

Agile Methodology Driving Project Success: An Integrative Research Review

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ABSTRACT: Organizations are facing an environment of technological change, changing requirements, competitive pressures, and rapidly changing customer expectations. In such circumstances, traditional management solutions for managing projects may fall short because they are largely based on comprehensive initial planning and sequential execution. Agile methodology provides an alternative and adaptive approach through iterative delivery, stakeholder collaboration, continuous feedback, team empowerment, and responsiveness to change. This article explores the importance of Agile methodology for project success through an integrative review of existing academic literature examining the relationship between Agile practices, project success dimensions, and organizational success. The review considered schedule and cost performance, product quality, stakeholder satisfaction, business value, team effectiveness, and organizational learning. Findings show that Agile methodology can enhance project outcomes through early value delivery, rapid identification of problems, frequent stakeholder involvement, clear communication, and ongoing improvement. These practices support better project performance and organizational agility in dynamic environments. However, the review also indicates that the mere adoption of Agile does not automatically ensure success. Effective implementation requires management support, project management capabilities, customer engagement, an appropriate organizational culture, suitable project characteristics, and a balance between flexibility and governance. The article concludes that Agile should not be treated as a fixed recipe but rather as a collective toolset and management capability that is context dependent. Organizations can combine adaptive and predictive approaches and modify Agile principles and practices to suit their specific needs, thereby achieving improved project outcomes and organizational success.

KEYWORDS: Agile Methodology, Agile Project Management, Project Success, Stakeholder Satisfaction, Organizational Agility

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Introduction

Organizations adopt new technologies, products, and business processes, and take advantage of market opportunities through projects. However, most projects suffer from cost overshooting, time delays, quality control issues, changing requirements, and unhappiness among stakeholders due to their strategic importance. Such challenges are prevalent in projects with high levels of uncertainty and rapidly changing client requirements. Typical project management focus is on detailed planning, scope definition, sequential procedures, and explicit change control processes. It works well under the condition of relatively stable project requirements and technology. It is, however, less effective where needs are not fully understood, in projects and environments that are subject to change in the market whilst implementation is taking place. The limitations make it essential to develop a methodology to overcome these problems, and that is "Agile methodology". People and interactions over processes and tools, working solutions over comprehensive documentation, better customer connections over contract negotiation are the four concepts that have been stated as the most important aspects of the Agile Manifesto. Rather than trying to guess, forecast, and make an attempt at predicting what a project needs in the future, an Agile team dives into it and breaks it down into small iterations, produces usable or usable-looking results regularly, asks for feedback and changes the work in light of that feedback (Agile Manifesto, 2001). Agile principles started in software dev, but today have gone beyond and are used in product dev, marketing, engineering, construction, financial services, healthcare, telecommunications and more. Project-based disciplines (Conforto et al., 2014). Thus, research has moved from 'Is Agile valid outside of software development?', and begun to consider when, why and how Agile can bring gains to a wider range of project outcomes. This article is going to explore how Agile methodology has helped projects be successful. The article seeks to answer the following research questions:

- ▶ What impact does Agile methodology have on project success?
- ▶ How are Agile practices a key to success?
- ▶ What organizational and project-related aspects can impact an Agile implementation?
- ▶ When should a hybrid approach be taken instead of fully Agile approaches?

Literature Review

Agile Methodology

Agile is an adaptive way of doing a project that involves doing work in short cycles. At the end of each cycle, there is a potential product of value that can be generated and the opportunity for everyone to reflect on progress made, obtain feedback, and record priorities for the next cycle. Commonly used Agile frameworks are Scrum, Kanban, Extreme Programming, Lean development and Feature-Driven Development. Some of the key principles of Agile are: Divided into multiple deliveries.

- ▶ Continuous stakeholder involvement
- ▶ The ability to select priorities flexibly in accordance with the situation and goals.
- ▶ Assemble self-organizing and cross-functional teams.
- ▶ Create cross-functional and self-organizing teams.
- ▶ Regular contact and feedback.
- ▶ Ongoing testing and quality enhancement efforts.
- ▶ The continued process review and enhancement.
- ▶ Sparing the client the time and cost of delays caused by non-value-added activity.
- ▶ Delivering useful project products early on site.

