

Team Leaders' Lived Experiences During Agile Adoption: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

Rapid technological advancements and global competition have heightened the need for agility in organizations striving to meet evolving customer expectations. This study examined the experiences of software team leaders who adopted Agile methods to enhance future Agile adoption in organizations seeking to deliver timely customer value. It employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to describe the lived experiences of software team leaders throughout Agile adoption. The research question asked about the experiences of software team leaders when successfully adopting Agile methodologies for their software projects. The conceptual framework that guided this research was the Agile Software Solution Framework (ASSF). The objective of employing ASSF was to assess the level of agility demonstrated by software development teams and facilitate the identification of areas where Agile implementation could suggest organizational and procedural improvements within the development environment. Twenty-five software team leaders were interviewed who guided Agile teams through the adoption of Agile methodologies, chosen through purposeful sampling. This study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to examine participant data and gain insights into how individuals make sense of a specific phenomenon in their unique context. This study documented several valuable Agile adoption techniques in its summary and recommendations section, thereby enhancing knowledge of Agile methodologies among software development team leaders. In conclusion, this study examined the successful adoption of Agile methodologies by software team leaders, providing insights into the challenges, successes, and key factors. This study benefits organizations by providing valuable insights into how software team leaders successfully adopt Agile methodologies, helping them enhance their software development practices and increase adaptability in a rapidly changing market.

Introduction/Background

In today's rapidly evolving business and technology landscape, the ability of software development processes to adapt to changing user requirements is crucial for achieving optimal performance. G. Lee and X. Weidong (2010) emphasized the significance of software development agility in the face of these unprecedented changes. Organizations recognize the need to become lean and agile in order to effectively meet the evolving needs and expectations of their customers while delivering high-quality products, services, and solutions efficiently (Meyer & Davis, 2000). Consequently, many organizations strive to adopt agile processes to harness the numerous benefits they offer (Altameem, 2015).

The benefits of agile methodologies are widely acknowledged, including faster return on investment, improved software quality, and increased customer satisfaction (Biddle et al., 2018). However, successfully implementing agile methodologies can be challenging, particularly in organizations with established practices and cultural norms that align more closely with traditional waterfall approaches (Javdani et al., 2016; McAvoy & Sammon, 2005; Pillai et al., 2012). The transition to agile methodologies often requires a shift in mindset, team dynamics, and organizational processes, which can encounter resistance and hinder adoption.

Agile methodologies have emerged as a transformative approach to software development, characterized by adaptive, collaborative behaviors that deliver rapid, customer-focused value. Beck et al. (2001) described Agile as a set of principles and methods that prioritize maximizing business satisfaction through regular feedback cycles and the prioritized, time-boxed delivery of valuable business solutions. It fosters an agile mindset characterized by innovation, efficiency, and a customer-centric focus (Rezvani & Khosravi, 2019).

Agile software development encompasses a range of practices that accelerate time-to-market by minimizing process overhead, establishing efficient feedback loops, and prioritizing customer-centric approaches (Beck et al., 2001; Szalvay, 2004). It emphasizes collaboration, reduced management bureaucracy, flexibility, responsiveness, and the incremental delivery of high-quality products (Neurur & Balijepally, 2007; Rigby et al., 2016; Williams & Cockburn, 2003). The Agile philosophy recognizes the empirical and nonlinear nature of software development, advocating for short feedback loops and valuing skilled individuals within the development process (Williams & Cockburn, 2003). Trust is a fundamental aspect of Agile methodologies, fostering collaboration between customers, team members, and management (Khalil & Fernandez, 2011; Khalil & Khalil, 2016).

Agile methodologies have revolutionized software development practices across industries such as telecom, healthcare, gaming, and interactive media. Organizations increasingly adopt Agile to respond to the challenges posed by an unpredictable world, empowering teams to deliver high-quality products and solutions (Sharifi & Rezaei, 2019). The involvement of customers throughout the development process is a key tenet of Agile, allowing for flexibility and accommodating changing requirements (Alahyari et al., 2017; Misra et al., 2007; Rasnacs & Berzisa, 2017). In a rapidly evolving business and technology landscape, Agile methodologies enable organizations to navigate constant change and achieve organizational agility (Denning, 2016). They facilitate working smarter by maximizing value creation while minimizing unnecessary effort (Denning, 2019). Agile methodologies address the challenge of delivering value to customers swiftly, regardless of the complexity of the problems or opportunities at hand.

As Agile methodologies gain prominence, it becomes essential to delve deeper into their adoption, implementation, and impact. This doctoral literature aimed to explore the experiences

and perspectives of software development team leaders during the adoption of Agile methodologies within Agile teams working on system development. By gaining insights into their lived experiences, this research aims to uncover lessons that can guide future efforts to adopt Agile practices in organizations seeking to adopt a customer-centric, adaptive approach.

While Agile methodologies offer significant potential for organizations, they also present challenges that can hinder successful implementation, even for well-prepared organizations (Appelbaum et al., 2017a, 2017b). These challenges encompass various aspects, including insufficient Agile experience, a lack of executive sponsorship, attempting enterprise-wide Agile adoption without first achieving success at the project level, resistance from managers unwilling to shift their roles, unrealistic planning expectations, underestimation of planning requirements, inadequate incorporation of necessary technical practices, overreliance on Agile tools, and prematurely assuming a complete Agile adoption (Alahyari et al., 2017; Handscomb et al., 2018).

Upon reviewing the existing literature, a research gap emerged: the lack of heuristic studies focused on Agile adoption. Heuristic inquiry, a qualitative research method, involves investigators personally engaging with the phenomena under study (Moustakas, 1994). These personal encounters often reveal profound and transformative experiences. Heuristic analysis is a valuable tool for understanding the world and making informed decisions in situations with limited information. Considering this gap, this phenomenological dissertation aims to address the need for a heuristic perspective in exploring the adoption of Agile methodologies. By employing this qualitative approach, the study sought to capture the essence of individuals' experiences during the Agile adoption process, providing valuable insights into their transformative journeys.

Through an in-depth exploration of the experiences of successful Agile adopters, this research aimed to bridge the existing gap in the literature and provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, critical success factors, and transformative aspects of Agile adoption. By gaining insights from those who have successfully implemented Agile methodologies, organizations can benefit from valuable guidance and improve their own Agile adoption efforts. Ultimately, this study aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and to provide practical recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and outcomes of Agile implementations across organizations in various industries.

Literature Review

By critically analyzing the existing literature and synthesizing the key findings, this literature review provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge on Agile adoption in software development. It contributed to the understanding of the lived experiences of software development team leaders and shed light on effective strategies and challenges in Agile adoption.

The Agile Software Solution Framework (ASSF)

The core of ASSF is a 4-dimensional analytical tool (4-DAT) for measuring team agility across four independent dimensions: scope, agility features, agility values, and process. Each dimension includes several quantitative and qualitative categorization criteria. The ASSF has six

identified aspects of Agile software development methodologies: abstraction, agility, people, process, product, and tools (see Figure 1).

