formal project coordination, but also from the perspective of everyday project work, team cooperation, communication, and problem solving.

The sample was purposive and criterion-based rather than random. Therefore, the results should not be interpreted as statistically representative of the entire FMCG sector or of all the enterprise's employees. This limitation was accepted because the aim of the study was exploratory. The purpose was to identify perceived trends and current characteristics of project management practices in one selected organizational context, not to estimate population-level parameters.

At the same time, the sample has strong analytical value for the purpose of the study. The respondents were selected because they had relevant and repeated project experience in a large FMCG manufacturing organization with a complex and diverse project portfolio. Studying such respondents made it possible to obtain informed assessments of project management practices, including the coexistence of traditional and agile elements in the schedule, scope, and cost dimensions of the project management triangle.

The non-random character of the sample should therefore be considered when interpreting the results. The findings are best understood as exploratory, context-specific empirical evidence based on experienced project participants. The value of the sample lies in the practical experience of the respondents, their involvement in multiple projects, and the possibility of analysing their perceptions within one coherent organizational and project governance context.

3.5. Data analysis

The collected data were analysed quantitatively and descriptively. Due to the exploratory character of the study, the purposive and non-random sample, and the relatively small number of respondents, the analysis focused on frequency distributions, percentages, and dominant response patterns rather than statistical generalization. The results should therefore be interpreted as empirical insight into this particular enterprise rather than as representative findings for the entire FMCG sector.

The analysis followed the structure of the questionnaire. First, contextual information was analysed, including project team size, respondents' project roles, types of projects, and self-assessed competence to complete the survey. Next, the current characteristics of project management practices were analysed in relation to the project management triangle: schedule, scope, and cost. Statements within these dimensions were interpreted as indicators of traditional or agile project management practices. A hybrid pattern was identified when responses indicated the co-existence of both traditional and agile characteristics within the same dimension or across different dimensions of the project management triangle.

For the questions concerning current project management characteristics, responses marked as "I do not know" or "no opinion" were excluded from the main interpretative analysis. The remaining answers were assessed with regard to respondents' agreement or disagreement with statements describing selected traditional and agile project management practices. Where applicable, the number of valid responses was indicated in the interpretation.

For the questions concerning perceived trends in 2019-2024, the analysis focused on identifying whether respondents perceived selected project management practices as having changed, remained unchanged, or being difficult to assess. These results were interpreted in relation to the theoretical assumptions presented in the literature review. Open-ended responses were analysed descriptively and grouped into thematic areas, including project goals, success criteria, team management, learning from deviations, risk assessment, communication, and end-user involvement.

4. RESULTS

A total of 31 respondents participated in the study, all of whom declared having at least five years of project experience across various roles. Consequently, the study was based on 31 experienced respondents and more than 460 cumulative project experiences they reported. The results of this research are presented below.

Figure 1 presents the size of the project teams in which respondents had most recently participated or were still involved.



Fig. 1. Size of the project team in the respondent's most recent or current project (N = 31; single-choice item; values shown as number of respondents) (own study based on research results)

Respondents most frequently reported teams consisting of 6-10 members (11 respondents; 35.5%) or more than 30 members (10 respondents; 32.3%), which together accounted for 67.7% of responses. The next most common responses were teams of up to 5 members (5 respondents; 16.1%) and teams of 11 to 15 members (4 respondents; 12.9%). The least common response, indicated by one respondent (3.2%), referred to a team size of 16-30 members. The diversity of team sizes suggests that current projects vary considerably in complexity, ranging from large and complex initiatives to more focused projects carried out by smaller teams. Fig. 2 shows the most common roles in which respondents participated in projects between 2019 and 2024.

