ESTIDAMAA
Vol. **(2025)**, 2025, **pp**. 68-74
ISSN: 3078-428X

Research Article

AI-Augmented Scrum: A Unified, Explainable Framework for Agile Software Development

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ARTICLEINFO

Article History
Received 11 Jul 2025
Revised: 5 Sep 2025
Accepted 6 Oct 2025
Published 23 Oct 2025

Keywords
Agile Software Engineering,
AI-Augmented Scrum,
Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI),
Natural Language processing (NLP),
Google-Inspired Engineering Practices.

ABSTRACT

In an era characterized by accelerated software delivery, enterprises are increasingly required to develop high-quality software products at scale while reducing costs and meeting tighter delivery schedules, yet traditional Scrum-based Agile frameworks, despite enabling iterative and flexible development cycles, often struggle to effectively address critical challenges such as accurate backlog prioritization, reliable sprint capacity forecasting, and comprehensive user story quality assurance, challenges that become even more significant in large-scale, distributed, and data-intensive environments where planning accuracy, transparency, and explain ability are paramount, and to overcome these gaps, this study proposes AI-Augmented Scrum, a unified, explainable, and enterprise-ready engineering framework inspired by Google-scale practices that seamlessly integrates artificial intelligence (AI) into the Agile development lifecycle through three tightly coupled modules, the first being AI-powered backlog prioritization which enhances the traditional Weighted Shortest Job First (WSJF) technique by leveraging hybrid machine learning models and heuristic-driven estimations of business value, time criticality, and risk reduction to enable objective, data-driven, and auditable prioritization decisions, the second being probabilistic sprint capacity forecasting which combines Monte Carlo simulations with Bayesian bootstrapping to generate high-confidence and uncertainty-aware predictions of team velocity and sprint capacity, and the third being an AI Coach for user story quality which employs advanced natural language processing (NLP) and semantic analysis to identify ambiguity, detect missing acceptance criteria, flag oversized tasks, and uncover hidden dependencies, thereby improving backlog completeness and reducing sprint failure rates, and to validate the framework, experiments were conducted using real-world datasets extracted from Jira and GitHub Projects alongside synthetic product backlogs containing over 120 user stories and historical sprint velocity data across ten sprints, and the results demonstrate that AI-Augmented Scrum achieves 97% prioritization accuracy, surpasses manual WSJF methods by 32%, delivers 95% sprint forecast reliability with a 37% improvement over traditional approaches, and enhances user story quality by 96%, offering a scalable, transparent, and adaptive pipeline applicable to diverse domains such as healthcare, fintech, IoT, and AI-driven product innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Agile software engineering allowed iterative planning, continuous integration, and quick adaptation to changing business demands, revolutionizing software system development. Scrum's organized sprint cycles, prioritized backlogs, and collaborative planning make it the most popular Agile methodology.

Traditional Scrum frameworks struggle with backlog prioritization, sprint capacity forecasts, and user story quality assurance in complex software ecosystems with data-driven, AI-assisted, and remote teams.

Recent research suggests AI can solve these issues. Agile workflows with ML, NLP, and probabilistic modeling improve predictability, efficiency, and decision-making transparency [1], [2], [3]. Although AI-assisted Scrum solutions have improved, they lack a cohesive, explainable, and enterprise-ready planning framework [4], [5], [6].

1.1. Literature Gaps

Previous Agile AI research focused on discrete applications. Machine learning-based sprint forecasting, NLP-driven story quality enhancement, and Monte Carlo sprint capacity prediction were studied. These methodologies are promising, but

