

# Strategies and Challenges to Enhance the Impact of E-Service Quality on Institutional Excellence: A proposed framework

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## ABSTRACT

E-service quality plays a significant role to achieve success or failure in any organization, offering services online. It will increase the competition among the organizations, to attract the customers on the basis of the quality of service provided by the organization. Better e-service quality will enhance the relationship with customers and their satisfaction. So, the measurement of e-service quality is very important, but it is a complex process due to the complex nature of services. Literature predicts that there is a lack of universal definition of e-service quality. Hence, the main objective of implementing an E-service quality is to improve the organizations business processes and operations for improved business institutional excellence. But not all organizations have been successful in the E-service quality. The aim of this paper was an attempt to enhance the Impact of E-service quality on institutional excellence as a part of corporate strategy in an organization. The results confirmed the positive and significant effects of E-service quality to enhance institutional excellence. The moderator role of company quality policy between E-service quality and institutional excellence also was confirmed. Throughout this study, further details and valuable implications have been discussed. Findings also help practitioners and managers make proper decisions when implementing E-service quality and excellence practices in their organizations. With the joint effect of E-service quality and institutional excellence, organizations can achieve maximum strong excellence and remain in a competitive market, which may assist to maintain and improve the performance and effectiveness of e-service quality to retain customers.

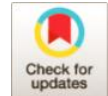
**Keywords:** *E-service quality, Company quality policy, Institutional excellence.*

## Introduction

Globalisation and information technology development have witnessed a metamorphic change in the working structure of traditional businesses. In the dynamic electronic environment, knowledge of consumers' expectation is the key to success. Therefore, several scales were developed in various e-service contexts to measure consumers perceived electronic service quality (e-SQ). SITEQUAL [1], website service quality (WebQual), eTailQ [2], and E-S-QUAL [3] were major e-SQ measurement scales developed in the new millennium. To improve service quality, many technology projects have been

introduced within the scope of e-governance and smart government in various public administration reforms [4]. These projects are mainly targeted at improving service quality and overall public satisfaction with government services [5]. Focusing on the area of e-services quality, it is first important to highlight that a strong blend exists between service quality and institutional excellence [6].

Despite the contribution of e-services to service quality and overall public satisfaction, the alignment between business strategy and technology innovation continues to remain of keen concern for businesses and senior executives [7]. Performance excellence through



technology innovation marks the new step in business performance and continues to gain relevance in businesses, particularly in the public domain [6]. In the paper [8] on the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Quality Service Model emphasise that the primary aim of public entities today is to "establish a management model for service excellence". On the emphasised need for alignment between technology and business strategy towards performance, performance excellence in the public sector requires critical attention. As observed by [9], the public sector faces many challenges in its efforts to ensure that a representative, competent and professional set of institutions are installed for the national development process. Many governments are therefore implementing innovation policies to transform and revolutionise the sector through public policy frameworks in public value governance[10].

Others have established that the public sector lacks the strategic vision for future advancement and is usually encouraged to adopt measures that exist in the confines of the private sector. Other global and regional bodies have emphasised the need for "high-quality, reliable public services and legal certainty" in the public sector. The lack of a clear strategic vision breaks the gap in the efforts made by the sector to install institutional excellence through technology innovation. On this background, to achieve excellence in the public sector, earlier studies including [4] on the excellence of e-government services in the UAE, as in paper by [11] on India e-Government service delivery excellence, among others have emphasized the need for excellence in the public domain through technology innovation and a clear strategy. It is, therefore, important to finally add that the need to align institutional strategy with technology innovation towards institutional excellence in a single framework has been emphasised by [7]. Building on selected strategy aspects of internal motivation [12], knowledge sharing [13] and collaborative culture [14], the contribution of these areas to e-service quality and institutional excellence are observed [15]. Given the several service quality models proposed, including the e-SERVQUAL, E-Qual, WebQual, among others [16], the present research builds on the e-service quality model originally proposed by [4] and [11] on measuring e-government service delivery. The overall contribution of key strategies and e-service quality towards institutional excellence are observed [7].Owing to the importance of E-service quality and Company quality policy for any organization, an

empirical examination is conducted to show their joint effect on institutional excellence.