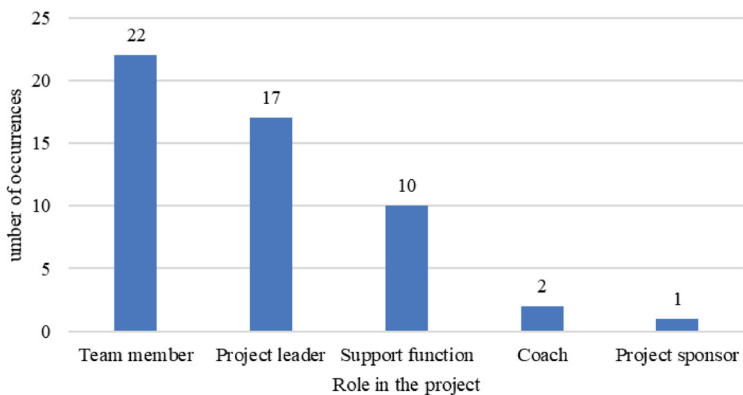


Fig. 2. Main roles of respondents in projects conducted between 2019 and 2024 (N = 31; multiple-response item; values shown as number of indications) (own study based on research results)

Respondents most frequently indicated the role of team member (22 indications; 71.0% of respondents) and project leader (17 indications; 54.8% of respondents). Because the item allowed multiple responses, the percentages do not sum to 100%. A frequent response was also that the same person served as a project manager on one project and as a team member on another. This allows the results to be interpreted from both managerial and execution perspectives. Some respondents also reported supplementary roles, such as support function (10 indications; 32.3%), coach (2 indications; 6.5%), and project sponsor (1 indication; 3.2%).

The projects reported by respondents included automation, implementation of new products, machines and production lines, software implementation, new systems, factory expansion, process and procedure standardization, continuous improvement, ergonomics improvement, efficiency and productivity improvement for key production indicators, reduction of major losses, and implementation or development of a TPM structure. Additionally, respondents reported involvement in projects such as the modernization of the ERP II system for multiple company branches around the world. Figure 3 summarizes the respondents' self-assessment of their competence to complete the survey.

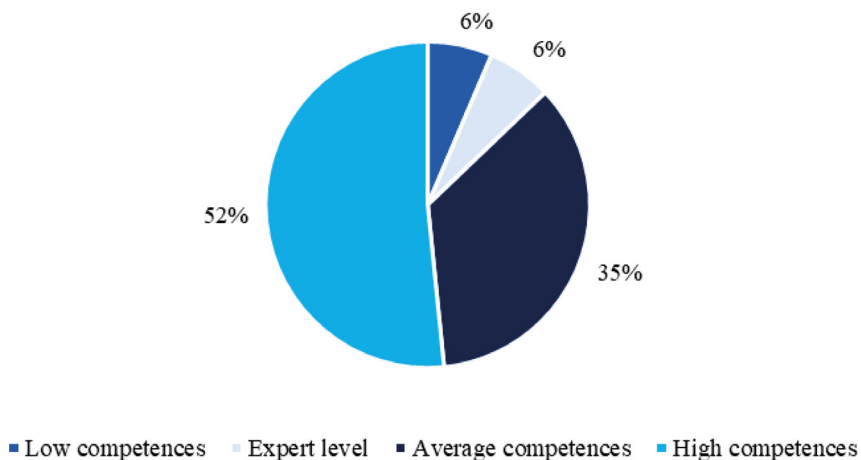


Fig. 3. Self-assessment of respondents' competence to complete the survey
(N = 31; single-choice item; values shown as percentage of respondents)
(own study based on research results)

More than half of the respondents indicated a high level of competence (52%). Average competence was indicated by 35% of respondents, while expert-level competence and low competence were each indicated by 6% of respondents. This suggests that the respondents were aware of their project-related skills and that their answers were grounded in practical experience

gained through participation in multiple projects. This supports the credibility of the responses provided in the survey.



Fig. 4. Frequency of project meetings with different stakeholder groups (N = 31; multiple-response item; values shown as number of indications) (own study based on research results)

As shown in figure 4, respondents reported that full team meetings are most often held once a week or convened as needed. An example of such a regular meeting is the “Opening Team Meeting”, during which the team begins the week by reviewing the agenda, discussing the previous week, and maintaining team spirit. In addition, respondents indicated in the comments section that problem escalation is rare, as teams strive to resolve issues in real time without unnecessarily involving management. Such responses point to a more agile way of managing project work at the team-leader level.

