



Evolution and Current Trends in Agile Software Development Methodologies: A Comprehensive Analysis of Industry Adoption and Practices

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Abstract: This research article analyzes the current state of agile software development methodologies and how they are being adopted across various software industries. As companies persist in adapting to digital transformation, agile methodologies have progressed past their conventional structures to include new technologies, mixed models, and expanded implementations. This research examines prevailing trends such as the incorporation of artificial intelligence into agile methodologies, the merging of DevOps and DevSecOps with agile frameworks, and the obstacles organizations encounter in the process of agile transformation. This study identifies crucial success factors, prevalent challenges, and new trends in agile implementation through a thorough review of literature and analysis of industry practices. The results show that although agile adoption is on the rise, organizations are progressively tailoring frameworks to fit particular contexts, resulting in hybrid methodologies. The study emphasizes the increasing significance of metrics-based strategies, ongoing education, and cultural change as essential factors for effective agile implementation. This thorough examination offers important perspectives for software development companies aiming to enhance their agile methodologies in a changing technological environment.

Keywords: Agile Software Development, DevOps, Scrum, Kanban, Scaled Agile, Software Engineering, Digital Transformation, Continuous Integration

I. INTRODUCTION

Background: Over the last twenty years, the software development sector has experienced considerable change, with agile methodologies becoming the primary strategy for overseeing software projects. Following the release of the Agile Manifesto in 2001, agile methodologies have significantly transformed the way software teams work together, provide value, and adapt to evolving needs. The fundamental principles of agile development iterative progress, collaboration with customers, adaptable planning, and ongoing enhancement have struck a chord in various organizational settings, ranging from startups to major corporations.

In recent times, the agile environment has changed significantly. Organizations are no longer merely selecting between traditional waterfall and agile methods; rather, they are maneuvering through a complicated landscape of frameworks, methodologies, and combined models. The incorporation of new technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation tools has generated fresh opportunities and difficulties for agile professionals. Moreover, the growth of remote and distributed teams, driven by worldwide events, has required adjustments to conventional agile methodologies.

Research Motivation: This research is driven by multiple essential insights identified within the software development sector. Although agile adoption rates are still elevated, organizations often face challenges with implementation, cultural resistance, and difficulties in scaling. Numerous organizations indicate facing challenges in their agile transformation efforts, especially when trying to implement agile practices across various teams and departments. Additionally, the surge of agile frameworks and methodologies has resulted in uncertainty regarding which methods are best suited for particular organizational environments. Third, the swift advancement of development tools, techniques, and technologies necessitates ongoing re-evaluation of how agile methodologies need to be modified and utilized.

Research Objectives: Objectives of Research: The objectives of our research include the following: To understand how organisations in multiple industries throughout the world are currently using Agile software development methodologies, To identify what challenges and success factors there are to adopting and implementing an Agile approach, To explore the use of emerging technology practices, and how they can integrate into the current methodologies of Agile development, To assess our current understanding of different metrics and approaches to measure success and effectiveness using Agile methodology and finally to provide practical recommendations that can be used as a guide when seeking to optimise an organisation's use of Agile development practices.



Research Questions: This study addresses the following research questions:

- **RQ1:** What are the current trends in agile methodology adoption and practice across software industries?
- **RQ2:** How are organizations integrating DevOps, DevSecOps, and emerging technologies with agile frameworks?
- **RQ3:** What are the primary challenges organizations face during agile transformation, and what strategies prove most effective in addressing them?
- **RQ4:** How do organizations measure and evaluate the success of their agile implementations?

