

Aalto University  
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Degree Programme in Computer Science and Engineering

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# What metrics are agile industrial teams using, why and how?

## A systematic literature review

Master's Thesis  
Espoo, Fix me June 18, 2011

**DRAFT! — February 24, 2014 — DRAFT!**

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ABSTRACT OF  
 MASTER'S THESIS

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<b>Title:</b>	What metrics are agile industrial teams using, why and how? A systematic literature review		
<b>Date:</b>	Fix me June 18, 2011	<b>Pages:</b>	44
<b>Major:</b>	Software Engineering	<b>Code:</b>	T3003
<b>Supervisor:</b>	Prof. Casper Lassenius		
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<p>Agile development methods are increasing in popularity, yet there are limited studies on the reasons and use of metrics in industrial agile development.</p> <p>This paper presents results from a systematic literature review. Based on the study, metrics and their use is focused to the following areas: Iteration planning, Iteration tracking, Motivating and improving, Identifying process problems, Pre-release quality, Post-release quality and Changes in processes or tools. The findings are mapped against agile principles and it seems that the use of metrics supports the principles with some deviations.</p> <p>Surprisingly, we find little evidence of the use of code metrics. Also, we note that there is a lot of evidence on the use of planning and tracking metrics. Finally, the use of metrics to motivate and enforce process improvements as well as applicable quality metrics can be interesting future research topics.</p>			
<b>Keywords:</b>	agile, metrics, measurement, systematic literature review		
<b>Language:</b>	English		

Aalto-yliopisto  
 Perustieteiden korkeakoulu  
 Tietotekniikan koulutusohjelma

DIPLOMITYÖN  
 TIIVISTELMÄ

<b>Tekijä:</b>	Eetu Kupiainen		
<b>Työn nimi:</b>	Mitä mittareita ketterät tiimit teollisuudessa käyttävät, miksi ja miten? Systemaattinen kirjallisuuskatsaus		
<b>Päiväys:</b>	Fix me 18. kesäkuuta 2011	<b>Sivumäärä:</b>	44
<b>Pääaine:</b>	Ohjelmistotuotanto ja liiketoiminta	<b>Koodi:</b>	T3003
<b>Valvoja:</b>	Prof. Casper Lassenius		
<b>Ohjaajat:</b>	Tkt Juha Itkonen Tkt Mika Mäntylä		
<p>Noh, mistäs teit dippas?</p> <p>- Nooh, tutkin minkälaisia mittareita ketterät tiimit teollisuudessa käytti, miten ja miksi.</p> <p>Okei, no mikäs on sen dipan tärkein anti?</p> <p>- Noh, kategorisoin mittareiden käyttöä ja syitä, johon halukkaat voivat tarkemmin tutustua.</p> <p>No miksi kukaan haluis noita ihmetellä?</p> <p>- Mulla (timolla) on sellainen teoria, että on syitä, jotka aiheuttaa ohjelmistoprojektien epäonnistumisia. Mäppäsin löydettyjä mittareita em. syykategorioita vasten, joten voin sanoa että mitä mittareita kannattaisi käyttää jos haluaa ehkäistä tietyistä syistä johtuvia failureita.</p> <p>- Lisäksi mä näytän miten suurempi osa on reaktiivisia mittareita.</p> <p>- Lisäksi ideana oli, että pystyisin luomaan jonkinlaisen tärkeiden mittareiden luokittelun... Tämä on osoittautunut aika hankalaksi. Mulla on nyt yksittäisiä mittareita, joita on ylistetty - ja osaan myös sanottu miksi. Ne voin esittää. Lisäksi jos kvantitatiivisesti ajateltuna, näyttää siltä että effort estimaatit on tärkeitä agiilissa, koska niitä näkyi paljon. Toisinpäin ajateltuna, eli mitkä ei oo tärkeitä, niin vois sanoa et koodimittarit. Niitä ei ollut juuri yhtään.</p>			
<b>Asiasanat:</b>	ketterä, mittarit, mittaus, systemaattinen kirjallisuuskatsaus		
<b>Kieli:</b>	Englanti		

# Acknowledgements

I want to thank my instructors Juha Itkonen and Mika Mäntylä for their invaluable feedback and tireless attitude towards my questions. Also, I want to thank Kim Dikert and Timo Lehtinen for relaxing and thoughtful chats.

Espoo, Fix me June 18, 2011

Eetu Kupiainen

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

SLR	Systematic literature review !FIXME <b>Poista koko abbreviations jos ei tuu montaa</b> FIXME!
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Software metrics have been studied for decades and several literature reviews have been published. Yet, the literature reviews have been written from an academic viewpoint that typically focuses on the effectiveness of a single metric. For example, Catal et al. review fault prediction metrics (Catal and Diri, 2009), Purao and Vaishnavi (2003) review metrics for object oriented systems and Kitchenham (2010) performs a mapping of most cited software metrics papers. According to the researcher’s knowledge there are no systematic literature reviews on the actual use of software metrics in the industry.

Agile software development is becoming increasingly popular in the software industry. The agile approach seems to be contradicting with the traditional metrics approaches. For example, the agile emphasizes working software over measuring progress in terms of intermediate products or documentation, and embracing the change invalidates the traditional approach of tracking progress against pre-made plan. However, at the same time agile software development highlights some measures that should be used, e.g., burndown graphs and 100% automated unit testing coverage. However, measurement research in the context of agile methods remains scarce.

The goal of this paper is to review the literature of actual use of software metrics in the context of agile software development. This study will lay out the current state of metrics usage in industrial agile software development based on literature. Moreover, the study uncovers the reasons for metric usage as well as highlights actions that the use of metrics can trigger.