Another point mentioned was meetings for stakeholders and the board. For stakeholders, these meetings typically take the form of regular monthly summaries or reports. However, for board or workstream leaders, meetings are convened both as needed and on a cyclical basis. This reflects a hybrid project management approach, combining flexible responses to changing needs with structured decision-making at the management level. Nevertheless, team leaders still manage projects in an organized manner by conducting regular meetings for the team, management, and stakeholders.

The following questions focused on the current characteristics of project management. The specialized questions were designed to determine whether current projects are managed using agile, traditional, or hybrid project management practices. From the specialized questions, responses marked as “I do not know” or “no opinion” were excluded from further analysis. The remaining analysis included the respondents’ declarations of “agree” and “disagree”.

Figure 5 presents the current characteristics of project management in the schedule category.

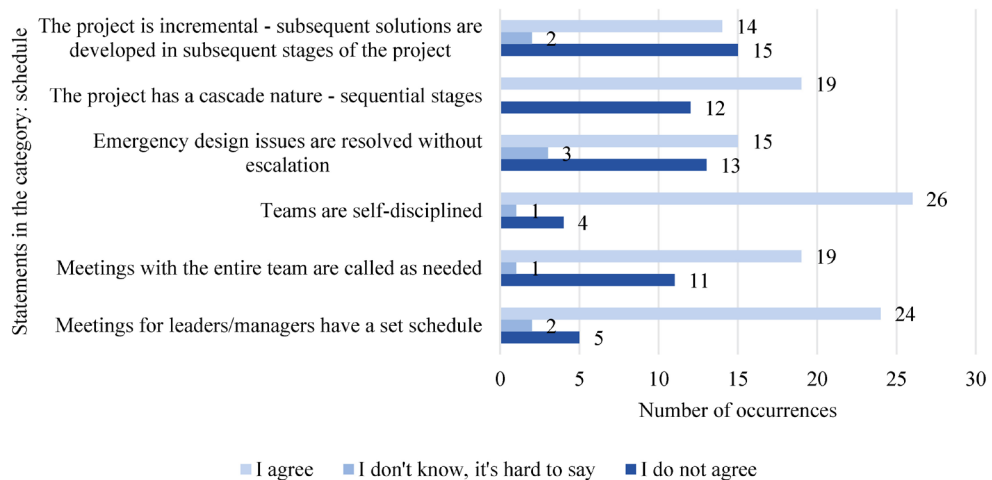


Fig. 5. Current project management characteristics in the schedule dimension (N = 31; agreement-type items; responses: “I agree”, “I do not agree”, “I do not know / it is hard to say”; values shown as number of respondents) (own study based on research results)

Within the schedule dimension, the strongest agreement was observed for team self-discipline (26 respondents; 83.9% of all respondents), scheduled meetings for leaders and management (24 respondents; 77.4%), and meetings with the entire team convened as needed (19 respondents; 61.3%). Respondents also frequently agreed that projects may have a sequential cascade character (19 respondents; 61.3%) and, at the same time, an incremental character, in which subsequent solutions are developed in later project stages (14 respondents; 45.2%). The assessment of whether urgent project issues are resolved without unnecessary escalation was more divided, with 15 respondents agreeing (48.4%) and 13 respondents disagreeing (41.9%). This indicates that current projects are managed using both traditional and agile practices, although the degree of flexibility differs across specific project situations. Figure 6 presents the current characteristics of project management in the scope category.