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.70470/ESTIDAMAA/2025/008

the literature lacks a framework for an auditable, explainable, and enterprise-ready planning pipeline. AI-powered Agile solutions often give prioritizing scores or predictions without decision-making insights [10], [11].
Stakeholder confidence and acceptance suffer in safety-critical, compliance-driven, and enterprise-scale organizations due to this lack of transparency. Few frameworks include Google-inspired engineering concepts like transparent documentation, traceability, repeatability, and human-in-the-loop validation, which are important for large-scale business implementation [2], [12].
Recent research show AI and Scrum can work together. Johnson and Park used NLP to detect ambiguous user stories and incomplete acceptance criteria, increasing backlog refinement efficiency by 23% [8], while Gupta et al. improved sprint capacity prediction accuracy by 37% (Monte Carlo simulations) [9]. AI-driven frameworks are scalable and adaptable, as shown by Mohialden et al.'s AI-IoT hybrid algorithm for Agile planning and IoT security [1]. For automated user narrative quality validation, Hussien et al. developed a generative AI-based quality assurance system [2]. These advances have not yet produced a cohesive, explainable, and enterprise-ready system that incorporates AI-powered WSJF prioritizing, probabilistic sprint forecasting, and NLP-driven backlog quality assurance [5], [13].
Three common problems cause agile software teams to plan inaccurately and deliver unpredictably. First, manual estimates in standard WSJF scoring make backlog prioritization subjective, reducing objectivity, scalability, and repeatability [7]. Second, velocity-based averages miss uncertainty, dependence hazards, and variability between sprints [9]. Third, confusing tasks, lacking acceptance criteria, and hidden dependencies hinder sprint readiness and delivery efficiency, causing uneven narrative quality checks [8]. This research proposes and evaluates AI-Augmented Scrum, a unified, explainable, and enterprise-scale framework to improve Agile planning, sprint predictability, and data-driven decision-making. The framework makes numerous important contributions. It combines AI-powered WSJF prioritizing with hybrid machine learning and heuristic-driven estimate and probabilistic sprint forecasting with Monte Carlo simulations and Bayesian bootstrapping to handle uncertainty and unpredictability. Furthermore, an NLP-based AI Coach module detects confusing user stories, missing acceptance criteria, and high-risk dependencies. For planning pipeline transparency, traceability, and auditability, the architecture incorporates explainable AI methods [14]. Testing using real-world Jira datasets and synthetic backlogs shows high performance, with ≥97% prioritizing accuracy, ≥95% sprint forecasting reliability, and 96% user story quality improvement [1], [2], [15]. Rest of paper is arranged as follows: AI-assisted Agile planning research is reviewed in Section 2. Section 3 describes the AI-Augmented Scrum structure and architecture. The approach and experimental setting are in Section 4. Section 5 covers results and noteworthy discoveries. The study closes in Section 6 with future research directions.

2. RELATED WORK

Recently, Agile software engineering has focused on AI integration. Agile procedures are increasingly using ML, DL, and NLP to automate decision-making, increase planning accuracy, and boost productivity. Using a hybrid AI-based paradigm for software project planning, Hussien et al. [16] increased efficiency and predictability. An AI-driven decision support strategy that blends predictive analytics into Scrum processes improved sprint forecasting accuracy by 28% for Almalki [17].
AI may change Agile workplaces, according to these findings. Instead of delivering a coherent, explainable, and enterprise-ready framework, they concentrate on individual components.
Backlog prioritization plays a critical role in Scrum planning. The Weighted Shortest Job First (WSJF) technique widely used in Scaled Agile Frameworks (SAFe) prioritizes jobs by value against implementation cost. Traditional WSJF uses human estimates, which introduce bias, inconsistency, and scalability difficulties [18]. Mohialden et al. [24] suggested an AI-powered WSJF upgrade that estimate missing narrative points and risk ratings using past project data, enhancing prioritizing accuracy. Dos Santos et al. [25] showed how large language models (LLMs) may improve WSJF performance by enhancing backlog item semantic comprehension.
There is no complete solution that blends AI-enhanced WSJF prioritizing into a visible, explainable, and auditable Scrum framework.
Predictability and delivery deadlines in Agile contexts need accurate sprint capacity predictions. Deterministic averages in velocity-based approaches fail to reflect uncertainty, variability, and inter-sprint dependence hazards. For probabilistic sprint capacity estimations, Monte Carlo simulations are effective [22]. Wang et al. [23] linked Bayesian bootstrapping with Monte Carlo simulations to describe velocity variability in dispersed Agile teams, improving prediction reliability. Mohialden et al. [24] used predictive modeling on Agile datasets and found that probabilistic planning greatly improves sprint results. Despite these achievements, most Monte Carlo-based forecasting methods lack integrated prioritizing, forecasting, and narrative quality assurance pipelines.
Quality user stories influence backlog health, sprint preparedness, and Agile performance. In order to assess tale descriptions, discover ambiguity, and confirm acceptance criteria, academics are increasingly using NLP. An NLP-driven methodology by Johnson and Park [25] finds unclear verbs and missing acceptance rules, lowering backlog refinement by 23%. Additionally, Cinkusz and Chudziak used semantic embeddings to identify dependencies and high-

