

Does Organic Quality Management do what it promises?

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An overview of research on OQM

Organic quality management (OQM®) aims to measure and enhance the health and quality of an organization. This is done by means of a questionnaire developed according to scientific criteria. This article provides an overview of research conducted on the reliability and validity of the OQM questionnaire.

The research deals with the following questions:

- What connection is there between the performance of the workers and the quality of the organization?
- What connection is there between the workers' identification with the organization (personal commitment and motivation) and the quality of the organization?
- What connection is there between fluctuation of workers (i.e. tendency to stay with or leave the company) and the quality of the organization?
- What is the connection between the physical and emotional health of the workers and the quality of the organization?
- How reliable is the OQM questionnaire?

How reliable is the OQM questionnaire?

A reliable questionnaire produces the same results twice in the same organization under assumed identical circumstances. This naturally never occurs in reality, but it is easy to simulate using statistical methods. The OQM questionnaire achieves excellent results in this study. The theoretical maximum of a reliability coefficient is 1.0. For organization-diagnostic procedures (such as OQM), however, a value of over 0.5 is sufficient. In personality tests involving one person, the required reliability coefficient is over 0.8; in intelligence tests it is over 0.9.

The OQM questionnaire would only need to produce a value over 0.5, yet it consistently achieves values over 0.8 and even over 0.9. This means its reliability is comparable to that of measurement instruments used for single diagnostics. The following chart shows the reliability rates in individual areas for all eight quality characteristics measured by the questionnaire.

Reliability

Quality Characteristic	Reliability Coefficient
Empowering Leadership	.94
Gift-oriented Assignment of Co-workers	.85
Passionate Spirituality	.87
Effective Structures	.87
Internalized Values & Culture	.86
Holistic Teams	.91
Convincing Lifestyle	.82
Loving Relationships	.91

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The connection between performance and quality

In order to establish whether the OQM questionnaire is successful in measuring the connection between performance and quality, two additional secular test procedures were conducted, taking the test person's self-evaluation into account as well as outsider evaluation. This was intended to measure correlation with the OQM questionnaire. The test procedures concern themselves with In-Role Behavior (IRB) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Williams & Anderson (1991), Riketta & Landerer (2002), Van Dyne & LePine (1008)).

The In-Role Behavior questionnaire measures how conscientious workers are in performing their duties. It evaluates statements such as:

- I meet the requirements of my tasks.
- My behavior at work is in keeping with my organization's mission statement.
- My boss is satisfied with me.
- I accomplish the tasks expected of me.

There is a strong connection between the OQM questionnaire and the IRB questionnaire: The correlation is $r=.58$, $p<.001$.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior is concerned not so much with the workers' sense of duty as with what they choose to do voluntarily – i.e. their performance over and above what is expected of them. Statements such as the following were evaluated:

- I help my colleagues when they have a lot of work to do.
- I help my boss with his/her work of my own free will.
- I take time to listen to my colleagues' problems and concerns.
- I offer suggestions to improve work processes without having to be prompted.
- I would never criticize my company in public.

- I take care of things belonging to the company.

The correlation with the OQM questionnaire is $r=.53$, $p<.001$. These results confirm that there is a strong connection between workers' performance and the quality of the whole organization.

The connection between identification and quality

A further test procedure, the Mael Scale for Organizational Identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), was employed in addition to the OQM questionnaire. The Mael Scale examines how closely workers identify with their company. Key statements for this evaluation were:

- When someone criticizes my company I take it as a personal attack.
- When I talk about my company I usually speak of "us" rather than "them".
- My company's success is my success.
- When someone praises my company I take it as a personal compliment.

Here the correlation is $r=.35$, $p<.001$. This shows that the closer the workers' identification with their company is, the higher the quality of the company tends to be.

The connection between fluctuation and quality

The issue here is whether workers tend to stay with their company or leave as soon as possible:

- I intend to stay in this organization.

The correlation between the quality measured by the OQM questionnaire and this question is $r=.40$, $p<.001$. This means there is a clearly measurable connection between the quality of a company and the fluctuation of its workers.

The connection between health and quality

The Job-Induced Tension scale (JIT, House & Rizzo, 1972) was conducted parallel to this question. The test subjects had to give their reactions to statements such as:

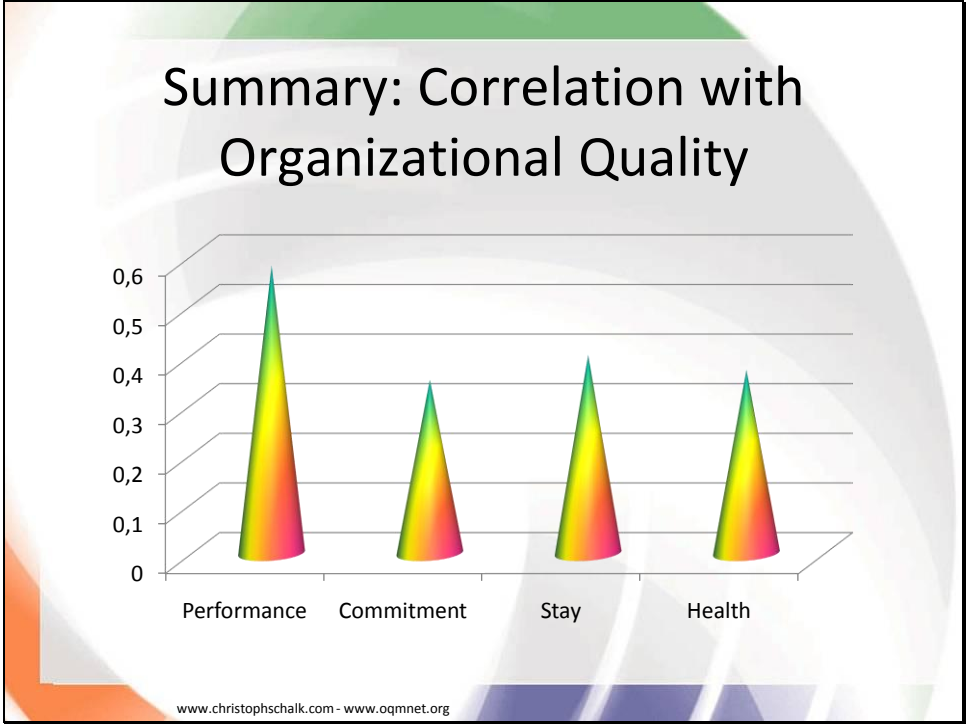
- My work influences my physical wellbeing.
- I work under great stress.
- My work makes me feel restless or nervous.
- Problems connected with work keep me awake at night.
- I often think about my job when I am doing other things and I can't switch off.

A correlation of $r=-.37$, $p<.001$ was measured here.

Concrete questions were also asked about typical physical complaints such as stomach-ache, headache, racing heart, lack of drive and pain in the shoulders, neck or back. The correlation here was $r=-.22$, $p<.001$.

Both questions demonstrate a significant negative correlation. Putting it the other way round: The higher the quality of a company, the less frequent and less severe the physical and emotional complaints will be.

It can thus be said in summary that there is proof of a clear connection between the quality of a company and the performance of its workers, between the workers' identification with their company and their willingness to personal commitment, and between the fluctuation of workers and their physical and mental health. The following graph provides an overview of these results.



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