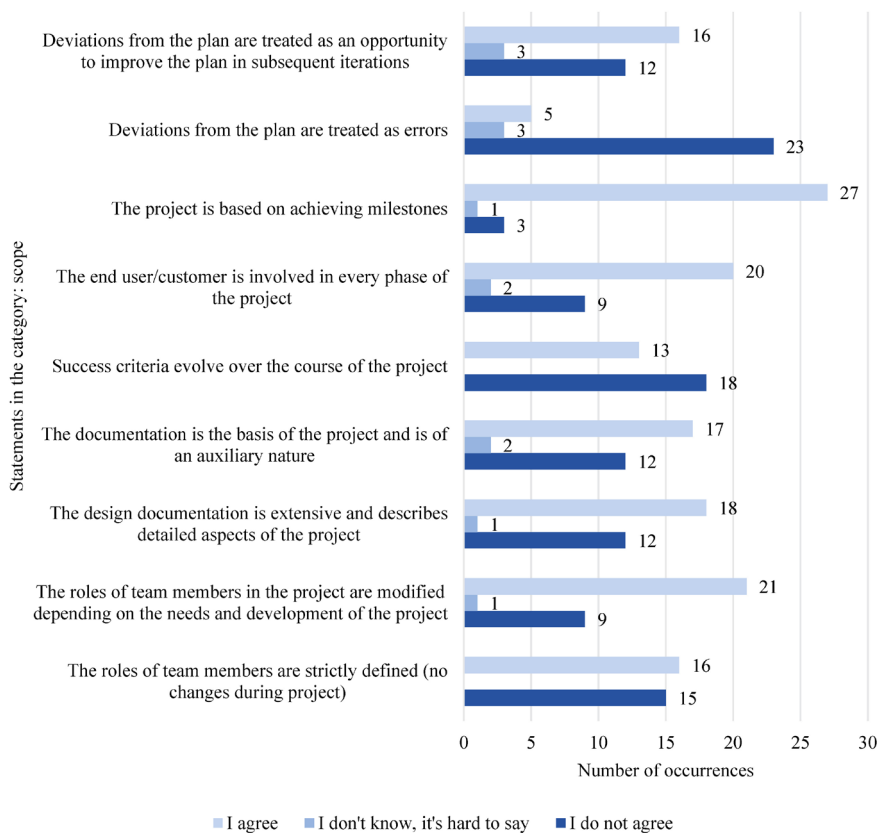


Fig. 6. Current project management characteristics in the scope dimension (N = 31; agreement-type items; responses: “I agree”, “I do not agree”, “I do not know / it is hard to say”; values shown as number of respondents) (own study based on research results)

The results for the scope dimension show that while formal project control remains important, it is not the only way in which scope is managed. The strongest agreement concerned milestone-based management (27 respondents; 87.1% of all respondents), modification of team members' roles depending on project needs (21 respondents; 67.7%), and end-user or customer involvement in every phase of the project (20 respondents; 64.5%). Respondents also often agreed that project documentation is extensive and describes detailed aspects of the project (18 respondents; 58.1%). These results do not point to a full shift toward agile scope management but rather show a more practical pattern: the project framework remains stable through milestones and documentation, while the way of working within this framework may change depending on project needs. This may explain why the scope dimension combines traditional and agile elements more visibly than the cost dimension. Figure 7 presents the cost dimension of the project management triangle.

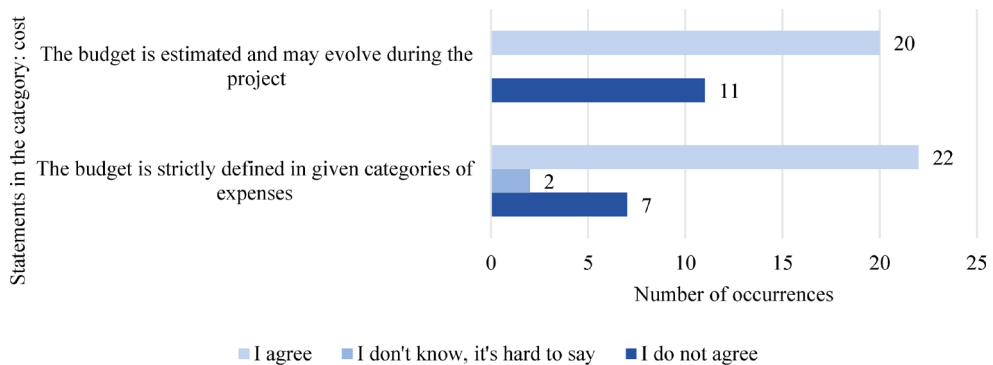


Fig. 7. Current project management characteristics in the cost dimension (N = 31; agreement-type items; responses: “I agree”, “I do not agree”, “I do not know / it is hard to say”; values shown as number of respondents) (own study based on research results)