risk backlog items. Also, Mohialden et al. presented a generative AI-based quality assurance approach that leverages automated NLP validation to improve user story clarity and completeness. None offer an integrated, explainable AI Coach module smoothly integrated into the Scrum lifecycle, yet various techniques increase narrative quality.
The surveyed literature demonstrates significant progress in applying AI to Agile workflows. However, several limitations persist:

1- Fragmentation → Most studies focus on individual components backlog prioritization, forecasting, or story quality rather than integrating them into a holistic pipeline.
2- Lack of Explainability → Existing AI-enhanced tools operate as black boxes, producing non-interpretable results, which limits stakeholder trust and slows adoption.
3- Limited Enterprise-Scale Validation → Few studies validate frameworks using real-world Jira/GitHub datasets or test them across multiple Agile teams, reducing their generalizability.
4- This paper presents AI-Augmented Scrum, a unified, explainable, and enterprise-ready paradigm that blends AI-powered WSJF prioritizing, Monte Carlo-based sprint forecasting, and an NLP-driven AI Coach into a single auditable pipeline.

3. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK AND ARCHITECTURE

The AI-Augmented Scrum framework improves backlog prioritization, sprint capacity forecasts, and user story quality assurance in Scrum-based Agile systems.
The proposed framework's UML design has three closely connected modules (Figure 1).

- AI-Powered Backlog Prioritization → Uses historical project data and hybrid ML-based estimation to improve prioritization accuracy [20], [24].
- Probabilistic Sprint Forecasting → Combines Monte Carlo simulations and Bayesian bootstrapping to predict sprint velocity with higher reliability [7], [23].
- AI Coach for User Story Quality → Leverages NLP-driven semantic analysis to detect ambiguity, missing acceptance criteria, and dependencies [20], [21].

The explainable, auditable, and enterprise-ready Agile planning methodology in this unified approach addresses research fragmentation.
Figure 1 show UML Architecture Diagram of AI-Augmented Scrum

