

Transforming Healthcare Project Management through Agile Practices: A Framework for Adaptive Healthcare Delivery

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Abstract

The use of the traditional, rigid and linear structures of healthcare project management has been found to be inadequate to address the needs of the modern healthcare context, where there are a lot of uncertainties, high rates of change and complex interdependencies. This paper suggests an agile-based framework of adapting the healthcare project management in order to improve the flexibility, collaboration, and resilience. The researchers applied the mixed-methods design, conducting a quantitative study on the 100 healthcare professionals, who had to provide data with regard to the role agile played in healthcare transformation, along with the qualitative research that involved 10 stakeholders participating in the agile-led healthcare projects. Quantitative data showed that there were some significant positive correlations between agile adoption, project performance, stakeholder satisfaction and flexibility and responsiveness (p under 0.05) and the qualitative analysis yielded five major themes flexibility and responsiveness, collaboration and cross-functional engagement, continuous improvement, barriers to implementation, and perceived outcomes and impact. All the outcomes prove the idea that agile principles, properly engrained in healthcare management, will increase flexibility, communication, performance, and solve the systematic problem of operating dynamic healthcare systems. This project provides an in-depth approach to reforming healthcare delivery with agile approaches by focusing on resilience, continuous improvement, and patient-focused end results.

Keywords: Agile Project Management, Healthcare Delivery, Resilience, Adaptability, Collaboration, Mixed-Methods, Organizational Flexibility

1. Introduction

The healthcare delivery systems are dedicated to delivering services that promote the health requirements of the people, and the betterment of the overall outcomes of the patients. However, the modern healthcare facilities are working in a more turbulent environment with a broad range of technological shifts, changing patient needs, various regulations, and changing socio-economic conditions. All these issues result in the need to re-evaluate the traditional and linear project management models which are usually rigid to respond to the abrupt changes. Traditional project management approaches (e.g., the waterfall approach) involve the use of a linear process to achieve activities. In general, it is not the most effective way to conduct business in a fluctuating and unpredictable sector such as healthcare delivery (Nordmark, Lindberg, and Zingmark, 2022).

The recent scholarship on sectors has also highlighted the need to consider resilient and risk-adaptive project management as a way of accommodating uncertainty. According to Narang

(2025a), companies with complex and interdisciplinary projects, including transportation research centers, need a well-developed structure to improve flexibility, support cooperation, and enhance risk management. On the same note, Narang (2025b) has suggested preemptive, knowledgeable, and discursive precautionary and informed strategies of risk-management to create resilience. These papers show that the concept of resilience and flexibility is not only important in the field of transportation and research but also essential in the field of healthcare, where a project environment is also dynamic and faces the constant threat of change.

Agile project management in this regard has become a more responsive and participatory management method that is aimed at maximizing responsiveness and performance within complex systems. Agile, as the product of the software world, focuses on iterative planning, constant communication, and multi-functional collaboration, which allow the team to adapt fast to change and some uncertainty (Alotaibi and Almudhi, 2023). Agile principles have become popular in the healthcare sector due to their potential to generate innovation, help enhance communication, and align the scope of project outcomes with those that are patient-centered. Agile is iterative and adaptive, which contributes to a better coordination of clinical, administrative, and technical aspects and results in increased performance and responsiveness in healthcare projects (Dotsenko et al., 2023a).

The change in the healthcare systems in the first place being inevitable and intensive, especially at the time of crisis situations, such as pandemics, armed conflicts, or the sudden migration of the population, further emphasizes the necessity of adaptive approaches to project management. In this case, the healthcare facilities will also need to reconsider the traditional approaches to the recruitment of staff members, distribution of resources, and building the teams (Chumachenko, Bondarenko, Dotsenko, and Bondarenko, 2024). It makes human-human resource management a vital part of resilience and flexibilities in view of challenges of proper staffing in circumstances of inadequacy in financial and logistic provisions. They are turning to the medical staff as a precious and inexhaustible asset, and flexible policies of human resources are the only way to sustain the process in the field of healthcare where they are overwhelmed (Dotsenko et al., 2023a).

