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A Hybrid Approach to Overcome Requirements Challenges in the Software Industry

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A Hybrid Approach to Overcome Requirements Challenges in the Software Industry

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Abstract: This research paper presents a hybrid approach to overcome the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding during the software requirements phase. The aim of this study is to investigate the factors that contribute to this challenge and propose a solution that combines traditional and agile methodologies. To accomplish this, a survey was conducted to collect responses from industry professionals in the software development sector. The survey results showed that inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding is a common issue that leads to delays and misunderstandings in software development projects. To address this challenge, the proposed hybrid approach combines the traditional requirements engineering process with agile techniques such as user stories, prototypes, and continuous feedback loops. The hybrid approach aims to improve communication and collaboration between the client and the development team, ensuring that the software's requirements are well-understood and documented. The results of this study indicate that the proposed hybrid approach is effective in overcoming the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding. The findings of this research have practical implications for software development organizations, highlighting the importance of adopting a hybrid approach to ensure successful software development projects.

1 INTRODUCTION

A "requirement" for a system is a representation that describes an ability, trait, or attribute aspect of a system, making it valuable and useful to a client (Young, 2002). Steve McConnell, in his book Software Project Survival Guide, agrees that the most challenging part of requirement gathering is not documenting what clients "want," but finding what they "need" that can be effectively provided within the behavior and design parameters available to the project team. Customers often say one thing during requirement elicitation and then do something very different (Åfors and Zuckerman, 2001).

Part of the difficulty lies in the reliance on traditional requirements collecting methods such as concentration groups, questionnaires, and interviews, which do not adequately deal with discrepancies in people's responses. The goal of gathering requirements is to obtain information utilizing diverse perspectives that portray what needs to be constructed. Gathering requirements may also be thought of as bringing together diverse people's opinions and knowledge to come up with a solution to an issue. Gathering requirements is both the most complex and most important component of any project (Lane et al., 2016). User involvement is crucial for successful project completion and It also enables the understanding of user requirements and ensures the delivery of satisfactory software products (Islam. et al., 2023). It is perplexing because it is such a complex procedure, and so little effort is given to the approach utilized to evoke the necessities needed to complete a project successfully.

Most projects involve distinctive mission stages. Project managers execute such hybrid philosophy by

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merging both agile and traditional requirement collection techniques into one philosophy in accordance with the project type. Several tactics are used to join numerous tiers to oversee the work. The stages are either agile or traditional but not a mix of both (Hidellaarachchi et al., 2021). Our investigation found that software firms may lack a standard approach regarding requirement collection methodology. Such companies work with adaptive measures and go along with simple adjusting contraptions that fulfill their necessities. These adaptive approaches to fulfilling necessities ultimately give birth to a Hybrid model.

To address such problems, a hybrid approach is proposed to overcome inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding. This article reviews the typical requirements-gathering landscape and conceptual underpinning, justifies recasting the requirements-gathering process, discusses a method for creating a requirement-collecting hybrid technique combining traditional waterfall and agile approach, and describes the requirements-gathering design concepts. The paper concludes with a brief conclusion.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Requirement Engineering (RE) is a circumstance in which a system or portion of a system must be used to meet contracts, requirements, specifications, or other documents (Doe, 2011). RE alludes to the method or levels utilized to compile requirements. RE is the foremost vital stage within Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) since the proper determination of requirements plays a vital role in achieving the success of Software Development to meet client desires (Weyns, 2019). Because the RE segment is a segment of the SDLC and its order is inside the first section of the SDLC level, it must be able to effectively reduce the risk of software program development failure and establish consumer demands (Kumar et al., 2013). Traditional RE includes 5 major techniques: elicitation, analysis, documentation, validation, and management (Bernard, 2012). Traditional RE approaches are carried out in a sequential and iterative manner. The number of iterations performed can be highly reliant on the delicacy with which customers' desires are captured.

Elicitation could be a RE handle that relies on obtaining data and records from clients based on confinements and criteria that are appropriate. In order to meet the objectives established as raw requirements, facts, and information might be gathered from formal or non-formal files. Observation, interviews, surveys,

and questionnaires are some of the strategies or methods used to undertake elicitation (M and BB, 2018).

