

# ITIL Compliance with a Service Perspective: a Review Based on Service-Dominant Logic

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## **Abstract**

Information technology implementation continues to be a challenging process for many organisations and one of the challenges is the transition to service orientation. To apply a service perspective is not a minor change of attitude; it is a paradigm shift for the whole IT sector. Providers of IT services can no longer afford to focus on solving technical problems, they now have to consider the quality of the services and focus on the relationship with customers. The purpose of this paper is to examine how the popular ITIL frameworks comply with a service perspective. We have used service-dominant logic as an analysis model to find out how ITIL corresponds to a service perspective. The findings show that while ITIL highly corresponds to the service perspective in some aspects it fails in others, such as recognising the customers as value co-creators and that products are a distribution mechanism for services.

**Keywords** ITIL, service-dominant logic. IT service management, service orientation, value co-creation.

## 1 Introduction

Information technology (IT) implementation continues to be a challenging process for many organisations (Brown et al. 2016). One of these challenges is service orientation. Services-oriented thinking is one of the fastest growing paradigms in technology management and the awareness of becoming more service oriented and customer focused is increasing (Bardhan 2010). The rationales behind adopting a service perspective are many. Grönroos (2000, pp. 87–88) argues *“The emerging principles of services marketing will become the mainstream principles of marketing in the future ... The physical goods become one element among others in a total service offering ... This means that physical goods marketing and services marketing converge, but services-oriented thinking will dominate”*. Normann (2001, p. 99) reinforces this statement by claiming *“It forces us to shift our attention: from production to utilization, from product to process, from transaction to relationship”*. However, to apply a service perspective is not a minor change of attitude; it is a paradigm shift for the whole IT sector (Göbel and Cronholm 2016). According to Cater-Steel (2009, p. 2) *“Many IT service providers are still characterized by a culture which is technology-focused rather than customer-centric”* and *“...are struggling to change the culture and processes within their own departments or organizations”*.

A prominent approach for a transition to a service-oriented culture is to adopt the concept of IT service management (ITSM). ITSM is a service-oriented strategy by which IT services are offered under contract to customers and performance is managed as a service (Pollard and Cater-Steel 2009). The main purpose of ITSM is to deliver services from a customer perspective and thus it plays a critical role in supporting and satisfying business requirements (Galup et al., 2009; Bardhan, 2010). ITSM is also an umbrella term that includes several best practices such as ITIL (e.g. Cannon et al. 2011); Capability Maturity Model Integrated for Services (CMMI-SVC) (SEI 2010) and ISO/IEC 20000 IT Service Management Standard (ISO/IEC 2011). All these best practices emphasise the importance of being service oriented and their purpose is to provide normative knowledge and processes that show how service providers can improve their management of IT services.

In this study, we have conducted a review of ITIL as a representative of ITSM best practices. No doubt, the concept of service is important to ITIL. The following quotation is one of many service-oriented statements. *“At the heart of ITIL and ITSM in general is the concept of service. Services are the focus of service providers and customers alike. ITIL professionals are dedicated to making the provision of service highly effective and highly efficient. However, success in this endeavour is dependent on the real understanding of the concept of service and how the concept will impact the activities of practitioners and the experience of the customer”* (Karu et al. 2016, p. 3). Unquestionably, ITIL is in many ways service oriented. However, there are some questionable statements in the ITIL books. One example, found in the book ‘ITIL continual service improvement’ implies lack of a thorough understanding of the service concept: *“Services are a means of delivering value to customers”* (Lloyd et al. 2011, p. 13). According to service theory, a service provider *cannot deliver value*. Value is always *experienced and determined by the customer* and created in a social context (e.g. Edvardsson et al. 2011; Lusch and Nambisan 2015).

The purpose of this paper is to examine how ITIL complies with a service perspective. The practical relevance of this purpose is that the findings can be used for further improvements of ITIL. The scientific relevance is that the findings constitute a base for further elaboration which can add valuable insights of how a service perspective can contribute to the field of ITSM. Lusch et al. (2007, p. 5) support a general need for a review by stating, *“...managers, though motivated to perform and being aware of the links among service, competitive advantage, and firm performance, often fail to execute on service knowledge”*. This study is also motivated by the fact that there is a need for more research on ITIL. Cronholm & Persson (2016) argue that there is a general need for more research on best practices such as ITIL in the field of ITSM. McNaughton et al. (2010) claim that the benefits of implementing and using ITIL processes have been predicted or assumed with very little research and minimal evidence. Moreover, Cervone (2008) reports that academic research on ITIL is in its early stages, despite its numerous references to it in the popular press and practitioners’ magazines. The following section describes ITSM including ITIL in relation to a service perspective. In Section 3, we present service-dominant logic which is used as the lens for analysing ITIL while Section 4 includes the methodology used. Thereafter, section 5 describes the findings and Section 6 presents the conclusions drawn.