This study covers the following research questions:

- RQ1: Why are metrics used?
- RQ2: What actions do the use of metrics trigger?
- RQ3: Which metrics are used?



- RQ4: What metrics are important?

## 1.1 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 3 describes how the SR was conducted. Chapter 4 reports the results from the study. Chapter 5 discusses about the findings and how they map to agile principles. Chapter 6 concludes the paper. !FIXME **Final structure** FIXME!

## Chapter 2

# Background

### 2.1 Agile software development

Agile development methods have emerged to the software world ruled by traditional heavyweight methods. In agile methods the focus is in lightweight working practices, constant deliveries and customer collaboration over long planning periods, heavy documentation and inflexible development phases.

Agile manifesto created by agile enthusiasts (Beck et al., 2007) lists agile principles that give an idea what is agile development about. Popular agile development methods include Scrum (Schwaber and Beedle, 2002), Extreme Programming (Beck and Andres, 2004) and Kanban (Anderson, 2010).

### 2.2 Related work

Hartmann and Dymond (2006) don't provide any specific agile metrics but rather describes how agile metrics should be chosen and how they should be introduced to the organization. Also, they provide a set of heuristics for agile metrics.

**!FIXME** **tää jäi vähän laihaks** **FIXME!**

### 2.3 Systematic literature review

Systematic literature review is a research method originated from the field of medicine **!FIXME** **viite** **FIXME!**. The overarching idea is to aggregate and synthesize existing knowledge regarding a research topic. This rigorous and audible evaluation method can facilitate theory development and point out gaps in research (Webster and Watson, 2002).

**2.4 Causes for software project failures**

**2.5 Evidence based software engineering**

**2.6 Previous metric research**

## Chapter 3

# Review method

Systematic review (SR) was chosen as research method because the study is more about trying to understand a problem instead of trying to find a solution to it. Also, there was already existing literature that could be synthesized.

### 3.1 Protocol development

Kitchenham's guide for SRs (Kitchenham, 2004) was used as a basis for developing the review protocol. Additionally, a SR on agile development (Dybå and Dingsøy, 2008) and a SR on SR (Kitchenham and Brereton, 2013) were used to further understand the challenges and opportunities of SRs. The protocol was also iterated in weekly meetings with the instructors, as well as in a pilot study.

### 3.2 Search and selection process

The strategy for finding primary studies was following:

- Stage 1: Automated search
- Stage 2: Selection based on title and abstract
- Stage 3: Selection based on full text. Conduct data extraction and quality assessment.

Table 3.1 shows the selection funnel in terms of the number of papers after each stage.

Table 3.1: Paper selection funnel

Stage	Amount of papers
Stage 1	774
Stage 2	163
Stage 3	29

Scopus database <sup>1</sup> was used to find the primary documents with automated search. Keywords include popular agile development methods and synonyms for the word metric. The search was improved incrementally in three phases because some key papers and XP conferences were not found initially. The search strings, hits and dates can be found from appendix A.

The selection of the primary documents was based on an inclusion criteria: *papers that present empirical findings on the industrial use and experiences of metrics in agile context*. The papers were excluded based on multiple criteria, mainly due to not conforming to requirements regarding empirical findings and agile and industrial context. Full criteria are listed in appendix B.

In stage 1, Scopus was used as the only search engine as it contained the most relevant databases IEEE and ACM. Also, it was able to find Agile and XP conference papers. Only XP Conference 2013 was searched manually because it couldn't be found through Scopus.

In stage 2, papers were included and excluded by the researcher based on their title and abstract. As the quality of abstracts can be poor in computer science (Kitchenham, 2004), full texts were also skimmed through in case of unclear abstracts. Unclear cases were discussed with the instructors in weekly meetings and an exclusion rule was documented if necessary.

The validity of the selection process was analysed by performing the selection for a sample of 26 papers also by the second instructor. The level of agreement was substantial with Kappa 0.67 (Landis and Koch, 1977).

Stage 3 included multiple activities in one work flow. Selection by full text was done, data was coded and quality assessment was done. Once again, if there were unclear papers, they were discussed in meetings. Also, selection of 7 papers was conducted by the second instructor with an almost perfect agreement, Kappa 1.0 (Landis and Koch, 1977).

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.scopus.com>

### 3.3 Data extraction

Integrated coding was selected for data extraction strategy (Cruzes and Dyba, 2011). It provided focus to research questions but flexibility regarding findings. Deductive coding would have been too restraining and inductive coding might have caused too much bias. Integrated coding made it possible to create a sample list of code categories:

- Why is measurement used?
- How is measurement used?
- Metric
- Importance related to metric
- Context

The coding started with the researcher reading the full text and marking interesting quotes with a temporary code. After, reading the full text the researcher checked each quote and coded again with an appropriate code based on the built understanding. In weekly meetings with the instructors, a rule set for collecting metrics was slowly built:

- Collect metric if team or company uses it.
- Collect metric only if something is said about why it is used, what actions it causes or if it is described as important.
- Don't collect metrics that are only used for the comparison and selection of development methods.
- Don't collect metrics that are primarily used to compare teams.

Atlas.ti Visual QDA(Qualitative Data Analysis), version 7.1.x was used to collect and synthesize the qualitative data. Amount of found quotes per code can be seen in section 3.3.

To evaluate the repeatability of finding the same metrics, second instructor coded metrics from three papers. Capture-recapture method (Seber, 2002) was then used which showed that 90% of metrics were found.