### **Theoretical background and development of hypotheses**

Activity theory (AT) seems to provide a descriptive language with which to look closely at the activity systems in which new tools are introduced. In this respect, it is unique in its comprehensive approach to the elements that constitute human activity. Drawing from Vygotsky, the theory asserts that knowledge is mediated through the actions and interactions among those who use it. Thinking, learning and even knowing, are activities that are shaped by the activities in which people participate. Tools, structures and work-settings are created during regular participation in social activities. It is not possible to participate without inheriting the socio-cultural residue of antecedent conditions. Therefore, cognition is inherently context and historically bound. Moreover, the theory provides a way to understand how changes come about in activity systems through the reciprocal and unified processes of internalisation and externalisation. Thought, innovations and imaginations are internal processes that can be manifested externally and lead naturally to new artefacts and social practices. Institutional excellence: is defined as the ongoing efforts to establish an internal framework of standards and processes intended to engage and motivate employees to deliver products and services that fulfill customer requirements within business expectations [17]. It is the achievement by an organization of consistently superior performance for example, outputs that exceed meeting objectives, needs, or expectations [18].The enthusiasm, energy level, commitment and the amount of creativity that an employee brings to the organization on a daily basis [19].A collaborative culture is one where collaboration is regular and deliberate [20]. Collaboration doesn't just occur if someone happens to initiate it. Instead, it's baked into processes of how people do their work every day and into the attitudes they take about that work. Knowledge sharing in a company refers to the sharing of valuable information among the members of a company [19]. One of the most important things in the process is setting up a company culture that promotes knowledge sharing. Paper by [21] explain knowledge sharing as the action of passing on expertise skill or understanding from an individual, group, firm, or institution to another.

Internal knowledge sharing is the sharing of knowledge among colleagues of an organization within or inside the organization.

A quality policy is a brief statement that aligns with your organization's purpose and strategic direction, provides a framework for quality objectives, and includes a commitment to meet applicable requirements (ISO 9001, customer, statutory or regulatory) as well as to continually improve [22].

According to [23], ineffective employee motivation lead to service quality challenges within the organisation. Authors for [24] add that understanding and improving service quality requires that internal employees are strongly motivated. Motivated employees would go the extra mile to relate to customers and save the business through commitment towards organizational improvement [25]. Given the ultimate contribution of employee motivation to e-service quality, the following hypothesis is established.

H1: Employee motivation has an effect on e-service quality.

According to authors [26], knowledge sharing within the technology environment is essential to e-service quality and e-loyalty perception among company customers. Knowledge sharing permits engagement between members of the organisation to identify innovative ways and means of servicing the company customers [27]. The institution of collaborative and knowledge sharing platforms has therefore, been considered as integral to the acceptability and availability of e-services from the perspective of technology acceptance [5]. Given this inter-relationship, the second research hypothesis is presented as follows:

H2: Internal knowledge sharing an effect on e-service quality.

Collaborative culture strongly aligns with knowledge sharing towards e-service quality [28]. According to [29], collaborative culture changes everything within the organisations with regards to how common objectives are pursued. Author in [29] asserts that collaboration permits openness, peering, sharing and acting by replacing the old tenants of business. Collaboration builds on the transaction cost models, and the development of a new perspective to explain e-Gov systems development, as intended in the present research [3]. Given this literature, the following hypothesis is presented:

H3: Collaborative culture has an effect on e-service quality.

Work motivation is a series of internal and external forces that cause workers to choose how to act and lead to certain behaviors [15]. Motivation is often used to predict behaviors. Since it varies widely between individuals, motivation often has to be combined with abilities and environmental factors that affect employees' behaviors and performance [30].

H4: Employee motivation has an effect on institutional excellence.

Knowledge management systems have become one of the fastest growing areas in business organizations. We live in an information economy where the production and distribution of information and knowledge is the main source of wealth and prosperity [31]. Knowledge management is one of the processes that assist organizations in generating, organizing, using, disseminating and transforming important information and expertise owned by departments that are essential for various management activities such as decision making, problem solving, learning and strategic planning [3].