The process aspect of the ASSF included three models of a software process: a software process fragment model, a software process scope model, and software process/method choreography. The process aspect encompasses various types of processes, including the development process, project and process management process, risk management process, and others.

The agility aspect of the ASSF encompasses the concepts of agility, agile values, and principles, and includes two models: the Agility Measurement Model (AMM) and the Agile Adoption and Improvement Model (AAIM; Balakrishnan, 2016). The responsibilities and accountabilities of individuals or teams are associated with these models at the time of model enactment and instantiation for specific situations or projects. The AMM model provides a framework for agile teams to measure agility and select an appropriate agile level for specific projects. The AAIM, along with the AMM, will guide organizations or software development teams in effectively adopting and improving agile practices within specific organizations for specific situations or projects (Balakrishnan, 2016).

The product aspect of the ASSF comprises three models of a software product: the software product fragment, the software product scope model, and the software product choreography. The product aspect encompasses various types of software applications, including object-oriented, agent-oriented, service-oriented, and others. The responsibilities and accountabilities of individuals or teams are associated with these models at the time of model enactment and instantiation for specific situations or projects (Balakrishnan, 2016).

The tools aspect of the ASSF provides two guiding vision models: an Agile tools model and an Agile workspace choreography model. The responsibilities and accountabilities of individuals or teams are associated with these models at the time of model enactment and instantiation for specific situations or projects. The tools model characterizes Agile software development tools to guide self-organizing Agile teams in using or abandoning specific tools for specific situations or projects. The tools model presents a mental model to represent various types of tools: development tools, automated testing tools, deployment tools, automatic documentation generator tools, and communication tools (Balakrishnan, 2016).

The people aspect of the ASSF characterized the attributes of agile people and agile teams. It provides two models: the Agile People Model and the Agile Team Choreography Model.

Agile Culture

The agile organizational environment must include a focus on culture to minimize or prevent mistakes early in the process, thereby reducing the need for extensive rework. Organizations that are unwilling to learn from these mistakes suffer IT failures and may cease to exist after one or two significant failures (Charette, 2005). Turk et al. (2005) investigated the assumptions underlying agile software development and found that some assumptions did not apply in all software development environments or organizations. Some of these assumptions were not aligned with, or directly conflicted with, the organization's assumptions, and management must align the development needs with the development process.

Culture was a critical factor in the success of agile, and it must have a culture of trust to be aware of factors that can impact employees. Education, partnership with executives, training,

and a willingness to adapt are all essential steps in the value chain, providing an understanding that agile is a continuous journey. Booch (2007) explored collaborative development environments and found that ultimately the quality of the system is directly the responsibility of the development team and their direct labor. Collaborative environments are team-centric and focus on the user experience to meet the team's needs. Psychologically, there is a subtle yet essential shift in perspective. Teams create a collaborative design or development environment that is distinct because software developers must manipulate deep artifacts with equally complex associations among teams and through IT resources, spanning either short or long physical distances. Cross-functional teams are redesigned from the ground up and function through several iterations, listening to customers who match the agile methods.

Agile Mindset

The agile mindset is a way of thinking that involves understanding, collaborating, learning, and staying flexible to achieve high-performing results. By combining the agile mindset with processes and tools, teams can adapt to change and deliver incremental value to their customers (Jaafari & Amiri, 2019; Schwaber, 2015). During agile adoption and transformation, teams that understand the Scrum process well enough and even grasp some agile principles but lack the necessary mindset often encounter roadblocks in the transition. Getting the mindset right is what moves teams to high performance, a level of performance described as “optimal productivity,” “astonishing results,” and “a team that can do anything.” An agile mindset is the set of attitudes supporting an agile working environment. These include respect, collaboration, improvement and learning cycles, pride in ownership, focus on delivering value, and the ability to adapt to change. This mindset is essential for cultivating high-performing teams, which in turn deliver exceptional value to their customers.

Agile Leadership Roles

Agile leaders also helped teams progress in their maturity. Agility is not binary; teams go through predictable stages as they enhance their ability to learn and improve. Leaders create a supportive environment in which teams can progress; they provide coaches and exposure to peers who can help teams learn; and they commit themselves to improving their own abilities in parallel. Where agile leadership comes into play in the management context is ensuring that the different parts of the organization, with their varying operating models, do not undermine each other. Put more positively, agile leaders need to help the organization optimize for flexibility and continuous improvement, ensuring that improving customer outcomes always takes priority and that the rest of the organization supports this mission. However, other things need to be done as well. Agile leaders, like most leaders, are organizational representatives and agents of change. Their actions facilitate others to promote support for organizational goals. Bass (2016) asserted that leaders are role models who motivate individuals towards defined visions and goals. A leader's personal actions shape others' expectations and behaviors within the organization, which, in turn, influence job performance (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015). Hocine and Zhang (2014) argued that leaders motivate and guide subordinates to complete organizational initiatives, thereby contributing to the project outcome. When a project is directed by effective leadership, team performance and productivity are enhanced, work quality improves, and the likelihood of positive project outcomes increases (Araújo & Pedron, 2015).

Agile Project Management

Under traditional project management, projects were divided into distinct phases: requirements, design, coding, and testing. Each phase was completed before the next phase began, and previous phases were not revisited (Banerjee, 2016). In contrast to this linear sequence of traditional project management, agile project management, a more recent approach, implements short iterative cycles of product delivery (Heidrich et al., 2014). Product features are delivered incrementally, and code is integrated continuously. With this method, customers have a functioning product quickly, rather than waiting for months for completion under the traditional model. Since its inception over a decade ago, agile software development has become a mainstream software development model. Management competencies outlined in the Agile Project Management Handbook stress “flexibility over predictability, value-driven as opposed to plan-driven, with incremental rather than one-shot delivery, putting greater emphasis on a team-based approach” (Taylor, 2015, p. 673). The agile approach was designed to embrace changes during project development. Like the traditional project management approach, agile is set up in phases. Rather than a single, large process model implemented in the conventional software development life cycle, the development cycles are broken into smaller parts, and the increments are revisited at each phase of development (Leau et al., 2012).

Agile Product Owners

According to Unger-Windeler et al. (2019), the product owner is responsible for prioritizing and overseeing the development team’s tasks, ensuring the company derives as much value as possible from the team’s work on a Scrum team. You can think of an agile product owner as the project management lead in the product’s development. When they receive the high-level goals and plans from product management, product owners will translate that strategy into stories and other individual tasks for the product backlog. Unger-Windeler et al. (2019) also stated that product owners serve as the bridge between the product’s strategic and tactical plans. Product owners can be members of the product management team, but at most companies, they are part of the development team.

Agile Team Coordination and Communication

Coordination, referred to in the Agile manifesto as collaboration, was a primary key to success during adoption. Not only is adopting a large-scale agile framework complex and challenging, but teaching adaptation practices at the team level is equally complex. Coordination is an essential part of collaboration; automated testing tools, infrastructure, and environment are positively impacted by agents that work together (Mansor et al., 2016). Shared information helps achieve common goals, and graphical elements facilitate understanding between disparate groups.

