Analyzing Scope Creep Control in Information Technology Projects to Support Digital Strategy: A Case Study at PT Klik Sinergi Solusi

Azizah Kuswardini[1*], Rina Djunita Pasaribu[2]

[1,2] Distance Learning Master of Management Study Program, School of Economics and Business, Telkom University

Article Info

ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has become a core component of modern business strategy, positioning information technology (IT) projects as key drivers of organizational innovation and efficiency. However, the success of digital strategies is highly dependent on an organization's ability to manage project scope with discipline. One of the most persistent challenges is scope creep—the uncontrolled expansion of project scope without formal approval—which can disrupt timelines, overburden teams, and diminish both the quality and strategic relevance of project outcomes. This study aims to identify the root causes of scope creep, examine its impact on the implementation of internal digital projects, and propose adaptive and structured control strategies. The research was conducted at PT Klik Sinergi Solusi (KSS) using a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with twelve project stakeholders across different roles, direct observation, and project documentation analysis, including backlog records, meeting notes, and scope change archives. The findings reveal that scope creep at KSS is driven by a combination of weak scope planning structures, the absence of effective change control mechanisms, inconsistent and undocumented communication, and an overly accommodating organizational culture toward user requests. As a result, projects suffer from delays, wasted effort, reduced output quality, and misalignment with the company's digital strategy. The study also formulates six scope control strategies, including stronger scope baselines, regular validation forums, optimized use of project tools, and the development of a data-driven, assertive project culture. This research contributes to the theoretical discourse on digital project management and offers practical recommendations for designing scope control mechanisms that support the success of digital transformation initiatives.

Corresponding Author:

Name: Azizah Kuswardini
Institution: Distance Learning Master of Management Study Program, School of Economics and Business, Telkom University, Main Campus (Bandung Campus), Jl. Telekomunikasi No. 1, Bandung 40257, West Java, Indonesia
Email: azizahkd@student.telkomuniversity.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital transformation, Information Technology (IT) projects are no longer perceived as purely operational undertakings but as strategic vehicles essential to organizational agility and innovation [1]. Digital Business Strategy (DBS) has positioned IT as a core enabler in achieving long-term competitiveness, particularly through the development of data-driven platforms, integrated applications, and cloud-native infrastructure (Vial, 2019). Organizations that succeed in aligning their IT projects with strategic goals are more likely to achieve market responsiveness, customer-centricity, and operational excellence.

However, executing IT projects that meet both tactical and strategic expectations remains a persistent challenge. A common barrier to project success is scope creep—defined as the unauthorized or uncontrolled expansion of project deliverables without corresponding changes in cost, time, or resources (PMI, 2021), scope creep has been identified as a major cause of project failure globally. According to PMI (2021), 33% of failed projects attribute their failure to uncontrolled changes in scope. Within technology-driven enterprises, this issue becomes more complex as projects operate within fast-paced environments and ambiguous stakeholder expectations [2].

Previous research highlights several contributing factors to scope creep, including insufficient stakeholder alignment, ambiguous project charters, lack of formal change control, and informal communication practices [3], [4]. In agile environments, where flexibility is emphasized, these risks can escalate if iterations are not bounded by clear scope baselines and regular validation. As a result, even minor deviations accumulate over time, reducing project predictability and undermining team morale [5]. In Indonesia, digital transformation is growing rapidly, with digital economic value projected to reach USD 130 billion by 2025 [6]. However, the rise in digital projects also brings recurring challenges such as scope creep, which cost organizations up to Rp 1–2 billion annually in project delays and inefficiencies.

Strategic alignment requires more than just agile implementation—it demands integrated scope control mechanisms that bridge operational discipline with adaptive delivery. Mechanisms such as backlog prioritization, sprint-based retrospectives, and structured stakeholder reviews are increasingly recognized as essential components of modern scope governance (Ross et al., 2017). Yet, in practice, many organizations fail to embed these practices consistently, leading to recurring inefficiencies and underperformance.