## 2 IT Service Management

Our literature review has revealed several interesting claims and considerations with respect to the service term in ITSM. One claim is that the recent focus on ITSM highlights the importance of having positive relationships between service providers and end-users (Brown et al. 2016) which is one of the

cornerstones of the service concept. Galup et al. (2009) claim that ITSM is a subset of service science that focuses on service delivery and service support. McNaughton et al. (2010) describe ITSM as a key issue in business-oriented service support, in which IT services are planned and managed according to their contributions to required business processes. Axelos, the owner of ITIL, defines ITSM as “*The implementation and management of quality IT services that meet the needs of the business*” (Cannon et al. 2011, p. 16). Van Bon (2002) argues for an increased service perspective in the IT sector and claims that providers of IT services can no longer afford to focus on technology and their internal organisation. They now have to consider the quality of the services they provide and focus on the relationship with customers. Cater-Steel (2009) provides a report from case studies of organisations with difficulties in ITSM improvement and ITIL adoption. The report presents six critical factors which are important in achieving an effective service-oriented philosophy. The factors needed to successfully transition to a service-orientation are: support from senior management; the threat or opportunity to outsource IT services; integration of processes to provide end-to-end service; involvement of business stakeholders; culture change of IT staff to service excellence; and the redesign of processes prior to investing in tools. One important conclusion of the study conducted by Cater-Steel (2009, p. 8) reads “*If IT service providers fail to provide a reliable customer-centric focus, it will impact on their organizations by limiting the potential for IT to add value*”. Another related study describes the IT service quality attributes that could be measured to improve IT service quality (Lepmets et al. 2012). This study demonstrates promising results concerning IT service quality but is not specifically focusing on ITIL and SDL. No doubt, the literature is unanimous and we can conclude that all the cited scholars above strongly emphasise the importance of the service aspect in ITSM.

As mentioned in section 1, we have selected ITIL as a representative of ITSM best practices. The reasons for selecting ITIL are that ITIL is the most adopted and well-established framework on the market (Cannon et al. 2011) and has become a de facto standard for ITSM (Marrone 2011). ITIL consists of a set of best practices to aid the implementation of ITSM. It is built around a process-based perspective of controlling and managing IT operations, including continuous improvement and metrics (Galup et al. 2009).

### 3 Service-Dominant Logic

In order to examine how ITIL complies with a service perspective we have selected service-dominant logic (SDL) as a theoretical lens (e.g. Vargo and Lusch 2004; 2008; 2016). The main reasons for this choice are: it describes a contemporary service perspective that is applicable to the IT sector (e.g. Wittern 2010; Alter 2012); it is well known and well cited; and it consists of 11 clearly articulated foundational premises which support a structured analysis. As described in Section 2, many scholars have emphasised the importance of applying a service perspective. However, we have not found any study that has applied SDL to analyse the service perspective of ITIL. The overall purpose of SDL is to argue for the adoption of service. SDL can be seen as a reaction to the traditional goods-dominant logic which focuses on solving technical problems and not on fulfilling business needs and customer value (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Vargo et al. 2008). One important part of SDL is the 11 foundational premises. These premises can be regarded as statements or insights that constitute a service perspective (see Table 1). One purpose of the foundational premises is to mirror a shift in focus “*... away from tangibles and toward intangibles, such as skills, information, and knowledge, and toward interactivity and connectivity and ongoing relationships. The orientation has shifted from the producer to the consumer*” (Vargo and Lusch 2004, p. 15). An exhaustive description of SDL including the foundational premises can be found in Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008; 2016).

	Foundational premises	Brief description
FP1	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange.	The application of operant resources (knowledge and skills), “service,” as defined in S-D logic, is the basis for all exchange. Service is exchanged for service.
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.	Because service is provided through complex combinations of goods, money, and institutions, the service basis of exchange is not always apparent.
FP3	Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision.	Goods (both durable and non-durable) derive their value through use – the service they provide.
FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit.	The comparative ability to cause desired change drives competition.

