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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
IT Service Management, IT Governance, Service Quality, Operational Excellence, Digital Transformation	Cloud computing, artificial intelligence, automation and digital platforms have revolutionised information technology (IT) service delivery and management in large organisations. In this context, IT Service Management (ITSM) has emerged from a purely technical role to become a strategic capability of the organization that is focused on governance, service quality, operational efficiency and continuous improvement. This research explores the change of ITSM in large organizations, focusing on governance, the quality of services delivered and operational excellence. The research in this study is qualitative research type descriptive research in interpretivist approach which is qualitative document analysis of secondary data. The relevant peer-reviewed literature, reports from the organization, industry and professional publications and other authoritative sources of documentation were purposefully picked and thematically analysed. The results suggest that for an effective ITSM transformation to occur, the following practices should be incorporated: Governance, standardization, digital technology, automation, performance measurement, and continuous improvement. Additionally, the analysis shows that effective IT governance has a positive impact on accountability, risk management, strategic alignment and transparency, and the maturity of the ITSM process has a positive impact on service reliability, responsiveness and user-focused service quality. Some of the key mechanisms identified for operational excellence that facilitate automation, artificial intelligence, DevOps integration and proactive monitoring to eliminate manual processes, enhance efficiency and allow for ongoing service improvement. The study shows it is important to view ITSM transformation as a continuous organisational transformation and not only as the implementation of an ITSM framework or technological platform. For large organizations, an integrated governance, service quality and operational excellence strategy can help achieve more efficient, reliable, responsive and strategically aligned IT service environments.
ARTICLE HISTORY	 2026 Journal of Social Research Development
Date of Submission: 24-02-2026	
Date of Acceptance: 26-03-2026	
Date of Publication: 30-03-2026	
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Email:	sullah.goraya@gmail.com
DOI	https://doi.org/10.59075/jsrd.v7i1.591
Volume/Issue	7(1), 2026, 240-260

Introduction

Information Technology (IT) has transformed from supporting organizational function, to playing a central role in the contemporary organizational strategy, in service delivery and in organizational performance. Large organizations are increasingly relying on sophisticated IT systems, the cloud, digital applications, enterprise systems, cyber security, and interdependent service environments to run their business and meet their customer's needs. With greater and greater reliance on IT, organisations have higher expectations on the availability, reliability, responsiveness, security and quality of technology-enabled services. This has made Effective IT Service Management (ITSM) an important organizational capability to coordinate IT resources, processes, people and technologies in order to generate sustainable value. ITSM is not just about problem solving; it also includes structured plans and processes to plan, deliver, monitor, govern, improve and align services to organizational needs (Iden & Eikebrokk, 2013).

As organisations go through wider digital transformation, the role of ITSM has become more important than ever. Older IT service delivery models, that tended to be hierarchical, manual and focused on incident management, are now complemented or even replaced with automated, integrated, agile and data-driven approaches. Technologies like cloud computing, AI, automation, DevOps, analytics, and self-service have transformed IT service design, delivery, monitoring, and enhancement. ITSM needs to be more agile in this environment and deal not only with technical, but also with business priorities and customer expectations that change. Studies have shown that an organization's aim for ITSM implementation is driven by various reasons and expected returns such as better service quality, process improvement, governance of the organization and better alignment between IT and business needs (Iden & Eikebrokk, 2013; Serrano et al., 2021).

One of the main aspects of this shift is IT governance. However, in large organizations, responsibilities, decision making, accountability, policies, controls and risk management processes must be clearly defined as a result of the scale and complexity of their IT operations. ITSM cannot therefore be considered solely as a process that can be limited to operational activities; it can also be considered as one of the mechanisms by which an organization can manage the performance of its IT resources and services. MacLean and Titah (2023) conduct a review of 126 empirical studies on ITSM published from 2012-2021, and define ITSM as a management control system of several control practices. They came up with the results linking ITSM implementation with transparency, service quality, customer orientation, productivity, responsiveness, and business-IT alignment. This view emphasizes the need to look at ITSM transformation and how it impacts on the governance of the organization instead of seeing service management as a set of technical processes.

Another vital part of ITSM transformation is service quality. Availability, reliability, responsiveness, consistency, usability, security and ability to provide agreed service requirements are becoming increasingly important factors in measuring the effectiveness of an IT service. In an organization with a large number of people, IT service quality weakness can impact staff, customers, business continuity, operational processes and reputation. ITSM evaluation research shows that the goal of achieving high service quality is one of the main purposes of ITSM, and that assessing service management is

challenging because IT services are comprised of overlapping processes, organisations and performance dimensions (Serrano et al., 2021; Wibowo et al., 2022). The other standard, ISO/IEC 20000-1, also focuses on the design, implementation, maintenance and continuous improvement of service management systems for planning, designing, transitioning, delivering and improving services (International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2018).