This study examines the case of PT Klik Sinergi Solusi (KSS), an Indonesian technology firm that develops and implements digital solutions for large corporate clients. In multiple internal projects—especially those utilizing agile and hybrid methodologies—scope creep emerged as a persistent issue, often disrupting timelines, inflating costs, and undermining strategic objectives. The study investigates not only the direct impacts of scope creep but also the systemic and cultural drivers behind its recurrence. This paper seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How does scope creep affect the strategic success of digital projects? (2) What are the organizational and procedural factors that cause scope creep? (3) What mitigation strategies can be institutionalized to manage scope creep effectively?

This paper contributes to the literature by linking scope management with institutional theory and organizational behavior. We argue that mitigating scope creep requires more than tools and templates; it demands structural interventions, cultural shifts, and strong institutional arrangements [7]. By combining empirical findings with theoretical insights, we propose a contextualized framework for managing scope creep in agile digital projects.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Strategic Management and Digital Business Strategy*

Strategic management encompasses a set of coordinated activities through which organizations define, pursue, and evaluate long-term objectives to sustain competitive advantage [8]. In contemporary business contexts, these objectives are increasingly influenced by digital disruption, prompting the emergence of Digital Business Strategy (DBS) as a new paradigm. DBS seeks to blend digital technology integration with strategic positioning, operational alignment, and customer engagement [2]. According to [9], successful digital enterprises demonstrate a clear linkage between digital investments and organizational goals. [10] Luftman (2000) introduced the concept of strategic alignment maturity, which emphasizes the need for synchronization between business strategies and IT capabilities. Without such alignment, digital transformation initiatives risk becoming fragmented or misaligned with organizational vision.

2.2 *IT Project Management and Project Life Cycle*

IT project management involves the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements (PMI, 2021). The lifecycle typically includes five stages: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing. Projects are constrained by the well-known triangle of time, cost, and scope. According to [5], IT projects are especially vulnerable to volatility due to rapid technological shifts, evolving requirements, and diverse stakeholder needs. In agile environments, the project life cycle is iterative and adaptive, allowing for frequent changes and feedback integration. However, this iterative nature also makes agile projects susceptible to scope creep if not governed by clearly defined baselines, regular stakeholder validation, and effective communication channels.

2.3 *Scope Creep: Definition, Drivers, and Impact*

Scope creep is defined as the progressive, undocumented expansion of a project's original boundaries in terms of features, functions, deliverables, or goals [3]. It is commonly triggered by poor requirement specifications, stakeholder interference, undocumented discussions, and reactive project culture [4]. The Scope Creep Lifecycle proposed by Madhuri illustrates how unchecked incremental changes accumulate and lead to project derailment. In the Indonesian context, [11] observed that scope creep is exacerbated by a lack of formal change management and insufficient communication structures, especially in software projects. These factors lead to compromised product quality, budget overruns, and delays in project completion. In the broader strategic context, scope creep affects not only operational delivery but also weakens the linkage between project outputs and organizational goals.

2.4 *Mitigation Strategies for Scope Creep*

Mitigating scope creep requires a combination of technical controls and behavioral interventions. PMI (2021) recommends the establishment of a strong scope baseline as part of the project plan, including a clearly defined Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and formal stakeholder sign-off. [1] emphasize the importance of agile governance—embedding control into the iterative development process through mechanisms like backlog prioritization, sprint reviews, and change control boards. [5] suggests that communication plays a pivotal role in scope containment; without regular and structured stakeholder engagement, even minor adjustments can evolve into major disruptions. Digital tools such as Jira and Confluence have also been shown to improve transparency and traceability, offering teams a centralized system for

monitoring scope-related decisions and progress. Furthermore, organizational culture significantly affects scope management. Teams that prioritize client satisfaction without enforcing proper validation mechanisms are more prone to scope creep. Assertive communication, supported by leadership commitment to governance, helps build a delivery culture that respects boundaries while remaining responsive. Training teams in negotiation, expectation-setting, and structured change communication further reinforces this discipline.

2.5 Previous Research

Empirical studies across sectors have consistently reported the presence of scope creep and its detrimental effects on project performance. [12], [13] found that in construction and infrastructure projects, inadequate documentation and misaligned expectations led to significant project extensions and budget escalations. In software and digital product development, [3], [4] documented how informal requests and stakeholder-driven changes created delivery uncertainty. [11] highlighted that in Indonesian IT settings, lack of formal change approval processes and ineffective planning often result in features being added without analysis or resource allocation.