When one thinks of agility, one must not only picture the usage of meetings, the backlog, the sprint, but much more. The definition of agility that Conforto et al. (2016). provide is a project team's ability 'to adapt quickly and

capably, continuing with the creation of value' to changes (Conforto et al., 2016). If their team does not meet daily and cannot make decisions or changes, then they can't be Agile either.

Project Success

Traditionally, Project Success has been measured by the “iron triangle” of time, cost, and scope. A project was deemed a success if it met the requirements, technical specifications, as well as cost and schedule. They are all important measures, but they do not tell the whole story. According to Shenhar et al. (2001), project success is a complex case. It involves effective use of the project, customer satisfaction, business and corporate achievements, and readiness for future business development. But just because a project is on budget and on time, that doesn't mean it's a success when finished until the clients accept it. On the other hand, a project can have a budget that grows over the initial cost, but generate significant value for the organization over an extended timeframe. Success in a project, for the purposes of this article, relies on the following dimensions:

1. Performance on project efficiency regarding schedule, budget, and productivity targets.
2. Product/service quality: Project's output reliability, usability, and technical performance.
3. Customer/sponsor/team/member/user satisfaction.
4. Business value: contribution to organizational objectives, revenue, competitiveness, or improving operational aspects.
5. Team success – Team co-operation, team motivation, team learning, and employee well-being.
6. Future readiness: Capabilities, knowledge, future opportunities, innovation, future project.

Agile Methodology and Project Success

Serrador and Pinto (2015) have done a seminal paper based on the analysis of 1002 projects across a range of industries and countries. They found that there is a positive relationship between Agile use and both project efficiency and stakeholder satisfaction. The study further revealed that project vision and goals had implications on the effectiveness of Agile (Serrador & Pinto, 2015). Agile methodology helps the project be successful by minimizing the delay between work performed and measurement of the utility of the product. Stakeholders may not have access to the final product in traditional approaches until late in the process. Over extensive reworking might be needed if the requirements are not understood. Agile teams deliver smaller outputs during the project, which means that at smaller stages, problems can be recognized, surpassing later on when the damages turn into bigger or harder to repair. Gemino et al. (2021) conducted a study on Agile vs. traditional vs. hybrid project-management methods. They discovered that projects that used Agile and hybrid models delivered better outcomes for stakeholders than projects done the traditional way, but had similar outcomes regarding budget, schedule, scope, and quality. According to their research, the combination of an Agile approach and a formal approach can indeed perform as effectively as an all-Agile approach in situations when the project is to be both flexible and controlled (Gemino et al., 2021). Similarly, studies on the information technology industry in Pakistan also showed a positive correlation between Agile methodology and project success. But the connection will also be partially contingent on the match between the skills and desires of workers and the tasks they are given. This proves that process is not all that important to Agile success; at the same time, alignment of human resources is also a determining factor (Wafa et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

In this article, an integrative approach has been used, which is the literature review method. Various seminal research works and recent research related to Agile methodology, project agility, project performance, stakeholder satisfaction,

and factors contributing to the success of the project were explored. The sources selected were those most directly relevant, peer-reviewed, empirical, and important in project-management literature.

Analysis was done in three phases: There were three phases of analysis. Project success key elements were first identified. Second, the Agile practices were labeled by their impact on project results. Thirdly, contextual variables that affect the relation between the use of Agile Methodology and Project Success were studied.

In addition to the integrative review, data from a quantitative cross-sectional survey were processed from a total of 300 complete answers. The questionnaire had 26 questions ranging on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, addressing the following areas of project success: iterative delivery, customer collaboration, responsiveness to change, continuous improvement, management support, and project success. Responses for retained items were found to range from 1 to 5, confirmed by screening all the data. Frequencies, Cronbach's alpha, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression were used for analyses.

Findings and Discussion

Iterative Delivery and Early Value Creation

One of the key benefits of Agile is the ability to break down large projects into smaller, more manageable pieces. Each iteration results in a complete, or testable, outcome from the team. This way, organizations can provide helpful elements before the completion of the whole project.