This research focuses primarily on agile methodologies as applied in software development organizations. While agile principles have been adopted in various other domains, this study concentrates on their application in software engineering contexts. The research examines practices and trends primarily from 2023-2025, acknowledging that the field continues to evolve rapidly. Limitations include the reliance on published literature and industry reports, which may not capture all organizational practices, particularly those in smaller or less visible companies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Foundations of Agile Methodologies: Agile software development grew out of the limitations of traditional waterfall methods, which could not support rapidly changing technology and requirements. The principles outlined in the Agile Manifesto focus on the importance of individuals and interaction over the importance of processes and tools, the importance of delivering working software over the importance of having detailed documentation, the importance of collaborating with customers over the importance of negotiating contracts, and the importance of responding to change instead of following predetermined plans [1]. Across the literature on Agile Software Development, there are three core frameworks of Agile that authors consistently write about and are most widely used. One framework, Scrum, is characterised by its iterative approach (sprints), defined roles and ceremonies [2]. A second framework, Kanban, is a more flexible approach to managing projects and workflow, because it concentrates on visualising workflow and limiting the amount of active work in progress [3]. A third framework, Extreme Programming (XP), is used primarily for its emphasis on the technical aspects of an Agile software development process (pair programming, continuous integration and test-driven development) [4]. While each framework offers its own advantages, they are designed to fit different project and organisational scenarios.

Evolution of Agile Practices: Recent studies highlight considerable changes in the understanding and application of agile methodologies. Organizations are progressively embracing hybrid strategies that incorporate aspects from various frameworks, customizing practices to meet their particular requirements instead of strictly following one methodology. This practical perspective indicates an evolution in the field, as professionals understand that no single model offers the best answers for every situation [5]. The idea of scaled agile has risen in importance as companies seek to broaden agile methodologies from single teams to whole departments or organizations. Frameworks like SAFe (Scaled Agile Framework), LeSS (Large-Scale Scrum), and the Spotify model have surfaced to tackle coordination, alignment, and governance issues in extensive agile implementations [6]. Research shows that scaling agile continues to be one of the biggest challenges for organizations, with numerous reports highlighting struggles in keeping agility while managing several teams [7].

Integration with DevOps and DevSecOps: A current trend in literature regarding how Agile Methodologies and DevOps practices are merging together. DevOps is essentially Agile principles applied to the entire lifecycle of software development, including Continuous Integration, Continuous Delivery and Automation, as well as emphasizing the collaboration between Development and Operations teams [8]. With this merging of practices, businesses have seen significant reductions in the time it takes to deploy software, improvements in software quality and increased speed and responsiveness of their organizations [9]. Another trend that can be seen today is the movement towards a DevSecOps Model, which is essentially DevOps encapsulated with integrated security practices throughout the entire development lifecycle, as opposed to being treated as an end-stage gate [10]. Organizations utilizing DevSecOps can experience an enhanced level of security posture while still maintaining the capacity for fast and flexible software development that is achievable through Agile and DevOps Models [11]. The literature indicates that a successful implementation of a DevSecOps Model requires a company-wide cultural change, the utilization of automated security testing and having defined ownership for security responsibilities across each internal functional team.

Emerging Technologies and Agile: Recent studies examine the ways in which new technologies are altering agile methodologies. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are being incorporated into different facets of the development process, ranging from automated code evaluations and testing to sprint organization and work estimation [12]. Tools powered by AI can assess previous project data to offer more precise forecasts and detect possible risks, allowing teams to make better-informed choices [13]. Cloud-native development and containerization technologies have greatly influenced agile methodologies. These technologies allow for more regular deployments, enhanced consistency across environments, and greater scalability, all of which closely align with agile principles [14]. Microservices architectures, usually implemented in cloud settings, enable team independence and quicker iteration cycles, essential principles of agile development [15].



Challenges in Agile Adoption: Although agile methodologies are widely adopted, literature consistently highlights various challenges organizations encounter during their implementation. Cultural resistance continues to be one of the major obstacles, especially in organizations that have established hierarchical frameworks and conventional project management methodologies [16]. Support from leadership and the culture within the organization are essential elements that influence the success or failure of agile transformations [17]. Additional frequently mentioned obstacles involve struggles with overseeing distributed teams, keeping documentation updated in fast-evolving settings, striking a balance between flexibility and essential governance, and effectively assessing agile success [18]. Studies show that companies frequently undervalue the degree of organizational transformation needed for effective agile implementation, emphasizing process alterations while overlooking cultural and mindset transformations [19].