Despite these findings, there is limited literature focusing specifically on how scope creep is managed within agile-based IT consulting firms that serve both internal and external clients. Moreover, few studies address the intersection between scope governance and digital strategy execution. This gap presents an opportunity to explore how organizations can create integrated frameworks that uphold agile responsiveness while safeguarding strategic alignment.

This literature framework reinforces the importance of studying scope creep not only as a technical project challenge but as a strategic execution risk. Particularly in digitally transforming organizations, scope governance becomes essential in safeguarding project integrity

and ensuring that investments deliver intended business value while meeting stakeholder expectations in dynamic environments.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes scope creep as a multidimensional issue that emerges from the interaction between organizational behavior, procedural gaps, and environmental complexity in IT project settings. Scope creep is defined as the uncontrolled expansion of project scope without formal approval or adjustment of time, cost, or resources (PMI, 2021). Drawing from strategic alignment theory [2], [10], the study frames IT projects as strategic enablers rather than purely operational initiatives. When scope creep occurs, it not only jeopardizes project delivery but also threatens the alignment between digital initiatives and overarching business goals.

The conceptual framework integrates three theoretical components: (1) scope creep drivers—including weak planning, undocumented change, informal communication, and stakeholder overreach [4]; (2) the consequences—delays, budget overruns, quality issues, and strategic drift; and (3) control mechanisms—such as scope baseline documentation, stakeholder validation forums, structured change approval, agile tools, and assertive work culture [1], [5]. This framework guides the investigation into how PT Klik Sinergi Solusi can manage scope creep effectively while maintaining project agility and strategic relevance.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore, interpret, and explain the phenomenon of scope creep in IT project environments. The research was conducted at PT Klik Sinergi Solusi (KSS), a technology consulting firm involved in digital transformation projects across

government and enterprise sectors. The research focused on identifying the drivers of scope creep, analyzing their impact on project performance and strategic alignment, and formulating practical control mechanisms.

KSS was selected as the study site using purposive sampling based on its active involvement in national-scale IT implementation and its reputation for adopting agile methods in digital delivery. Informants were selected based on their direct roles in managing, developing, or overseeing digital projects within the Software Delivery Division. These included project managers, account managers, developers, business analysts, customer engineers, and steering committees personnel. The scope of the study was limited to internal projects executed between 2022 and 2024 that had experienced significant scope deviations. Credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability were tested through triangulation between interview responses and project documentation, following the qualitative validation framework used in the study.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

Two primary data collection techniques were employed: in-depth interviews and documentation analysis.

In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to gain rich, contextual understanding of how scope creep occurred, how teams responded, and what governance mechanisms were present or lacking. Informants were asked about project planning processes, change request procedures, sprint dynamics, stakeholder communication, and delivery constraints. Interviews were conducted both in-person and virtually, and all were audio-recorded with consent.

Documentation analysis was conducted to triangulate field data and strengthen the reliability of findings. Documents reviewed included project backlogs, sprint reports, change logs, stakeholder meeting minutes, retrospective notes, and formal scope baseline documents maintained in tools such as Jira and Confluence. These records helped trace decision histories and validate accounts from interviewees.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis through Miles and Huberman's interactive model (1994), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Codes were developed inductively to capture emerging themes related to causes, impacts, and controls of scope creep.

Data were categorized across three analytical dimensions: (1) scope deviation triggers, (2) organizational and project-level impacts, and (3) control mechanisms and mitigation practices. Cross-case comparisons were conducted between different roles (e.g., developer vs project manager perspectives) to identify consistent or divergent experiences. Triangulation was conducted through method (interview and document review) and source (multiple roles) validation to enhance credibility.