The third dimension, operational excellence relates to the organization's ability to provide IT services efficiently, consistently and continuously with the elimination of unnecessary costs, risks, delays, and process variation. Standardized process, automation, knowledge management, proactive monitoring, incident and problem management, performance measurement and continuous improvement are some of the areas that can help in achieving operational excellence in ITSM transformation. Modern service-management practices are also now more likely to include Agile, Lean, DevOps, and other practices in addition to the more traditional ITSM practices, as organizations seek to be more adaptive and responsive in their dynamic digital environment (ISO, 2019). But the use of frameworks or technologies does not necessarily mean operational improvement. ITSM outcomes may be impacted by the organisational context (Iden & Eikebrokk, 2013; Serrano et al., 2021), implementation practices, employee skills and competencies, governance structures, and the match of formal processes with actual organisational practices.

Even though ITSM is gaining more and more importance, the focus of the existing research, frequently, has been on the motives of implementing ITSM, critical success factors, adoption and expected benefits. These were identified by Iden and Eikebrokk (2013) as predominant themes in previous ITSM research, and in recent studies, the importance of gaining insight into the organizational mechanisms that help to explain the impact of ITSM is still emphasized. MacLean and Titah (2023) also contend that there are still gaps in the understanding of the effects and processes of ITSM, especially regarding the relationship between management controls and organizational outcomes. This indicates the need for a qualitative investigation that goes beyond merely determining whether an organization is implementing ITSM; it involves examining how organizations change their approach to the management of their services, what impact this change has on organizations' governance and service quality, and how it affects their level of operational excellence.

Thus, the focus of the present study is on the transformation of ITSM in the three dimensions of Governance, Service Quality and Operational Excellence, which are interconnected and related to each other. The study aims to examine the evolution of ITSM governance and accountability, understand factors that impact service quality and investigate how the changes in ITSM practices have been contributing to the pursuit of operational excellence using qualitative analysis of secondary documentary evidence. The study will combine these aspects to give a contextual understanding of ITSM transformation and its implications to the big organizations of the present world.

Problem Statement

Cloud Computing, Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Digital platforms and interconnected enterprise technologies have revolutionized large organizations' approach to designing and delivering IT services. But there remain organisations struggling to marry traditional IT Service Management (ITSM) with new digital operating models. The changes to ITSM can present governance, accountability, process standardisation, service quality, organisational coordination, automation, risk management, and continuous improvement challenges. Previous research focused on the implementation of ITSM, the benefits gained, the critical success factors, and the evaluation mechanisms, but limited attention has been paid to understanding how all these dimensions come together in the process of the transformation of ITSM in large organizational environments (Iden & Eikebrokk, 2013; Serrano et al., 2021; MacLean & Titah, 2023). There is a need to understand how the transformation of ITSM practices enhances governance, impact of the quality and reliability of IT services and how they support operational excellence specifically. The issue is not whether organizations adopt ITSM frameworks, but rather how they adapt and implement ITSM practices to meet the ever-changing technology and organizational needs. This study aims to solve this problem by exploring ITSM transformation in a qualitative analysis that involves the interdependent areas of governance, service quality and operational excellence.

Significance of the Study

It is important to the study because it helps to advance the understanding of ITSM transformation as an organizational and managerial process and not only a technical or procedural activity. The study can help advance academic literature by integrating three aspects related to IT governance, namely service quality, operational excellence and qualitative approaches. Although existing research has identified the ways in which effective ITSM can positively impact service quality, transparency, productivity, responsiveness, and business-IT alignment, there is a lack of understanding with regard to the mechanisms through which these outcomes come about in organizational contexts (MacLean & Titah, 2023). The study could also offer hands on information for IT managers, CIOs, service-management professionals and other decision-makers in an organization, helping them identify practices linked to better governance, delivery of services, process efficiency, automation, risk management and continuous improvement. In addition, the results can contribute to the knowledge on how to tackle organization challenges in the change of traditional ITSM processes and how to integrate with today's digital transformation processes. The study can create a holistic view of the current situation of ITSM transformation using a qualitative analysis of secondary evidence, which integrates results from academic studies, industry publications, ITSM frameworks, documents from organizations, and international standards.

Scope of the Study

This study is aimed at the transformation of IT Service Management in large organizations with a specific focus on three interrelated aspects of IT governance, IT service quality and operational excellence. Secondary documentary evidence, such as peer-reviewed academic literature, ITSM

frameworks and standards, organisational and industry reports, professional publications and other authoritative, publicly available documents, will be used to guide the study at the enterprise-level of IT service management. Issues related to governance and accountability, business-IT alignment, service reliability and responsiveness, process standardization, process automation, performance measurement, risk management, process continual improvement, and business operational efficiency will be explored. Primary interviewing, surveying, experiments or quantitative measurement of organizational performance will not be conducted. It will also not try to score, rank or compare individual organizations or ITSM frameworks. Rather, the research will offer a qualitative and interpretive examination of larger patterns and practices of ITSM transformation within large organizations.

Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follow:

To explore how large organizations are transforming IT Service Management (ITSM practices) to strengthen governance, accountability, and alignment between IT services and organizational objectives.

To examine the factors that influence IT service quality, including service reliability, responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and the effectiveness of ITSM processes in large organizations.

To analyze how transformed ITSM practices contribute to operational excellence through process standardization, automation, efficiency, risk management, and continuous service improvement.

Research Questions

Following are the research questions:

How are large organizations transforming their IT Service Management practices to improve governance, accountability, and alignment with organizational objectives?

What factors influence the quality and effectiveness of IT services within transformed ITSM environments in large organizations?

How do transformed ITSM practices contribute to operational excellence, particularly in terms of efficiency, process improvement, automation, and risk management?

Research Design and Methodology

Research Design

This study will be qualitative descriptive research to understand the transformation of the Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) practices of large organizations in terms of

governance, service quality and operational excellence. The study aims to explore organisational practices, processes, challenges and perceived result, hence a qualitative design is suitable. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore the meaning and reactions of people and groups to complex organizational phenomena in their natural environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study will be directed towards the evolution of the way ITSM is carried out in large organisations, specifically in relation to IT governance, service delivery and quality, process standardization, automation, risk management and continuous improvement. Modern ITSM theories focus on service management practices being aligned with organizational strategy, governance, performance measurement, service quality and ongoing service improvement (PeopleCert, 2026).

The method used is qualitative descriptive because the aim is not to create a new formal theory but to interpret the existing practices of ITSM transformation and the implications of these practices in organizations. Secondary documentary evidence will be used in the research to find patterns and themes of governing, managing, evaluating and improving IT services by large organisations.

Research Approach

An interpretivist qualitative approach will be used in the study. Interpretivism is suitable because organizational change and ITSM practices cannot be fully comprehended using the numbers alone but also organizational meanings, practices, relationships, decision-making processes and contextual factors. This is because qualitative inquiry is well suited to analyzing the meaning that people or groups give to social and organizational issues, as Creswell and Poth (2018) explain.

Accordingly, the study will interpret ITSM transformation within its organizational context, focusing on three interconnected areas:

IT Governance – accountability, decision-making, policies, compliance, risk management, and alignment between IT and organizational objectives.

Service Quality – reliability, responsiveness, availability, service-level management, user/customer experience, and performance measurement.

Operational Excellence – process efficiency, standardization, automation, continuous improvement, incident/problem management, and optimization of IT operations.

These dimensions are also consistent with contemporary ITSM guidance emphasizing service-level agreements, performance indicators, service operation, digital transformation, and continual improvement.

Research Method

The study will employ the qualitative document analysis as the main research method. Document analysis is a systematic method of document analysis and interpretation to produce meaning and empirical understanding of a research problem (Bowen, 2009). The method is well suited for this study as the transformational experience of ITSM has been extensively reported in organizational reports, industry frameworks, standards, professional publications, policy documents and scholarly research.

The documentary dataset will consist of relevant secondary sources, including:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles on ITSM and digital transformation;
- Books and academic chapters concerning IT service management and organizational transformation;
- ITSM frameworks and standards, particularly ITIL and ISO/IEC 20000;
- Annual reports and technology transformation reports of large organizations;
- Industry and consultancy reports;
- Organizational IT governance and service-management documents where publicly available;
- Relevant professional and institutional publications;
- Reports addressing automation, cloud transformation, service quality, governance, and operational improvement.

ISO/IEC TS 20000-11:2021, for example, provides guidance on the relationship between ISO/IEC 20000-1 and ITIL and specifically addresses the use of ITIL for establishing and improving service management systems and services.

Sampling Technique and Selection of Documents

The study will use purposive sampling which is the selection of documents that directly address the research objectives and questions identified. In qualitative research, purposive selection is suitable in which the information rich sources are selected intentionally to yield meaningful information on the phenomenon studied. (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

- Documents will be selected according to the following criteria:
- Direct relevance to ITSM, IT governance, service quality, or operational excellence;
- Focus on large or enterprise-level organizations;
- Credibility and identifiable authorship or institutional origin;
- Sufficient methodological or substantive information;
- Relevance to contemporary IT service-management transformation;
- Publication by recognized academic, professional, governmental, standards, or organizational sources.

Where possible, greater emphasis will be placed on recent literature and contemporary organizational and industry evidence, while foundational methodological and theoretical sources will also be retained.