The Analysis is a RE system that navigates on assessing sources and information elicited from different sources. The Analysis technique arranges data and facts as basic essentials according to the type and manner of customer want. This technique must be carried out with caution in order for the analysis results to fulfill the requirements for clear, complete, consistent, verified, detectable, appropriate, and practical parameters (Eduard and Shashkin, 2019). Documentation, often known as the specification, is a RE method that concentrates on compiling a traditional file containing requirement specifications gathered throughout the data collection and analysis techniques. The functional and non-functional requirements collected from the analysis phase must be included in the formal specification report. Validation could be a procedure that concentrates on confirming the conformance between the specifications of the requirements established during the analytical phase and the user's preferred demands (Chemuturi, 2012). Before converting into the final model as spelled out in a legal document, the validation method desires to include users in providing comments and critiques that are utilized to check the consequences of the raw requirement requirements. The validation technique must be repeated repeatedly until the developer and the individual reach an agreement.

Process management is a process that focuses on phase management and documentation from the elicitation process to the validation process, including any alterations that occur. Starting with the development phase and ending with the maintenance process, the management process is a procedure that must be repeated repeatedly and continuously (Geisser and Hildenbrand, 2006).

Agile, on the other hand, presupposes that requirements engineering continues throughout a system's lifecycle. RE is done in Agile by continuous collaboration, with requirement gathering, development, and testing occurring simultaneously. The evolutionary requirements theory, which asserts that requirements should evolve through time, is used to accomplish this. User testimonies, which are written from the perspective of the user, are used to elicit and capture business requirements in Agile (Manifesto, 2013). These user testimonies are utilized as a fundamental work unit and expand over the project's lifespan. Continuous planning is a key component of agile methodologies, release planning, iteration planning, and activity-level planning are all examples of planning. For each iteration, iteration planning is conducted that lasts between one and three weeks which

demands estimating user stories, acknowledging prior iteration's successes, and defining development and objectives in general for the upcoming iteration. For individual iterations, a release motive is created in which the length of each iteration is set. Developers and customers agree on each iteration that will be included, and velocity points are determined every time. Task-level planning includes breaking down user stories into future tasks, allocating tasks among team members, and focusing on implementation issues (Inayat et al., 2015; Jun et al., 2010).

The hybrid technique is well-known for combining the development of a traditional waterfall approach with the adaptability of an agile methodology (Kuhrmann et al., 2017). Joining both methodologies can settle various complications in projects and can gain ground. which depends upon the kind of project and its necessities (Muddangula and Chandrababu, 2020). Accepting such a hybrid system, which combines procedures from both the waterfall and agile models, can lead to success.

In spite of the way that we achieve different benefits from traditional and agile strategies, project managers are at this point standing up to various troubles while executing gigantic extension projects (Jabar et al., 2019). The execution of different project development approaches, for instance, traditional and agile doesn't give the overall benefits that the Stockholders are expecting (Copola Azenha et al., 2021).

Hayata and Han presented a methodology that is hybrid in nature for developing IT projects, combining agile-scrum processes with traditional waterfall methodology. The waterfall method is used to show project requirements, and the agile strategy is employed during the design, execution, and closing phases. In the testing step, the Waterfall framework might be employed (Hayata and Han, 2011). Lozo and Jovanovic created another adaptable hybrid technique for managing IT projects, with four different phases of the SDLC. The waterfall technique is used in the main and fourth turns of the project life cycle, while the agile methodology is used in the second and third phases. Waterfall and agile methodologies can be utilized to implement a hybrid technique (Lozo and Jovanovic, 2012). which however, is dependent on the project type (Salah et al., 2017).

In today's world, most software development is focused on improving existing software rather than creating entirely new software. Instead of considering waterfall and agile methodologies as two different processes, hybrid development is more realistic. The difficulties that appeared through utilizing new procedures that might use new techniques require extra commitment and backing from the stakeholders. Learning new strategies might be a tedious cycle for the stakeholders. Any mission in which stakeholders running in diverse time areas might have correspondence troubles or inaccessibility of help on every occasion for the project. Higher administration needs to comprehend the project requirements and choose the appropriate procedure to cope with the task.

Agile and Waterfall structures are wonderful methodologies that can be associated to consolidate the excellence of techniques to frame a crossover method. This research pushes us to design a hybrid approach that incorporates agile methodologies into traditional software and IT project development and management. Our initial idea is to implement a spiral model that incorporates agile management and waterfall-style plan-driven development process and project management. Our aim is to reduce failure, research gap, and further modification requests once the product is delivered by using this model. Our model and scope will be very specific and explicit, and all aspects of the desired product will be included in the documentation.

3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem addressed in this research is the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding during the software requirements phase (Bhat et al., 2006). The software development industry often faces issues due to unclear, incomplete, or ambiguous software requirements, which can lead to delays, misunderstandings, and unsatisfactory outcomes. The lack of client involvement and understanding of the software's domain and requirements is a significant factor that contributes to these challenges (Cao et al., 2008).