The cost dimension shows a different pattern than schedule and scope. Most respondents agreed that the budget is strictly defined across specific expenditure categories (22 respondents; 71.0% of all respondents), while 20 respondents (64.5%) also confirmed that the budget is estimated and may evolve during project execution. In practice, this means that some budget changes are possible, for example, when material prices increase or project conditions change, but they do not necessarily indicate a fully flexible approach to cost management. In this area, flexibility seems to be corrective rather than adaptive. The budget may be adjusted when needed, but cost control remains strongly linked to formal planning, predefined categories of expenses, and the need to protect the project from excessive spending. For this reason, the cost dimension appears to be the most traditional part of the project management triangle.

For the analysis of perceived trends between 2019 and 2024, 27 valid responses were included. Four responses were excluded from this part of the analysis because they did not provide a sufficient basis for assessing changes over the five-year period. The valid responses were used to identify perceived changes in project management practices between 2019 and 2024. Figure 8 presents the respondents' assessment of these changes.

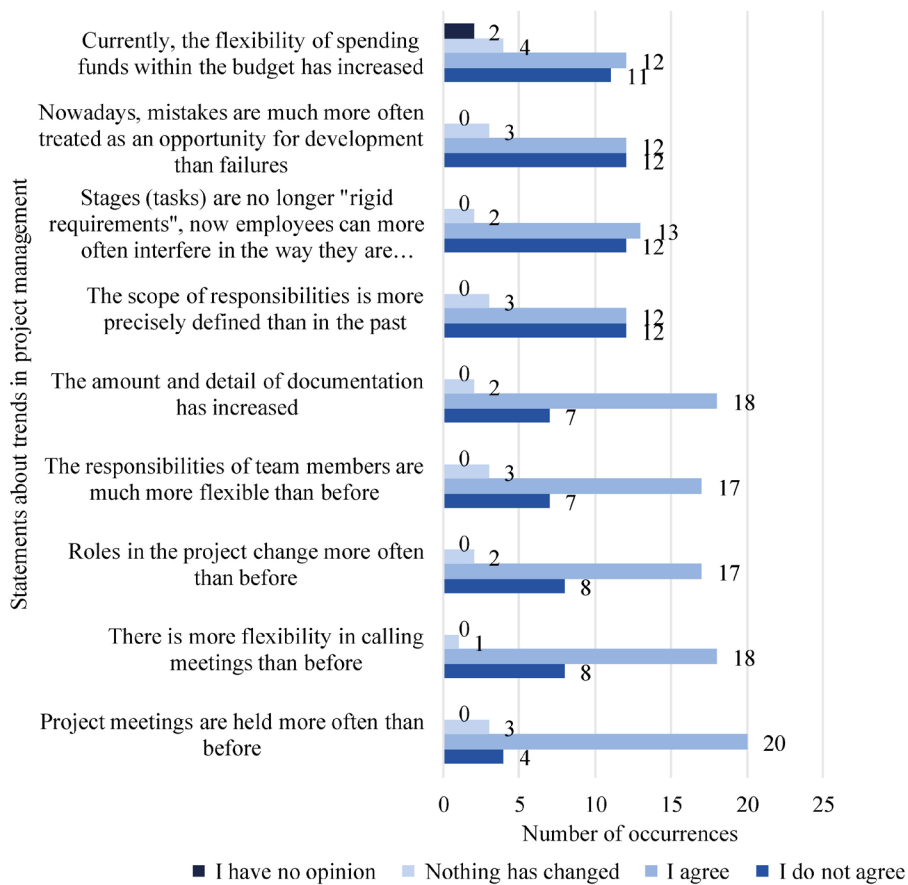


Fig. 8. Perceived trends in project management practices between 2019 and 2024 (N = 27; trend-assessment items; responses: "I agree", "I do not agree", "Nothing has changed", "I have no opinion"; values shown as number of respondents) (own study based on research results)

Respondents most frequently indicated that, compared with 2019, project meetings are held more frequently (20 respondents; 74.1%), flexibility in scheduling meetings has increased (18 respondents; 66.7%), and the amount and detail of project documentation has increased (18 respondents; 66.7%). They also frequently indicated that roles in projects change more often than before (17 respondents; 63.0%) and that the responsibilities of team members are more flexible (17 respondents; 63.0%).