A quality assessment form adopted from (Dybå and Dingsøyr, 2008) was used to evaluate the quality of each primary study. Detailed list of quality assessment questions can be found in appendix C. Additionally, a relevancy factor was added to the same assessment to describe how useful the paper was for this study. The scale for the relevancy factor is:

Table 3.2: Amount of found quotes

Code	Amount of quotations
Why use this metric?	151
How is measurement used?	61
Metrics	108
Importance related to metric	45
Context	158

- 0 = doesn't contain any information regarding metrics and should be already excluded
- 1 = only descriptions of metrics with no additional info
- 2 = some useful information related to metrics
- 3 = a good amount of relevant information regarding metrics and metric usage

### 3.4 Data synthesis

Data synthesis followed the steps recommended by Cruzes and Dyba (2011). Process started by going through all quotes within one code and giving each quote a more descriptive code describing the quote in high level. Then the descriptive codes were organized in groups based on their similarity. These groups were then given a high level code which are seen as categories in table 4.6.

## Chapter 4

# Results

This chapter presents the results from the systematic literature review. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of primary studies by publication channels. Table 4.3 lists the distribution of agile methods and table 4.4 lists the distribution of domains.

### 4.1 Overview of studies

#### 4.1.1 Quality of studies

The perceived quality of the studies varied a lot (from 0 to 10). Even with many low quality studies they were included since they still provided valuable insight. For example in some cases experience reports can provide more valuable data than a high scoring research papers.

According to the assessment control group and reflexivity had lowest total scores while value for research, context and findings scored the highest.

### 4.2 Why were metrics used and how were they used?

Categories for the reasons and the use of measurements are listed in table 4.6. The following chapters will describe each category in more detail.

#### 4.2.1 Iteration planning

Many metrics were used to support iteration planning. The metrics were used for task prioritization and scoping of the iteration.



Table 4.1: Publication distribution of primary studies

Publication channel	Type	#	%
Agile Conference	Conference	8	38
HICCS	Conference	3	14
ICSE	Workshop	2	10
XP Conference	Conference	2	10
Agile Development Conference	Conference	1	5
APSEC	Conference	1	5
ASWEC	Conference	1	5
Elektronika ir Elektrotechnika	Journal	1	5
Empirical Software Engineering	Journal	1	5
EUROMICRO	Conference	1	5
ICSE	Conference	1	5
ICSP	Conference	1	5
IST	Journal	1	5
IJPQM	Journal	1	5
JSS	Journal	1	5
PROFES	Conference	1	5
Software - Prac. and Exp.	Journal	1	5
WETSoM	Workshop	1	5

Table 4.2: Distribution of research methods

Research method	Amount
Multicase	2
Experience report	7
Singlecase	19
Survey	1

Table 4.3: Distribution of agile methods

Agile method	Amount
Scrum	15
XP	7
Lean	5
Other	5

Table 4.4: Distribution of domains

	Domain	Amount
	Telecom	10
	Enterprise information system	7
	Web application	4
	Other	11

Many metrics were focused to help in the prioritization of the tasks for the next iteration [S8,S9,S11]. Prioritization of features was affected by a metric that measured the amount of revenue a customer is willing to pay for a feature [S11].

Effort estimation metrics were used to measure the size of the features [S6]. Furthermore, velocity metrics were used to calculate how many features is the team able to complete in an iteration [S23]. Knowing the teams' effective available hours was found useful when selecting tasks for an iteration [S3]. Velocity metrics were also used to improve the next iteration estimates [S16]. In one case, task's start and end date metric was used to point out interdependent tasks in the planning phase [S12].

### 4.2.2 Iteration tracking

Purpose of iteration tracking was to track how the tasks selected for the iteration were performed and that necessary modifications were done to the plan to complete the iteration according to schedule.

Metrics helped in monitoring, identifying problems, and predicting the end result by making it transparent to the stakeholders how the iteration is progressing. [S21,S27,S16,S5,S12,S7,S29,S30].

Progress metrics included number of completed web pages [S12], story completion percentage [S29] and velocity metrics [S5]. However, using velocity metrics had also negative effects such as cutting corners in implementing features to maintain velocity with the cost of quality [S6]. One qualitative progress metric was product demonstrations with customer [S30]. Measuring the completion of tasks enabled selecting incomplete tasks to the next iteration [S12].

When the metrics indicated, during an iteration, that all planned tasks could not be completed, the iteration was rescoped by cutting tasks [S16,S5,S17] or adding extra resources [S5,S17].

When there were problems that needed to be fixed, whether they were short or long term, the metrics helped in making decisions to fix them

Table 4.5: Quality assessment fo primary studies

Study	Rese arch	Aim	Con text	R.de sign	Samp ling	Ctrl. Grp	Data coll.	Data anal	Reflex iv-ity	Find ings	Value	Total	Rele vancy
[S1]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	10	2
[S2]	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
[S3]	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
[S4]	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
[S5]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	9	3
[S6]	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2
[S7]	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	5	2
[S8]	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	3
[S9]	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	8	2
[S10]	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	5	2
[S11]	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	3
[S12]	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
[S13]	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	3
[S14]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
[S15]	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	9	2
[S16]	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
[S17]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	8	3
[S18]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	9	3
[S19]	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	2
[S20]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	10	2
[S21]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	10	2
[S22]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	10	2
[S23]	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	4	2
[S24]	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	2
[S25]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	10	3
[S26]	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	9	2
[S27]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	9	2
[S28]	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	9	3
[S29]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
[S30]	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2
[S31]	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	16	15	20	15	19	7	14	13	7	21	24		

Table 4.6: Categories for measurement usage

Categories	Sources
Iteration planning	[S6,S23,S3,S8,S12] [S16,S9,S11]
Iteration tracking	[S21,S27,S16,S5,S12] [S4,S7,S6,S17,S29] [S30,S10,S25,S24,S23] [S8,S20]
Motivating and improving	[S29,S28,S13,S4,S3] [S23,S25,S27]
Identifying process problems	[S21,S29,S17,S13,S25] [S16,S19,S18,S31,S22]
Pre-release quality	[S14,S5,S29]
Post-release quality	[S19,S3,S7,S25]
Changes in processes or tools	[S13,S21,S18,S4,S25,S14,S26,S20]

[S25,S5,S21,S4]. It was possible to base decisions on data, not only use common sense and experience [S28]. Balance of work flow was mentioned as a reason for using metrics in multiple papers [S23,S19,S20,S8,S21,S5,S13]. Progress metrics were used to focus work on tasks that matter the most [S28], avoid partially done work [S24], avoid task switching [S24] and polishing of features [S28]. Finally, open defects metric was used to delay a release [S10].

