

**Adopting Design Thinking Practices to Satisfy Customer
Expectations in Agile Practices: A Case from Sri Lankan
Software Development Industry**

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ABSTRACT

While application of Agile principles leads to better project success, some projects are still failing due to lack of understanding of exact client requirements. Agile teams have recently started adopting Design Thinking (DT) to better understand what is in customers' mind. In this research, we explore DT practices in Agile teams using inductive reasoning. The research first formulated a conceptual framework based on a literature review. Based on this, conducted a set of interviews where the researcher interviewed ten professionals, including project managers, business analysts, tech leads, and architects of different IT service organizations. Interview findings were then analyzed using the Straussian grounded theory. Customer journey, story mapping, prototypes, POC, UX, and scenarios were identified as the most suitable methods to identify real need of the customer. Moreover, practicing human-centered approach through workshops, discussions, team communication, and end-user interaction through UAT were also identified to be effective. Based on these findings, this research further derived a model to achieve customer satisfaction through DT in agile-base projects. The proposed model categorizes best practices into five categories such as customer real need identification, transforming customer real need into pilot solutions, visualizing pilot solution for customer feedback, idea generation for pilot solution, and brainstorming.

Keywords: agile practices; design thinking; design thinking practices; ground theory

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASD	Adaptive Software Development
DSDM	Dynamic systems development method
DT	Design Thinking
ET	Engineering Thinking
FDD	Feature-Driven Development
HCA	Human Centered Approach
XP	Extreme Programing