Metrics and Measurement: The issue of measuring success in agile methodologies has sparked significant debate in recent writings. Conventional metrics like velocity, sprint burn down, and cycle time are still commonly employed, yet both researchers and practitioners are becoming more aware of their shortcomings [20]. Contemporary methods highlight outcome-focused metrics like customer satisfaction, value provided to the business, and team well-being in addition to conventional velocity measurements [21]. Studies indicate that successful measurement systems integrate quantitative metrics with qualitative evaluations and refrain from establishing detrimental incentives that promote manipulation of metrics instead of enhancing real performance [22]. The literature highlights the significance of metrics tailored to contexts that correspond with organizational objectives rather than one-size-fits-all measurement methods.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This research employs a mixed-methods approach combining systematic literature review with analysis of industry reports, case studies, and empirical data from published sources. The research design follows established protocols for conducting literature reviews in software engineering research, ensuring comprehensive coverage of relevant literature while maintaining focus on the research questions.

Literature Search Strategy: The literature search was conducted across multiple academic databases and industry sources including IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, SpringerLink, and relevant industry publications. The search focused on publications from 2023-2025 to capture the most current trends and practices, while including seminal works from earlier periods when necessary for foundational context.

Search terms included combinations of: agile software development, agile methodologies, Scrum, Kanban, DevOps, DevSecOps, scaled agile, agile transformation, agile metrics, continuous integration, continuous delivery, and related terms. Boolean operators were used to refine searches and ensure comprehensive coverage.

Synthesis Approach: Findings were synthesized using narrative synthesis techniques, organizing information thematically around the research questions. Where quantitative data was available from multiple sources, patterns and trends were identified and reported. The synthesis aimed to provide comprehensive coverage while highlighting areas of convergence and divergence in the literature.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Current State of Agile Adoption

Adoption Rates and Trends: Analysis of recent industry data reveals that agile methodologies have achieved mainstream adoption across the software development industry. Surveys indicate that over 70% of software development organizations report using some form of agile methodology, representing continued growth from previous years. However, the nature of adoption has evolved significantly.

Table 1: Agile Framework Adoption Rates (2024-2025)

Framework/Methodology	Adoption Rate	Year-over-Year Change
Scrum	58%	+3%
Hybrid Agile	42%	+8%
Kanban	36%	+5%
Scrum ban	27%	+6%
SAFe	18%	+4%
Lean	15%	+2%
Extreme Programming	12%	-1%
LeSS	8%	+2%

In this table 1 Percentages exceed 100% as many organizations use multiple frameworks



The data reveals several notable trends. First, while Scrum remains the most widely adopted framework, the growth rate of hybrid approaches has accelerated significantly. This suggests that organizations are becoming more pragmatic in their approach, selecting and combining practices from multiple frameworks rather than adhering strictly to a single methodology.

Industry Sector Variations: Adoption patterns vary significantly across industry sectors. Technology companies and digital-native organizations show the highest adoption rates, often implementing multiple agile frameworks simultaneously. Financial services and healthcare sectors have seen substantial growth in agile adoption, driven by digital transformation initiatives and pressure to improve time-to-market for new products and services.

Traditional manufacturing and government sectors show more conservative adoption patterns, often implementing agile practices in specific departments or projects rather than organization-wide transformations. These sectors face unique challenges including regulatory compliance requirements, established procurement processes, and cultural factors that can complicate agile adoption.

4.2 Integration of DevOps and DevSecOps



Figure 1: DevOps Maturity Stages in Agile Organizations

DevOps Adoption Patterns: The integration of DevOps practices with agile methodologies has become increasingly common, with the boundary between agile and DevOps becoming increasingly blurred in practice. Organizations report that DevOps adoption significantly enhances their ability to deliver value continuously and respond to market changes rapidly.

The data displayed in figure 1 shows that most organizations have progressed beyond basic DevOps adoption, with 75% reaching Level 3 (Defined) or higher. However, only 12% have achieved Level 5 (Optimizing) maturity, indicating significant room for improvement in most organizations.

DevSecOps Integration: Security integration throughout the development lifecycle, known as DevSecOps, represents an evolution from treating security as a separate phase. Organizations implementing DevSecOps practices report several benefits:



Table 2: DevSecOps Implementation Benefits

Benefit Category	Improvement Range	Organizations Reporting
Security vulnerability detection time	40-60% reduction	78%
Cost of security fixes	35-50% reduction	71%
Deployment frequency	25-40% increase	65%
Compliance efficiency	30-45% improvement	68%
Security incident response time	45-65% reduction	73%

As shown in table 2, These improvements demonstrate the value proposition of integrating security practices throughout the development lifecycle. However, implementation challenges remain significant, with many organizations struggling to achieve comprehensive DevSecOps adoption.