### 4.2.3 Motivating and improving

This section describes metrics that were used to motivate people and support team level improvement of working practices and performance.

Metrics were used to communicate different data about the project or product to the team members [S29,S28,S23,S25,S27]. Measurement data motivated teams to act and improve their performance [S28,S23,S3,S4,S13]. Some examples included fixing the build faster by visualizing build status [S13,S4], fixing bugs faster by showing amount of defects in monitors [S3] and increasing testing by measuring product size by automated tests that motivated team to write more tests [S28].

Metrics were also used to prevent harmful behaviour such as cherry picking features that are most interesting to the team. Measuring work in progress (WIP) and setting WIP limits prevented cherry picking by enforcing only two features at a time and thus preventing them from working on lower priority but more interesting features.[S17]

#### 4.2.4 Identifying process problems

Metrics were often used to identify or avoid problems in processes and work flows. This chapter describes how metrics were used to spot problems.

There were multiple cases highlighting how metrics are used to identify or predict problems in order to solve or avoid them [S21,S29,S16,S19,S18,S31].

Sometimes there were work phases where no value was added, e.g., “waiting for finalization”. This type of activity was called waste and was identified by using lead time. [S22]

Story implementation flow metric describes how efficiently a developer has been able to complete a story compared to the estimate. This metric helped to identify a problem with receiving customer requirement clarifications. [S13]

Creating awareness with defect trend indicator helped to take actions to avoid problems [S25]. One common solution to problems was to find the root cause [S13,S17].

#### 4.2.5 Pre-release quality

Metrics in the pre-release quality category were used to prevent defects reaching customers and to understand what was the current quality of the product.

Integration fails was a problem to avoid with static code check metrics [S14]. Moreover, metrics were used to make sure that the product is sufficiently tested before the next step in the release path [S14,S5]. Additionally, making sure that the product is ready for further development was mentioned [S7].

Some metrics forced writing tests before the actual code [S29]. Technical debt was measured with a technical debt board that was used to facilitate discussion on technical debt issues, see fig. 4.1 [S4].

#### 4.2.6 Post-release quality

Metrics in post-release quality deal with evaluating the quality of the product after it has been released.

Customer satisfaction, customer responsiveness, and quality indicators were seen as attributes of post-release quality. Some metrics included customer input to determine post-release quality [S19,S7,S3] while other metrics used pre-release data as predictors of post-release quality [S25,S19,S7]. Customer related metrics included, e.g., defects sent by customers [S3], change requests from customers [S19] and customer’s willingness to recommend product to other potential customers [S7]. Quality prediction metrics included

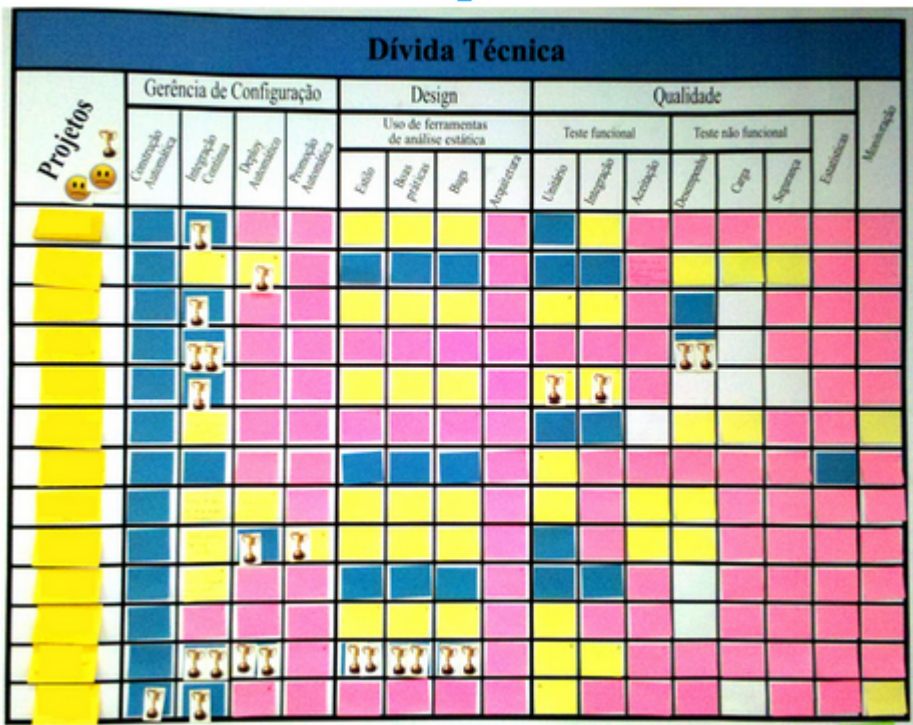


Figure 4.1: Technical debt.

defect counts [S19], maintenance effort [S25] and deferred defect counts [S7].