H5: Internal knowledge sharing an effect on institutional excellence.

Collaboration is also required as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or other firms may not have enough resources to achieve TBL performance [32]. Additionally, collaboration based on relationship governance infuses culture, which guides partner firms on the "basis of trust and continuance" and largely eliminates transactional cost [33,34]. Culture draws from relational view (RV), that establishes relationships among dependent business partners will bring competitive advantage.

H6: Collaborative culture has an effect on institutional excellence.

The consideration of e-service quality as an essential ingredient for business excellence has been registered in the quality management literature and available business excellence models. According to [35], e-service quality contributes effectively to institutional excellence by ensuring that customers and other external stakeholders' expectations are met. Given these observations, the research hypotheses of the research are presented as follows:

H7: E-service quality has an effect on institutional excellence.

By installing quality policy, a company is able to outline key measures and responsibilities in charge of quality implementation [36].

Enforcing such policies is essential to steer the organisation to adhere to key quality standards necessary to achieve business excellence. In paper [37], authors add that quality policy stipulates the quality vision and provide the strategies to achieve this stated vision. Given this literature support, the last hypothesis is presented as follows:

H8: Company quality policy enforcement significantly moderate the effect of e-service quality on excellence.

**Research gap**

Service quality of any website can be viewed as the sum of facilities and services provided by business' websites. Different perspectives on the importance of the quality of web services and the disparity in the level of services they provide, and their relationship to value added, make businesses rethink the framework of e-service and how to provide it to enhance the disparate relationships with added value [38]. In paper [39], discussed that quality of service is making sure that business fulfill their customers' needs and requirements when using their website. And the quality level of websites' services could refer accordingly to the level of technical capabilities, level of design, facilitates processing their transactions, and quick response, that meet or exceed the customer's needs, which may contribute to build a good relationship with them [38].

Customer perceived e-service quality is one of the critical determinants of the success of online business [3]. Accordingly, there is a rise of research on the construct of e-service quality. Currently, most of the research is conceptual in nature or based on a few case studies. Though there are survey-based empirical studies examining the construct of e-service, most of them focus on the dimensions from the perspective of online companies, and few studies have been conducted to investigate the dimensions from the perspective of institutional excellence, for example institutional performance. In order to fill the research gap, this study empirically examines e-service quality from the perspectives of organizations in the context of online service to enhance institutional excellence.

**The proposed framework for the research**

Figure 2 shows the proposed conceptual framework based on the literature reviewed above. These practices were shortly discussed in the previous section. Employee motivation, internal knowledge and collaborative culture have the capacity of supporting the e-service quality and institutional excellence through company quality policy enforcement. This research emphasizes on the capability of e-service quality in causing a positive effect on developing an organization and its performance.

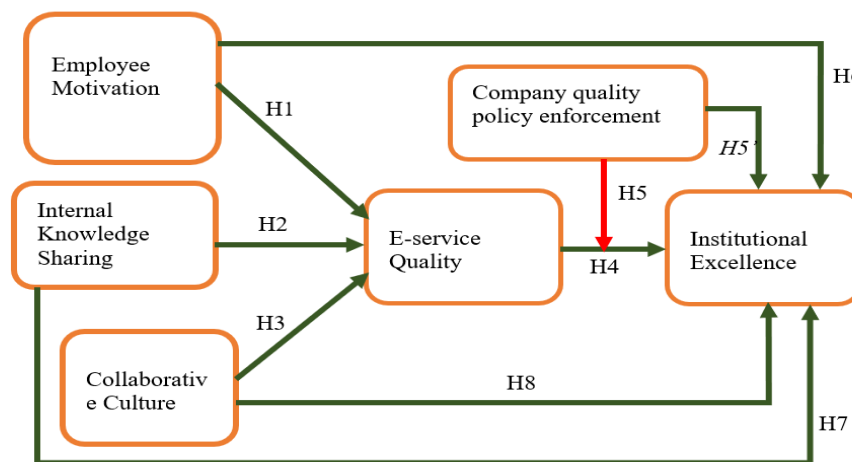


Figure 2. research framework

Finally, based on the literature review above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Employee motivation has an effect on e-service quality.