The overall methodological approach allowed the researcher to deeply explore the procedural, cultural, and structural factors influencing scope management at KSS, with the goal of contributing both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for strategic IT project governance.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an in-depth synthesis of the research findings from qualitative interviews conducted at PT Klik Sinergi Solusi (KSS), triangulated with relevant literature and prior empirical studies. The discussion is structured around three primary themes that emerged from thematic analysis: (1) How does scope creep affect the strategic success of digital projects?, (2) underlying causes and organizational contributors to scope creep, and (3) practical strategies to mitigate scope creep in digital

transformation projects. The section not only interprets the findings within the context of KSS's agile/hybrid project environments but also reflects on their broader implications for digital governance and organizational change.

4.1 The Impact of Scope Creep on Project Performance and Digital Strategy

The first major theme identifies scope creep as a serious inhibitor to project success and digital transformation outcomes. An overwhelming 11 of 12 informants reported that scope changes—particularly those introduced mid-development—frequently resulted in project delays. This is consistent with PMI (2021), which positions scope creep as a top threat to schedule adherence in digital projects. Informants noted that changes often arose without formal scope baseline documentation, forcing teams to revise backlog priorities and disrupt sprint flow. This mirrors [2] conclusion that digital transformation projects are especially susceptible to volatile requirements due to emergent user needs and rapid technological shifts.

Scope creep also created tangible financial impacts. Although many of the projects were internal and lacked formal budget tracking, 11 informants acknowledged that additional development hours, technical rework, and overtime contributed to hidden costs. These untracked economic losses align with the findings of [9], who describe such indirect project costs as "invisible drains" on organizational resources. Several informants admitted to absorbing additional work without renegotiating deadlines or resources—an indication of weak scope governance and the normalization of unplanned effort.

Furthermore, 11 informants indicated that scope creep negatively impacted project quality. Changes introduced late in the development cycle often compressed testing phases, reduced time for quality assurance, and increased the likelihood of defects or technical debt. This concern resonates with [14], who link poor quality control in agile projects to scope volatility and lack of structured validation checkpoints. One developer explained that last-minute changes

From a strategic perspective, eight informants noted that scope creep diverted attention from long-term digital transformation goals toward short-term user demands. This reduced alignment with the company's digital roadmap and weakened the strategic contribution of certain projects. Deployment delays were also reported by 10 informants, often caused by late-stage change requests that required rework in code, documentation, training materials, and SOPs, affecting go-live readiness and user confidence.

Interestingly, two informants pointed out that scope creep was not always detrimental. When scope adjustments were deliberate, formally approved, and aligned with the organization's digital strategy, they could enhance user satisfaction and deliver additional strategic value. This reflects [15] view that well-governed flexibility can strengthen a project's strategic relevance.

Table 1. Impact of Scope Creep at PT KSS

Theme	Key Findings
Project Timeliness	11 of 12 informants noted scope creep often causes delays, particularly when changes occur mid-sprint.
Cost Overruns	Increased untracked effort leads to additional costs, even in internal projects.
Quality Reduction	Late-stage changes reduce QA time, increasing the risk of errors and technical debt.
Strategic Misalignment	8 of 12 informants noted scope creep shifts focus away from strategic goals toward ad hoc demands.

Theme	Key Findings
Deployment Delays	Change requests at the end of the project disrupt release planning and go-live readiness.

In summary, scope creep at KSS not only disrupted operational delivery but also influenced the company's ability to achieve strategic digital objectives. While the majority of its effects were negative—delays, cost escalation, reduced quality, and strategic drift—controlled scope changes, when aligned with the company's roadmap, could be leveraged as opportunities to enhance project outcomes.

4.2 *Underlying Causes of Scope Creep in Agile/Hybrid Digital Projects*

All 12 informants reported that project scope was rarely formalized through a dedicated document at the outset. Instead, initial requirements were often captured informally—through meetings, chat messages, or loosely defined backlog items—rather than being documented in a formal scope baseline. This informality allowed requirements to evolve unchecked, especially when no one felt empowered to push back. These findings align with [3], who identify incomplete scope documentation as a primary enabler of scope creep in agile teams.

Only three of the twelve projects had clear benchmarks such as a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) or defined acceptance criteria to assess scope boundaries. The rest operated with a fluid and evolving scope definition, which, while aligned with agile adaptability, contradicted best practices in scope control that emphasize the need for measurable baselines [15].