#### **4.2.7 Changes in processes or tools**

This chapter describes the reported changes that applying metrics had for processes and tools. The changes include changes in measurement practices, development policies, and the whole development process.

The successful usage of sprint readiness metric and story flow metric changed company policy to have target values for both metrics as well as monthly reporting of both metrics by all projects [S13].

At Ericsson by monitoring the flow of requirements metric they decided to change their implementation flow from push to pull to help them deliver in a more continuous manner. Also, based on the metric they added an intermediate release version to have release quality earlier in the development cycle. [S20]

Changes to requirements management were also made based on lead time in other case at Ericsson. Analysing lead time contributed to delaying technical design after purchase order was received, providing customer a rough estimate quickly and merging the step to create solution proposal and technical design. [S18]

Problem with broken build, and the long times to fix the build, led to measurements that monitor and visualize the state of the build and the time it takes to fix it [S4,S13,S14].

Also, additional code style rules were added to code check-in and build tools so that builds would fail more often and defects would get caught before release [S13,S14].

Similarly, testing approaches were changed based on flow metrics. Using lead time led to that integration testing could be started parallel to system testing [S18]. Also, throughput of a test process showed insufficient capability to handle the incoming features, which led to changing the test approach [S26].

### **4.3 How were metrics used / what actions did they trigger?**

### **4.4 Create improvement ideas**

This sections describes improvement ideas that were created based on metrics.

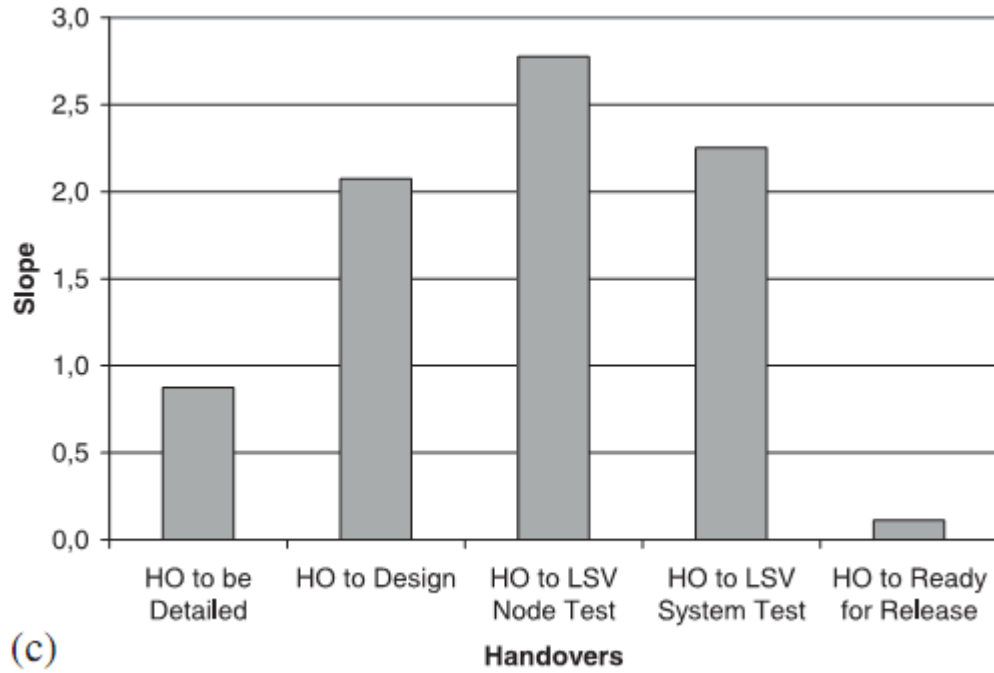


Figure 4.2: Handovers [21]

When a waste of extra process (requirement would wait for long time before full specification) was identified in requirement specification with the help of lead time, processing time and queue time metrics, a solution idea was created where a quick high level proposal would be sent to customer without the need for in-depth specification. Customer could then use the high level proposal to evaluate if they want to pursue that requirement further. Similarly, two requirement specification phases could be combined when another waste of extra process was identified in requirements specification phase. Additionally, lead time could be decrease by increasing the collaboration with the market unit and the development unit. Similarly, there was a waste of waiting in design which could be improved by starting real work only when the purchase order is received, not when requests are received. [S18]

Same metrics as above were used to identify waste of waiting in testing phases. The improvement suggestion was to provide earlier beta version and making testing phases parallel. [S18]

Cost types, rate of requirements over phases and variance in handovers were used to identify bottlenecks at Ericsson. They noticed that focusing on deadlines caused a lot of requirements to be transferred to system test phase close to the deadline. The improvement suggestion was to focus more



on continuous delivery instead of focusing on market driven deadlines. Furthermore, Kanban was suggested as a development method to accomplish the continuous delivery capabilities. [S21]

Throughput and queue time metrics were used to identify bottleneck in network integration test phase which lead to using other testing practices in future projects. [S26]

Rate of requirements over time was used to identify problems in the development process. One improvement suggestion was to change from push to pull-approach so that team can adjust the workload to enable continuous delivery. Another improvement suggestion was to add intermediate release versions so that integration and testing would happen more often and problems could be identified earlier than close to the actual release. [S20]

Citrix online started measuring velocity for their Operations department as well. This led to other departments trying to decrease their products' Ops story points to enable faster releases. The reduction in story points was possible by creating hot deployment strategies and providing better documentation. [S8]

Mamdas, an Israel Air force IT department, were using burndown to follow their progress. However, when they noticed that work remaining wasn't decreasing according to remaining resources they had to make changes. In their iteration summary meeting they decided to pursue senior engineers to help them create optimal development environments and continuous build systems. Also, they decided to evaluate customer requests in more detail to avoid over polishing features. [28]

## 4.5 Metrics & categorization

Metrics are listed by primary study in appendix, see appendix D.