The recent studies demonstrate the topicality of agile transformation in healthcare organizations as the tool for creating sustainable innovation, ensuring better safety, or making operations more adaptable. Giving the opportunity to identify and solve a problem quickly and foster creative problem-solving, agile transformation helps enhance communication in complex adaptive healthcare systems (Dotsenko et al., 2023a). Moreover, this change favours the adoption of safety-oriented systems through their integration of strategic irregularity, organizational sturdiness, and stability in the management procedure of the medical institutions.

A multi-project environment is also applicable to the healthcare industry, and resource redistribution through an agile approach is critically important. According to Dotsenko et al. (2023b), the proposed interaction between a donor and a recipient is a donor-acceptor model of agile redistribution of human resources in medical institutions. The approach allows for effective redistributing the resources in various projects without violating the principles of functional preservation, flexibility, and resiliency. They revealed through the use of process-modeling

techniques including IDEF0 and IDEF3 how agile resources could be managed using scenario based methods by operating within limited regulatory and cultural contexts. This type of dynamic resources management enables health care organizations to dynamically adopt emerging changes in the operation requirements, and maintain the operation of health services even when discontinuity occurs.

Agile transformation is another concept that goes beyond the project management processes to the culture of healthcare institution. It encourages lifelong education, openness and participation of decision-making which are key characteristics of ensuring quality and safety in practice in medicine. Healthcare organizations that have embraced agile methods have reported in the literature on empirical studies faster response times, enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration, and improved staff and patient satisfaction (Nordmark et al., 2022; Alotaibi and Almudhi, 2023). Considering these changes, this paper offers a conceptual framework to incorporate agile techniques into healthcare project management that enhances flexibly delivered healthcare. Using a mixed-method approach (quantitative analysis of agile practice-performance relationships and qualitative information about agile transformation obtained by healthcare stakeholders) will help the current research add to the rather vast corpus of literature on agile transformation in the healthcare setting. The results will be useful in offering effective advice to harmonize agile procedures with health care delivery to enhance adaptability, innovation, and total success in the project.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Evolution of Agile Project Management in Healthcare

Agile project management (APM) is a receptive and adaptive reaction to the rigorous, linear project methodology created out of the software development process. Management has successfully implemented its iterative, collaborative, and customer-centric principles in various sectors, including healthcare (Hamadneh, Alshurideh, AlHamad, and Al Kurdi, 2024). The need to enhance responsiveness, communication, and innovation within the healthcare sector has also led more and more stakeholders to discover the potential of Agile, a method that is complex, uncertain, and highly regulated (Zierock, Angar, and Rimpler, 2023).

The article by Desai et al. (2024) proved the effectiveness of Agile by using the Home Hospital Early Adopters Accelerator, which was a multisite initiative that used the Scrum framework to organize different healthcare teams. The paper established that Agile decreased the time to completion of a project by 20 percent, and the program increased cross-functional cooperation, which confirms that Agile would better accelerate the process of innovation diffusion and outcomes in quality implementation in clinical settings. On the same note, Chigbu (2024) discussed the application of Agile project management in healthcare IT projects, and he made the conclusion that Agile frameworks are important in promoting digital transformation projects by facilitating collaboration between stakeholders, looping feedback, and responding to changes.

2.2 Agile Practices and Strategic Transformation in Healthcare Projects

The flexibility of Agile is one of the reasons why it is strategic for healthcare organizations that need to work in the conditions of continuous change. Considering iterative prototyping and

testing as the key elements of enhancing patient-centered outcomes, Zierock et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of strategic transformation in healthcare institutions through the opportunities of Agile thinking and user-centered design. Their study highlights that the customer-centeredness and continuous feedback aspect of Agile enable a healthcare system to bring value faster and maintain organizational resiliency during turbulent environments. Moreover, the application of Agile in relation to the Design Thinking and Objectives and Key Results (OKR) systems entails a positive effect on the establishment of a corporate culture of unceasing innovation. The key idea of Agile thinking as argued by Zierock et al. (2023) enables healthcare teams to receive change as an opportunity to get better instead of a part of the disruption. This is consistent with Dotsenko et al. (2023a), who proposed Agile transformation as a hierarchical innovational tool and a safer healthcare system improvement in the more intricate adaptive systems.