Data Collection Procedure

Information will be gathered by systematically reviewing selected secondary documents. Relevant literature and organizational documents will be found using academic databases and trusted sources from the organization. The researcher will then analyze the documents based on the predetermined inclusion criteria.

Once selected, the relevant segments of the text will be pulled from the document and sorted and arranged in relation to the three main analytical elements: governance, service quality and operational excellence. Any other themes that arise from the documents will not be excluded, but will be retained as well.

The data collection process will therefore involve:

Identification → Screening → Selection → Document Extraction → Coding → Theme Development → Interpretation

This systematic process is consistent with qualitative research procedures in which the research problem, questions, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting are logically connected (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will be used for analyzing the collected documentary material. Thematic analysis can be used to discover, cluster, analyze, and interpret similar themes in qualitative data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis will proceed through the following stages:

- 1. Familiarization with the data:** Repeated reading of selected documents to understand their overall content.
- 2. Initial coding:** Identification of meaningful statements, concepts, practices, challenges, and organizational outcomes.
- 3. Searching for themes:** Grouping related codes into broader thematic categories.
- 4. Reviewing themes:** Examining whether emerging themes adequately represent the documentary evidence.

5. Defining and naming themes: Developing clear definitions for the major themes.

6. Interpretation: Relating the themes to the research objectives and questions.

7. Reporting: Presenting findings through analytical discussion supported by documentary evidence.

The coding structure will start with IT governance, service quality and operational excellence, and codes will be generated inductively, which could include automation, organizational resistance, digital transformation, risk management, performance measurement, customer experience and continual improvement.

Analytical Framework

The study will conceptually organize the analysis around the following relationship:

ITSM Transformation → Governance → Service Quality → Operational Excellence

In this context, ITSM transformation is the changes in service-management practices, technologies, processes and organizational changes. Governance is about accountability, decision making, risk, compliance and strategic alignment. Service quality is about effectiveness and reliability of IT services and the service consumers' experience. Operational excellence is related to efficiency, standardisation, automation, resiliency and continuous improvement.

This fits within the modern ITSM concept of aligning the organizational strategy, governance, service management, operational performance, and continuous improvement.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative Trustworthiness will be established in the study with credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Multiple types of documentary sources will be used rather than only relying on one source or one organization, building credibility. Where appropriate, findings will be compared with the academic literature, professional frameworks, standards, and organizational reports.

Document selection criteria, coding procedures and analytical decisions will be documented so as to enable dependability. Confirmability will be handled by making sure that interpretations are based in documentary evidence and that there are no contentious assumptions. The level of transferability will be enhanced by comprehensive descriptions of the organizational and ITSM context studied, allowing the reader to make their own judgement about the applicability of the results to other large organisations.

Creswell and Poth (2018) highlight the need for validation techniques and systematic processes in creating quality in qualitative research.

Ethical Considerations

The study will not engage direct interaction with human participants as the content is largely available second hand and of public interest. However, ethical conduct of research will be observed throughout the study. Sources will be cited correctly with APA referencing 7th edition and information will not be distorted or removed from its context. Any documents that are confidential or sensitive will not be used except for legitimate research purposes in organizational documents. The researcher will also differentiate between what it says and what the researcher thinks it means.

Review of Literature

IT Service Management and Organizational Transformation

Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) is a service management field that has shifted from being mostly operational with a focus on technical service management to being more of an organizational role focused on the development, delivery, governance and ongoing improvement of IT-enabled services. Organizations rely on cloud computing, enterprise applications, digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), automation and interconnected information systems more and more, so that the importance of effective service management is growing. In recent literature, ITSM is regarded as a set of organizational capabilities to create value from IT services instead of merely keeping the technological infrastructure. (Ramakrishnan et al., 2025).

The literature suggests that ITSM transformation needs to be interpreted in the context of broader digital transformation within the organization. Digital transformation is the process of change within the organization's structures, processes, capabilities, business models, and value creation mechanisms due to the strategic application of digital technologies (Verhoef et al., 2021). In a systematic review of 279 articles, Hanelt et al. (2021) identified the shift from a one-off use of technology to a more flexible organization that continuously adapts. Likewise, Kraus et al. (2021) and Calderon-Monge and Ribeiro-Soriano (2024) point out that digitalization does not only influence several organizational activities, but also necessitates organizations to build up the required technological and managerial competencies.

It is in this general change that ITSM offers tools to bridge the gap between technical changes and manageable services and processes. In their study on reviewing 47 studies, Serrano et al. (2021) identified implementation benefits, challenges, opportunities and practices as major themes in ITSM research. Their review shows that implementing ITSM can enhance service management and service processes, but that there are also challenges associated with organizational change, resources, process complexity, and practices for implementing ITSM. MacLean and Titah (2023) build on this notion by summarizing 126 ITSM studies, and by creating a conceptual understanding of ITSM as a management control system. Their research shows that ITSM controls have the potential to impact transparency, performance, customer focus, service quality, and business-IT alignment.