In the software development industry, challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding during the requirements phase have been a persistent problem. Unclear or incomplete software requirements can lead to delays, misunderstandings, and unsatisfactory outcomes. The lack of client involvement and domain knowledge is a significant factor that contributes to these challenges (Gupta et al., 2020). Therefore, the research problem addressed in this study is how to overcome the challenges of inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding of software requirements and propose an effective solution that combines traditional and agile methodologies.

The purpose of this study is to investigate this

problem and propose a hybrid approach that combines traditional and agile methodologies to overcome these challenges. According to our survey results, inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding is a common issue that software development professionals face. Therefore, it is crucial to find a solution that enhances communication and collaboration between the client and the development team to ensure that the software's requirements are well-understood and documented. The proposed hybrid approach aims to address this issue by combining traditional requirements engineering with agile techniques, such as user stories, prototypes, and continuous feedback loops. This study has practical implications for software development organizations, highlighting the importance of adopting a hybrid approach to overcome the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding of software requirements. The proposed solution can help organizations improve the quality of their software and deliver satisfactory outcomes to their clients.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The first author Identifies the research questions that the study aims to answer. These questions focused on the factors that contribute to the challenge of inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding during the software requirements phase, and how a hybrid approach can overcome these challenges. The Authors also conduct a comprehensive review of relevant literature to gain an understanding of the current state of knowledge in the area of software requirements gathering, traditional and agile methodologies, and hybrid approaches. This review provides a foundation for the study's theoretical framework. Furthermore, the author designed a survey questionnaire that has been used to collect data from industry professionals in the software development sector. The survey included questions that will help to identify the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding, as well as questions that will gather information about the effectiveness of the proposed hybrid approach.

Identify the target population for the survey, which in this case was industry professionals in the software development sector. Use a sampling technique, such as random sampling or stratified sampling, to select a representative sample from the population. Data was collected through online surveys and in-person interviews. Ensure that the data is collected in a systematic and standardized manner to maintain the validity and reliability of the results.

Analyze the survey data using appropriate statistical techniques to identify patterns and trends. This analysis included descriptive statistics to summarize the data, as well as inferential statistics to test hypotheses and determine the significance of the findings. The author then tried to present the results of the study in a clear and concise manner, using tables, charts, and graphs to illustrate the key findings.

These results include an analysis of the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding, as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed hybrid approach. To draw conclusions from the study's findings and provide recommendations for software development organizations on how to overcome the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding. These recommendations should highlight the importance of adopting a hybrid approach to ensure successful software development projects.

In summary, the research design and methodology for this study involved conducting a survey of industry professionals in the software development sector to identify the challenges related to inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding and evaluate the effectiveness of a proposed hybrid approach. The study's findings will provide practical implications for software development organizations on how to overcome these challenges and ensure successful software development projects.

4.1 Characteristics of Software Firms/Companies towards the Topic:

The survey evaluated 16 tech companies based on various criteria, including work experience, company size, location, and job roles. Among the respondents, 50% had 5-10 years of work experience, 45% had 2-5 years, and 5% had less than 1 year. The majority of respondents identified as developers (35%), followed by business analysts (25%), testers (20%), project managers (10%), and product owners (10%).

5 FINDINGS

Each project in Bangladesh has unique features that can impact its success and completion. Development teams may be unable to provide accurate estimates due to uncertainty about specific tasks within the project. The responsibility of getting all stake-

Table 1: Survey profile characteristics

Title	Measure
Total No Of Company	16
Work Experience	50% 5-10 years 45% 2-5 years 5% 0-1 year
Project Types	Software
Project Location	Bangladesh
Respondent Location	Bangladesh
Respondent Role	Developer 35% Business Analyst 25% Tester 20% Project Manager 10% Product owner 10%

Table 2: Project Challenges

No.	Challenges	Problems
P1	The client is not properly, educated not have enough product/domain knowledge	62.5%
P2	Inactivity of the contact person	18.75%
P3	Lack of skill	32.5%
P4	Lack of proper documentation	43.75%
P5	Communication Gap	37.5%
P6	Misinterpretation about requirement document	62.5%
P7	Lack of access to end-user	43.75%
P8	Focus on visual aspect rather than functional	37.5%
P9	The client is not willing to give proper requirement	56.25%
P10	Inadequate resources	37.5%
P11	Struggle with Change Request	62.5%

holders on the same page lies with the requirement team. However, conflicts are expected during the requirement-gathering process due to. Discussions are the most common way to resolve such issues. To address this inadequate or insufficient client involvement and understanding of flaws in the requirement engineering cycle and resolve conflicts, we propose a hybrid requirement management model that can benefit both stakeholders and developers. Our survey focuses on various requirements, including gathering, management, verification, change management, elicitation, and improvement. We have reviewed several works and studies to address the challenges and offer solutions to improve the quality of requirements. Based on our survey, the following are the challenges that companies are facing with requirements management:

Another common issue we found is that budget limitations can prevent some companies from having a dedicated designer to create the prototype, which can hinder their ability to accurately visualize the final output of the project. This can lead to a lack of understanding of the project's requirements and objectives, ultimately leading to delays, errors, and costly rework. It is essential for companies to recognize the value of prototyping and allocate the necessary resources to ensure its effective implementation. This includes investing in skilled designers and providing adequate time and budget for the prototyping process.

According to our survey, many companies tend to prioritize team meetings over other important aspects of requirements management, such as addressing challenges faced by the business and capturing edge cases and corner cases. This can result in incomplete or inaccurate requirements, leading to delays, errors, and rework. To address this issue, companies should allocate sufficient time and resources to thoroughly understand the business context and identify all possible edge cases and corner cases. Addi-
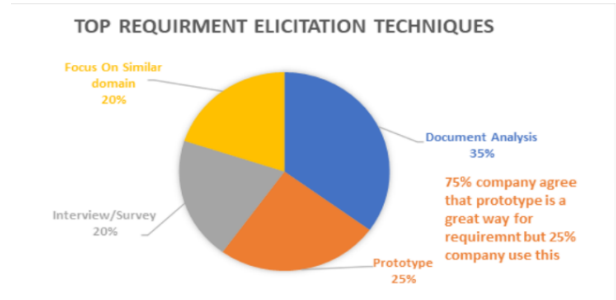

Figure 1: Requirement's elicitation techniques.

tionally, companies should involve all relevant stakeholders, including clients and end-users, throughout the requirements gathering and management process to ensure that all necessary requirements are captured and the final product meets their needs.
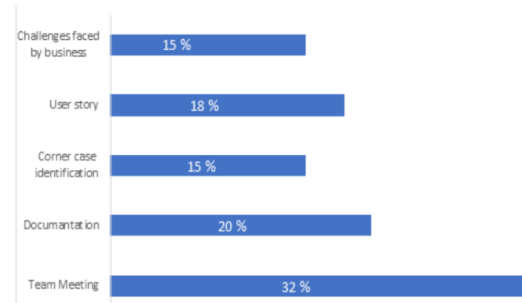

Figure 2: Requirement analysis techniques.

5.1 Problem analysis

After surveying 16 companies to identify the problems they face when collecting requirements, we used a pivot chart and linear regression line (including outliers) to prioritize the problems. By analyzing the data, we were able to determine which issues were most common and severe, and we developed a plan to address them accordingly.

Based on the graph mentioned earlier, it is evident that Problem 1 is the most commonly faced challenge by companies, followed by P6 and P11. Problem 9 was faced by only one company during the survey. Problems 4 and 7 are also significant challenges and are considered high-priority issues.

Regarding the remaining problems, P3, P5, P8, and P10, we consider them as medium focus areas based on their values. The slope of the linear line represents P7, and since all medium values are close to this line, P7 is also a high-priority issue. According to the collected data, P2 is the lowest priority problem. As mentioned in figure 4
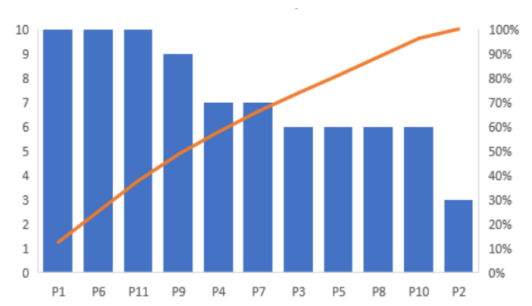
Figure 3: Problem prioritization.