Metrics could help in decreasing software project failures due to prioritization and resource & schedule issues in iteration tracking. Metrics here are all reactive.

Iteration tracking metrics could help in monitoring issues that lead to project failures. Metrics are mostly reactive.

Metrics that are used to motivate and improve people can be used to solve issues related to values & responsibilities and company policies that lead to project failures. Metrics are both reactive and proactive.

Metrics that are used to point identify problems can be used to prevent Method causes for failures. Metrics are almost all proactive.

Metrics that are used to improve or understand pre-release quality can be used to prevent failures that are caused by value & responsibility, task

Table 4.7: Metrics categorized by causes for failures

Causes for failures	My categories							
	Iteration planning	Iteration tracking	Motivation and improving	Identifying process problems	Pre-release quality	Post-release quality	Cannot Say	My Category
People								
Instructions & Experience	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Values & responsibilities	0	0	2	2	3	0	0	7
Cooperation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Company Policies	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Tasks								
Task Output	1	0	0	2	4	0	0	7
Task Difficulty	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Task Priority	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Methods								
Work Practices	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	9
Process	0	1	1	8	0	0	0	10
Monitoring	0	10	0	1	4	0	0	15
Environment								
Existing	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6
Product								
Resources & Schedules	11	3	0	0	0	0	0	14
Tools	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customers & Users	0	1	0	0	0	7	0	8
Cannot Say Cause Category	0	2	0	0	0	0	15	17
Total	19	18	6	22	19	7	15	106

output and existing product related issues. Metrics are mostly reactive.

Metrics that are used for post-release quality can be used to prevent failures that are caused by customers' and users' opinions. Metrics are mostly proactive.

In general, used metrics were more reactive than proactive.

In general, it seems that metrics are used the most to prevent project failures that are caused by Methods, then by Environment and not so much about People or Tasks.

## 4.6 Important metrics

This section describes metrics that were considered important.

Progress as working code was considered as one of the cornerstones of agile [S30].

Story flow percentage and velocity of elaborating features were considered as key metrics for monitoring projects. Also, a minimum 60% value for flow was identified. Similarly, velocity for elaborating features should be as fast as velocity of implementing features. Also, they said using both metrics *"drive behaviors to let teams go twice as fast as they could before"*. [S13]

Net Promoter Score was said to be *"one of the purest measures of success"* [S7].

According to a survey, projects that were said to be definitely successful 77% measured customer satisfaction often or always. Also, the more often customer satisfaction would be measured the more likely it would be that the project would have good code quality and the project would succeed. [S1]

Story percent complete metric was considered valuable since it embraces test driven development - no progress is made before test is written. Also, percent complete metric is considered more accurate than previously used metric. Moreover, it gives normalized measure of progress compared to developer comments about progress. Additionally, story percent complete metric leverages existing unit testing framework and thus requires only minimal overhead to track progress. Team members seemed to be extremely happy about using the metric. [S29]

Pseudo-velocity was considered essential for release planning [S23].

In an agile survey [S1], project success had significant positive relationship with the following metrics: team velocity, business value delivered, running testing features, defect count after testing and number of test cases. However, there were no detailed descriptions of these metrics.

Effort estimates were consider important in release planning especially in terms of prioritization [S9].

Burndown was valuable in meeting sprint commitments [S7]. Similarly, managers said burndown was important in making decisions and managing multiple teams [S5]. However, developers didn't consider burndown important [S5].

Top performing teams at Adobe estimated backlog items with relative effort estimates [S7].

Practitioners at Ericsson valued transparency and overview of progress that the metrics were able to provide to the complex product development with parallel activities, namely cost types, rate of requirements over phases and variance in handovers [S21].

At another case at Ericsson Value Stream Maps (VSM) were used to visualize problem areas and possible improvements. Practitioners valued how the maps were easy to understand. Metrics that were used to build VSM were lead time, processing time and queue time. [S18]

Defects deferred was seen as a good predictor of post-release quality because it correlated with issues found by the customers [S7].

Defect prediction metrics predicted number of defects in backlog and defect trend indicator were seen important to decision making, and their use continued after the pilot period. Key attributes of the metrics were sufficient accuracy and ease of use. [S26]

Technical debt board that visualized the status of technical debt in categories was considered important because it gave a high level understanding of the problems and it was then used to plan actions to remove technical debt. It was proven to be useful in their context. [S4]

The following metrics were considered very useful in agile context: number of unit tests, test coverage, test-growth ratio and broken builds. The benefit for the number of unit tests is not well described except that it provides "*first insights*". Test coverage provides info on how well the code is tested. Test-growth ratio is useful in projects where old codebase is used as basis for new features. Fixing broken builds prevents defects reaching customers. [S14]

#### 4.6.1 Important metrics based on NOT importance-ToMetric data

Effort estimation metrics were used in many cases, so it could be perhaps said they are important since they provide scoping and prioritization.

## Chapter 5

# Discussion

### 5.1 Implications for practice

To provide implications to practice the findings are mapped to the principles of agile software development Beck et al. (2007) categorized by Patel & al. Patel et al. (2006). For each paragraph the naming by Patel et al. is used and references to the agile practices is provided by numbers.

Communication and Collaboration (principles 4 and 6) was reflected in metrics that motivated a team to act and improve, see section 4.2.3. Also, progress metrics were used to communicate the status of the project to the stakeholders, see section 4.2.2.

Team involvement (5,8) was reflected in metrics that motivated team to act and improve, see section 4.2.3. Also, to promote sustainable development metrics were targeted to balance the flow of work, see section 4.2.2.