These results suggest that the most visible changes concern the everyday organization of project work: meetings, role allocation, responsibilities, and documentation. This does not mean that project management has become fully agile; rather, the changes point to a more practical adjustment of project work to current needs,

while formal elements such as documentation and defined responsibilities remain important. The increase in documentation detail is particularly interesting, because it shows that flexibility does not necessarily reduce formalization. In the enterprise studied, both tendencies seem to develop in parallel.

At the same time, opinions were more divided regarding whether the scope of duties is more clearly defined, whether employees can more often influence how tasks are performed, whether mistakes are more often treated as opportunities for development, and whether flexibility in budget spending has increased. This suggests that the evolution of project management practices is not uniform across all areas. Various types of projects still require different management approaches, which supports the conclusion that hybrid project management is developing as a tailored rather than universal solution.

The optional open-ended questions were also subjected to analysis, allowing respondents to share their thoughts on project management and provide recommendations for individuals beginning their project management practice. The responses were analysed descriptively and grouped into several thematic areas.

According to the respondents, one of the key conditions for effective project management is a clearly defined project goal. This goal should be agreed upon at the beginning of the project and not changed without justification. At the same time, respondents emphasized that the method of achieving the goal may be adapted during the project if circumstances change.

Another important recommendation concerned success criteria. Respondents indicated that success criteria should be agreed upon by both the sponsor and the project leader. If this step is omitted, misunderstandings may occur, and the project may be perceived differently by various stakeholders.

The respondents also emphasized the importance of team management skills. Project leaders should be able to resolve conflicts, develop competences, support idea generation, and strengthen cooperation between team members. They should also avoid attributing blame to individuals and instead focus on identifying root causes in processes.

Several responses referred to learning from failures and deviations. Respondents indicated that not every failure should be treated negatively. In many cases, project difficulties may create opportunities for learning, improvement, and knowledge sharing.

The respondents also recommended selecting project team members with appropriate experience and competences, assessing formal, technical, and financial risks realistically, balancing the number of meetings with time for actual work, and ensuring effective communication within the project. They further emphasized the importance of involving the end user from the project initiation phase, especially in cross-departmental projects.

Overall, the open-ended responses complement the quantitative results by showing that effective project management requires both formal structure and flexibility.

While clear goals, success criteria, risk assessment, and documentation remain important, they should be supported by team autonomy, communication, learning, and adaptation to changing project conditions.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that project management practices in the FMCG enterprise analysed here are not moving in a simple direction from traditional to agile project management; the observed pattern is more selective. Some elements of project work have indeed become more flexible, especially meeting organization, role adjustment, and responsiveness to current project needs. At the same time, other elements, such as milestones, documentation, and budget control, remain strongly connected with a more traditional project management logic.

This finding is consistent with recent studies on hybrid project management. Hybrid project management is described as a combination of traditional and agile methods, but knowledge on when and how specific hybrid models should be applied remains fragmented. Recent reviews also show that hybrid project management depends not only on methodology, but also on project-, team-, customer-, and organizational factors. Moreover, its practical implementation in organizations still requires further research (Krupa, Hájek, 2024; Székely, Késmárki-Gally, Lakner, 2025). The results of the present study support this view in the context of one FMCG enterprise.

This contextual view is also consistent with standard-setting project management sources. Project management guidance is presented as a set of practices that can be applied in different organizational and project contexts, rather than as one rigid methodology. Similarly, contemporary project management standards emphasize principles, performance domains, and tailoring, which supports the view that project management practices should be adjusted to the specific characteristics of the project and organizational environment (International Organization for Standardization, 2020; Project Management Institute, 2021). These standards reinforce the interpretation that hybrid project management should be understood as a context-dependent configuration of practices.

