
Paper #1 Critique

The Risks of Agile Software
Development
(Elbanna & Sarker, 2016)

Critique presented by:
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General Criticism of the Study Design

Positive criticism: This qualitative study made great effort toward removing bias, and establishing validity and external validity, through triangulation.

Negative criticism: Additional information that would have been useful-

- Size of organizations studied and size/scope of project
- Followed four organizations longitudinally- does not highlight any findings specifically; there could be something interesting here.

Positive Aspects

The paper addresses common concerns over a broad range of businesses in several industries for multiple development purposes.

The paper breaks down the risks into clear and concise categories, and explores common methods for handling such risks.

It examines the Agile method experimentally and eliminates the bias of developers' personal preference.

All concerned parties are interviewed in the study, not just the developers.

Negative Aspects

The paper does not address whether businesses experienced an overall positive or negative experience from switching to Agile.

The paper gives us a good sense of company types and purpose of development, but does not tell us much else about the companies providing feedback.

We aren't given enough information about processes of said businesses before they adopted Agile. What were the risks of Agile being compared to?

Question #1

What can be done to mitigate the accumulation of technical debt?

Question #2

Self-organization of team members and tool choices is a primary aspect of ASD.

The authors discovered 17 out of the 28 organizations had issues with this. How could this problem be addressed?

Question #3

Communication was discovered as an issue in several dimensions:

- Lack of documentation in legacy code (passing existing code to a later generation of developers.)
- Workflow needs between groups (i.e. developers & IT staff)
- Technical and non-technical parties

What mechanism(s) could be instituted to allow for better communications?

Question #4

Knowledge retention is a key issue in ASD. Face-to-face communications are preferred over written documentation.

- What is the advantage of face-to-face communications?
- What are the shortcomings to f2f and how could these be mitigated?

Question #5

After reading this article,

Considering the risks stated in the paper, what types of projects do you think would be best suited for Agile development?