2.3 Agile Frameworks for Enhanced Efficiency and Collaboration

Agile approaches, including Scrum, Kanban, and hybrid stage-gate frameworks, are based on the focus of planning iteratively, cross-functional collaboration conditions, and open communication, and all these factors contribute to the efficiency of a project (Hamadneh et al., 2024). The practices are especially useful in the health sector, where patient safety, regulatory issues, and coordination among departments are of primary importance. Agile implementation in the Mayo Clinic proved to be rather effective in terms of communication, team integration, and stakeholder involvement (Obrenovic, Tabassi, and Bryde, 2020).

Kanwal et al. (2023) emphasized that Agile collaborative structure can make projects more satisfactory to stakeholders, even under the conditions of a limited budget or time limitations, due to the adaptability of the methodology and feedback systems. Likewise, studies of hybrid "leagile" models, which supply lean with agile agility, indicate that the models can contain responsiveness and cost-effectiveness, which is essential in the high-demand setting characterizing healthcare (Richards, Yeoh, Chong, and Popovic, 2019).

2.4 Challenges in Agile Implementation within Healthcare

There are positives in the implementation of agile in healthcare, but it does not go without problems. The researchers have uncovered many obstacles, including resistance to change, absence of appropriate training, and poor coordination of a company (Sakkthivel and Joghee, 2019; Same et al., 2023). Healthcare work environments are typically predisposed to being hierarchical and risk-averse since it can be a blowback to the culture that needs to be Agile. Besides that, complicated patient data system introduces the challenge of interoperability, privacy, and security the problem which, in turn, is emphasized by Chigbu (2024) in his examination of Agile IT projects.

As Desai et al. (2024) have also found, the participators of Agile healthcare accelerators initially had issues with the understanding of the Scrum framework and the way to integrate it into their daily tasks. These problems demonstrate the role of strategic training, devotion to leadership, and re-organization of an organization in order to enable long-term Agile transformation.

2.5 Integration of Technology, AI, and Intelligent Information Systems

The new step in healthcare project management is the meeting of the Agile practices with newly developed technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and smart information systems (IIS). The solutions based on artificial intelligence can enhance decision-making, resource distribution, and predictive risk management, which provide an ideal fit within the scope of Agile due to its iterative and responsiveness to data (Samra and Shaalan, 2015; Shehab, Som, and Al-Qassem, 2023).

It was noted that a project forecast made by AI technologies enhances the precision of a project, exposes a smaller amount of risk, and facilitates evidence-based decision-making (Samrah, 2016; Som & Al-Qassem, 2023). Healthcare, with its complex and change-sensitive project environment, greatly benefits from such capabilities. Furthermore, AI combined with Agile designs opens new perspectives of adaptive medical care provision, especially by means of autonomous processes and cognitive scheduling (Samra, Sharari, and AlTunaiji, 2020).

2.6 Agile Resource Management and Organizational Resilience

In healthcare organizations, human resource management plays a critical role in bringing about resilience in the system. According to the latest research, such a concept as Agile resource redistribution has been proposed, which implies the active distribution of personnel and resources in various healthcare projects (Dotsenko, Chumachenko, Bondarenko, and Chumachenko, 2023b). This approach exploits the donor-acceptor relationships to make the resources more efficient and avoid any disruption of the operations when a crisis (like a pandemic or a conflict) occurs (Chumachenko, Bondarenko, Dotsenko, and Bondarenko, 2024). Agile approach fosters flexibility in strategies and organizational resilience, therefore allowing healthcare organizations to respond fast to fluctuating patient numbers, employee unavailability, or environmental limits. Managers can standardize agile redistribution procedures of resources, as well as guarantee functional continuity, through the use of scenario-based process models (IDEF0 and IDEF3) (Dotsenko et al., 2023b).

3 Research Objectives

1. To assess the level of awareness and adoption of agile project management practices among healthcare professionals.
2. To evaluate the effect of agile practices on project performance, stakeholder satisfaction, and delivery flexibility in healthcare organizations.
3. To explore how agile practices transform organizational culture and operational behavior in healthcare.

4. Methodology

This paper used a mixed-design approach in its study which incorporates a combination of the quantitative and qualitative research designs in order to give a detailed picture of how agile practices contribute to the performance of a project and adaptive healthcare delivery. The triangulation of the data which involves combining both the measurably statistical results with the experience based results of the healthcare professionals was made possible by the mixed-

method approach. The design suited the situation well as it resulted in tangible and contextual complexities of agile implementation in health care contexts.