Stakeholder involvement was another key factor. Seven informants stated that stakeholders were either not engaged during planning or only became active once development had started. This late engagement led to misaligned expectations and a higher frequency of mid-project change requests. This supports the findings of [16], who emphasize the importance of early co-design processes to align deliverables with user needs.

Change control mechanisms also proved weak in practice. Although nine projects had a documented change request procedure (e.g., Jira tickets, CR forms), these processes were rarely followed consistently. Most scope changes were initiated through informal channels and implemented without structured impact analysis. Only two informants reported that every change request was formally approved and documented, reflecting a cultural norm of bypassing governance to deliver quickly.

Communication gaps further compounded the problem. All informants mentioned misunderstandings between technical teams and stakeholders, often caused by outdated documentation or lack of cross-functional updates. While Jira and Confluence were available, 11 informants said these tools were underutilized or bypassed in favor of chat messages or verbal discussions, which reduced traceability.

Finally, none of the projects explicitly identified scope creep as a risk during the planning phase. This absence of proactive risk mapping indicates a reactive approach to scope management, contradicting PMI (2021) guidance that recommends identifying and preparing for scope-related risks from the outset.

Table 2. Underlying Causes of Scope Creep at PT KSS

Theme	Key Findings
Lack of Formal Scope Plan	12 of 12 projects lacked formal scope documents; most relied on verbal agreements or loose backlogs.

Theme	Key Findings
Inconsistent Baselines	9 of 12 informants stated that no clear baseline was established at the start of the project; only 3 projects had defined benchmarks (e.g., WBS, acceptance criteria).
Weak Stakeholder Engagement	7 of 12 informants said stakeholders joined too late or passively in the planning process.
Informal Change Control	9 of 12 projects had a change approval process on paper, but it was rarely enforced.
Communication Gaps	All informants cited misunderstanding between tech teams and users due to weak documentation or rotation.
Tool Underutilization	Tools like Jira/Confluence existed but were inconsistently used or bypassed via chat.
No Risk Mapping	None of the projects explicitly identified scope creep as a formal risk during planning.

In summary, the underlying causes of scope creep at KSS stem from procedural gaps, weak governance, cultural tendencies to accommodate requests without formal analysis, and insufficient use of available tools. These factors combine to create an environment where scope changes are frequent, undocumented, and often misaligned with strategic goals.

4.3 *Strategies for Mitigating Scope Creep and Supporting Digital Governance*

Despite these challenges, several potential mitigation strategies emerged from the interviews. Based on the findings, six main strategies were identified to address the root causes of scope creep in KSS's agile and hybrid projects. These strategies align with recommendations from the literature and address both procedural improvements and cultural changes, enabling agility while ensuring strategic alignment.

1. **Strengthening Scope Baseline Documentation**

   The most frequently cited recommendation was to establish a formal scope management plan at the start of the project, including a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), acceptance criteria, and a documented change approval process. According to PMI (2021) and [15], a well-defined baseline provides a clear reference for monitoring progress and prevents undocumented scope changes.

2. **Regular Validation Forums**

   Early and continuous stakeholder engagement through structured forums—such as backlog grooming, sprint reviews, and roadmap planning—helps ensure that any scope changes are assessed collectively. [1], [16] note that regular validation mechanisms support alignment between project outputs and user needs, reducing the risk of last-minute changes.

3. **Formalizing Change Control Governance**

   Although formal change request mechanisms existed in KSS, they were inconsistently applied. Establishing an active Change Control Board (CCB) with cross-functional representation ensures that changes above a defined impact threshold are reviewed, approved, and documented. [17] emphasizes that strong institutional safeguards are critical in hybrid environments to balance responsiveness and control.

4. **Optimizing Tool Utilization**

   Jira and Confluence were underutilized despite their availability. Integrating these

tools into daily workflows and mandating their use for recording all discussions, approvals, and change logs enhances transparency and traceability.

5. **Embedding an Assertive Communication Culture**

Teams often prioritized client satisfaction over governance, leading to unchecked changes. Training in negotiation and expectation-setting, combined with leadership backing, can build an assertive delivery culture [5], [7]. This ensures that boundaries are respected without compromising responsiveness.