Communication is also vital for the transfer of knowledge and information and supports the successful coordination of projects. Orłowski et al. (2017) identified the business environment as dynamic and characterized by rapid change, complexity, and uncertainty. Technological progress and reduced political barriers create the possibility for people and

organizations to work almost anywhere, anytime. Applying knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities ensures the successful handling of dynamic changes.

Agile Software Development

Williams and Cockburn (2003) state that agile software development is centered on feedback and change, emphasizing that software development is an empirical, nonlinear process in which short feedback loops are necessary to achieve a desirable, predictable outcome (Liechti et al., 2017). Drury et al. (2012) argue that agile methods must contribute to one or more of the following: driving change, proactively anticipating change, responding to change, or learning from change. Furthermore, an agile method must contribute to, rather than detract from, perceived economy, quality, and simplicity. A third requirement is to be continually prepared to use the component. Thus, agile software development has been characterized differently from plan-based or traditional development methods, primarily by emphasizing adaptation to change and delivering high-quality products through straightforward processes. Neurur and Balijepally (2007) stated that agile and traditional methods differ in several areas, including their fundamental assumptions, approaches to control, management styles, knowledge management, role assignment, customer roles, project cycles, development models, and desired organizational structures.

Collaboration Challenges of Agile Teams

Alzoubi et al. (2016) categorized factors that complicate communication in geographically distributed teams: physical distance, team configuration, project characteristics, and customer interaction. Rizvi et al. (2015) categorized communication complexities applicable to remote teams as communication challenges that included (a) time zone differences; (b) deficient asynchronous interaction; (c) language barriers; (d) imperfect collaborative infrastructure; and (e) insufficient cooperation on priorities, requirements, and reviews.

Alzoubi et al. (2016) reviewed the literature to analyze the communication factors that complicate collaborations in geographically distributed teams and recommended potential solutions. They identified several mitigating characteristics, including limiting distribution to no more than 2 teams, encouraging face-to-face communication via video tools and site visits, facilitating frequent product demonstrations, supporting trust and honesty within the team, promoting organizational support for rapid, frequent communication, and systematic refactoring of development code.

Failure to understand business processes places the quality and sustainability of software development at risk (Sundararajan et al., 2014). However, Agile methodologies, especially Scrum, can be a good fit for Agile projects if there are regularly scheduled information exchanges, such as weekly team retrospectives and general project progress discussions (Paasivaara & Lassenius, 2014). To streamline knowledge sharing among Agile teams, Bass (2016) proposed dividing project-related information into syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic objects. Syntactic objects represent the technical domain, semantic objects are part of the business area, and pragmatic objects are components of project management, including resources and scheduling. In large-scale Agile projects, a knowledge-sharing strategy should be part of the Agile process (Bass, 2016). While emphasizing the importance of establishing knowledge-sharing practices for scaling Agile development, Santos et al. (2015) developed a model for

integrating knowledge sharing in the organizational environment and motivation activities. They reported that successful knowledge-sharing practices among Agile team members enhance the company's competitiveness. Knowledge of project requirements is a critical element of the Agile team dynamic (Strode et al., 2009); team members depend on each other to work together and have a singular understanding of the objectives. Two additional knowledge dependency paradigms are domain expertise and task allocation (Strode et al., 2009).

Temporal dispersion refers to differences in work time or time zones, and, like spatial distance, temporal distance poses common and wide-ranging hurdles (Alzoubi et al., 2016; Nguyen-Duc et al., 2015). Espinosa et al. (2015) posited that the temporal gap has a greater impact on team performance than does the geographical gap. By studying the effects of temporal distance through a more straightforward concept of interactivity and measuring interactivity levels, Espinosa et al. found that using well-chosen communication technology mitigated the effects of time zone differences on the performance of remote teams. They noted the benefit of temporal teams' dislocation in situations where development, testing, and other activities span a wider temporal range. There is general agreement among scholars that coordination of cost and higher project complexity are consequences of temporal distance (Verner et al., 2014). To mitigate these challenges, Verner et al. (2014) suggested predefined overlapping work schedules and periodic co-location of teams or team members at key moments of product development.

Human factors influence the agile adoption process. Departing from familiar traditional methodologies and embracing an Agile process is challenging for some individuals (Gandomani & Nafchi, 2016). Gandomani and Nafchi (2016) studied human-related barriers to Agile adaptation and found inaccurate perceptions of the new methodology might be the reason for incomplete or failed transformations. These human-related factors included resistance to change, unrealistic expectations, and cultural issues. Lenberg et al. (2016) supported these findings, noting that readiness for change in software engineering firms is a function of members' awareness of the need for change and perceptions of inclusion in organizational change.

There was valuable learning on successful team collaboration to be gained from the theme of Agile Coordination and Communication. The importance of collaboration, coordination, and communication in agile teams is often discussed and rarely disputed. These activities are supported through various practices, including pairing, customer collaboration, stand-ups, and the planning game. The learning from this theme will be further analyzed in conjunction with the findings from the interview sessions to be conducted.

Agility and Organizational Change

Improved organizational agility enhances the organization's ability to respond effectively and proactively to unexpected environmental shifts (Appelbaum et al., 2017b). The customer's role has evolved from being a recipient of a transaction, product, or service to one that enables them to improve these products and services (Yang & Liu, 2012). It is no longer sufficient for an organization to produce products and services that it thinks will appeal to customers. The ability to sense unexpected changes, be attuned to customers' expectations, and adjust internal capabilities, structures, and products ahead of competitors is crucial for maintaining a competitive advantage (Yang & Liu, 2012). Appelbaum et al. (2017b) found that organizations used to compete on economies of scale achieved through control and hierarchy. The competitive environment has shifted, and economies of scale alone are no longer sufficient; they must be balanced with strategic agility, as opportunities are short-lived.

Situational awareness, a key characteristic of an agile workplace, enables workers to understand how their work fits into the larger system, strengthening their focus on what they are doing, what is possible, and how their work and its connection to the larger system can be improved. Ross (2018) stated that situational awareness enables workers to detect environmental changes and quickly adapt their work to them as they occur (Joroff et al., 2003). Ross (2018) also stated that agile organizations learn to incorporate micro improvements into the system. Micro improvements accumulate over time and can lead to significant transformations, fostering a continuous improvement mindset and workers' abilities (Joroff et al., 2003). Rehearsing change is another characteristic of agility, which allows continuous experimentation and refinement of the change, while simultaneously increasing workers' buy-in of the change, as opposed to the traditional change pilots, which are often used to evaluate the effectiveness and deem a change as success or failure (Joroff et al., 2003).

Agile Adoption Overview

Agile adoption is a change in process from a traditional, sequential development model (e.g., Waterfall) to one that aligns with Agile values and principles (Denning, 2016; Gandomani & Nafchi, 2016). Agile is considered an alternative approach to traditional project management or product development. It can be summarized as a value-based, iterative approach under which requirements and solutions evolve through the collaborative effort of self-organizing cross-functional teams. Agile emphasizes adaptive planning, evolutionary development, continuous delivery of value, and continuous improvement, encouraging rapid, flexible responses to change. The focus during Agile adoption is on process change, which moves a software team from one process, such as Waterfall, to an Agile process or framework. The most common change in process is the implementation of the Scrum framework. It could also mean implementing Kanban, Lean software development, Extreme Programming (XP), or another Agile methodology (Denning, 2016; Jovanović et al., 2017).