The quantitative element of the study intended to quantify the association amongst the agile practice use, project performance, satisfaction of stakeholders, and flexibility in healthcare delivery. Data was collected through structured survey questionnaire as part of purposely chosen sample of 100 healthcare professionals who work in the public and private hospitals, medical institutions and healthcare project offices. Project managers, administrators, clinicians, and coordinators who were involved in the processes of healthcare project management were the sample. The selection of 100 respondents (that gave adequate statistical power) was essential to carry out an inferential analysis including correlation, t-tests, and ANOVA whose analysis requires a moderate or large-scale sample to ascertain any significant effect. The size of the sample is in line with the requirements to quantitative research in management and organizational research, and results are well generalized with the specified population.

The qualitative part was intended to add to the numerical data and carry out the exploration of the experiences, perception, and challenges faced by healthcare professionals in applying agile practices. To select a sample, purposive sampling was used to choose 10 participants because they were directly involved in the agile-oriented healthcare projects. These respondents consisted of four project managers, three healthcare administrators and three clinical staff. The reason why the sample of 10 was used is based on the principle of data saturation, according to which the further interviews were not expected to present any more new information or theme. In qualitative inquiry, this size is deemed sufficient to do in depth thematic analysis and yet is manageable and can be interpreted. Figure 1 present the flowchart of utilized proposed approach in this study.

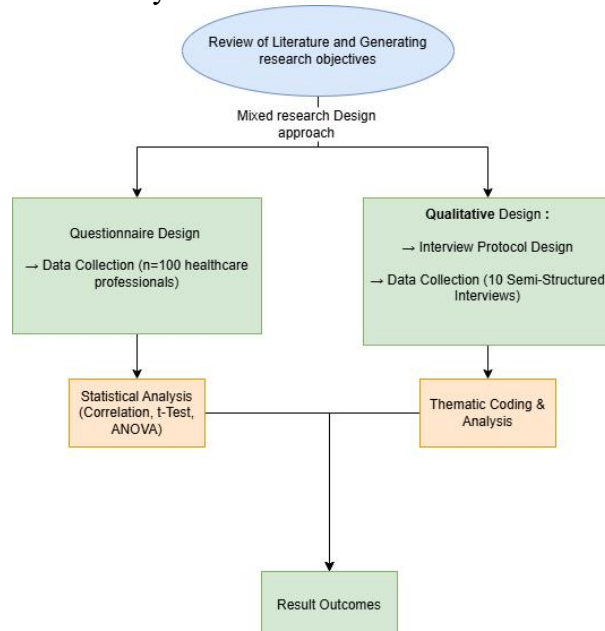


Figure 1: Flow-chart of Proposed approach

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative study was used to test how agile practices correlate with the performance of projects in healthcare organizations. There were findings related to the level of awareness and adoption of the agile methodologies; these findings proved moderate to high among the respondents.