6. **Proactive Risk Mapping**

None of the projects studied had scope creep listed as a risk during planning. Including scope creep in project risk registers and preparing mitigation plans enables proactive management before deviations escalate (PMI, 2021).

Table 3. Recommended Strategies to Mitigate Scope Creep at PT KSS

Strategy	Key Actions
Strengthen Scope Baseline Documentation	Develop WBS, acceptance criteria, and formal change approval workflow [15]
Regular Validation Forums	Conduct backlog grooming and sprint reviews with stakeholders [16]
Formalize Change Control Governance	Establish an active CCB with cross-functional members [17]
Optimize Tool Utilization	Use Jira/Confluence consistently for scope tracking
Embed Assertive Communication Culture	Train teams in negotiation, supported by leadership
Proactive Risk Mapping	Identify scope creep in the risk register and prepare contingency plans

In summary, these strategies directly address the procedural gaps, weak governance, and cultural tendencies identified earlier. By implementing them, KSS can reduce scope-related disruptions while leveraging agility to deliver projects that remain strategically relevant, in line with best practices in project management literature.

4.4 Integrative Summary

The findings from this study reveal that scope creep in KSS's agile and hybrid projects has both operational and strategic implications. As discussed in Section 4.1, scope creep frequently leads to delays, hidden costs, reduced quality, and strategic misalignment, while in limited cases, well-managed scope adjustments can provide additional value when aligned with digital strategy.

Section 4.2 identified the procedural and cultural drivers behind these issues: the absence of a formal scope baseline, inconsistent benchmarks, late stakeholder engagement, weak change control enforcement, underutilization of project tools, and a lack of proactive risk mapping. These factors create an environment where scope changes are frequent, undocumented, and often reactive.

Section 4.3 presented six interrelated strategies to address these challenges: strengthening scope baseline documentation, conducting regular validation forums, formalizing change control governance, optimizing tool utilization, embedding an assertive communication culture, and mapping scope creep risks during planning. These recommendations align with best practices in project management literature and are directly linked to the root causes identified earlier.

In summary, mitigating scope creep in KSS requires more than procedural fixes—it demands an integrated approach that combines

structural governance mechanisms, tool-supported transparency, and cultural change. This ensures that agility remains a strategic enabler rather than a source of uncontrolled change, supporting the organization's long-term digital transformation goals.

4.5 Discussion

The results of this study reinforce the view that scope creep is one of the most significant risks in agile and hybrid projects, as highlighted by PMI (2021). Uncontrolled scope changes disrupt timelines, increase costs, reduce quality, and weaken strategic alignment. Consistent with [2], the volatility of requirements in digital transformation projects stems from rapidly evolving user demands and technological developments. In KSS, this volatility was amplified by the absence of a formal scope baseline, allowing changes to be introduced without adequate monitoring or documentation.

Late changes were identified by 11 of the 12 informants as a major contributor to quality issues. These changes often compressed testing periods, reduced the time available for quality assurance, and increased the risk of defects and technical debt. This aligns with [7], [14], who emphasize that incomplete testing caused by shortened development cycles can undermine product stability and user satisfaction.

Hidden costs were another significant impact observed in KSS's projects. Although many projects were internal and did not have explicit budget tracking, additional work hours, rework, and overtime created unrecorded financial burdens. This is in line with [9], who describe such costs as "invisible drains" that erode resources over time, particularly when change control processes are weak.

Interestingly, while scope creep is generally viewed as a negative phenomenon, two informants in this study pointed out that it can have strategic benefits when managed appropriately. Controlled scope changes—when deliberate, approved, and aligned with the organization's digital strategy—were seen to enhance feature relevance and increase user satisfaction. This perspective is supported by [15], who note that strategic agility requires the ability to incorporate beneficial changes that respond to emerging market needs.