H2: Internal knowledge sharing an effect on e-service quality.

H3: Collaborative culture has an effect on e-service quality.

H4: Employee motivation has an effect on institutional excellence.

H5: Internal knowledge sharing an effect on institutional excellence.

H6: Collaborative culture has an effect on institutional excellence.

H7: E-service quality has an effect on institutional excellence.

H8: Company quality policy enforcement significantly moderate the effect of e-service quality on excellence.

**Development of e-service quality measures**

With the increase of e-service adoption in business field, the importance of measuring and monitoring e-service quality in the virtual world has been recognized, and e-service quality posits to be a hot topic in research field. Some academic researchers have already been conducted to develop e-service quality measurement. From the existing literature, it is evident that these studies have been conducted mainly in the domains of online retailing service, online shopping website quality, and e-service quality.

The measurement of variables are presented in Table 1. The dimension of employee motivation was measured using 7 items scale adapted from [40]. The second dimension of internal knowledge sharing was also defined by a seven-item scale, originally adapted from [41]. Finally, collaborative culture was also defined by the seven-items scale adapted from [41]. Together, e-service strategies constituted 21 items multi-factor scale, with each construct uniquely defined. Besides from the constructs under e-service strategies, e-service quality was originally adapted from [42] e-SERVQUAL model. A total of seven items were adapted from [42] to measure e-service quality. Authors in [42] research paper originally measured e-service quality for an online travel agency. Company quality enforcement was adapted from [43] paper on policy awareness, enforcement and maintenance in information security effectiveness. The final construct within the model is institutional excellence, measured with the help of the EFQM excellence model indicators originally presented in 2013 [44].

**Table 1 Measurement Scales**

Dimension	Sources
<b>E-services strategies</b>	
<i>Employee Motivation</i>	
1 Rewards and salary	Talukder & Saif (2014) [40]
2 Job Characteristics	Talukder & Saif (2014) [40]
3 Working conditions	Talukder & Saif (2014) [40]
4 Recognition and acceptance	Talukder & Saif (2014) [40]
5 Training and development	Talukder & Saif (2014) [40]
6 Job security	Talukder & Saif (2014) [40]
7 Performance appraisal/ growth	Talukder & Saif (2014) [40]
<i>Internal Knowledge Sharing</i>	
1 share business proposals and reports	Yang & Chen (2007) [41]
2 share business manuals	Yang & Chen (2007) [41]
3. share service success and failure stories	Yang & Chen (2007) [41]
4. share business knowledge gained from news sources, magazines etc	Yang & Chen (2007) [41]
5. Employees share experiences	Yang & Chen (2007) [41]
6. employees share know-whom and know-where	Yang & Chen (2007) [41]
7. share knowledge from education and training	Yang & Chen (2007) [41]
<i>Collaborative Culture</i>	
1 Participation	Harding et al., (2017) [45]
2 Interaction	Harding et al., (2017) [45]
3 Task completion	Harding et al., (2017) [45]
4 Adaptive Responsiveness	Harding et al., (2017) [45]
5 Audience Awareness	Harding et al., (2017) [45]
6 negotiation	Harding et al., (2017) [45]
7 Self-evaluation	Harding et al., (2017) [45]
<b>E-Service Quality</b>	
1 App/ web functionality	Fu Tsang et al., (2010) [42]

2 Information Content and Quality	Fu Tsang et al., (2010) [42]
3 Fulfilment	Fu Tsang et al., (2010) [42]
4 Responsiveness	Fu Tsang et al., (2010) [42]
5 Safety and Security	Fu Tsang et al., (2010) [42]
6 Appearance and Presentation	Fu Tsang et al., (2010) [42]
7 Customer Relationship	Fu Tsang et al., (2010) [42]
<b>Company Policy Enforcement</b>	
1 corrective measures	Knapp & Ferrante (2012) [43]
2 sanctioning	Knapp & Ferrante (2012) [43]
3 discipline / punitive measures	Knapp & Ferrante (2012) [43]
4 terminations for non-compliance	Knapp & Ferrante (2012) [43]
5 general compliances	Knapp & Ferrante (2012) [43]
<b>Institutional Excellence</b>	
1 people results	EFQM (2013) [44]
2 customer service	EFQM (2013) [44]
3 society results	EFQM (2013) [44]
4 business results (operational performance)	EFQM (2013) [44]
5 Stakeholder perceptions	EFQM (2020) [44]
6. General excellence	EFQM (2020) [44]

