

Exploring the Interplay of Military Experience and Agile Mindset in Software Development

How does prior military experience shape veterans' adaptability, decision making, and team integration in Agile software development, and what training or support optimizes their transition compared with non-veteran peers?

Brian Belisle's dissertation explores how military background influences the adoption of an Agile mindset in software development teams. Agile methods value adaptability, collaboration, iterative learning, yet there are few studies comparing veterans and civilians in this context. Belisle uses a two-phase approach in their research. In Study One he conducts thematic analysis of interviews with Agile practitioners to identify core mindset traits: adaptability, collaboration, communication, and uncertainty management that underpin successful Agile work. In Study Two he recruits 24 software professionals, 12 veterans and 12 non-veterans, and applies crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis to compare how each group demonstrates those traits. He maps behaviors onto Pulakos et al.'s eight-dimension adaptability framework and validates findings with Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact tests.

Belisle's findings show that veterans display strengths in structured decision making, stress resilience, and crisis response that reflect their hierarchical training, while non-veterans lean more on creative problem solving, rapid learning, and decentralized teamwork. Both pathways support Agile success but, nonetheless, require different onboarding and coaching strategies. Belisle's work provides us with practical recommendations for tailored training, mentorship, and team structures that leverage veterans' discipline and non-veterans' improvisation. It also advances theory on workforce adaptability by showing that professional background shapes how Agile principles are enacted in practice.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Veterans bring disciplined decision making, resilience, and clear protocols to Agile teams while non-veterans emphasize creativity and rapid learning.
- Two distinct adaptability pathways both support Agile success but call for tailored training and support strategies.
- Professional background shapes how core Agile mindset traits such as adaptability, collaboration, communication, uncertainty management, are enacted.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW:

- Delivery Managers
- Agile Coaches
- Veteran Support Workers

CONTACT US:

- Brian Belisle, Doctor of Business Administration
- Dissertation supervisor: C. Anthony Di Benedetto, Professor, marketing
anthony.dibenedetto@temple.edu
- Dissertation: [Exploring the Interplay of Military Experience and Agile Mindset in Software Development](#)