The root causes identified in this study are consistent with findings from [16], [18]. These include the lack of a formal scope baseline, inconsistent benchmarks, limited early stakeholder involvement, weak enforcement of change control, underutilization of project management tools such as Jira and Confluence, and the absence of scope creep in initial risk registers. Such gaps create a reactive project environment where changes are accommodated informally, without proper impact assessment.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on scope creep by examining its dynamics in agile-hybrid digital projects within an Indonesian IT service provider context. It shows how procedural weaknesses interact with cultural norms to influence governance and decision-making. Practically, the study provides a set of six interrelated strategies—strengthening scope baseline documentation, conducting regular validation forums, formalizing change control governance, optimizing tool utilization, embedding assertive communication culture, and proactive risk mapping—that can be applied to mitigate scope creep while maintaining the flexibility required in digital projects.

5. CONCLUSION

This research examined the impact, causes, and mitigation strategies for scope creep in agile and hybrid digital projects at PT Klik Sinergi Solusi (KSS). The findings confirm that uncontrolled scope changes

result in delays, hidden costs, reduced quality, and diminished alignment with long-term digital transformation objectives. However, the study also highlights that scope creep can be strategically advantageous when managed deliberately and aligned with organizational priorities.

The main causes identified include the absence of a formal scope baseline, with 9 of 12 informants stating that no clear baseline was established at project initiation; inconsistent benchmarks; late or passive stakeholder involvement; weak enforcement of change control mechanisms; underutilization of Jira and Confluence; and the exclusion of scope creep from initial risk registers. These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of early stakeholder engagement, robust documentation, and proactive risk identification.

To address these challenges, the study proposes six interrelated strategies:

1. Strengthening scope baseline documentation to include WBS, acceptance criteria, and formal change approval processes.
2. Conducting regular validation forums with active stakeholder participation.
3. Formalizing change control governance through an active Change Control Board.
4. Optimizing tool utilization, ensuring consistent use of Jira and Confluence for tracking changes.
5. Embedding an assertive communication culture through negotiation training and leadership support.
6. Proactively mapping scope creep risks in project planning and preparing contingency actions.

By implementing these strategies, KSS can strengthen governance, balance flexibility with control, and ensure that project outcomes contribute meaningfully to its digital transformation roadmap. Future research should further explore the conditions under which scope creep can be leveraged as a strategic advantage, particularly in fast-paced and unpredictable digital environments.

5.1 Academic Contribution and Practical Implications

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the literature on project management by contextualizing scope creep within agile-hybrid digital projects in an Indonesian IT service provider. While prior research has examined scope creep predominantly in Western contexts or in traditional project environments , this study highlights how procedural gaps and cultural norms interact to influence project governance in a dynamic, emerging market setting. The inclusion of both negative and potential positive effects of scope creep extends existing theory on strategic agility by demonstrating that controlled scope adjustments can enhance project relevance and value.

From a practical standpoint, the six interrelated strategies identified—strengthening scope baseline documentation, conducting regular validation forums, formalizing change control governance, optimizing tool utilization, embedding assertive communication culture, and proactive risk mapping—provide actionable guidance for organizations aiming to mitigate scope creep without losing agility. These strategies are particularly relevant for IT service providers undergoing digital transformation, where responsiveness must be balanced with governance to ensure strategic alignment.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides in-depth insights into the causes, impacts, and mitigation strategies for scope creep in agile-hybrid digital projects, several limitations remain. First, the research did not quantitatively measure the relationship between scope creep and specific project performance indicators such as delivery time variance, budget deviation, or defect rates. As a result, while the qualitative findings offer rich descriptions, they cannot determine the

statistical significance or magnitude of scope creep's effects.

Second, the study focused on the general category of agile-hybrid projects without differentiating between pure agile, hybrid, and other adaptive methodologies. This limits the ability to identify variations in scope creep patterns across different project delivery frameworks.

Third, the mitigation strategies identified were derived from observed practices and literature alignment but were not empirically tested within the organization during the research period. Therefore, the actual effectiveness of these strategies in reducing scope creep remains to be validated in future implementations.

Future research could address these limitations by employing a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative interviews with quantitative analysis of project data to measure the precise impact of scope creep on performance. Comparative studies across different project methodologies could also uncover method-specific vulnerabilities and strengths in scope management. Additionally, longitudinal studies that monitor the implementation of the recommended strategies would provide valuable evidence of their real-world effectiveness in balancing agility with governance.

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