Studies from other sectors also point to the importance of context. Research on technology-based products and services shows that hybrid approaches are shaped by internal processes, organizational culture, customer requirements, and project-specific conditions (Azenha, Reis, Fleury, 2021). In collaborative university-industry R&D projects, hybrid project management has been described as a set of practices selected according to the project context rather than as one fixed methodology (Fernandes et al., 2018). In software and product development, hybrid approaches are also discussed as a way to combine the structure of traditional project management with the flexibility of agile practices (Leong et al., 2023; Ly et al., 2025). Against this background, the results of the present study reveal a similar tendency in

an FMCG enterprise: hybrid project management does not replace traditional project control, but adds flexibility where it is useful and possible.

A particularly important finding concerns the uneven evolution of the project management triangle. The schedule dimension shows the strongest movement toward agile practices. Regular meetings for leaders and management still provide structure, but working meetings are often organized depending on current needs. Teams also appear to take more responsibility for solving problems without unnecessary escalation. This corresponds with studies in which communication, coordination, and responsiveness are treated as important features of agile and hybrid project work (Ciric et al., 2019; Ly et al., 2025).

The scope dimension shows a more balanced pattern. Milestones and documentation remain important, but project roles and end-user involvement are more flexible. This suggests that scope is not managed only through rigid planning. In the enterprise studied, a stable project framework still exists, but the way of working within this framework may change during project execution. This result is important because it highlights how flexibility does not necessarily involve the disappearance of formal project control. In practice, both tendencies may develop at the same time.

The cost dimension differs from schedule and scope. Although respondents indicated that the budget may evolve during project execution, cost management remains more strongly connected with predefined expenditure categories and formal control. This may result from the operational character of FMCG enterprises, where projects are implemented under cost pressure, quality requirements, and production continuity constraints. In such conditions, excessive flexibility in budget management could increase financial and operational risk. Therefore, the cost dimension remains the most traditional part of the project management triangle.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in identifying asymmetry in the hybridization of project management practices. The results suggest that hybrid project management should not be understood only as a general combination of traditional and agile approaches. It may also be assessed through the different dimensions of the project management triangle. Schedule and scope may absorb more agile practices, while cost may remain closer to traditional control mechanisms. This perspective helps explain why hybrid project management in practice is often uneven, selective, and dependent on the specific project dimension.

The practical implication is that project managers should not introduce hybrid project management as one uniform set of rules. Instead, they should decide which project areas require stability and which can benefit from flexibility. In schedule management, this may mean combining regular governance meetings with needs-based working meetings. In scope management, however, it may mean maintaining milestones and documentation while allowing role adjustment and end-user involvement. Finally, in cost management, it may mean allowing justified corrections while keeping budget categories and approval mechanisms under control.

The study should still be interpreted as an exploratory, single-enterprise analysis. While the results are valuable because they reveal how experienced project participants perceive changes in project management practices, they should not be generalized to the entire FMCG sector. Further comparative research in other FMCG enterprises and in other operationally intensive sectors would be needed to verify whether similar patterns occur in different organizational settings.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The article analysed perceived changes in project management practices between 2019 and 2024 and examined the current characteristics of project management in a single large FMCG enterprise. Particular attention was paid to the schedule, scope, and cost dimensions of the project management triangle. The findings show that project management in the enterprise in question is developing toward a hybrid model, but this development is selective rather than uniform.

The main conclusion is that traditional and agile practices coexist in the analysed organization. Schedule and scope show a stronger movement toward flexible and adaptive practices, while cost remains more strongly connected with traditional project control. In the schedule dimension, this is visible in the increased role of needs-based meetings, team self-discipline, and real-time problem solving. In the scope dimension, flexibility is reflected in role adjustment and end-user involvement, while milestones and documentation continue to provide structure. In the cost dimension, budget categories and cost control remain dominant, even if some budget corrections are possible during project execution.

The study therefore indicates an asymmetrical evolution of the project management triangle. Hybrid project management in the enterprise studied does not necessitate replacing traditional project management with agile practices. Rather, it means adding flexibility to selected areas of project work while maintaining formal control where stability, accountability, and financial discipline are required. This finding is particularly relevant for FMCG enterprises, where projects are carried out under cost pressure, quality requirements, production continuity constraints, and the need to implement many initiatives simultaneously.