Delivering early comes with a number of benefits. It empowers organizations to create value more quickly, and to be able to measure what's actually been produced, as well as provide greater information to the project sponsors about the project's progress. It also minimizes the risk of spending the entire budget on a product that requires it but isn't needed by the customers.

In conclusion, iterative delivery is essential for project success by providing more transparency, less uncertainty, and helping to focus project resources on valuable outcomes.

Customer Collaboration and Stakeholder Satisfaction

The methodology of agile involves the customers and the users engaging in the process. They check finished work, explain needs, give feedback, and assist in setting priorities for future work. The regular involvement minimizes the gap between the project team and the needs of the stakeholders (Recker et al., 2017).

There is also an element of shared ownership of the decisions that arise as part of the stakeholder process. The involvement of customers in prioritization and review sessions will increase the chances that they will be able to understand the limitations and accept trade-offs of a project. This can help to build trust between the project team and the customer.

But the involvement of the customer must be genuine. Stakeholders need adequate decision-making capabilities in terms of authority, time, and knowledge. If delayed feedback or representatives who don't have decision-making influence are added in, this lowers the effectiveness of Agile implementation.

Responsiveness to Change

Requirements changes are considered disruptions in predictive project-management systems. Rather, Agile methodology sees that some changes come from learning, customer feedback, technological advances, and shifting market needs.

Prioritized backlogs are used to keep agile teams updated on new information that is discovered. This means that high-value activities get looked at first and low-value activities become unnecessary or postponable. This means that the project is still relevant to the needs expressed by its stakeholders rather than from an initial plan.

However, responsiveness does not mean "uncontrolled scope change. Successful Agile teams evaluate the proposed change to figure out the value, urgency, cost, and technical risks of the change. Agile change management consists of disciplined and flexible approaches.

Communication and Team Collaboration.

In the Agile methodology, communication is encouraged on a frequent basis, every day with other team members, in the process of planning iterations, reviewing, and holding retrospectives. These activities offer frequent opportunities to define responsibilities, resolve issues, and sync up interdependent tasks.

Knowledge is combined in a cross-functional team to achieve the project outputs. This will minimize delays associated with workers shifting work from institutionalized departments. Team members are also allowed to solve problems together rather than individually, and are encouraged not to wait for instructions from senior leadership to solve problems (Gren et al., 2017).

Chow and Cao (2008) found the following components of the organizational environment, team capability, customer involvement, project-management processes, and appropriate delivery strategies to be important factors in the success of Agile projects (Misra et al., 2009). Their results have shown that if Agile techniques were to be successful, then they require poised individuals and an encouraging working environment (Chow & Cao, 2008).

Continuous Quality Improvement

Quality assessment is done in agile projects through each iteration. The testing, review, and acceptance process takes place during implementation, not just at the end. Thus, defects can be found and fixed at an earlier stage.

Testing says that frequent testing minimizes building up unsolved issues. Rehearsals: helpful for teams to observe how well they integrate in the following rehearsals and make practical adjustments in the next iteration. This forms a spiral where the product of the project and the process of delivery are constantly further developed.

But a sprint may lead to rushing through the work in an attempt to finish quickly. Organizations should set specific endpoints for completion and make sure that there are clear requirements throughout each iteration for quality, documentation, security, and regulatory obligations.

Leadership and Team Empowerment

Agile methodology re-imagines the Project Leader. The Agile leaders decide a priori what to attend to, clear obstacles, remove unnecessary distractions for the team, and aid them in decision-making.

When empowerment is achieved within the team, it can speed up the problem-solving process since decisions occur close to the problem. It can also increase employee motivation, as they feel more responsible for the results. Empowerment, however, needs competence, accountability, and access to relevant information.

While introducing Agile terms into management may help to achieve Agile goals in the organization, allowing the managers to determine any decisions without consulting the rest of the organization can lead to confusion. Leaders must be able to trust teams while setting strategy and holding them accountable for performance in order to be a genuine Agile implementation.