The literature therefore indicates that the transformation of ITSM today is not something that is just based on implementing ITIL or any other service-management framework. Rather, it is about the changes in organizational processes, governance structures, technologies, roles, performance indicators, and the relationship between the business and IT. The evolution of Enterprise Service Management (ESM) is a good example of why this is becoming so important. This technology takes principles of service management beyond the confines of the IT department and into wider business service processes, as Goscinska and Winkler (2024) make clear. Their study defines ESM as "an organizational capability that seeks to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of IT and business service management."

ITSM Frameworks, Standardization, and Continual Improvement

Transformation of ITSM is linked closely with the frameworks and standards like ITIL, COBIT and ISO/IEC 20000. These frameworks offer organizations a framework for service management, service governance, service risk management, process control and ongoing improvement. As mentioned by Ramakrishnan et al. (2025), the ITSM ecosystem encompasses several complementary systems such as ITIL, COBIT, ISO/IEC 20000 and other frameworks relating to the organization's processes. Using multiple frameworks can bring complementary capabilities to the organizations, but it can be complex due to the lack of proper integration between the various concepts, processes, and implementation requirements.

Recent studies highlight the need for continuous improvement in an ITSM environment that has been transformed. In the pharmaceutical industry, Baptista and Barata (2024) determined that maturity assessment, ITIL refinement, configuration management, regulatory integration, and Plan-Do-Check-Act can aid in the process of continuous improvement when it comes to service management. Likewise, Gunawan and Irianto (2024) relate ITIL CSi to service and information quality, which shows the need to continually scrutinize and enhance IT service processes through a systematic approach.

Standardisation can also be seen in the research on ITSM platforms. In a study on ServiceNow implementation in an organization, Santos and Rodrigues (2024) identified that IT service management (ITSM) platforms can assist in service monitoring, resource allocation, staff assistance and the quality of services, among other areas, and that one of the challenges faced during implementation may be the resistance of the organization. Transformation must not only be on the technical platform, but in the organizations' readiness and adaptation.

IT Governance and ITSM Transformation

IT governance is a crucial context for all aspects of ITSM transformation, as a large organisation needs to be able to manage and allocate resources, risks, responsibilities and the performance of technology in order to support and sustain business goals. As IT governance is a complex and multidimensional field with multiple themes and subthemes, it cannot be narrowed down to a single framework or decision-making mechanism, as described by Priyadarsini and Kumar (2022). In the systematic

review of IT governance mechanisms and frameworks presented by Karataş and Çakır (2024), they also highlight the necessity of IT governance in the management of increasingly digital organizational environments.

There has been also a growing focus on IT Governance and its relation with the organizational performance. The empirical evidence has shown recently that governance mechanisms can play a role in developing organizational capabilities with the aid of IT. For instance, Wu et al. (2024) studied 254 companies to test the link between IT governance mechanisms and IT-enabled dynamic capabilities, which showed that IT governance is crucial for organizations to build technology-related dynamic capabilities in a changing environment. Moreover, Wu et al. (2024) identified internal-audit capabilities as related to IT governance processes and effective IT controls, further establishing the link between governance, accountability and control.

Digitalization also transforms how organizations are controlled. In reviewing 116 studies, Fähndrich (2023) concluded that the digitalization of management control influences the management-control activity, the instruments used, organizational structures, and behavior. This discovery has implications for the field of ITSM, as transformation of services is increasingly driven by automated monitoring, real time information, dashboards, performance indicators and data driven decision making. In turn, governance needs to be able to manage more dynamic and automated service environments, and ITSM transformation necessitates it.

A third governance issue is business–IT alignment. In a systematic review, Őri and Szabó (2024) claim that business–IT misalignment is still a significant challenge in information–systems research. Transformation of ITSM can thus be seen as a step to connect the operational IT activities with the organizational goals in part. Similarly, the organizational impacts that MacLean and Titah (2023) identify in regards to ITSM management controls include business–IT alignment and transparency.

IT Service Quality

One of the key outcomes of ITSM is service quality. The key objective of service management is to ensure that IT services continuously deliver services in accordance to the service's organizational and user needs. According to Widiyanto and Subriadi (2022), one of the goals of ITSM is to achieve high service quality and it is difficult to evaluate ITSM as a result of the large number of factors involved in the complexity of the service environment in organizations.

The empirical studies also support the connection between the ITSM practices and the service quality, for instance, in a customer-service organization, ITSM improvement was studied by Žilinskienė and Norkus (2022), and they highlighted incident management, ITIL practices and service-quality improvement. In a high-regulated world, continual improvements in ITSM can also help to increase service quality, as shown by Baptista and Barata (2024). It is suggested by these studies that maturity and integration of ITSM processes have more impact on service quality than technology.