The adoption also requires significant changes in the organization's behaviors and cultures. The adoption includes new processes, people, management, culture, and technical issues. In my study, business values are considered the core component, and focus emerges as a business value that requires clear goals. The transition must facilitate and achieve business value (Gandomani & Nafchi, 2016). Adoption cannot be achieved overnight or within a short period. Change elicits responses that range from inaction to acknowledgment, rectification, and dissuasion. Inaction is often due to the awareness of resistance or inability to respond (Vrhovec, 2016). Acknowledgment recognizes the resistance but may not do anything else. Rectification intends to solve the problems. Dissuasion attempts to prevent the resistance through coercion, authoritative persuasion, or supportive persuasion; inaction and acknowledgment only increase resistance. Rectification and dissuasion can lower resistance; however, the most effective response to opposition is congruent rectification (Vrhovec, 2016).

The benefits of adopting Agile are many. Agile development accelerates the delivery of initial business value. Through continuous planning and feedback, it can ensure that value is maximized throughout the development process. Adaptive iterative planning and feedback learning loop mean that teams can continuously align the delivered software with the desired business needs, easily adapting to changing requirements throughout the process (Denning, 2019). Organizations can significantly reduce the project risk associated with software development (Denning, 2019). Finally, by following an Agile process, project outcomes result in

a software system that better addresses business and customer needs. Finally, by following an Agile process, project outcomes result in a software system that better addresses business and customer needs.

Methods

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the firsthand experiences of Agile practitioners and uncover critical factors and practices that contribute to the successful adoption of Agile methodologies in system development projects. By understanding their lived experiences, this research aimed to shed light on the challenges they faced, the strategies they employed, and the lessons they learned throughout the Agile adoption process. The target population consisted of software development team leaders in the United States who had successfully adopted Agile methodologies for their teams.

To recruit participants, we presented my research at three local chapters of the Project Management Institute (PMI). The local PMI chapters assisted in distributing my recruitment flyers before my presentation, and we engaged with chapter members afterward to address any questions they had regarding the research. Over 50 chapter members in the United States received research flyers. Additionally, we used LinkedIn to contact 60 individuals (both men and women) who appeared to meet the research criteria based on their profiles. The ending sample consisted of 25 software development team leaders from various companies.

Data were collected via semi-structured face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 1 hour each. An interview protocol was employed, incorporating open-ended questions. The data analysis involved a thematic analysis of the collected data to identify observations, patterns, and themes that emerged from the participants' experiences. This interpretive analysis aimed to uncover the deeper meanings and insights inherent in the participants' experiences, enabling a rich understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Research Question:

The central research question (RQ) of this doctoral study was as follows: What were the lived experiences of software team leaders during the successful adoption and implementation of Agile methodologies for their software development projects?

Sample Interview Questions:

1. What is the "burning reason" or business justification why your company chose to adopt agile frameworks and practices?
2. What were your key performance indicators (KPI) and/or Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) for your agile initiative?
3. What benefit(s) was the organization seeking from an agile adoption?
4. Describe your agile mindset and the agile mindset of the software teams and business partners during the agile adoption.

Findings

The participant demographics are displayed in Table 1. The 25 participants were identified throughout data collection and analysis as P01-P25.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Gender	Agile roles	Location	Experience in years	
				Agile	Software development
P1	F	SM	Denver, CO	20	20
P2	M	—	—	18	18
P3	M	SM	SF Bay area, CA	16	16
P4	M	SM	Denver, CO	18	18
P5	M	SM, product owner, Agile PMO lead	Torrance , CA	16	16
P6	F	SM	Greenwood, IN	8	8
P7	M	SM, Agile coach, software PM	Phoenix, AZ	11	16
P8	M	Software project lead, SM	Phoenix, AZ	5	12
P8	F	SM, senior Agile coach	Washington, DC, area	10	17
P10	M	Agile project leader	Washington, DC	11	18
P11	M	SM	Grand Rapids, MI	15	22
P12	M	—	—	7	17
P13	M	SM, project lead	Philadelphia, PA	8	18
P14	F	Product owner, Agile coach	Golden, CO	12	21
P15	M	Agile PMO lead, SM, Agile coach	Burbank, CA	14	20
P16	M	SM, senior Agile coach	Santa Monica, CA	15	24
P17	M	Software project lead, SM	Salt Lake, UT	13	20
P18	M	SM, senior Agile coach	—	16	19
P19	M	—	—	20	24
P20	M	Enterprise Agile coach, SM, senior project manager, program manager	Salt Lake, UT	23	24
P21	M	SM, senior Agile coach	Santa Clara, CA	16	22
P22	F	SM, Agile coach	SF Bay area, CA	13	20
P23	F	SM, senior Agile coach	Denver, CO	16	23
P24	M	—	—	—	27
P25	M	SM, senior Agile coach	SF, CA	23	28

Note. Participants P2, P12, P18, P19, and P24 dropped out of the study. Dashes indicate data unavailable for these participants. F = female; SM = scrum master; M = male; SF = San Francisco; PMO = project management office; PM = product manager.

The data analysis resulted in 5 themes. They are 1) Cultivating an Agile mindset for organizational adaptability, 2) Agile leadership as a catalyst for team maturity, 3) Organizational culture as a determinant of Agile sustainability, 4) Change management as a critical enabler of

Agile adoption, and 5) Tools and processes as enablers of Agile efficiency. These themes are also discussed here in relation to existing scholarly literature. Collectively, these findings emphasize that Agile is not merely a project management methodology but a transformative organizational philosophy requiring alignment across mindset, leadership, culture, and infrastructure.

Theme 1: Cultivating an Agile Mindset for Organizational Adaptability

One of the most prominent findings from the participant narratives was the centrality of an Agile mindset, which is characterized by adaptability, openness, resilience, and a continuous learning orientation. As one participant stated, *“The Agile mindset is about being willing to change when things don’t work and being open to learning from mistakes.”* This sentiment captures the essence of agility as more than just speed—it is about the capacity to pivot in the face of uncertainty and to frame change as an opportunity rather than a threat.

The literature supports this perspective, with Ozkan and Gok (2020) identifying the Agile mindset as the foundation of organizational agility, rooted in proactive problem-solving and iterative improvement. Edmondson and Lei (2018) further emphasize that psychological safety—an environment where individuals feel safe to take risks and share ideas—is critical for cultivating such a mindset. Without this safety, openness and experimentation are stifled. Denning (2019) also notes that embedding Agile values such as respect, openness, and focus into team norms and rituals helps organizations maintain operational resilience in dynamic and unpredictable environments.

Theme 2: Agile Leadership as a Catalyst for Team Maturity

The study revealed that leadership plays a pivotal role in determining the success and maturity of Agile adoption. Participants consistently described leaders not as traditional authority figures, but as facilitators and enablers: *“Leaders here aren’t telling you how to do your job—they’re clearing obstacles so you can do your job.”* This reflects the principles of servant leadership, where leaders focus on supporting and empowering their teams rather than exerting top-down control.