Reflection (12) was visible in metrics that were used to identify problems and to change processes, see section 4.2.4 and section 4.2.7.

Frequent delivery of working software (1,3,7) was directly identified in one paper, where the team measured progress by demonstrating the product to the customer [S30]. Additionally, there were cases where e.g. completed web-pages [S12] were the primary progress measure. Also, many metrics focused on progress tracking and timely completion of the iteration, see section 4.2.2. However, some other measures from section 4.2.2 show that instead of working code agile teams followed completed tasks and velocity metrics.

An integral part of the concept of working software is measuring post-release quality, see section 4.2.6. This was measured by customer satisfaction, feedback, and customer defect reports. It was also common to use pre-release data to predict post-release quality. Agile developers tend to measure the end product quality with customer based metrics instead of the traditional

quality models, such as ISO/IEC 25010 (ISO/IEC, 2010).

Managing Changing Requirements (2) was seen in the metrics that support prioritization of features each iteration, see section 4.2.1. Additionally, different metrics helped keeping the internal quality of the product high throughout the development which then provided safe development of modifications from new ideas, see section 4.2.5.

Design (9,10,11) was seen in focus to measuring technical debt and using metrics to enforce writing tests before actual code, see section 4.2.5. Additionally, the status of build was continuously monitored, see section 4.2.7. However, the use of velocity metric had a negative effect on technical quality, see section 4.2.2. Many metrics focused on making sure that the right features were selected for implementation, see section 4.2.1, thus avoiding unnecessary work.

There were also metrics, or their usage, which were not agile in nature. E.g., maintaining velocity by cutting corners in quality instead of dropping features from that iteration [S6]. Also, adding people to project to reach a certain date [S5, S17] doesn't seem that agile compared to removing tasks. Adding people can have a negative impact to progress, considering the lack of knowledge and training time required. Moreover, the use of dates to plan interdependent tasks is not agile in nature [S12]. Instead, interdependencies should be visible in choosing the tasks to appropriate iterations. Also, the use of number of defects to delay a release [S10] is against agile thinking as one should rather decrease the scope to avoid such a situation.

Some agile metrics that work well for an agile team, such as tracking progress by automated tests [S28], or measuring the status of the build [S14] can turn against the agile principles if used as an external controlling mechanism. The fifth agile principle requires trust in the team, but if the metrics are enforced outside of the team, e.g., from upper management there is a risk that the metrics turn into control mechanisms and the benefits for the team itself suffer.

### 5.1.1 Comparison to prior studies

Only few papers have broadly studied the reasons for software metrics use in the context of agile software development. Hartmann and Dymond (2006) also highlight process improvement as one of the reasons for measurement in their agile metrics paper. Also, they emphasize that creation of value should be the primary measure of progress - which was also seen in this study.

Korhonen (2009) found in her study that traditional defect metrics could be reused in agile context - if modified. Defect metrics were also used in many of the primary studies.

Kitchenham’s mapping study (Kitchenham, 2010) identified several code metrics in academic literature. However, in this study almost no evidence of code metric use in the industrial context was found. Maybe it is time to re-evaluate the need for code metrics research if industry doesn’t seem to use them.

## 5.2 Limitations

The large shares of specific application domains in the primary documents is a threat to external validity. Seven out of 29 studies were from enterprise information systems domain and especially strong was also the share of ten telecom industry studies out of which eight were from the same company, Ericsson. Also, Israeli Air Force was the case organization in three studies.

The threats to reliability in this research include mainly issues related to the reliability of primary study selection and data extraction. The main threat to reliability was having a single researcher performing the study selection and data extraction. It is possible that researcher bias could have had an effect on the results. This threat was mitigated by analysing the reliability of both study selection and data extraction as described in chapter 3.

Due to iterative nature of the coding process, it was challenging to make sure that all previously coded primary documents would get the same treatment, whenever new codes were discovered. In addition, the researcher’s coding “sense” developed over time, so it is possible that data extraction accuracy improved during the analysis. In order to mitigate these risks a pilot study was conducted to improve the coding scheme, get familiar with the research method, refine the method and tools.

## Chapter 6

# Conclusions

This study presents the results from a systematic literature review from 29 !FIXME **numero** !primary studies. According to the researcher's knowledge there is no previous systematic reviews of measurement use in the context of industrial agile software development. This study classifies and describes the main measurement types and areas that are reported in empirical studies. This study provides descriptions of how and why metrics are used to support agile software development.!FIXME **lisää important metrics ja metrics categories** ! This study also analyzed how the presented metrics support the twelve principles of Agile Manifesto (Beck et al., 2007).

The results indicate that the reasons and use of metrics is focused on the following areas: Iteration planning, Iteration tracking, Motivating and improving, Identifying process problems, Pre-release quality, Post-release quality and Changes in processes or tools.

This paper provides researchers and practitioners with an useful overview of the measurements use in agile context and documented reasonings behind the proposed metrics. This study can be used as a source of relevant sources regarding researchers' interests and contexts.

Finally, this study identified few propositions for future research on measuring in agile software development. First, in the academia lot of emphasis has been given to code metrics yet this study found little evidence of their use. Second, the applicable quality metrics for agile development and the relationship of pre-release quality metrics and post-release quality are important directions of future research. Third, this study found that planning and tracking metrics for iteration were often used indicating a need to focus future research efforts on these areas. Fourth, use of metrics for motivating and enforcing process improvements can be an interesting future research topic.

!FIXME **lisää important metrics ja metric categories** !