	Foundational premises	Brief description
FP 5	All economies are service economies.	Service (singular) is only now becoming more apparent with increased specialisation and outsourcing.
FP 6	Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary.	Implies value creation is interactional.
FP7	Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions.	Actors can offer their applied resources for value creation and collaboratively (interactively) create value following acceptance of value propositions, but cannot create and/or deliver value independently.
FP8	A service-centered view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational.	Because service is defined in terms of customer-determined benefit and co-created it is inherently customer oriented and relational.
FP9	All social and economic actors are resource integrators.	Implies the context of value creation is networks of networks.
FP10	Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.	Value is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaning laden.
FP11	Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements.	The term service ecosystem is used to identify actor-environmental interaction and energy flow and mutual service provision. A service ecosystem is defined as a relatively self-contained, self-adjusting system of resource-integrating actors connected by shared institutional arrangements and mutual value creation through service exchange.

Table 1. Description of the foundational premises

## 4 Research Method

To fulfil the purpose of how ITIL complies with a service perspective we have conducted a literature study of the ITIL books. First, we (two authors of this paper) have used the 11 foundational premises in SDL as a lens with which to identify related ITIL statements. That is, we have read the ITIL books to collect service-oriented statements that can be related to the premises in SDL. We have individually read the ITIL books and documented findings. We have used the latest version of the foundational premises (Vargo and Lusch 2016) and the ITIL books read to identify related statements are: Service Strategy (Cannon et al. 2011), Service Design (Hunnebeck et al. 2011), Service Transition (Rance et al. 2011), Service Operation (Steinberg et al. 2011), Continual Service Improvement (Lloyd et al. 2011) and ITIL Practitioner (Karu et al. 2016). Secondly, we compared and reconciled our results from the individual collection of ITIL statements. This exercise was recorded in a document consisting of two columns and 11 rows: the foundational premises and the corresponding ITIL statements. Then, we compared each foundational premise with the corresponding ITIL statements to find out whether there was a high, low or no correspondence, with respect to service orientation. We define correspondence as a close similarity, connection, or equivalence. (Oxford Dictionaries 2016). Based on the outcome of the comparison, we were able to draw conclusions regarding how ITIL complies with different aspects of the service concept as represented by the foundational premises and ITIL's service orientation as a whole. Due to limited space the findings represent representative examples extracted from the complete data set.

## 5 Findings

### 5.1 FP1 Service is the fundamental basis of exchange

The two statements in Table 2 show that ITIL has adopted the overall view of service as the fundamental basis for exchange. Both statements correspond with S-D logic, which revolves around processes and not around products (Vargo and Lusch 2008). According to Marrone (2011), service-oriented IT Management is market orientated which implies that there is a customer-supplier relationship. The service orientation also means that IT organisations that have implemented ITIL need to have a dual focus. This dual focus includes an engagement at *operational level* benefits as well as *strategic level*

positioning to develop a unique and valuable stance relevant to the customer (ibid.). That is, it is not enough for ITIL to support technical advantages; it is also necessary for ITIL to support a service perspective including delivery of value propositions to the customer.

No.	ITIL statements	Comparison
1	“The appropriate approach for managing IT is therefore the approach of managing a set of services, rather than a set of products” (Cannon et al. p.48)	High correspondence.
2	“A service provider must first and foremost recognize that they are not providing hardware and software; they are providing value in the form of technology-based services that make it possible for the customer to achieve their goals” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 13)	High correspondence.

Table 2. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP1

## 5.2 FP2 Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange

Clearly, the authors of ITIL make a distinction between products and services (see Table 3). Indirectly, the authors are claiming that products have an intrinsic value. FP2 emphasises that indirect exchange (e.g. products) masks the fundamental basis of exchange which is the value the service can provide. This view implies that services have higher intrinsic value than products which contradicts the statement in ITIL. The view of SDL is that products and services represent value propositions (Vargo and Lusch 2008). The second quote implies that the product mask the service. According to SDL, the indirect change (e.g. the computer, infrastructure) is an important part of the service. In this case, it means that without the computer or the infrastructure the value cannot be experienced.