Rigby et al. (2016) argue that Agile leaders are essential in scaling Agile practices across organizations, serving as cultural role models and reinforcing Agile principles in decision-making. Moe et al. (2021) expand on this by showing that leaders who embrace transparency and adaptability foster team autonomy, ultimately enabling self-organization and accountability. These leadership qualities are not only beneficial to Agile teams but also necessary for sustaining agility in large-scale, complex organizational environments.

Theme 3: Organizational Culture as a Determinant of Agile Sustainability

Another dominant theme was the recognition that organizational culture either enables or inhibits Agile sustainability. One participant warned, *“If the culture doesn’t support openness and trust, Agile becomes just another set of meetings.”* This reflects a common pitfall where organizations adopt Agile processes but fail to embrace the values that underpin them.

Denning (2019) asserts that culture change is not optional in Agile transformations; it is the transformation. Organizations with high-trust, collaborative cultures are more likely to sustain Agile practices over time (Poth & Jähn, 2020). Conversely, cultures rooted in rigid

hierarchies or blame-oriented dynamics can undermine Agile by stifling transparency, feedback, and shared ownership. This finding reinforces the need for Agile transformation efforts to go beyond process implementation to reshape cultural norms actively.

Theme 4: Change Management as a Critical Enabler of Agile Adoption

Change management emerged as a critical enabler of Agile adoption, with participants citing structured rollout strategies and visible early successes as key to gaining stakeholder buy-in. As one respondent explained, *“We started small, proved it worked, and then expanded—people need to see success before they’ll buy in.”* This incremental approach aligns with established change management models that emphasize phased implementation, stakeholder engagement, and continuous feedback loops.

Dikert et al. (2016) found that pilot projects serve as effective laboratories for building confidence in Agile practices before scaling. van Waardenburg and van Vliet (2019) highlight that adaptive governance—adjusting decision-making structures based on feedback—helps organizations refine Agile processes and maintain relevance in changing environments. This study’s findings affirm that Agile change management is not a one-off event but an ongoing process of learning, adaptation, and scaling.

Theme 5: Tools and Processes as Enablers of Agile Efficiency

The final theme emphasizes the role of tools and processes in making Agile principles actionable. Participants consistently reported that well-aligned tools enhance transparency, streamline communication, and enable real-time progress tracking. As one participant observed, *“Our tools let everyone see exactly where things stand, so nothing gets lost in translation.”*

Kuhrmann et al. (2017) note that tools must be integrated seamlessly into workflows to avoid becoming administrative burdens. Forsgren et al. (2018) argue that tooling is most effective when paired with disciplined Agile rituals—such as stand-ups, retrospectives, and backlog refinement—that maintain team alignment and momentum. The synergy between tools and processes allows organizations to balance the discipline required for consistent delivery with the flexibility needed to adapt.

Findings Summary

The findings of this study reinforce the idea that Agile adoption and sustainability require a multidimensional approach that integrates mindset, leadership, culture, change management, and enabling tools. The five themes identified in this research are not discrete elements but interdependent components of a holistic Agile ecosystem. A strong Agile mindset empowers teams to embrace change; Agile leadership removes barriers and fosters autonomy; a supportive organizational culture sustains trust and collaboration; effective change management ensures adoption gains momentum; and robust tools and processes operationalize Agile values into daily practice.

In a rapidly evolving business environment, organizations cannot rely on static strategies. Agile offers not just a set of practices but a philosophy that equips organizations to adapt, innovate, and thrive. The study’s insights provide a roadmap for leaders seeking to embed agility into their organizations' DNA, ensuring that Agile is not a passing trend but a lasting capability.

By aligning strategy, culture, and execution, organizations can transform Agile from a methodology into a strategic advantage—one that enables resilience, responsiveness, and sustained competitive performance.

The findings from the experiences of agile leaders during a successful agile adoption highlight the significance of the ASSF (Agile Success and Sustainability Framework) conceptual model as a powerful indicator for formulating and planning an Agile adoption project. The project manager assumes a critical role in ensuring the successful completion of a project, which entails meeting the constraints of scope, time, cost, quality, resources, and risk as approved between project management and senior management (PMI, 2013). However, project success is influenced by multiple factors beyond project management, and project managers face constant pressure from various stakeholders to achieve their goals.

Project management is driven by the goals of minimizing costs, delivering projects on time, achieving high-quality outcomes, and meeting stakeholder expectations. It is crucial to define and manage project success, considering that a significant portion of IT projects are canceled before completion or incur substantial cost overruns (Standish Group International, 2014). However, the concept of project success remains subjective (Berssaneti & Carvalho, 2015; Müller, 2016). The elements of time, scope, and cost, often referred to as the iron triangle, are closely associated with project success due to their interdependence (Bronte-Stewart, 2015; Davis, 2013).

Many organizations face challenges with projects that exceed budgets, change scopes over time, and fail to meet deadlines. The literature suggests that project failure often stems from the project environment, tasks, and people, and when a project fails, it involves shortcomings in management, sales, and implementation (Lehtinen et al., 2014). Previous research has underscored the crucial role of project management in project success or failure, emphasizing the importance of critical tasks such as risk identification and control, schedule monitoring, and cost and scope management (Nguyen, 2016). The findings of this study align with prior research, highlighting the interconnectedness of multiple variables. Study participants also identified poor communication and engagement as primary contributors to project failure, leading to the inability to meet cost and time expectations and achieve customer satisfaction.

Conversely, participants perceived project success as meeting expectations regarding time, budget, scope, and added value to the client, thus aligning project success with failure. Key elements of success included fostering a positive team environment, effective time management, clear and articulate communication, well-defined project criteria, and strong leadership. The importance of clearly defining project criteria aligns with prior research advocating the early definition of success criteria in the project development phase (Heagney, 2013; Joslin & Müller, 2015; PMI, 2013).

The involvement of project stakeholders and considering their objectives are also crucial for determining project success (Bronte-Stewart, 2015; Heagney, 2013). Stakeholder involvement allows them to select success criteria that are important to them, aligning the project's goals with their needs and considering available resources and risks (Joslin & Müller, 2015; Cullen & Parker, 2015). As a result, the attributes used to measure project success have evolved to be more focused on quality and meeting stakeholder needs. The notion of success defined by added value to the client aligns with this stakeholder-centered focus.

Motivating and guiding subordinates toward achieving goals and initiatives is a key element of project success. The actions of transformational leaders play a vital role in developing expectations and behaviors within the organization, influencing performance, quality, and results

(Bass, 2016; Hocine & Zhang, 2014; Araújo & Pedron, 2015; Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015). Transformational leaders inspire their followers by fostering a shared vision and considering their needs; this qualitative analysis provided valuable insight into participants' experiences with successful Agile adoptions in the selected population. The analysis revealed that the agility aspect of the Agile Software Frameworks (ASSF), including the Agile Mindset, was a significant contributor to successful Agile adoptions. The participants reported that the Agile Mindset provided a foundation for effective communication and collaboration, emphasized continuous improvement, and focused on delivering value to the customer.