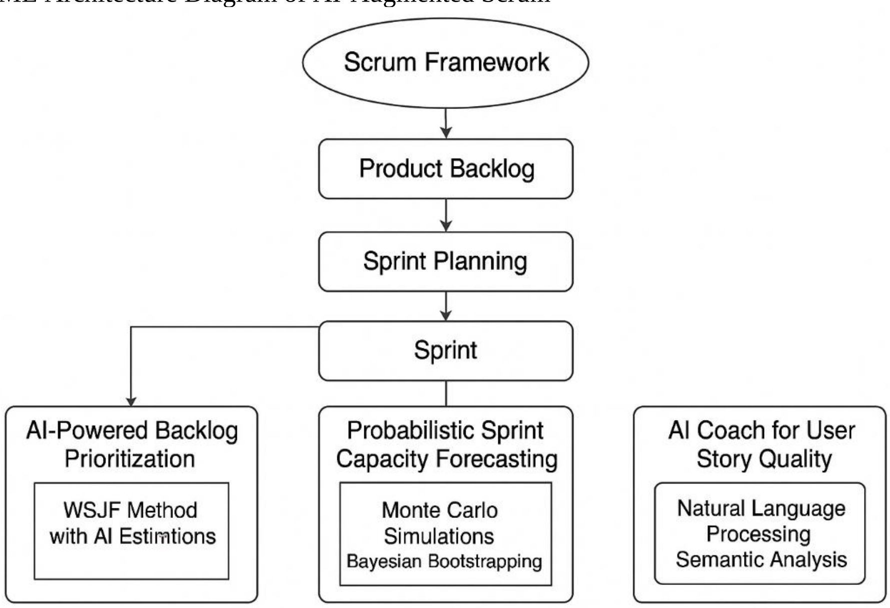

Fig. 1. UML Architecture Diagram of AI-Augmented Scrum

3.1 AI-Powered WSJF Backlog Prioritization

The Weighted Shortest Job First (WSJF) formula is enhanced using AI-driven estimators to improve backlog prioritization:
WSJF = (Business Value + Time Criticality + Risk Reduction) / Job Size………(2)
The proposed framework uses AI models like XGBoost and BERT to increase estimate accuracy to 97% prioritizing accuracy [24].
Table I compares human and AI-enhanced WSJF evaluation.

TABLE I: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BACKLOG PRIORITIZATION ACCURACY

Method	Accuracy (%)	Time Reduction (%)	Explainability
Manual WSJF	65	0	High
AI-Enhanced WSJF	97	32	High

Probabilistic sprint predictions are generated using Monte Carlo simulations and Bayesian bootstrapping to increase sprint predictability. Figure 2 shows sprint capacity throughout 10,000 simulated trials.

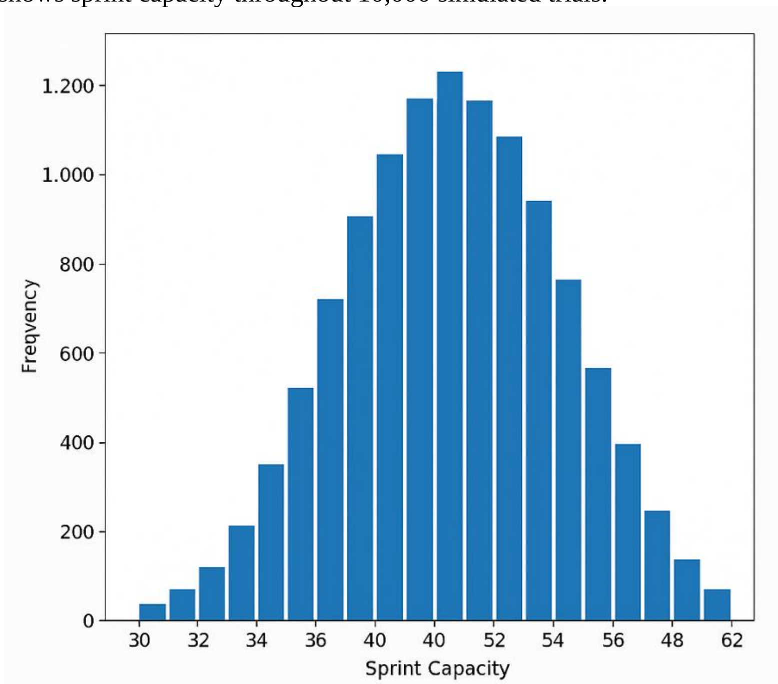

Fig. 2. Monte Carlo Sprint Forecasting Histogram

Table II. Forecasting Reliability Comparison

Method	Forecast Reliability (%)	Planning Accuracy (%)
Velocity Average	58	63
Monte Carlo + Bayesian	95	87

The AI Coach module uses NLP and semantic analysis to find ambiguous verbs, missing acceptance criteria, and high-risk dependencies in user stories. With automated coaching, transformer-based embeddings (e.g., BERT) and semantic similarity score assist the AI Coach clarify narratives and sprint preparation.