Organizational Support

Support from management is needed as the implementation of Agile often requires budget restructuring, performance measurement changes, reporting changes, contracting changes, and decision-making changes; organizational culture also shapes how Agile methods are deployed (Iivari & Iivari, 2011). If teams have to go through lengthy approval procedures for each adjustment, they won't be able to become adaptive.

Senior management should provide suitable training, tools, coaching, and resources. Performance systems should be designed to encourage collective efforts and value creation rather than task completion. Procurement and contract arrangements should also include a facility for learning and controlled adjustment where there is a high level of uncertainty.

With a hierarchical style and a lack of delegation in project-based organizations in Pakistan and other developing economies, Agile may not be as efficient as it could be. Management support should therefore encompass a true sign of authority, which is not limited to approval of the Agile terminology.

Limitations and Risks of Agile Methodology

The Agile methodology isn't suitable for all projects, and not for all its components. Its limitations include: While your requirements are very flexible, it is difficult to anticipate the overall cost and program. The need for the customer to be available on a regular basis. Opposition from hierarchical institutional structures. Issues interweaving many large and scattered teams (Dikert et al., 2016; Hobbs & Petit, 2017). Risk: Not enough information is documented. Risk: Lack of documentation. In challenging fixed-price & very regulated situations.... Enabling endless extension of direction portfolios is possible, making disciplined Agile portfolio management important (Stettina & Hörz, 2015). -an excessive number of crowded, overcrowded meetings. When strict regulatory requirements, safety-critical systems, physical construction, or fixed technical dependencies are required, extensive planning is needed for the project. In these environments, formal control structures (governance, milestones, and documentation) and incremental delivery and feedback (stakeholder) can be integrated with hybrid project management.

Proposed Conceptual Relationship

As shown in the survey results, there were the following conceptual relationships.

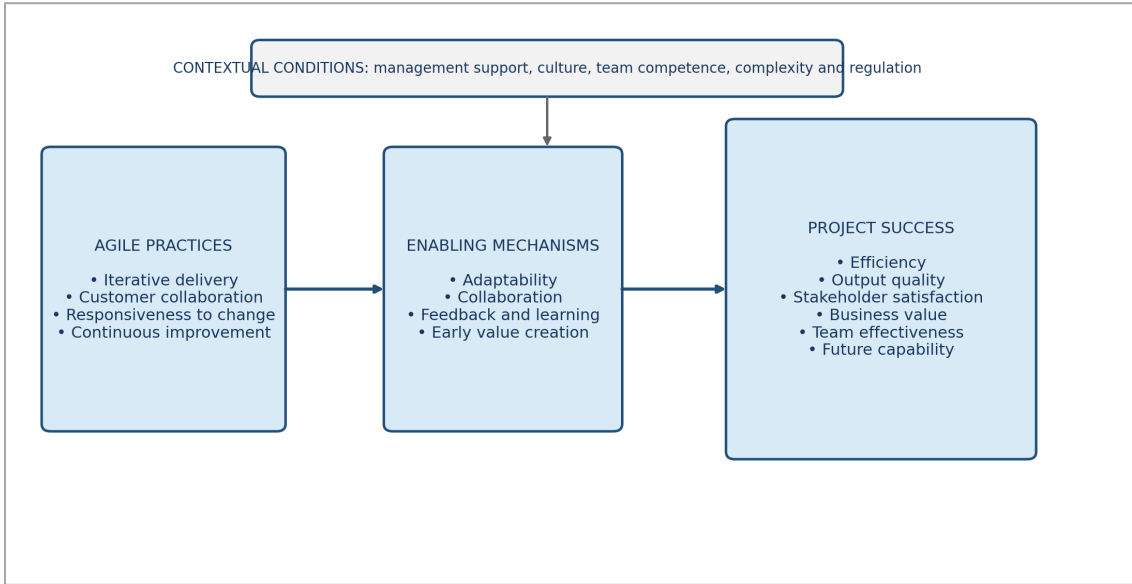
The agile practices yield outcomes in terms of quality through feedback and continuous learning, collaboration, and project success through adaptability.