Recommendations and Implications

Some recommendations for new research topics related to Agile adoptions:

1. A qualitative or quantitative research study that explores the impact of Agile transformation on organizational culture: This research could investigate how Agile adoption affects an organization's culture, including changes in leadership, team dynamics, and employee engagement.
2. A qualitative or quantitative research study that examines the role of project management in Agile adoption: This research could investigate the relationship between project management and Agile adoption, including the benefits and challenges of integrating Agile principles into project management practices.
3. A qualitative or quantitative research study that investigates the impact of Agile adoption on software quality: This research could explore how Agile adoption affects software quality, including the role of testing, continuous integration, and code reviews in improving software quality.
4. Identifying factors that contribute to successful Agile transformation: This research could investigate the key factors that contribute to a successful Agile transformation, including leadership support, training and coaching, and team buy-in.
5. Comparing different Agile frameworks and practices: This research could compare different Agile frameworks and practices, including Scrum, Kanban, and Lean, to identify their strengths and weaknesses in different contexts.
6. Evaluating the effectiveness of Agile adoption in different industries: This research could investigate the effectiveness of Agile adoption in different industries, including healthcare, finance, and manufacturing, to identify best practices and challenges.

Research Study Agile Adoption Recommendations

Agile methodology has become a popular approach to software development and project management. Many organizations are adopting agile practices to increase flexibility, improve speed to market, and enhance overall organizational effectiveness. However, implementing agile practices can be complex and challenging. In this paper, we will provide recommendations for executive sponsors on how to adopt and transform to an agile methodology successfully. After conducting this research study, this researcher offers the following general recommendations for Agile adoption.

Develop a Clear Agile Strategy: The first step in adopting agile methodology is to develop a clear strategy. This strategy should outline the goals and objectives of the agile transformation, along with the expected outcomes. The strategy should also define the roles and

responsibilities of key stakeholders, including the executive sponsor, project managers, and development teams. By having a clear strategy, organizations can ensure that everyone is aligned and working towards a common goal.

Provide Adequate Training and Resources: One of the biggest challenges in adopting agile methodology is ensuring that everyone in the organization is adequately trained and has the necessary resources. This includes training in agile methodologies, tools, and techniques, as well as access to the necessary software, hardware, and other resources. Organizations should also provide ongoing support and coaching to help teams adopt and integrate agile practices into their daily work.

Encourage Collaboration and Communication: Agile methodology is based on collaboration and communication between team members. Executive sponsors should encourage and facilitate collaboration by forming cross-functional teams and promoting open communication. This can be achieved through collaborative tools such as chat applications, online collaboration platforms, and video conferencing software. By encouraging collaboration and communication, organizations can improve their productivity and increase their overall effectiveness.

Foster a Culture of Continuous Improvement: Agile methodology is based on the principles of continuous improvement and adaptation. To successfully adopt and transform to an agile methodology, organizations must foster a culture of continuous improvement. This means encouraging teams to identify areas for improvement, experiment with new approaches, and regularly review and reflect on their processes and practices. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, organizations can increase their agility and responsiveness to changing market conditions.

Experiment with pilots and prototypes: Ensure key stakeholders have a common understanding of Agile concepts and benefits. Set up a robust feedback mechanism to involve stakeholders early in the process. Show and communicate progress and success. Envision Agile benefits, desired outcomes, a foundational roadmap, and how to measure success. Plan a concise, contextualized strategy for Agile transformation. Others throughout the organization will recognize when something extraordinary is happening and will jump on the bandwagon to adopt a promising methodology.

Inadequate experience with Agile approaches: Most new Agile teams have members who are inexperienced in applying basic Agile practices and unfamiliar with successful Agile transformations. An agile process will expose problems and issues with the project more quickly than a more traditional development process; addressing them is also not always very clear to new and inexperienced Agile teams. Challenges can arise in prioritization, breaking requirements into testable, independent increments, and understanding and communicating the problems to be addressed in a retrospective, among other areas. These challenges can add up and make the difference between the team's success or failure with Agile. Understand that inexperienced teams need more formal processes and guidance. Focus on collaborating to design an intuitive product or process rather than extensive training. Include an experienced Agile resource to coach the team, leveraging their substantial experience in Agile methods and success with Agile practices.

Optimize work with distributed teams by utilizing easily accessible, intuitive communication and collaboration tools. Whenever possible, maintain stability among team members on a project until its completion. This will help teams mature and develop a cadence and well-defined velocities that provide better predictability to product owners and stakeholders.

Invest in making training and continued coaching guidance available for the teams to consult. Encourage a learning organization by launching a community of practice. Executive leaders should model the behavior they want their management team to display. Lead by being an example and living the values they want them to adopt, and help middle managers understand how they fit into the changing organization.

Aim to get business units aligned through training: This helps to ensure that managers of different areas are not siloed and understand the implications of interacting with teams that do work in the new way. The goal should be to break dependencies across the entire organization. Adopt an Agile funding model that allows for investment in small increments, enabling prototyping, early learning, and course correction. This approach enables cross-functional teams to learn and adapt to an Agile methodology. Change your metrics. Identify new metrics that move away from measuring and tracking lines of code, quality issues, and reports as success factors and deliverables. Focus on the “working product” and value delivery; they should be the primary measures of success in an Agile environment. Moreover, to achieve this, facilitate continuous collaboration between the business and the development team.

Process Recommendations

Embrace an Iterative and Incremental Approach: An agile mindset requires a focus on delivering value in small, incremental increments. This means breaking down projects into smaller, manageable chunks and delivering working software at the end of each iteration. By embracing an iterative, incremental approach, teams can quickly respond to changing requirements and deliver value to customers more quickly.

Prioritize Collaboration and Communication: These are key components of an agile mindset. Teams should prioritize communication and collaboration between team members, stakeholders, and customers. This can be achieved by establishing regular meetings and communication channels, such as daily stand-ups, sprint reviews, and retrospectives. By prioritizing collaboration and communication, teams can improve their productivity and reduce the risk of misunderstandings and miscommunications.

Focus on Continuous Improvement: An agile mindset emphasizes continuous improvement. Teams should regularly reflect on their processes and practices to identify areas for improvement. This can be achieved by holding regular retrospectives and using metrics and feedback to identify areas for improvement. By focusing on continuous improvement, teams can increase their agility and responsiveness to changing market conditions.

Emphasize Customer Value: An agile mindset emphasizes delivering customer value. Teams should prioritize delivering working software that meets their customers' needs. This can be achieved by involving customers and stakeholders in the development process, gathering feedback, and using metrics to measure customer satisfaction. By emphasizing customer value, teams can ensure they deliver software that meets their customers' needs and provides business value.

Embrace Change and Adaptation: An agile mindset requires a willingness to adapt to changing market conditions. Teams should be open to changing requirements and be willing to adapt their processes and practices as needed. This can be achieved by using agile methodologies such as Scrum and Kanban, which prioritize flexibility and adaptation. By embracing change and adaptation, teams can increase their agility and responsiveness to changing market conditions.