It's also now linked to the quality of services as a part of digital service transformation. Based on a systematic review of 52 studies, Anggara et al. (2023) define digital service transformation as a third layer of digital transformation, which refers to the changes that happen in the digital service products and the way they are delivered. This is especially important in large organizations where users are ubiquitous, demanding seamless, responsive, reliable, and digitally enabled services.

The definition of service quality is extended even more with Enterprise Service Management. According to Goscinska and Winkler (2024), ESM has the potential to expand the service-management functionality to other IT and business services, and is linked with the organizational modernization, customers satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and digital competitive capability. Thus, research on the subject of ITSM has become more focused on the enterprise-wide service quality perspective rather than a technical one.

Automation, Artificial Intelligence, and ITSM Transformation

Artificial Intelligence and automation are becoming key players in ITSM transformation. Typical service-management workflows are built around manual ticket classification, incident resolution, monitoring, change processing and knowledge retrieval. AI and automation can create new opportunities to anticipate, predict and optimize these activities. Diachenko and Roskladka (2024) explore the implications of AI and AIOps in ITSM, focusing on incident management, operational efficiency, and service quality. Their research suggests that in the field of IT operations and incident management, intelligent automation can shift the paradigm from the traditional ways of doing things.

Moreover, AI-powered ITSM introduces new governance considerations. Businesses need to establish the level of oversight for automated decisions, ensure ongoing ownership of decisions made with AI, and ensure data quality, security, transparency, and human oversight. Gartner's 2024 research also points to AI applications in ITSM as tools that can provide intelligent input and guidance to augment ITSM workflows, such as service-desk support, knowledge discovery, case clustering and self-service. AI transformation therefore presents not only opportunities for operations, but also new governance challenges.

There's also recently been a link between ITSM automation and greater digital transformation. Khot et al. (2024) investigate the convergence of AI, IoT and ITSM practices in the context of utility services and correlate these technologies with efficiency, reliability and sustainability goals. Also using machine learning, natural-language processing, and predictive analytics, as part of incident management, problem management, change management, and asset management, is discussed by Deshpande (2024). These studies demonstrate that automation is playing an increasingly significant role as a means for ITSM to move from reactive to predictive and proactive service management.

DevOps, Agility, and Operational Excellence

Another key area of ITSM transformation is operational excellence. This includes the capacity to provide services efficiently, reliably, consistently and continuously while avoiding unnecessary disruptions and process inefficiencies. Research on digital transformation is focused on the adaptive capacity of the organization and the continuous adaptation of processes and structures to technological and environmental change (Ciampi et al., 2022; Hanelt et al., 2021).

DevOps has provided a solution to this tension between process control in ITSM and fast delivery as it has become an important approach. Faustino et al. (2023) systematically explored the impact of DevOps practices on ITSM processes, and they found automated deployment in particular to be relevant, as well as incident management and problem management in the ITSM to be relevant. Amaro et al. (2023) also list capabilities and metrics that can be leveraged to gain insight into the adoption of DevOps and performance. Their key findings highlight the need for organizational skills, team empowerment, and real-world results when implementing DevOps.

DevOps integration with ITSM is thus a step toward more agile and integrated service management. New research indicates it is not DevOps vs. ITSM governance; it is about how governance, control, automation, collaboration and fast delivery can work together. Especially in large organisations, it's important to balance standardized process and compliance requirements with the need for speed and flexibility.

Achieving operational excellence is not just about technology, but also about building organizational capabilities. Sunder (2024) believes that the concept of operational excellence in services should be seen through the lens of capabilities rather than as a bunch of isolated improvement practices. Which is aligned with the digital-transformation research that focuses on organizational capabilities, agility, and continuous adaptation. (Calderon-Monge & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2024; Warner & Wäger, 2019).

Research Gap

The literature shows considerable research into each of the individual elements of ITSM, from its implementation, through to its adoption and governance, to its improvement, its automation and its digital transformation, to its effectiveness in service quality. Often these areas are explored independently, though. Previous ITSM studies have focused on implementation motives, critical success factors, implementation status and benefits (Iden & Eikebrokk, 2013), whereas more recent studies have addressed management controls, enterprise service management, digital transformation, AI, and DevOps (MacLean & Titah, 2023; Goscinska & Winkler, 2024; Ramakrishnan et al., 2025).

Another constraint is that the majority of the recent literature focuses on specific technologies, frameworks, sectors or on specific organizational cases. For instance, studies have been conducted on ITSM in pharmaceutical companies (Baptista & Barata, 2024), customer-service companies

(Žilinskienė & Norkus, 2022), public-sector IT departments (Khot et al., 2024), and in-company ITSM platforms (Santos & Rodrigues, 2024). This gives a background understanding but there is still scope to perform a wider qualitative synthesis to understand the relationship between governance, service quality and operational excellence in the context of ITSM transformation in large organizational settings.