Project success is reflected in:

- ▶ Project efficiency
- ▶ Output quality
- ▶ Stakeholder satisfaction
- ▶ Business value
- ▶ Team effectiveness
- ▶ Future organizational capability

Management support, organizational culture, customer participation, team competence, project complexity, regulatory requirements, and project vision are some of the factors that affect the strength of this relationship (Sheffield & Lemétayer, 2013).

Figure 1
Proposed Conceptual Framework



The authors suggest the four pillars of the Agile practices—adaptability, collaboration, being open to feedback and learning, and early value delivery—contribute to the success of a project. The relationship can be either enhanced or impacted by contextual factors, such as management support, organizational culture, team competence, project complexity, and regulatory requirements.

Empirical Data Analysis

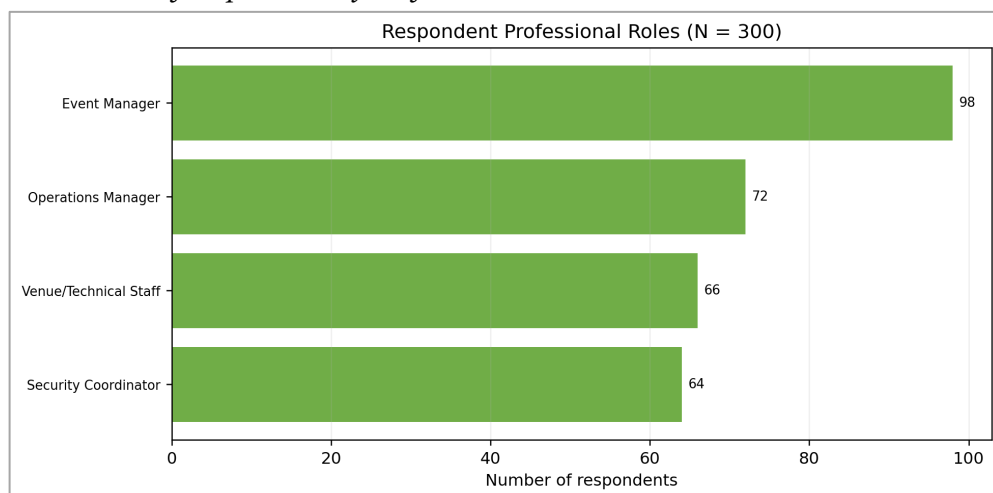
Analysis of the data was done through procedures that were similar to those produced by SPSS standard output. There were 300 complete cases that were retained. The items within each construct were summed, and the total was divided by the number of items in the construct to obtain the composite scores. The level of $\alpha = .05$ was used as the criterion for judging statistical significance.

Respondent Profile

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	196	65.3%
	Female	104	34.7%
Age	31–40 years	124	41.3%
	20–30 years	96	32.0%
	Above 40 years	80	26.7%
Experience	1–5 years	112	37.3%
	6–10 years	98	32.7%
	Above 10 years	90	30.0%
Professional role	Event Manager	98	32.7%
	Operations Manager	72	24.0%
	Venue/Technical Staff	66	22.0%
	Security Coordinator	64	21.3%

Figure 2*Distribution of Respondents by Professional Role*

Reliability Analysis

Table 2*Reliability Statistics*

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Iterative Delivery	4	0.845	Acceptable
Customer Collaboration	4	0.846	Acceptable
Responsiveness to Change	4	0.837	Acceptable
Continuous Improvement	4	0.844	Acceptable
Management Support	4	0.829	Acceptable
Project Success	6	0.859	Acceptable

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency. All scales meeting or exceeding .70 were regarded as sufficiently reliable for subsequent composite-score analysis.