4.3 Emerging Technologies in Agile Practices

AI and Machine Learning Integration: Artificial intelligence is increasingly being applied to various aspects of agile software development. Applications include:

- **Automated Code Review:** AI-powered tools analyze code for quality issues, security vulnerabilities, and adherence to coding standards
 - **Sprint Planning:** Machine learning algorithms analyze historical data to improve estimation accuracy and identify potential risks
 - **Testing Automation:** AI-assisted test generation and execution improve test coverage while reducing manual effort
 - **Predictive Analytics:** Models predict project outcomes, identify bottlenecks, and suggest optimization opportunities
- Adoption Rates by Function (2024-2025):

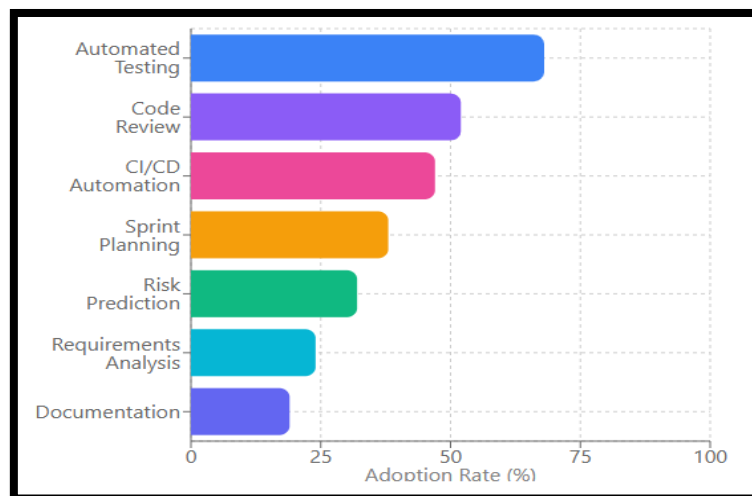


Figure 2: AI Adoption in Agile Processes

Data displayed in figure 2' Source is Industry survey data from 2024-2025 (multiple sources combined).

While AI adoption is growing, most organizations are still in experimental or early implementation phases. Automated testing shows the highest adoption rate, likely because it provides immediate, measurable benefits with relatively lower implementation complexity.

Cloud-Native Development: Cloud-native development practices align well with agile principles, enabling frequent deployments, scalability, and flexibility. Key technologies include:

- **Containerization (Docker, Kubernetes):** Enables consistent environments across development, testing, and production
- **Microservices Architecture:** Allows teams to work independently on specific services, facilitating agile practices at scale
- **Infrastructure as Code:** Enables version control and automated deployment of infrastructure configurations
- **Serverless Computing:** Reduces operational overhead, allowing teams to focus on code development



Organizations adopting cloud-native practices report improvements in deployment frequency, system reliability, and development team autonomy. However, these benefits come with increased complexity in areas such as distributed system management, monitoring, and debugging.

4.4 Scaling Challenges and Solutions

Table 2 demonstrates the agile scaling challenges and frequency by considering various parameters.

Common Scaling Challenges: Organizations attempting to scale agile practices beyond individual teams face several recurring challenges:

Table 3: Agile Scaling Challenges and Frequency

Challenge	% Organizations Reporting	Severity (1-5)
Coordination across teams	76%	4.2
Inconsistent practices	68%	3.8
Maintaining agility at scale	64%	4.1
Leadership alignment	61%	4.3
Dependencies management	59%	3.9
Cultural resistance	57%	4.4
Governance and compliance	53%	3.7
Metrics and reporting	48%	3.5
Budget and resource allocation	45%	3.6

Cultural resistance and leadership alignment emerge as the highest severity challenges, confirming that agile transformation is fundamentally an organizational change initiative rather than merely a process change.