The selection of these constructs from variable sources is in an attempt to support the construct validity of the research. These papers had earlier received empirical validation and were pre-tested for reliability and validity in measuring the selected constructs. Despite earlier empirical use of these indicators, the present research will also attempt to pilot test the data collection instrument to re-assess the use of these measurements in the present research.

### Discussion

It is necessary to note that business excellence models perform two functions. The first is, they guide firms and institutions towards business excellence. And the second is, they conduct assessment or evaluation of the performance of firms [46, 47]. Guiding firms towards business excellence is the major function of business excellence models, and conduction of assessment is the minor function of business excellence models. On the need to improve business excellence, organizations usually conduct self-assessments to investigate the alignment between strategies and their excellent results [48]. Self-assessment is seen as an aspect of excellence measurement where the excellence results of the organization are compared with other originations to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses [49]. According to [50], business excellence models help improve the strategic position of the origination as well as the overall organizational performance.

The concept of motivation acts as a median item in the human learning process. If a company does not have the capability to motivate its workers, the expertise or skills within the company is not utilized virtually to the

maximum [51]. It has therefore become the focus of every educational organization or company to discover the elements that can assist them to effectively provide motivation packages to their workers to enable the workers to perform their tasks efficiently [52]. Motivation is an internal issue for human beings. Excellent pay and recognition are the most effective motivators for workers[53]. It is necessary that employees are involved in the decision-making process of selecting motivation packages for workers instead of allowing managers to be in charge of the entire decision-making process [54]. This is because what may motivate the manager is not necessarily what may motivate the employee.

Authors in paper [55] had establish in their research that knowledge is fragmental, and as such, dispersed in the minds of different employees. Therefore, establishing the internal sharing of knowledge in an organization or institution will provide well-organized procedures for the interchange of knowledge and interaction among staffs [19, 56, 57]. Internal sharing of knowledge enables an organization to integrate and pass on individual knowledge to better the company's organizational resources [58]. Through the process of internal knowledge sharing, the individual knowledge of staff can be gripped by other staff in the company. Thereby expanding the company's scope of internal organizational knowledge [59].

E-service quality must contribute to business excellence in organizations. As public entities handle the complexities of socio-economic development, the use of e-services has remained essential [60].

According to [61, 62] service quality is a key driver of customer satisfaction and business excellence. Improving service quality does not only lead to happy customers but help ensure that the internal stakeholders are equally happy [3]. Given this relationship, it is essential that both public and private enterprises consider it essential to promote service quality in the bid to achieve business excellence.

### Implications for research

Will generally helped organizations managers and all sectors to view e-service quality on institutional excellence. Furthermore, for the purpose of improving the processes, the organizations should maintain a track of the knowledge obtained from a variety of sources. To enhance this field of study, the study has taken an extension which is natural from the previous research related to e-service quality due to its contribution.

### Conclusion

This model can be used as a roadmap for researchers who wish to measure user perception of e-service quality in eservice domains, and for e-service managers and website administrators in assessing the effects of changes to improve their institutional excellence. This novel framework has been produced after reviewing the literature and considering the identified issues. This framework will assist in bringing order to e-service quality on institutional excellence. In addition, this framework will assist developers to understand and evaluate the standards of e-service quality. Future research could consider the relationship between the framework's categories. In addition, researchers can examine these themes in different contexts in order to validate this model. This research has applied several tests such as the preliminary analysis (missing value analysis, assessment of outliers, normality test, multicollinearity, and descriptive analysis), demographic analysis (response rates and profiles of respondents), measurement modeling (reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity), structural model, and hypotheses testing (direct effect, mediation effect, and summary of research hypotheses).

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