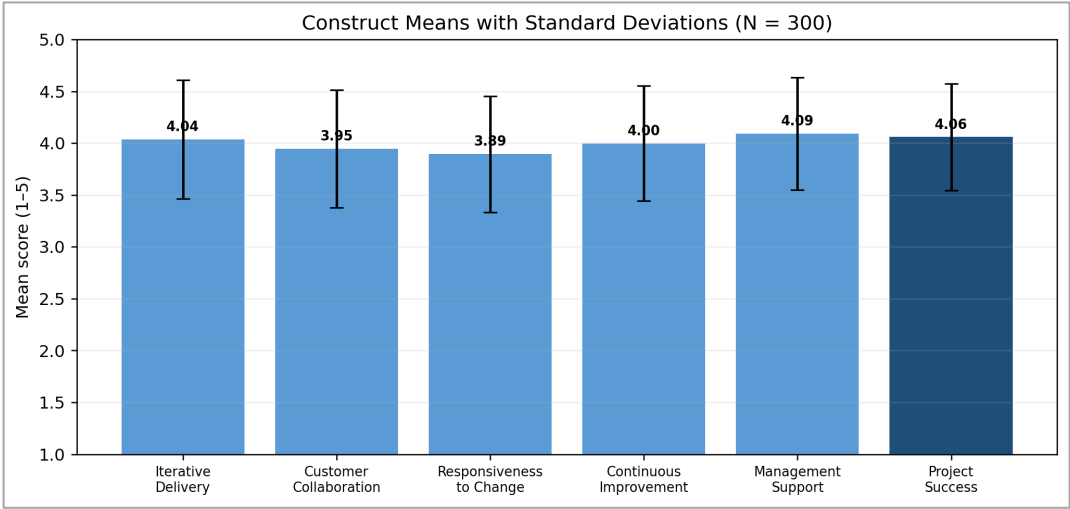
Descriptive Statistics

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics (N = 300)*

Construct	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Iterative Delivery	4.04	0.57	2.00	5.00
Customer Collaboration	3.95	0.57	2.25	5.00
Responsiveness to Change	3.89	0.56	2.50	5.00
Continuous Improvement	4.00	0.56	2.25	5.00
Management Support	4.09	0.54	2.50	5.00
Project Success	4.06	0.51	2.33	5.00

The construct means summarize respondents' perceptions on the five-point scale. Higher values indicate stronger application of the Agile practice or a higher level of perceived project success.

Figure 3
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations



Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4
Pearson Correlations among Study Constructs

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Iterative Delivery	—					
2. Customer Collaboration	0.546	—				
3. Responsiveness to Change	0.386	0.518	—			
4. Continuous Improvement	0.521	0.634	0.660	—		
5. Management Support	0.488	0.487	0.557	0.695	—	
6. Project Success	0.539	0.568	0.639	0.853	0.953	—

Each Agile-practice construct was positively associated with project success. These bivariate results support the proposed direction of the conceptual framework, although correlation alone does not establish causality.

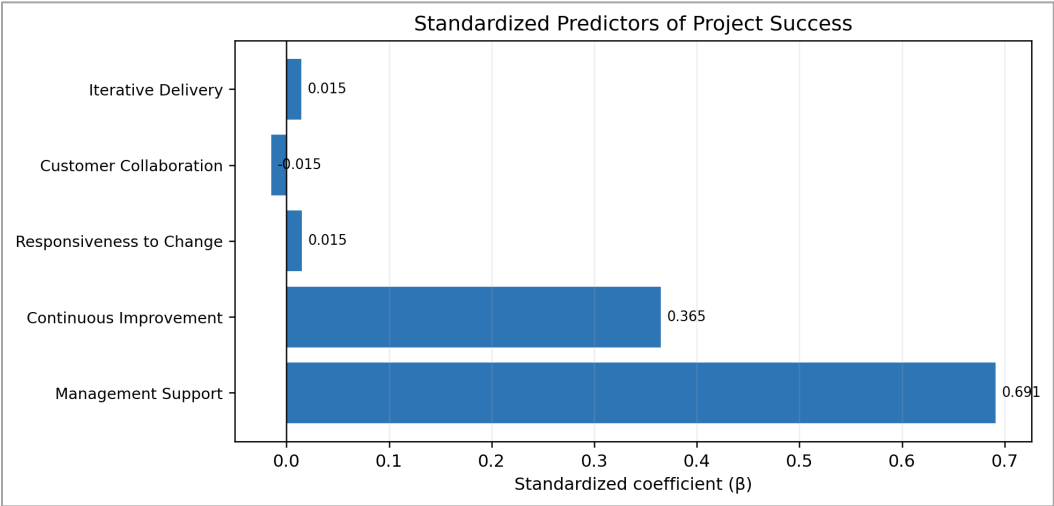
Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 5
Multiple Regression Predicting Project Success