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## Appendix A

### Search strings

The first search string was:

TITLE-ABS-KEY(software AND (agile OR lean OR "crystal method" OR "crystal clear" OR dsdm OR "dynamic systems development method" OR fdd OR "feature driven development" OR "agile unified process" OR "agile modeling" OR scrumban OR kanban OR scrum OR "extreme programming" OR xp) AND (measur\* OR metric OR diagnostic OR monitor\*)) AND (LIMIT-TO(SUBJAREA, "COMP")) AND (LIMIT-TO(LANGUAGE, "English"))

It found 512 hits 19 September 2013.

The second search string was:

TITLE-ABS-KEY(software AND (agile OR lean OR "crystal method" OR "crystal clear" OR dsdm OR "dynamic systems development method" OR fdd OR "feature driven development" OR "agile unified process" OR "agile modeling" OR scrumban OR kanban OR scrum OR "extreme programming" OR xp) AND (measur\* OR metric OR diagnostic OR monitor\*)) AND (LIMIT-TO(LANGUAGE, "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO(SUBJAREA, "ENGI")) AND (EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "COMP") OR EXCLUDE(SUBJAREA, "PHYS") OR EXCLUDE(SUBJAREA, "MATE") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "BUSI") OR EXCLUDE(SUBJAREA, "MATH") OR EXCLUDE(SUBJAREA, "ENVI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "EART") OR EXCLUDE(SUBJAREA, "DECI") OREXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "ENER"))

It found 220 hits 7 November 2013.



The third search string was:

TITLE-ABS-KEY(software AND (agile OR lean OR "crystal method"  
OR "crystal clear" OR dsdm OR "dynamic systems development method"  
OR fdd OR "feature driven development" OR "agile unified process" OR "ag-  
ile modeling" OR scrumban OR kanban OR scrum OR "extreme program-  
ming" OR xp) AND (measur\* OR metric OR diagnosticOR monitor\*)) AND  
(LIMIT-TO(LANGUAGE, "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO(SUBJAREA, "BUSI"))  
AND (EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "ENGI") OR EXCLUDE(SUBJAREA, "COMP"))

It found 42 hits 10 December 2013.

## Appendix B

# Inclusion and exclusion criteria

### Inclusion criteria

- Papers that present the use and experiences of metrics in an agile industry setting.

### Exclusion criteria

- Papers that don't contain empirical data from industry cases.
- Papers that are not in English.
- Papers that don't have agile context. There is evidence of clearly non-agile practices or there is no agile method named. For example, paper mentions agile but case company has only three releases per year.
- Paper is only about one agile practice, which is not related to measuring.
- Papers that don't seem to have any data about metric usage. Similarly, if there are only a few descriptions of metrics but no other info regarding reasons or usage.
- Papers that have serious issues with grammar or vocabulary and therefore it takes considerable effort to understand sentences.
- Papers where the setting is not clear or results cannot be separated by setting, for example surveys where there is data both from academia and industry.
- Papers where the measurements are only used for the research. For example author measures which agile practices correlate with success.

## Appendix C

### Quality assessment questions

1. Is this a research paper?
2. Is there a clear statement of the aims of the research?
3. Is there an adequate description of the context in which the research was carried out?
4. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
6. Was there a control group with which to compare treatments?
7. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?
9. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been considered adequately?
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?
11. Is the study of value for research or practice?

## Appendix D

# Metric distribution by primary studies

Metrics by primary studies

ID	Metrics
[S1]	Business value delivered, customer satisfaction, defect count after testing, number of test cases, running tested features
[S2]	Velocity
[S3]	Team available hours, team effective hours, critical defects sent by customer, open defects, test failure rate, test success rate, remaining task effort, team effectiveness
[S4]	Technical debt in categories, build status, technical debt in effort
[S5]	Burndown, check-ins per day, number of automated test steps, faults per iteration
[S6]	Velocity, story estimates
[S7]	Burndown, story points, # of open defects, defects found in system test, defects deferred, net promoter score
[S8]	Story points, task effort, velocity, operation's velocity
[S9]	Effort estimate, actual effort
[S10]	# of defects/velocity
[S11]	Revenue per customer
[S12]	Task's expected start and end date, effort estimate, completed web pages, task done

- [S13] Fix time of failed build, story flow percentage, percentage of stories prepared for sprint, velocity of elaborating features, velocity of implementing features
  - [S14] Broken build, test coverage, test growth ratio, violations of static code checks, # of unit tests
  - [S15] Effort estimate, effort estimate, effort estimate, effort estimate
  - [S16] Sprint burndown, release burndown, cost performance index, schedule performance index, planned velocity
  - [S17] Common tempo time, number of bounce backs, cycle time, work in progress, customer satisfaction(Kano analysis), effort estimate kits, inventory per phase
  - [S18] Lead time, processing time, queue time
  - [S19] Change requests per requirement, fault slips, implemented vs wasted requirements, maintenance effort, lead time
  - [S20] Rate of requirements per phase, variance in handovers, requirement's cost types
  - [S21] number of maintenance requests, number of work items per phase, lead time
  - [S22] # of faults, fault-slip-through, # of requests from customers, # of requirements per phase, lead time
  - [S23] Work in progress, average velocity, cycle time, pseudo velocity
  - [S24] Lead time, work in progress, # of days in maintenance, # of days to overdue, reported hours on CSR
  - [S25] Number of features developed in release, queue, throughput
  - [S26] Defect trend indicator, # of defects in backlog, predicted # of defects
  - [S27] Burndown, check-ins per day, number of automated test steps
  - [S28] Burndown, # of new defects, number of written and passed tests, task estimated vs actual time, time reported for overhead activities, check-ins per day
  - [S29] Story estimate, story complete percentage
  - [S30] Progress as working code
  - [S31] Costs, schedule
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