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“Unlike products, services do not have much intrinsic value” (Lloyd et al. 2011, p. 17)	No correspondence.
2	“If an IT supplier only builds and delivers computers, they are not a service provider ...” (Cannon et al. 2011, p. 48)	No correspondence.

Table 3. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP2

## 5.3 FP3 Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision

The first ITIL statement in Table 4 both complies with and contradicts FP3. Obviously, not all services require some form of technology. For example advice, guidance or instructions do not necessarily include technology. The ITIL statement complies with FP3 since it recognises technology as a mechanism for the delivery services. The second ITIL statement has no correspondence since it implies that services are viewed as add-ons to products. This view places the product in the foreground and regards the service as secondary. The statement also implies that the service cannot be delivered without the product. Vargo and Lusch (2004, p. 8) argue, “*Money, goods, organizations, and vertical marketing systems are only the exchange vehicles*” (p. 8). Clearly, the view of Vargo and Lusch places the service in the foreground and the product is viewed as a means of proposing a value.

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“All services require some form of technology to deliver them.” (Steinberg et al. 2011, p. 4)	Both low and no correspondence.
2	“... services are sold or made available when a product is delivered.” (Cannon et al. 2011, p.48)	No correspondence.

Table 4. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP3



#### 5.4 FP4 Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit

Constantin and Lusch (1994) define operand resources as resources on which an operation or act is performed to produce an effect. Operant resources are employed to act on operand resources (and other operand resources). We can conclude that there is high correspondence between the two statements in Table 5 and FP4 since they emphasise people with the right knowledge as the fundamental source of benefit. Vargo and Lusch (2004, p. 9) claim, “*Knowledge is an operand resource. It is the foundation of competitive advantage and economic growth ...*”.

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“It is people who drive the demand for the organization’s services and products and it is people who decide how this will be done. Ultimately, it is people who manage the technology, processes and services. Failure to recognize this will result (and has resulted) in the failure of service management activities.” (Steinberg et al. 2011, p. 4)	High correspondence.
2	“When the right people are involved in the right ways, ongoing service provision is more efficient and effective.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 21)	High correspondence.

Table 5. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP4

#### 5.5 FP5 All economies are service economies

We view the two ITIL statements in Table 6 as having high correspondence to FP5 and we can conclude that ITIL is committed to services. However, since ITIL distinguishes between services and goods there is also recognition of product economies (see Cannon et al. 2011, pp. 47-48) for an exhaustive comparison between services and manufactured products).

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“The approach of managing IT as a set of services is different from the approach where IT is managed as a type of manufacturing environment that produces a set of ‘products’ or outputs.” (Cannon et al. 2011, p.47)	High correspondence.
2	“The appropriate approach for managing IT is therefore the approach of managing a set of services, rather than a set of products.” (Cannon et al. p.48)	High correspondence.
3	<i>Acknowledgement of product economies (see Cannon et al. 2011, pp. 47-48)</i>	Low correspondence.

Table 6. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP5

#### 5.6 FP6 Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary

A major influence to the development of SDL is the work of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) state, “... *leaders in marketing are moving towards a dynamic exchange relationship perspective that involves performing processes and exchanging skills and services in which value is co-created with the customer*”. In his respect, all the ITIL statements in Table 7 contradict the foundational premise of value co-creation. Unquestionably, these statements exclude the customer from participating in the process of value co-creation. Our analysis shows that ITIL views the customers as passive value receivers and not as active value co-creators. That is, these statements correspond to a traditional goods-dominant perspective where the service provider produces the service and the customer consumes the service (Vargo and Lusch 2008).

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“IT service management is performed by IT service providers.” (Lloyd et al. 2011, p. 16)	No correspondence.
2	“... there is little or no buffer between the service provider’s creation of the service and the customer’s consumption of that service.” (Steinberg et al. 2011, p. 15)	Low correspondence.
3	“A service provider is an organization supplying services to one or more internal customers or external customers.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 3)	No correspondence.
4	“A customer is someone who by goods or services.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 3)	No correspondence.