The present study fills this gap by integrating these aspects in one analytical framework. It does not assess any specific ITSM framework or technology; it looks at a transformation of ITSM and the interrelationships between the following elements of governance, service-quality practices, automation, process integration, and continual improvement and operational excellence. The integrated view is in line with recent demands for a more holistic view of ITSM knowledge and organizational change. (Ramakrishnan et al., 2025).

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the selected secondary literature shows that the change in IT Service Management (ITSM) in large organisations is taking place in three interrelated areas; IT governance, service quality and operational excellence. The results show that ITSM transformation is not just about enhancing technical support or establishing a common service-management framework. Rather it is more about changes to organizational governance, delivery models, digital technologies, process integration, automation and continuous improvement. Additionally, the analysis suggests that the success of ITSM transformation is heavily reliant on an organization's capability to link technological capabilities to governance structures, service expectations and organizational goals.

ITSM Transformation and Governance

The first key observation relates to the growing strategic role of governance in and for ITSM transformation. A review of the literature shows that large organizations need to have clearly defined decision making mechanisms, accountability systems, policies, risk management, and performance monitoring systems in place to deal with the more complex IT environments. ITSM also serves as a mechanism for control of the organization. MacLean and Titah (2023) have identified these ITSM practices as being able to bring transparency, accountability, customer orientation, productivity, responsiveness and business-IT alignment. This is consistent with the results of the current research which determined that organisations need to learn to associate service management with organisational governance, instead of treating IT operations as a technically isolated activity.

The findings also reveal that governance gains in significance with the use of cloud services, artificial intelligence, automation and distributed digital infrastructures. Fähndrich (2023) asserts that digitalization alters the dimensions of management-control activities, instruments, organizational structures and behaviors. Within the context of ITSM, this can include the use of real-time monitoring, automated controls, service-level indicators, risk dashboards, and data-driven decision making to complement traditional hierarchical controls. The literature thus suggests that a change in the nature of ITSM can enhance governance when clear roles are defined for the ownership of

services and measurable performance expectations are set, there are escalation procedures and there are systematic mechanisms for managing risks.

The results also indicate that an ITSM framework does not ensure effective governance. Despite the formal adoption of ITIL, COBIT, or ISO/IEC 20000, or any other frameworks, organizations may still struggle with coordination issues, ambiguous responsibilities, or poor business–IT alignment. Organizational and implementation challenges were found to be important issues in ITSM adoption by Iden and Eikebrokk (2013), and MacLean and Titah (2023) reported that ITSM outcomes are dependent on the implementation of management controls. Therefore, it seems that the effectiveness of governance is related to the "embedding" of formal governance structures within institutional structures, management approaches, and management competences.

Transformation and Service Quality

The second significant result is that service quality is still an important result of ITSM change. It is observed that service reliability, service availability, service responsiveness, service consistency, user satisfaction, and effective incident resolution are key factors that are discussed in the literature regarding successful service management. Another aspect of ITSM research that has gained importance is the service improvement, as identified by Serrano et al. (2021), and organizational benefits, as shown by Wibowo et al. (2022) for the evaluation of ITSM, it is necessary to pay attention to the content, context, and processes in which the services are managed.

The results showed that the service quality is better when the organizations change their attitude from reactive service support to proactive and continuous monitoring service management. The traditional response to incidents after the disruption of service has taken place. Conversely, the monitoring systems, automation, analytics, predictive methods, knowledge bases, and self-service tools are becoming common features in transformed ITSM environments that help them detect and solve potential issues sooner. This change can decrease service interruptions and increase organizations responsiveness.

It has also been suggested from the literature that there are two aspects of service quality: technical and user. Having technical availability is not enough to ensure that users have a good service if the processes are complicated, the response is slow, the communication is poor or the support is ineffective. Goscinska and Winkler (2024) show how Enterprise Service Management applies service-management concepts throughout organizations and how to integrate service management and customer and employee satisfaction. The discovery aligns with a larger definition of IT service quality where the quality of the service overall experience is just as significant as the quality of the service itself.

However, results show that apart from technology, there are also organizational factors that affect the service quality. While advanced ITSM solutions can be implemented, they may fail to deliver quality service due to poorly designed processes, inadequate employee skills, and lack of accountability or unwillingness to change. Santos and Rodrigues (2024), for instance, discuss the

possibilities of ITSM platforms for supporting service management and the difficulties that organizations may encounter when implementing them. Hence technology must be seen not as an automatic quality of service provider, but as a quality-of-service enabler.