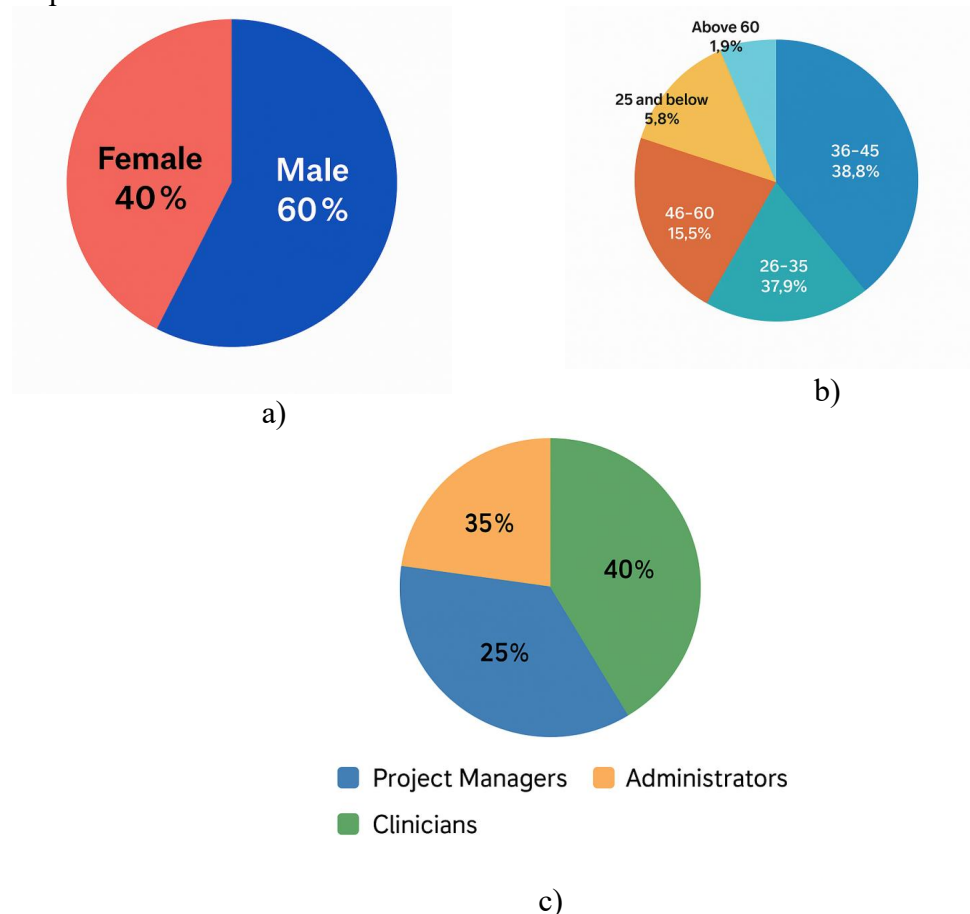


Figure 2: Pie-chart of a) Gender of Respondents b) Age group of Respondents c) Designation of Respondents

According to Figure 2, 100 healthcare professionals (both of the public and the non-public healthcare institutions) were included in the study. Gender distribution was equal with 60 percent of the respondents male and 40 percent who were female indicating the participation equal gender participation in the field of the professionals. The demographic profile showed that most of the respondents fell within the age group of 26-45 years and represented almost three quarters of the total sample, showing that they were mostly mid-career professionals who were actively engaged in the healthcare project activities. The presence of project managers (25%), administrators (35%), and clinicians (40) ensured different views in the leadership of managerial roles, administration (administrative) roles, and clinical roles. Such distribution of demographics demonstrates an overall combination of the professionals directly involved in the planning,

coordination, and implementation of healthcare projects, which increases the reliability and contextual sensitivity of the research results.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Adoption and Awareness of Agile Practices

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Awareness of Agile Methodologies	100	3.78	0.91	1.00	5.00
Level of Agile Adoption	100	3.45	1.02	1.00	5.00
Project Performance Score	100	3.96	0.84	2.00	5.00
Stakeholder Satisfaction	100	4.02	0.79	2.00	5.00

The level of awareness about agile concepts was high ($M = 3.78$), and respondents replied that they used them on a regular basis in the project settings ($M = 3.45$). The average performance of the project ($M = 3.96$) and stakeholder satisfaction ($M = 4.02$) were also above the median and testing the hypothesis that agile methodology positively impacts the results of projects.

In order to make a comparison of some results of projects done with both traditional and agile systems, independent samples t-test was applied.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test for Project Performance

Methodology Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Traditional Framework	42	3.52	0.88			
Agile Framework	58	4.21	0.73	2.41	98	0.018*

$p < 0.05$ indicates significance.

Agreements that operated by using agile frameworks had a considerable superior performance ($M = 4.21$) than their counterparts ($M = 3.52$). This observation suggests that agile activities promote the coordination, communication, and adaptability- essential determinants of project success in healthcare facilities.

The results of further analysis by using one-way ANOVA proved that the intensity of agile practice implementation significantly influenced project performance.

Table 3. One-Way ANOVA for Agile Practice Intensity and Project Performance

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.213	3	2.071	4.128	0.008*
Within Groups	48.987	96	0.510		
Total	55.200	99			

$p < 0.05$ indicates significance.

Organizations that had an increase in agile maturity showed better project effectiveness, which highlights the fact that the consistent enforcement of agile principles results in the constant improvement and advancement.

The strength of the relationship between agile adoption and project performance, stakeholder satisfaction and flexibility of healthcare delivery was also established through the correlation analysis.