Agility Recommendations

Developing an agile mindset is critical to successfully adopting and transforming to an agile methodology. Teams should adopt an iterative and incremental approach, prioritize collaboration and communication, focus on continuous improvement, emphasize customer value, and be open to change and adaptation. By adopting an agile mindset, teams can increase agility, accelerate time-to-market, and enhance overall organizational effectiveness.

The following are those behaviors demonstrated by those who possess an agile mindset:

1. **Respect** - Most teamwork needs to start with respect for your fellow teammates. At the organizational level, respect for colleagues, the customer, and the product itself is also key to maintaining an appropriate work environment.
2. **Collaboration** - With increasingly complex systems being built and subsequently complex problems being solved, no one person would be able to hold all the necessary information in their head to complete a task. Additionally, working collaboratively with other parts of the organization will decrease the number of handoffs necessary to deliver. Facilitating collaboration through tools, office space, and behavioral norms can improve the quality and quantity of collaborative discussions.
3. **Improvement Cycle** - No process should be set in stone. There is always room for improvement. An organization supporting such behavior would have a light hold on procedural adherence.
4. **Learning Cycle** - Allowing individuals to try something new, and yes, possibly fail, allows the staff to learn and improve themselves. Individuals should not be dinged for mistakes but instead supported for taking risks and increasing the group's knowledge.
5. **Focus on Delivering Value** - The main point of an agile team is to deliver value to the customer. The team should be able to focus on what is most valuable at the time and deliver, knowing that others in the organization (managers and scrum masters, for example) are there to help remove any impediments.
6. **Ability to Adapt to Change** - If the customer calls two hours after a meeting and wants changes, the organization rolls with it. Any process to manage this change can't impede the change.

This agility mindset is the environment within which agile teams flourish. It is neither a prerequisite for agile adoption nor required for a functional agile team. Nevertheless, if this mindset is cultivated and nourished, whether before, during, or after agile adoption, the teams and the company will experience excellent results, happy employees delivering outstanding value, and making customers elated.

Agile Organizational Recommendations

Transformation is about efficiency, agility, and adopting fresh thinking to tap into new markets or revenue streams. Or, better yet, both. How do you do it? To start, take note of how other successful transformational leaders drive success. Then, you will need to align business and IT interests to establish priorities, a vision, and outcomes.

Aligning business and technology leaders around a unified view of value is key to business transformation. Critical to that effort is trust. Trust stems from vulnerability and empathy toward others. Listening to understand the business or IT's goals, needs, and challenges can help establish a trusting relationship that will work to your benefit the rest of the way. Aligned teams that trust each other and share goals also benefit from sharing wins. The more wins, the more validated the relationship. The more validated the relationship, the more momentum gained to continue toward transformation. Iterative wins and organizational momentum also help justify future investment in IT modernization and digital transformation to boards and other stakeholders. An agile approach provides checkpoints for both IT and business stakeholders to evaluate whether they are adequately supporting and enabling one another. Then collectively, transformation leaders can assess whether the path taken is appropriate or needs updating.

Develop a Clear Vision and Strategy: Change agents and executives should define a clear vision and strategy for agile adoption and transformation. This includes defining the objectives and goals of the transformation, identifying the teams and departments that will be impacted, and determining the resources required for successful adoption. By developing a clear vision and strategy, change agents and executives can align teams and stakeholders around a common goal and facilitate a successful transformation.

Lead by Example: Change agents and executives should demonstrate a commitment to agile methodologies. This includes actively participating in agile ceremonies, encouraging teams to adopt agile practices, and modeling behaviors that support agile principles such as collaboration, transparency, and continuous improvement. By leading by example, change agents and executives can inspire teams to adopt agile methodologies, demonstrating the importance of agile transformation.

Provide Training and Support: Change agents and executives should equip teams with the training and support needed to successfully adopt agile methodologies. This can include providing training on agile frameworks and practices, as well as coaching teams on implementing agile methodologies in their day-to-day work. By providing training and support, change agents and executives can help teams build the skills and knowledge required for successful agile adoption and transformation.

Foster a Culture of Innovation and Experimentation: Change agents and executives should foster a culture of innovation and experimentation within their organization. This includes encouraging teams to experiment with new ideas and approaches and providing support for these efforts. Change agents and executives can also create a safe space for experimentation by encouraging teams to learn from failures and providing resources for testing and prototyping. By fostering a culture of innovation and experimentation, change agents and executives can help teams embrace agile principles such as flexibility, adaptability, and continuous improvement.

Empower Teams and Encourage Autonomy: Change agents and executives should empower teams and encourage autonomy in decision-making. This includes providing teams with the resources, tools, and support they need to make decisions and take ownership of their work. Change agents and executives can also provide guidance and support to help teams make informed decisions and ensure alignment with organizational goals. By empowering teams and encouraging autonomy, change agents and executives can help teams increase their agility, responsiveness, and accountability.

Agile Leadership Recommendations

Despite being the initiators of Agile transformations, executives and managers can sometimes represent the biggest obstacles to successful implementation. These leave Agile coaches and team leads in a frustrating professional paradox: facing the most resistance from the very people who hired them. Though the reasons for this resistance may vary, the results are often the same: failed transformations, fragmented teams, and wasted time and resources. To combat this, Agile experts must arm themselves with an Agile transformation strategy that brings leaders firmly on board.

Leaders must also commit to continually investing in and supporting transformation efforts, even those that do not call for their direct participation. If the problem is that leaders are failing to grasp the benefits of Agile, demonstrating them in practice can be an effective way to address it. There are two ways to approach this, at the team and leadership levels, but the key to both is to frame any changes as an experiment.

One way to reassure leaders is to acknowledge the discomfort and get it out in the open. Sometimes the problem does not seem so much from a resistance to Agile specifically but to change in general. Resistance is a typical response to all types of change, particularly in the workplace. Leaders can be especially sensitive when the need for that change implies failures on their part, and managers can feel attached to a status quo that they themselves helped create. In this way, organizational transformation efforts can feel like personal criticism.

Agile transformation tips for upper management executives:

- Define the sense of urgency: as an executive, your workforce will depend on you to convincingly deliver a vision for agile change. Unite your workforce by creating a burning platform that highlights the need for change and establishes a common ground for everyone.
- Realize commitment and buy-in of executive members: to achieve upper management commitment, the necessary stakeholders will need to be given the mandate to implement the change within their divisions and departments. Budgeting will play a large role in this, as the available assets will directly determine what can and cannot be done with resources. You will want to define the impact of the agile transformation on budgets and how you will shift finances from the current to the future state, ensuring all executives have the means to implement the change.
- Create a transformational team: the initiative of the agile transformation itself will need a guiding team, often a virtual team spread across various areas of the organization, to implement the change and act as a soundboard during the implementation.
- Organize an agile maturity scale and metrics within the organization: to be able to measure progress and improvement throughout the transformation, we need a baseline measurement of agile practices and maturity throughout the organization. Try to do this at least on the level of the individual teams – we will need this information to select pilot teams.
- Start with pilot teams: even the most comprehensive, full-blown agile transformation starts by taking baby steps. For most organizations, this will mean treading new

ground, and you will want to be careful about how to approach the transformation. Select one or two teams as pilots within the organization.