Table 7. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP6

### 5.7 FP7 Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions

All four ITIL statements in Table 8 have a low or no correspondence to FP7. The statements imply that service providers actually can deliver value. Vargo and Lusch (2004, p. 7) claim, “*Value is perceived and determined by the consumer on the basis of “value in use”*”. Moreover, value is always determined and experienced by the customer and created in a social context (e.g. Edvardsson et al. 2011; Lusch and Nambisian 2015). Vargo and Lusch (2004) add that value results from the beneficial application of operand resources (e.g. knowledge) sometimes transmitted through operand resources (e.g. tools). The main argument is that actors participating in the process of developing or delivering services can only make value propositions and that value is consumed when the service is used. The fourth ITIL statement refers to the traditional and somewhat old definition of value. Sandström et al. (2008, p 112) state, “*Previously, value was regarded as a ratio between service quality and cost. In the new perspective, value is realized when a service is used. Users of services are thus both the co-creators and the judges of service value.*”

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“Services are means of delivering value to customers.” (Lloyd et al. 2011, p. 13)	No correspondence.
2	“A service is a means of delivering value to customers by facilitating outcomes that customers want to achieve without the ownership of specific costs and risks.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 3)	Low correspondence.
3	“The whole point of being a service provider is to deliver value to them [customers].” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 21)	No correspondence.
4	“Service contribute value to an organization only when their value is perceived to be higher than the cost of obtaining the value.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 4)	Low correspondence.

Table 8. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP7

### 5.8 FP8 A service-centered view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational

Vargo and Lusch (2004, p. 11) state, “*Interactivity, integration, customization, and coproduction are the hallmarks of a service-oriented view*”. No doubt, all the four statements in Table 9 are beneficiary orientated. We can also conclude that the four ITIL statements are relational since they emphasise the importance of how the service can improve the customers’ business values and business objectives.

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“All services are measured by their ability to add value.” (Steinberg et al. 2011, p. 121)	High correspondence.
2	“As part of the service lifecycle, service operation is responsible for: Enabling the business to meet its objectives.” (Steinberg et al. 2011, p. 35).	High correspondence.
3	“Everything the service provider does needs to map, directly or indirectly, to value for the customer ...” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 13)	High correspondence.
4	"Even when the service provider is a different company, it is helpful for them to understand what the customers will use the services for." (Cannon et al. 2011, p.49)	High correspondence.

Table 9. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP8

### 5.9 FP9 All social and economic actors are resource integrators

Although the terms economic actors and resource integrators are not used in ITIL the first two statements in Table 10 highly correspond to FP9. However, the emphasis on resource integration is much more strongly articulated in SDL than in ITIL. For example, Vargo and Lusch (2008) discuss resource integrations as networks consisting of other networks, which implies a much larger context than ITIL describes. In SDL, another example of the emphasis on resource integrations is “*Organizations exist to integrate and transform microspecialized competences into complex services that are demanded in the marketplace*” (Vargo and Lusch 2008, p. 8). However, ITIL statement number 3 somewhat contradicts the first two ITIL statements since it clearly states that the ITIL guidance is exclusively written for service providers and thus excludes other actors.

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“Identifying and managing all types of stakeholders is important.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 21)	High correspondence.
2	“The people and perspectives necessary for successful collaboration can be sourced within stakeholder groups.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 21)	High correspondence.
3	“...it is important to note that the guidance is written for the service provider and is from the service providers point of view.” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 10)	Low correspondence

Table 10. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP9

### 5.10 FP10 Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary

To some extent FP10 overlaps FP6 and FP7 but set a clearer focus on who determines the value. According to Edvardsson et al. (2011) and Lusch and Nambisian (2015), value is always determined and experienced by the customer who is seen as the beneficiary. The first ITIL statement in Table 11 highly corresponds to FP10 since it clearly underlines that the person who determines the value is the person who receives the value. However, ITIL statement number 2 indicates that value is created by the use of ITIL. That is, value is created for the customer, not decided by the customer. ITIL statement number 3 argues that services are delivered with both utility and warranty. That is, ITIL claims that services have a built-in value in terms of utility and warranty. Thus, we view correspondence of the ITIL statements numbers 2 and 3 as low.