ITSM Transformation and Operational Excellence

The third key discovery has to do with the correlation of ITSM transformation and operational excellence. The literature reviewed suggests that the use of transformed ITSM practices can benefit the operational efficiency of the organization by standardizing the process, automating process, knowledge sharing, performance measurement, incident reduction and continuous improvement. Operational excellence, then, seems to be built upon a set of coordinated ITSM practices, not any one technology or framework.

Automation plays a special role in this regard. The use of AI, machine learning, AIOps and automated workflow is becoming common in ITSM processes. Diachenko and Roskladka (2024) are particularly interested in how AI could revolutionize incident management processes, and research on AI in ITSM shows that intelligent technologies can help with incident classification, knowledge retrieval, predictive analysis, and automated responses to incidents. These advancements can help streamline manual tasks and give IT staff more time to dedicate to more intricate workloads.

The results also show that there is need to combine ITSM and DevOps and agile. Faustino et al. (2023) identified a number of processes in ITSM that are impacted by DevOps practices, including automation and increased coordination between development and operations. This integration can be beneficial for organizations that want to align IT service management principles of control and stability with the current need for speed in the delivery of digital services. The results, however, show that it is a question of good governance because the more interested in speed, you may end up with risks in your operation, security or complexity.

Another aspect of operational excellence is the ongoing improvement of operations. Baptista and Barata (2024) show that maturity assessment, ITIL refinement, configuration management and continual-improvements are important to aid the improvement of ITSM environments. The results of the present study also indicate against the view of operational excellence as a state of the organization. Rather, it is something that is continuous and goes on as long as organizations are continuously testing their performance, looking for any gaps, making improvements, and retesting results.

Governance, Service Quality and Operational Excellence

One of the key overall conclusions is that governance, service quality and operational excellence are not distinct goals, but rather are part of a continuum. Good governance equips accountability, performance monitoring and strategic direction, thus creating conditions for quality in services. Better service quality, in turn, means more reliable and efficient organizational functioning.

Operational-performance data may then be used in the governance processes and inform additional service improvement.

The transformation of ITSM to operational excellence should be the goal of all IT organizations, driven by the need for service quality and governance improvement. ITSM transformation towards operational excellence is the target of all IT organizations because of the need of service quality and governance improvement.

This is aligned with the argument of MacLean and Titah (2023) on ITSM as a management-control system, and the wider digital-transformation literature which focusses on the capabilities of the organisation and its ongoing adaptation. (Hanelt et al., 2021; Verhoef et al., 2021).

Overall Discussion

In conclusion, the results show that ITSM transformation is a change of organization, not a change of technology. To be valuable in large organizations, ITSM frameworks, digital technologies, governance structures, human capabilities and continuous improvement practices need to work together as a whole. From the evidence it appears that organizations should not consider ITIL, automation, AI, cloud computing, or service-management platforms as distinct, standalone solutions. Rather, it is the manner in which these resources are integrated into the organizational processes and governance systems that are critical to their effectiveness.

The results also emphasize the need for contextual adaptation. There are significant variations among large organizations in their size, regulatory needs, organization, technology sophistication, and service needs. As a result, there are generic ITSM frameworks that offer useful principles and practices but are not suitable for all organisations as they must tailor practices for their specific context. The literature thus points to a transition from framework adoption towards capability development, where the ultimate goal is to build sustainable capabilities for governance, service quality, agility, resilience, and operational improvement, that are not only compatible with an ITSM model, but go beyond it.

Regarding the research questions, the results show that the four main paths of transformation of ITSM are: process modernisation, governance integration, automation, digital technologies and continuous improvement, which are linked to the context of large organisations. Process maturity, reliability, responsiveness, user orientation, automation and organizational capabilities all impact service quality. Lastly, transformed ITSM helps to achieve operational excellence by standardizing, automating, measuring performance, managing proactively, and integrating with agile and DevOps. So, the ITSM transformation can be interpreted as a multi-dimensional process, through which quality services and continuous improvement lead to operational excellence and effective governance lead to quality service delivery.

Conclusion

This research found that the reorganisation of IT Service Management (ITSM) in large organisations is on a multi-dimensional scale and goes beyond the implementation of technology or standard frameworks. The results illustrate that successful ITSM transformation is dependent upon the combination of good governance, quality of the provided services and operational excellence. Governance offers accountability, strategic alignment, risk management and performance control, service quality practices provide reliability, responsiveness and user satisfaction, automation and process standardisation, continual improvement and integration with agile & DevOps practices provide operational efficiency. The study also suggests that these technologies, like artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and automation, can enhance the capabilities of ITSM if the right organizational structure, skilled staff, and proper governance are in place. For this reason, for large organizations this ITSM transformation should be an ongoing process of organizational and service improvement and not be a one-off technological implementation. The study shows that organizations can achieve more responsive, efficient, reliable and strategically aligned IT service environments with the successful integration of governance, service quality, and operational excellence.

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