- Define how you will scale and expand: growing beyond pilot teams, decide how you will expand the agile transformation within your organization, and set up a matching governance structure to support this discussion.
- Focus on added value: as an organization, a great way to add value across the board is by implementing transparent marketplaces with re-usable materials for the teams to use. To incentivize improvement, define clear KPIs and OKRs for everyone to follow, and ensure the teams are working towards well-understood epics.

Integrated Agile Framework

Michael Spayd and Michele Madore have developed an Agile transformation cultural model, which is a valuable tool for organizations seeking to adopt Agile methodologies. The Agile transformation cultural model developed by Spayd and Madore is based on the premise that successful Agile transformations require a shift in organizational culture. The model comprises four key components: leadership, values, practices, and structures.

The first component of the model, leadership, refers to the need for leaders to model and promote Agile values and behaviors. Leaders play a critical role in shaping organizational culture, and their support is essential for a successful Agile transformation. Leaders must be willing to embrace Agile values, such as transparency, collaboration, and customer focus, and model them in their own behavior.

The second component of the model, values, refers to the need to align organizational values with Agile principles. Values such as continuous improvement, flexibility, and responsiveness are essential for Agile success. Organizations must be willing to let go of traditional values and embrace new ones that support Agile methodologies.

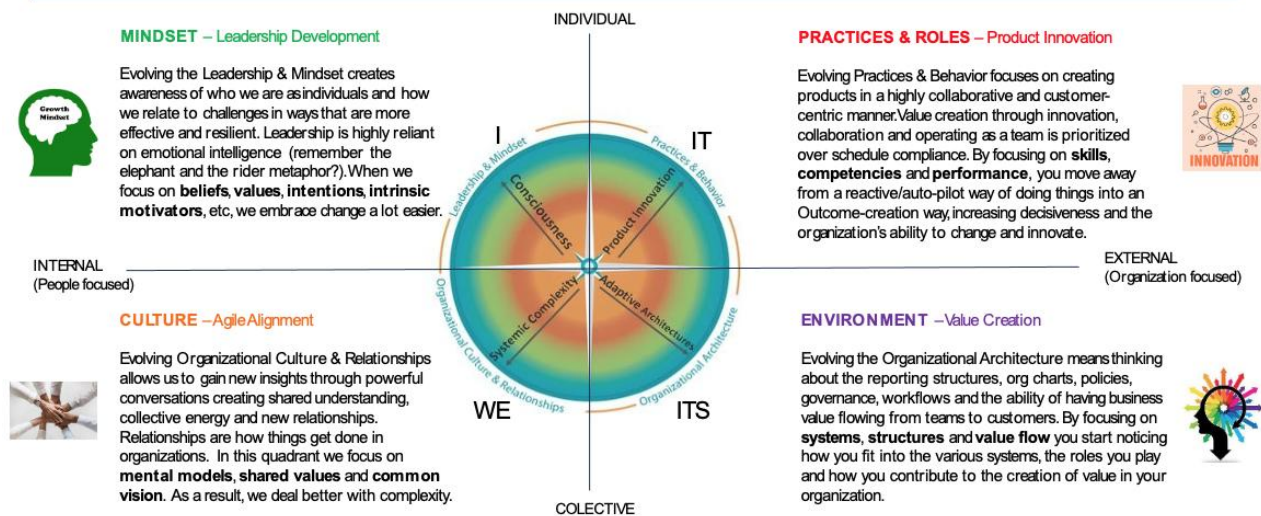
The third component of the model, practices, refers to adopting Agile practices and processes. This includes practices such as Scrum, Kanban, and Lean, as well as Agile engineering practices such as test-driven development and continuous integration. Organizations must be willing to invest in the training and development necessary to support these practices.

The fourth component of the model, structures, refers to the need to create organizational structures that support Agile methodologies. This includes creating cross-functional teams, flattening hierarchical structures, and embracing self-organizing teams (see Figure 3).

Figure 1

Integral Agile Transformation Framework

INTEGRAL AGILE TRANSFORMATION FRAMEWORK (AGILE TRANSFORMATION, SPAYD & MADORE)



Structures must be designed to promote collaboration, communication, and transparency.

Spayd and Madore's Agile transformation cultural model provides a valuable framework for organizations seeking to adopt Agile methodologies. The model emphasizes the importance of leadership, values, practices, and structures, and provides a roadmap for organizations to follow.

Michael Spayd and Michele Madore's Agile transformation cultural model provides a valuable framework for organizations seeking to adopt Agile methodologies. The model emphasizes the importance of leadership, values, practices, and structures, and provides a roadmap for organizations to follow. Numerous case studies have demonstrated the model's effectiveness, and organizations that adopt it can enjoy a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

In conclusion, an agile transformation framework model is a valuable tool for organizations seeking to adopt an agile approach to project management and software development. By following the key components of the framework, organizations can create a clear vision and strategy, establish a governance model, provide training and coaching, create a culture of continuous improvement, and sustain the transformation over the long term. With the proper framework in place, organizations can successfully navigate the challenges of agile transformation and realize the benefits of agile practices.

Summary

In summary, this research project has provided valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of software development team leaders as they adopt Agile frameworks and practices. Through our analysis of the data, we have identified the key factors that contribute to successful Agile adoption, including training and coaching, management buy-in, and effective communication and collaboration among team members. We have also identified the challenges teams face during the adoption process, including resistance to change, a lack of understanding

of Agile principles, and difficulty transitioning from traditional project management practices. Overall, this research contributes to a better understanding of the benefits and limitations of Agile adoption and provides recommendations for practitioners considering it for their software development process.

This study's findings revealed that Agile adoption is a complex process that involves significant cultural and organizational change. The study participants identified several challenges to Agile adoption, including resistance to change, lack of buy-in from senior management, and difficulty in implementing Agile practices. However, the study also identified several benefits of Agile adoption, including improved team collaboration, increased customer satisfaction, and faster time-to-market.

This study's findings also revealed several factors that influence successful Agile adoption, including leadership support, employee engagement, and organizational culture. The study participants emphasized the importance of leadership support in driving successful Agile adoption, as well as the need for employee engagement and participation in the adoption process. The study also found that organizations with a culture of innovation and continuous improvement were more likely to adopt Agile methodologies successfully.

This study makes several contributions to the field of Agile adoption. Firstly, the study provides a detailed understanding of the lived experiences of individuals involved in Agile adoption, helping organizations better understand its challenges and benefits. Secondly, the study identifies the factors that influence successful Agile adoption, which can help organizations develop strategies to support it. Finally, the study highlights the importance of organizational culture in Agile adoption, which can help organizations to create a culture that supports Agile methodologies.

In conclusion, your dissertation on a qualitative phenomenological study of Agile adoption in organizations makes a valuable contribution to the field. The study's findings highlight the challenges and benefits of Agile adoption, as well as the factors that influence its success. The study emphasizes the importance of leadership support, employee engagement, and organizational culture in driving successful Agile adoption. The study's findings can help organizations develop strategies to support Agile adoption and foster a culture that supports Agile methodologies.

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