Table 4. Correlation between Agile Practices and Healthcare Delivery Flexibility

Variables	1	2	3	4
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1. Agile Practice Adoption	1			
2. Project Performance	0.624**	1		
3. Stakeholder Satisfaction	0.578**	0.684**	1	
4. Healthcare Delivery Flexibility	0.552**	0.610**	0.592**	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All the correlations were heavy and positive and this is an indication that the agile extent of implementation enhances the outcome and flexibility of the project. The results indicate that agile is a powerful managerial approach used towards promoting flexibility in the provision of healthcare.

Chi-square test was used to find out that Agile maturity contraction and delivery flexibility were correlated.

Table 5. Chi-Square Test – Agile Maturity and Healthcare Flexibility

Variables	χ^2	df	Sig.
Agile Maturity Level \times Delivery Flexibility	15.73	3	0.001**

$p < 0.01$ indicates strong association.

The robust correlation indicates that the more the healthcare organizations evolve into being agile-mature, the higher will be their chances to cope with changes in technology, patients, and regulations. All these quantitative findings support the correlation that agile frameworks significantly enhance the project efficiency, responsiveness, and overall adaptability, which outlines the previous achievements of Dotsenko et al. (2023a) and Chumachenko et al. (2024).

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative study examined the experiences, perceptions, and thoughts of ten healthcare practitioners (including project managers, administrators, as well as clinical staff) who participated in the implementation or management of projects guided by agile principles. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to bring their perception of how the agile practices have a diffusion on the flexibility, collaboration, learning and overall project outcome in healthcare settings. Thematic analysis was used to determine the patterns that occur frequently and five big themes were identified: *flexibility and responsiveness, collaboration and cross-functional engagement, continuous improvement and learning, barriers to agile implementation, and perceived outcomes and impact.*

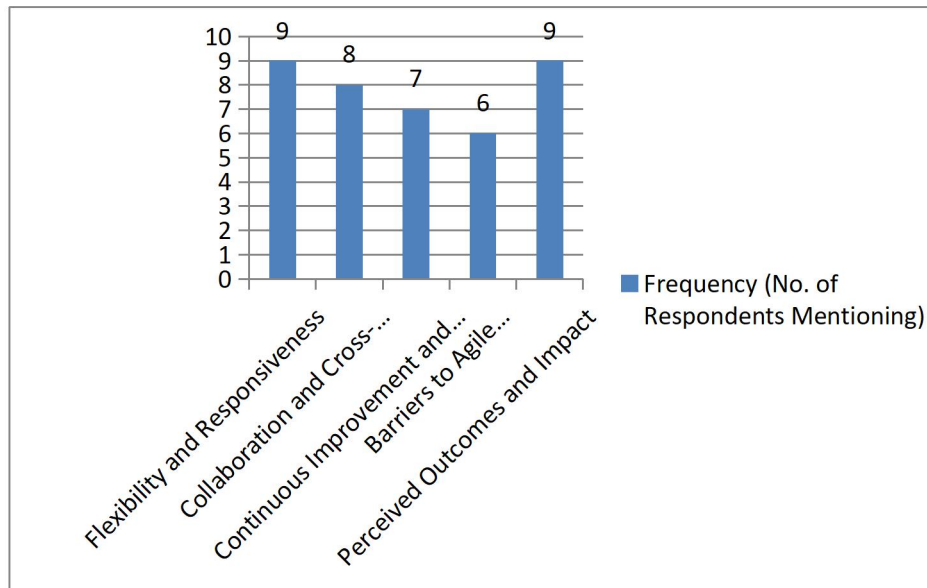


Figure 1. Distribution of Major Themes Identified.

This figure shows that *Flexibility and Responsiveness* and *Perceived Outcomes and Impact* were mentioned by nine out of ten participants, followed by *Collaboration and Cross-Functional Engagement* (eight mentions), *Continuous Improvement and Learning* (seven mentions), and *Barriers to Agile Implementation* (six mentions).

These results show that flexibility is stated to be the most valuable advantage of the application of agile practices in healthcare projects. As mentioned, participants noted that agile processes allowed their organizations to respond quickly with changes in the agility of healthcare, such as policy shifts, evolving patient needs and technology shifts. This kind of flexibility was deemed to be very important in cutting down the measure of aggravation and continuity of services. The participants described that agile enabled them to reprioritise and focus on decisions in real time owing to the provisions of the iterative planning strategy of agile. These findings are also aligned with the ones discussed by Dotsenko et al. (2023a), who have added the agile flexibility to the list of fundamental aspects of resilience and responsiveness improvement in multidimensional healthcare systems.