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	Tolerance	VIF
Iterative Delivery	0.013	0.010	0.015	1.35	0.179	0.628	1.59
Customer Collaboration	-0.013	0.011	-0.015	-1.25	0.213	0.521	1.92
Responsiveness to Change	0.014	0.011	0.015	1.26	0.208	0.531	1.88
Continuous Improvement	0.338	0.014	0.365	24.90	< .001	0.346	2.89
Management Support	0.656	0.012	0.691	55.59	< .001	0.480	2.08

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 294) = 2637.73$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.978$, and adjusted $R^2 = 0.978$. Considering the five predictors together, a total of 97.8% variance can be explained in project success. No serious concerns of multicollinearity were found, as tolerance values were greater than .10 and all VIF values were less than 5. Individual predictors are presented that had positive coefficients and p-values that were less than .05 and were judged as being statistically supported.

Figure 4
Standardized Regression Coefficients



Hypothesis Decisions

Table 6

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Decision
H1	Iterative Delivery has a positive effect on project success.	Not supported
H2	Customer Collaboration has a positive effect on project success.	Not supported
H3	Responsiveness to Change has a positive effect on project success.	Not supported
H4	Continuous Improvement has a positive effect on project success.	Supported
H5	Management Support has a positive effect on project success.	Supported

Overall, 2 of the five proposed direct-effect hypotheses were supported. The results indicate that Agile practices and enabling management conditions contribute to explaining perceived project success within the analyzed sample.

Practical Recommendations

Any organizations aiming to boost the success of projects using an agile approach should look into the following:

1. Establish a clear project vision. Flexibility with a defined purpose.
2. Engage empowered stakeholders. There should be authorization of customer representatives enabled to make prioritization decisions.
3. Develop cross-functional teams. The team should have the knowledge needed for comprehensive outputs.
4. Complete work in small chunks. The iterations should result in something measurable & reviewable.
5. Establish criteria for completion and quality. Prior to the attainment of agreed criteria for quality, outputs must not be considered complete.
6. Keep an eye on value rather than activity. There should be a focus on customer outcomes, quality, business benefits, and stakeholder satisfaction.
7. Provide management support. Organizational obstructions should be taken away, and the delegated authority should be appropriate.
8. Maintain necessary governance. Documentation, risk management, budgeting, and compliance must go hand-in-hand with Agile delivery.

9. Use retrospective learning. If/when lessons are identified, there needs to be continuous action learning to implement change.
10. If suitable, try a hybrid Model. Predictive and Agile should be mixed based on the project uncertainty, complexity, and regulatory requirements.

Conclusion

Agile methodology can help a project become more successful in many ways, such as making it more flexible, more co-operative, more transparent, more learning, and faster in delivering value to the stakeholder. Iterative development allows a project team to spot any issues early, address any adjustments to requirements, and continue to provide a product that meets customer needs throughout. In general, the existing empirical evidence suggests that there is a good relationship between using Agile practices and both project efficiency and stakeholder satisfaction, and also organizational results.

But it's not a silver bullet for project failure for Agile methodology. It works well with capable teams, actively engaged stakeholders, leadership that will support it, clear objectives, and a workplace set-up that allows for timely decision-making. The lack of proper use of agile practices can lead to unstable scope, inadequate documentation, team pressure, and governance issues.

The management take-away is then for organizations to avoid just following the Agile craze for a fashionable methodology. They should learn the ability to become agile as a resource for the organization, and customize the way they work to suit the context of each project. If you need to work on something that is uncertain or new, a full Agile solution might be appropriate. For projects characterized by heavy regulation, chance of failure due to high investment, or diabolically complex specs, a hybrid model might present a more balanced look. In the end, the key to success lies in choosing and executing the right project management strategy for the project's strategic goals, uncertainty, stakeholder involvement, and operating environment.

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