Successful Scaling Strategies: Analysis of successful agile scaling initiatives reveals several common strategies:

1. **Incremental Scaling:** Starting with pilot teams and gradually expanding rather than attempting organization-wide transformation simultaneously
2. **Executive Sponsorship:** Strong, visible support from senior leadership
3. **Communities of Practice:** Creating forums for sharing knowledge and standardizing practices across teams
4. **Flexible Framework Adoption:** Adapting scaled frameworks to organizational context rather than rigid implementation
5. **Investment in Training:** Comprehensive training programs for all roles, from developers to executives

Organizations employing these strategies report higher success rates and faster realization of benefits from agile transformation.

4.5 Metrics and Measurement Approaches

Evolution of Agile Metrics: The approach to measuring agile success has evolved significantly. While traditional metrics remain in use, organizations increasingly recognize the need for more comprehensive measurement frameworks.

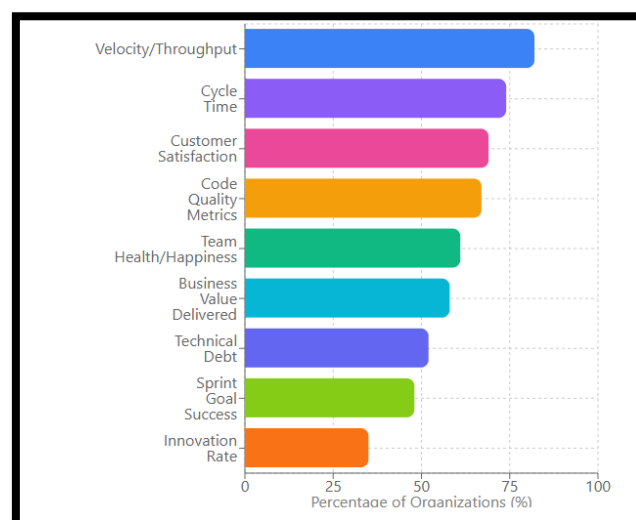


Figure 3: Metric Categories Used by Organizations



The data shows (figure 3: Multiple selections allowed - organizations typically use 3-5 metric categories simultaneously) a balanced approach emerging, with organizations tracking traditional velocity metrics alongside customer satisfaction, team health, and business value metrics. This reflects growing recognition that agile success encompasses multiple dimensions beyond simply completing story points.

Metric Challenges and Best Practices: Research identifies several challenges with agile metrics:

- **Gaming the System:** Teams may optimize for metrics rather than actual value delivery
- **Context Dependency:** Metrics meaningful in one context may be misleading in another
- **Overemphasis on Quantitative Data:** Neglecting qualitative insights and team sentiment
- **Short-term Focus:** Optimizing for sprint metrics at the expense of long-term sustainability

Best practices emerging from successful organizations include:

1. Using metrics for learning and improvement rather than performance evaluation
2. Combining quantitative metrics with qualitative team assessments
3. Regularly reviewing and adjusting metrics based on organizational maturity and goals
4. Ensuring metrics align with actual business outcomes
5. Maintaining transparency in how metrics are calculated and used

4.6 Cultural and Organizational Factors

Cultural Transformation Requirements: Successful agile adoption requires significant cultural change beyond process modifications. Key cultural elements include:

Table 4: Critical Cultural Factors for Agile Success

Cultural Factor	Importance Rating	Implementation Difficulty
Psychological Safety	9.2/10	High
Continuous Learning Mindset	8.9/10	Medium
Collaborative Spirit	8.7/10	Medium
Embrace of Change	8.5/10	High
Customer Focus	8.4/10	Medium
Transparency	8.3/10	Medium-High
Empowerment and Trust	8.8/10	High
Failure Tolerance	8.1/10	High

The high implementation difficulty ratings for many critical factors explain why cultural transformation remains one of the most significant challenges in agile adoption. Organizations that underestimate these cultural requirements frequently struggle with their agile implementations despite having appropriate processes and tools in place.

Leadership Role in Agile Transformation: Research consistently emphasizes the critical role of leadership in successful agile transformations. Effective leadership behaviours include:

- **Servant Leadership:** Supporting teams rather than commanding them
- **Removing Obstacles:** Actively working to eliminate impediments to team progress
- **Modelling Agile Behaviours:** Demonstrating adaptability, transparency, and continuous learning
- **Supporting Experimentation:** Creating safe environments for teams to try new approaches
- **Maintaining Long-term Vision:** Balancing short-term iterations with strategic direction

Organizations with strong leadership support report 2.5x higher success rates in agile transformations compared to those without consistent executive engagement.