The Collaboration and Cross-Functional Engagement theme proved that through agile models more departments are introduced into collaboration with each other including clinical, administrative, and IT departments. The respondents indicate that transparency and improved horizontal communication were a result of frequent sprints, daily stand-ups, shared feedbacks sessions. One of the respondents stated that the number of stand-ups improved communication between the doctors and the IT employees and that all of them understood their role and freely updated the other employees. This perception is congruent with Alotaibi and Almudhi (2023), who have observed that the notion of agile, and its interdisciplinary teamwork strategy, produces common ownership, as well as, enhances stakeholder satisfaction.

The next important theme was Continuous Improvement and Learning that was founded on the fact that the continuous feedback loops that agile applied and the retrospectives enabled the

teams to assess the performance of the processes and enhance them in a continuing way. A few of the respondents responded that the operations and organizational learning culture of reflection and adjustment facilitated efficiency. These insights support the quantitative results that had provided a correlation between agile maturity and better project performance, which creates the sense that the primary factors that contribute to agile long-term enhancement in the provision of healthcare services are the feedbacks and training.

These produced promising results, but the respondents identified major Barriers to Agile Implementation. These included resistance to change, top-down decision-making process, little agile knowledge, and regulatory obstacle. A similar observation was also observed by other interviewees because the documentation intensive processes, as well as strict compliance requirements, had slowed down the agile adaption process. These findings are also comparable to those made by Sakthivel and Joghee (2019), who have stated that the implementation of a traditional bureaucratic culture in the healthcare industry can act as an obstacle to the use of agile unless the leadership and employees acquire particular training and its institutional support.

The final theme was the Perceived Outcomes and Impact which included the actual results of agile transformation. Respondents had been variously mentioning an incremental morale of the staff, a greater patient satisfaction rate and a decrease in the number of delivery cycles. Agile concepts led to enhanced transparency, accountability in the teams, and vigorous and stern problem-solving, which was complemented by many participants. According to one of the respondents, we could observe the shortening of the lead times of patient report delivery and the personnel had more motivation because the progress could be observed. The findings verify the quantitative findings that reveal that agile practice adoption has a robust relationship with healthcare delivery flexibility.

It provides a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of agile methodologies in healthcare organizations as a synthesis of all of the qualitative evidence. The emphasis of flexibility, collaboration, and continuous growth addresses the fact that agile philosophies fit the context of healthcare provision, which is complex and dynamic. Although there are still some areas of implementation where it could be improved, particularly, the cultural aspects within the organization and education, the overall atmosphere of the individuals involved contributes to the notion that agile processes can make the innovation, efficiency, and resilience in managing a healthcare project better.

5. Conclusion

The paper provides empirical and theoretical information on how there is a necessity to combine agile project management practices with healthcare delivery systems. The findings show that the flexible, collaborative, and self-improving agile methodologies ensure that performance of a project or organizational flexibility is promoted significantly. The results of quantitative studies showed that high positive relationships exist around the processes of agile practice adoption, stakeholder satisfaction and efficiencies in deliveries, and as such, agile maturity is a direct input in enhanced healthcare outcomes. These results were further expanded by adding qualitative dimensions attached to how the iterative approach to work, making decisions in a team, and receptiveness toward the change informed by agile can increase an innovation and sustainable functioning of healthcare units.

More importantly, this paper brings out the point that agile change effectiveness does not merely concern process redirection, but cultural and structural change as well. The change hindrance, layered limitations, and dearth of agile experience remain one of the critical challenges to be addressed with the assistance of leadership commitment, particular training, and facilitating governance pattern. Nevertheless, the overall results suggest that agile solutions provide a long-term channel of operation in the mindset of health institutions that require to be enhanced to respond more quickly, take shorter lead times, and simplify the outcomes of the project according to the aims of patient-centered care.

The suggested framework will offer an acceptable roadmap regarding how the policymakers, healthcare administrators, and project managers ought to utilize agile approaches as part of a broader approach to a responsive approach to healthcare delivery. Agile practices are also able to transform healthcare project management into a more agile, responsive, and innovation-oriented profession which can develop solutions to the various challenges of a modern healthcare system because of the capacity to be more resilient, flexible, and undertaking an inter-departmental approach.

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