No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“The value of a service is not determined by the provider, but by the person who receives it – because they decide what they will do with the service, and what type of return they will achieve by using the service.” (Cannon et al. p. 17)	High correspondence.
2	“ITIL is not a standard that has to be followed; it is guidance that should be read and understood, and used to create value for the service provider and its customers.” (Cannon et al. 2011, p. 3)	Low correspondence
3	“Services are designed, built and delivered with both utility and warranty.” (Cannon et al. p. 18)	Low correspondence

Table 11. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP10

### 5.11 FP11 Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements

The first three first ITIL statements in Table 12 highly correspond to FP11. ITIL recognises value networks as valuable sources of service delivery, which indicates that customers can play a role in the creation of services. However, ITIL statement number 4 has no correspondence since it contradicts value co-creation through actor-generated institutions. It also indicates a distinction between service providers and customers, which hampers coordination and inclusion of value networks. Another difference is that value networks are superficially described in ITIL. In SDL, concepts such as value networks and service ecosystems are far more emphasised and articulated (Vargo and Lusch 2016).

No.	ITIL statements	Analysis
1	“A value network is a web of relationships that generates tangible and intangible value through complex dynamic exchanges through two or more organizations.”(Cannon et al. 2011 p. 127)	High correspondence.
2	“Creative solutions, energetic contributions and important perspectives can be obtained from unexpected sources, as inclusion is a better <b>policy</b> than exclusion.” (Karu et al. 2016)	High correspondence
3	“Most IT organizations today are complex and as services become more commoditized there is an increased use of value networks, partnerships and shared services models.” (Steinberg et al. 2011, p. 235)	High correspondence
4	“The whole point of being a service provider is to deliver value to them [customers].” (Karu et al. 2016, p. 21)	No correspondence

Table 12. The compliance of ITIL statements to FP11

## 6 Conclusions

Overall, we can conclude that ITIL corresponds to several of the foundational premises in SDL but, there are also parts with a lower correspondence. ITIL adheres especially to the general view stating ‘Service is the fundamental basis of exchange’ (FP1). We can also conclude that ITIL recognises people and knowledge as the primary drivers of efficient and effective service management activities which highly correspond to ‘FP4 Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit’. Undeniably, ITIL sets the customer in focus which means that there is also a high correspondence between ITIL statements and ‘FP8 A service-centred view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational’. We can also conclude that there are foundational premises that have a low or no correspondence to ITIL statements. Two of these foundational premises are ‘FP2 Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange’ and ‘FP3 Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision’. Based on the identified ITIL statements, we can conclude that ITIL often places the product in the foreground and the service in the background.

Several ITIL statements imply that services are viewed as add-ons to products which means products are the main constituent in the exchange. The basic view in SDL is that people exchange services for other services and that goods are only the exchange vehicles or the platforms that assist in providing benefits or the provision of satisfaction for higher-order needs (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Two other

foundational premises that have a low or no correspondence to ITIL statements are 'FP6 Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary' and 'FP7 Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions'. Both these foundational premises concern the o-creation of value. Based on the identified ITIL statements we can conclude that ITIL adheres to the traditional view of the service provider as *the* developer, deliverer and innovator of services and that ITIL does not recognise the customer as a co-creator of services and value propositions. Our analysis has also revealed some inconsistencies. That is, we have found ITIL statements that have both high and low/no correspondence to the same foundational premise (FP5, FP9, FP10 and FP11). Partly, this inconsistency concerns an increased service orientation in the ITIL books over the years. We have noticed that ITIL has become more service oriented in the book from 2016 (ITIL Practitioner) compared to the five books from 2011. It seems that ITIL is on a journey towards a service-dominant logic. One example of inconsistency is related to 'FP10 Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary'. We have found statements that recognise the beneficiary as the person who determines the value but we have also found contradictory statements claiming that it is the service provider who delivers the value. These contradictions are not a matter of wording; they contribute to confusion since they represent different views of the service concept.

We hope that our findings can be considered valuable in future development of ITIL and in practical use of ITIL. The scientific contribution consists of systematic structure of how theories concerning SDL are inscribed in ITIL. The findings can also be viewed as shortcomings concerning how SDL can be incorporated in ITIL. Thus, we also view the findings as a base for how SDL can be improved with respect to normative knowledge and guidelines which we view as important future research. Other proposed future research are: 1) an analysis of the service orientation in other ITSM best practices such as the ISO/IEC 20000 family which provides a standard and 2) a consideration of the dual roles of IT in digital service innovation as an operant resource and as an operand resource. According to Lusch and Nambisian (2015), IT becomes an active agent in the service ecosystem and can trigger or initiate service innovation that impacts other actors and their choices. As an operand resource, IT can play an enabling role and ensure that the collaborative value creation process that underlies service innovation is efficient and effective.

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