4.7 Remote and Distributed Team Challenges

The increase in remote and distributed teams has created both challenges and opportunities for agile practices. Key findings include:

Challenges:

- Difficulty maintaining informal communication and spontaneous collaboration
- Time zone differences complicating synchronous ceremonies
- Reduced visibility into team dynamics and individual well-being
- Technical infrastructure requirements for effective remote collaboration
- Building trust and team cohesion without physical proximity

Adaptations and Solutions:

- Asynchronous communication tools and practices
- Modified ceremony structures accommodating distributed participants



- Increased emphasis on documentation and communication protocols
- Virtual collaboration tools designed specifically for agile practices
- Intentional activities for team building and relationship development

Organizations successfully navigating distributed agile report that while challenges exist, remote work can enhance certain aspects of agile practices, including documentation quality, meeting efficiency, and inclusion of diverse team members.

4.8 Industry-Specific Adaptations

Regulated Industries:

Industries with significant regulatory requirements (financial services, healthcare, government) face unique challenges in agile adoption:

- Balancing agility with compliance requirements
- Managing documentation needs without sacrificing iteration speed
- Incorporating regulatory reviews into sprint cycles
- Maintaining audit trails while embracing change

Successful approaches in regulated industries include:

- Integrating compliance activities into sprint workflows rather than treating them as separate phases
- Automating compliance checks where possible
- Developing reusable compliance patterns and templates
- Engaging regulatory stakeholders early and continuously

Embedded Systems and Hardware Integration:

Organizations developing software for embedded systems or with significant hardware components face additional complexities:

- Longer iteration cycles due to hardware dependencies
- Limited flexibility to change hardware-software interfaces
- Testing complexity requiring specialized equipment
- Integration with waterfall-driven hardware development processes

Adaptations include hybrid approaches that maintain agile practices for software development while accommodating hardware constraints through careful interface management and strategic planning horizons.

V. CONCLUSION

This thorough examination shows that agile software development has evolved into a practically flexible domain where hybrid methods that integrate various frameworks now prevail over traditional methodologies. The adoption of DevOps practices is essential for success, as organizations with greater maturity levels realize markedly improved deployment frequency, quality, and team satisfaction. Nonetheless, cultural change continues to be the main obstacle to effective adoption, since technical and procedural adjustments are inadequate without aligned transformations in organizational attitudes and beliefs. As organizations progress beyond basic velocity metrics to more thorough measurement frameworks that integrate both quantitative and qualitative data, and with emerging technologies such as AI and cloud-native solutions presenting new possibilities, their adoption is still in the initial phases. Even with scaling frameworks accessible, organizations still face difficulties in implementing agile at scale, with success generally realized through gradual methods supported by robust leadership instead of extensive transformations.

These results carry significant implications for organizations at various levels of agile maturity. Organizations initiating agile adoption should focus significantly on cultural readiness and change management, commence with pilot teams, obtain executive support, tailor frameworks to their specific context, and create success metrics aligned with business objectives. Organizations scaling agile need to tackle coordination issues by forming communities of practice, invest in automation tools, prioritize outcomes instead of just following processes, and find a balance between standardization and team independence. Established agile organizations need to focus on ongoing enhancement, investigate the integration of new technologies, elevate their DevOps and DevSecOps skills, create advanced measurement systems, and share insights with the larger agile community.

A number of factors are expected to affect the direction of Agile Software Development in the future. They include the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) throughout the entire software development lifecycle; Platform Engineering (which seeks to find a balance between standardization and autonomy); An Organizational Shift towards Value Stream Focused Structures; The introduction of more advanced AI Driven Measurement Methods; and a continued emphasis on Sustainability and Ethical Considerations being integrated into Agile Frameworks. All five of these factors will create



dramatic changes in how teams are comprised, what skills are needed by members of Agile Teams, and how organizations structure their development practices.

This study's limitations include fast-changing technology that may outdate findings, incomplete coverage of smaller organizations and certain regions, difficulty applying results across different company types, and varying definitions of success that complicate comparisons.

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