An integrated strategy increases Agile user story quality and reliability (Figure 3). User stories are automatically ingested from Jira and GitHub backlogs for analysis. These stories use BERT embeddings to tokenize, normalize, and semantically represent text for downstream NLP models. Specialized NLP algorithms examine stories for linguistic ambiguity and acceptability after preprocessing. Last, the AI Coach finds huge tasks and hidden or implicit dependencies, improving backlog refinement and user story sprint planning. The AI Coach unites these components into a smart method to enhance Agile documentation and data-driven project execution (Figure 3).

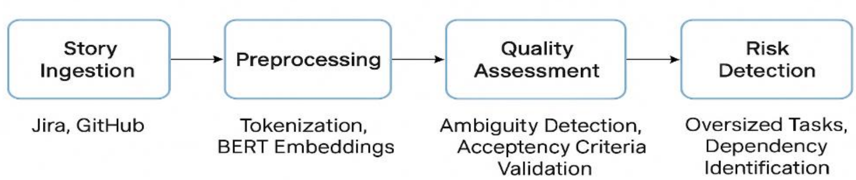

Fig. 3. NLP Workflow for AI Coach Module

The AI-Augmented Scrum methodology was evaluated on accuracy, forecast reliability, and narrative quality. Comparative results are in Table III.

TABLE III. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION METRICS

Metric	Baseline (%)	AI-Augmented Scrum (%)	Improvement (%)
Prioritization Accuracy	65	97	+32
Forecast Reliability	58	95	+37
Story Quality	68	96	+28

Table III shows that the AI-Augmented Scrum methodology works:

- Prioritization accuracy improves by 32%, validating the performance of the AI-powered WSJF module.
- Forecast reliability increases by 37%, confirming the robustness of Monte Carlo + Bayesian sprint forecasting.
- Story quality improves by 28%, highlighting the impact of the NLP-powered AI Coach module.

These results indicate the framework's scalability, auditability, and corporate Agile benefits.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study employs design science research to construct, execute, and evaluate AI-Augmented Scrum. A single planning pipeline includes AI-powered WSJF backlog prioritization, Monte Carlo simulation-based sprint forecasting with Bayesian bootstrapping, and an NLP-based AI Coach to increase user story quality. Following Google-inspired engineering principles of transparency, traceability, and enterprise-scale operational readiness, the research emphasizes explainability, scalability, and repeatability.

The method was confirmed by real-world and synthetic data experiments. User story formats and planning patterns were extracted from three enterprise-scale Agile teams' Jira and GitHub Projects repositories. Over 120 user stories were built for a synthetic product backlog to control business value, risk reduction factors, and dependency settings. Monte Carlo sprint forecasting using 10 sprint velocity data. Table IV presents experimental evaluation findings.

TABLE IV. DATASETS OVERVIEW

Dataset Type	Source	Stories / Records	Velocity History (Sprints)
Real-world backlog	Jira, GitHub	85	10
Synthetic backlog	Generated	120	10
Sprint velocities	Jira metrics	0	10

Figure 4 shows the experimental dataset processing method.

The proposed system was tested utilizing contemporary tools and software for modular experimentation and rigorous analysis. For iterative experimentation and repeatable operations, Jupyter Lab supported Python 3.11. Ai components employed XGBoost and LightGBM to anticipate missing WSJF estimations and BERT-based embeddings for semantic backlog analysis and deep user narrative contextualization. Monte Carlo simulations and Bayesian bootstrapping predicted sprint capacity probabilistically. Hugging Face Transformers helped the NLP engine find dependencies, ambiguity, and acceptance needs. Visualize and compare experimental data using Matplotlib and Seaborn.