5.2 Regression Graph

Regression analysis indicates that the points above the linear regression line (outliers), including P1, P6, P9, and P11, require the highest priority. Companies should focus more on these issues to optimize the gap and improve their requirements collection processes. See the following Figure 5

6 PROPOSED SOLUTION

According to Kotonya and Sommerville (Kotonya and Sommerville, 1996), the normal RE process used in our analysis consists of four phases, each of which contains a number of activities. The solution will commence by addressing the process of requirement collection, followed by a comprehensive review and
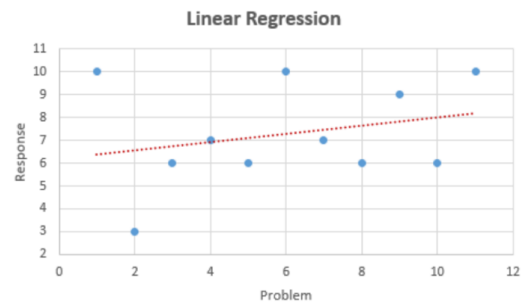
Figure 4: Linear regression.

analysis section. Within this phase, activities such as gap analysis, handling change requests, and formulating test cases will be carried out, while concurrently finalizing the design. The subsequent segment of the cycle will focus on specifying system requirement details, architectural design, test cases, and testing instructions. Finally, the client will verify the requirements, potential conflicts will be identified, and a mechanism for tracking document changes will be established to ensure accurate recordkeeping.

6.1 Requirement Collection

Initialization: The initiation phase of requirement collection involves communicating with stakeholders to establish the project's goals, objectives, and scope. This includes determining the project's purpose, desired outcomes, and benefits, and identifying the tasks, resources, and timeline required to achieve them.
Documentation: The documentation phase of requirement collection involves recording the requirements in a clear, concise, and comprehensive format that the project team can understand and use. The documentation provides a detailed description of the requirements that the project must meet.

6.2 Requirement Review and Analysis

The gap analysis should be used to identify gaps and inconsistencies in actual project requirements compared to desired requirements. Change requests from stakeholders are managed by evaluating their feasibility and prioritizing them. The project team then finalizes the design, including creating detailed specifications and visual aids. Finally, test cases are introduced to ensure that the project meets all requirements and functions as expected.

6.3 Requirement Specification

The requirement specification step involves identifying system requirements, creating a software architecture design, developing a test plan, and preparing testing instructions for user verification. The system requirements should be clear and complete, and the software architecture design should describe how the system will be structured. The test plan should cover all functional and non-functional requirements and the testing instructions should be easy to follow and cover all aspects of the system.

6.4 Requirements validation

In this step, the process of ensuring that the requirements gathered are accurate, complete, and feasible. This involves validating the requirements with stakeholders, identifying potential conflicts between the requirements, and documenting and tracking changes. The goal of requirements validation is to ensure that the requirements align with the stakeholders' expectations and that they are achievable and aligned with the project's goals.
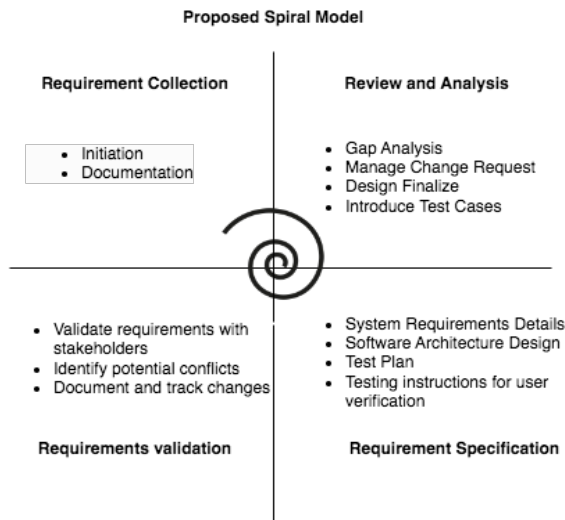

Figure 5: Proposed Model.

We can use the following model as a mix of all like hybrid so that any review or change can be handled during the requirement collection. Since most of the companies failed to use the best approaches due lack of knowledge, time, and budget constraints. Sometimes ignoring any steps in the process could lead to a bigger problem. So, the author recommends using figure 5 and consider illustrated each and every step with significance. One has to follow mentioned steps

with a spiral.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this research paper provides valuable insights into the challenges related to client involvement and understanding during the software requirements phase. The survey results indicate that inadequate client involvement and understanding is a common issue that leads to delays and misunderstandings in software development projects. The proposed hybrid approach, which combines traditional requirements engineering processes with agile techniques, has been found to be effective in improving communication and collaboration between the client and the development team. This approach has practical implications for software development organizations, highlighting the importance of adopting a hybrid approach to ensure successful software development projects. Overall, this research contributes to the field of software engineering by providing a practical solution to a common challenge in the industry. In future work, authors will check the proposed model's validity in terms of their industry.

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