From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that project managers should consciously differentiate between project areas that require stability and those that can benefit from flexibility. In practice, this means maintaining milestones, documentation, budget categories, and decision gates, while also allowing needs-based meetings, role adjustment, end-user involvement, and learning from deviations. Such an approach may help project teams avoid both excessive rigidity and uncontrolled flexibility.

The study has several limitations. It was conducted in one non-randomly selected FMCG enterprise and was based on a purposive sample of 31 experienced

respondents. Therefore, the results are not statistically representative of the entire FMCG sector. However, the selection of one enterprise was methodologically justified by the exploratory character of the study and by the specific features of that organization. The company represents a large FMCG manufacturing environment that had recently undergone a significant expansion and operated with a complex and diverse project portfolio. Projects in this context were carried out under cost pressure, quality requirements, production continuity constraints, and the need to implement many initiatives simultaneously. Studying one organization made it possible to analyse project management practices within a coherent organizational context, rather than combining responses from companies operating under different structures, procedures, cultures, and project governance systems.

In addition, the study was based on respondents' declarations, meaning that the findings reflect perceived project management practices and trends rather than directly measured project performance. Nevertheless, the respondents represented more than 460 cumulative project experiences, which provides a valuable exploratory insight into project management practices in the analysed organizational context.

Further research should include comparative studies in other FMCG enterprises and in other operationally intensive sectors. Future studies could also combine survey data with interviews, project documentation, and measurable project performance indicators, such as schedule adherence, budget control, scope stability, and achievement of operational targets after project implementation. This would make it possible to verify whether the asymmetrical hybridization of schedule, scope, and cost observed in this study also appears in other organizational contexts.

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TRADYCYJNE, ZWINNE CZY HYBRYDOWE ZARZĄDZANIE PROJEKTAMI? WYNIKI BADANIA EMPIRYCZNEGO W WYBRANYM PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWIE FMCG

Streszczenie

Artykuł analizuje postrzegane zmiany oraz aktualne cechy praktyk zarządzania projektami w wybranym dużym przedsiębiorstwie produkcyjnym z sektora FMCG. Badanie obejmuje lata 2019-2024 i koncentruje się na ocenie, czy współczesne praktyki zarządzania projektami są bliższe podejściu tradycyjnemu, zwinnemu czy hybrydowemu. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono trzem wymiarom trójkąta zarządzania projektami: harmonogramowi, zakresowi i kosztom. Badanie miało charakter eksploracyjny i zostało przeprowadzone w jednym celowo dobranym przedsiębiorstwie, traktowanym jako informacyjnie bogaty przypadek organizacyjny. Zastosowano analizę literatury, analizę danych zastanych, badanie pilotażowe oraz badanie ankietowe wśród doświadczonych pracowników zaangażowanych w pracę projektową. Ostateczna próba badawcza objęła 31 respondentów posiadających co najmniej pięcioletnie doświadczenie projektowe, których odpowiedzi odzwierciedlały łącznie ponad 460 doświadczeń projektowych. Wyniki wskazują, że w analizowanym przedsiębiorstwie współistnieją tradycyjne i zwinne praktyki zarządzania projektami. Najsilniejszy zwrot w kierunku praktyk zwinnych zaobserwowano w wymiarze harmonogramu, szczególnie w zakresie elastyczniejszej organizacji spotkań, rozwiązywania problemów w czasie rzeczywistym oraz rosnącej autonomii zespołów. W wymiarze zakresu stabilne kryteria sukcesu, dokumentacja i kamienie milowe współwystępują z elastycznością ról oraz zaangażowaniem użytkownika końcowego. Wymiar kosztów pozostaje najbardziej tradycyjny, ponieważ budżety są zwykle definiowane i kontrolowane w określonych kategoriach. Wyniki sugerują, że zarządzanie projektami w analizowanym

przedssiębiorstwie rozwija się w kierunku selektywnego modelu hybrydowego dostosowanego do typu projektu, kontekstu operacyjnego i wymagań organizacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: koszt, zakres, harmonogram, FMCG, zarządzanie projektami, hybrydowe zarządzanie projektami, trendy w zarządzaniu projektami, trójkąt zarządzania projektami, waterfall, agile