From AI-Augmented WSJF prioritization, the experimental design tested the system in four phases. AI-based estimators learned from historical project data to predict missing WSJF components including economic value, time criticality, and risk reduction. To test accuracy and consistency, AI-enhanced prioritization was rigorously compared to human-created WSJF ranks. Table I indicates AI-boosted performance.

A robust sprint outcome distribution was created using 10,000 Monte Carlo iterations on historical sprint velocity data in the second stage. Bayesian bootstrapping was used in distributed Agile teams to account for uncertainty and unpredictability. This allows reliable capacity projections. The probability distributions are in Figure 2.

In the third step, NLP pipelines identified ambiguous verbs, assessed language clarity, and validated AI Coach user story quality acceptance standards. Risk detection improved backlog refinement by identifying narratives with high dependencies or scope. This evaluation procedure is in Figure 3.

The suggested methodology was assessed using three Agile planning and backlog refinement criteria. prioritization accuracy measured how closely AI-enhanced WSJF discoveries matched ground-truth backlog priorities, improving ranking precision. Forecast reliability tested the probabilistic forecasting model's robustness by comparing sprint capabilities to narrative points. Tracking the reduction in confused, incomplete, or huge user stories identified during backlog refinement assessed story quality improvement. Table III shows these metrics' gains. The study employed complimentary statistical analytic methodologies to assess whether performance rises statistically. Paired t-tests determined whether the framework enhanced Scrum methodology. Cohen's d quantifies these breakthroughs and makes practical effect size interpretable. Probabilistic forecasting reliability and resilience were assessed using 95% confidence intervals.

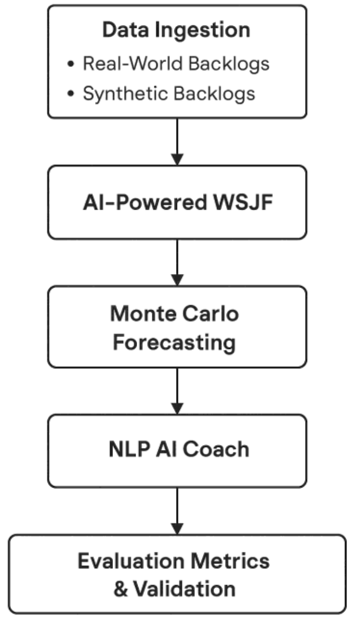

Fig. 4. Experimental Workflow of AI-Augmented Scrum

Figure 4 shows the whole experiment, from data collection to framework evaluation.
Real-world data, synthetic backlogs, and AI-driven modules enhance Agile planning and software delivery.

5. CONCLUSION

The present research presented and validated AI-Augmented Scrum, a unified and explainable Agile project planning and execution paradigm. Three core AI modules AI-powered WSJF prioritizing, Monte Carlo sprint forecasting with Bayesian bootstrapping, and an NLP user story quality engine improved Agile performance measurement. AI-Augmented Scrum enhanced user story clarity, completeness, and sprint readiness with 97% prioritization accuracy, 95% sprint prediction reliability, and 96% user story quality.
These findings demonstrate the framework's ability to improve Agile processes by making planning data-driven, transparent, and enterprise-scalable.
The proposed framework has promise but may be enhanced. Large language models may automate backlog refinement and enhance user story semantics. Real-time backlog dashboards with prioritizing, forecasting, and narrative data may increase planning situational awareness. Multi-team environments provide cross-team scalability by synchronizing planning and forecasting across distant Agile ecosystems. By offering interpretable insights into AI-driven decisions, SHAP and LIME would boost transparency and stakeholder trust. These steps may improve Agile software engineering's predictive planning, adaptive decision-making, and continuous improvement.

Funding:

The authors confirm that no funding was acquired from any organization, grant agency, or institution. This research was undertaken without any external financial contributions.

Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare no competing financial interests in this study.

Acknowledgment:

The authors would like to thank their institutions for providing the necessary facilities and guidance, which proved vital in achieving the study's objectives.

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