

THE POSSIBILITIES OF USING THE VALUE THEORY TO ANALYSE AND EXPLORE COMMITMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF TQM

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Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to identify the concept of analysing commitment in the context of TQM by means of the theory of organisational values.

Design/methodology/approach: The primary method applied was a literature review. It was conducted in accordance with a research methodology proposed by J.W. Creswell (2013). In the process of analysing the findings of the conducted study, the cause-and-effect concept was adopted. The authors identified the previously used methods and techniques of exploring commitment in TQM, as well as the values supporting TQM.

Findings: Employee commitment requires the co-existence of other values, primarily justice and trust. Values such as self-control, responsibility, independence, courage and initiative play an important role in achieving and sustaining commitment. By using self-control, assigning responsibility and encouraging initiative, TQM can naturally stimulate the development of commitment. The commitment of top management fulfils the motivational function. The existing system of organisational values can be used in practice to study commitment. In view of the established findings, it was concluded that research tools used to measure the level of commitment should include questions concerning specific values and factors influencing them.

Research limitations/implications: The adopted method of literature review is not a perfect way to obtain information. Previous studies were conducted in different organisations and in different cultures.

Practical implications: The results obtained can have practical applications in the processes of developing employee commitment surveys and questionnaires.

Originality/value: This paper is one of few publications discussing the possibilities of studying commitment based on the theory of organisational values.

Keywords: commitment, justice, trust, values, TQM.

Category of the paper: conceptual paper.

1. Introduction

The commitment of both employees and managers is ranked among the critical success factors of TQM, along with customer orientation, process improvement, human resource development and long-term thinking (Petry, 1992), qualitative analyses, supplier management, strategic planning, teamwork and benchmarking (Sila, 2003), as well as organisational culture and a physical environment that guarantees service quality (Kachwala et al., 2021).

The results of previous research on commitment within the context of TQM can be divided into two groups. The results in the first group point to management and employee commitment as a key success factor in quality improvement (Petry, 1992; Oakland 1995; Kassicieh, Yourstone, 1998; Sila, Ebrahimpour, 2003; Soltani et al., 2005; Tonjang, Thawesaengskulthai, 2020; Kachwala et al., 2021). Organisations with high levels of this commitment achieve better results in the implementation of the principles of TQM (Soltani, Lai, Gharneh, 2005) and six sigma (Pradhan et al., 2021). Commitment is supposed to lead to the removal of barriers on the way to success (Goh, 2015). The other group contains results indicating factors that influence commitment (Bou, Beltrán, 2005; Soltani et al., 2005; Dubey et al., 2018). These factors include institutional pressures and the organisational values of trust and justice.

In research to date on the role and importance of commitment, a fundamental problem is that such research is often limited to asking respondents about their opinions on the importance of commitment. A better practice is providing respondents with behavioural manifestations (e.g. management sets goals, ensures their compliance with the corporate mission, etc.). It is too often tacitly assumed that survey participants know what commitment is. Meanwhile, it is a very complex concept with many dimensions and types. This raises the question of whether such surveys allow for capturing the essence of commitment and whether respondents are precisely aware of which type of commitment they are supposed to evaluate.

There is no doubt that the involvement of employees as well as management is important for the implementation of TQM principles. Despite various research approaches and types of commitment, there is a general belief that commitment can be regarded as a category of organisational values. There are many theories of ethical, economic, psychological and other values. For the purposes of this paper, it has been assumed that values comprise everything that is desirable. These are both target states (e.g. quality) and desired modes of behaviour (cf. Rokeach, 1968). In this study, the authors use a theory of values proposed by L. Krzyżanowski (1994), in which commitment together with justice and trust form a certain system of mutually dependent values. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to present the concept of analysing and studying commitment in TQM based on the theory of organisational values. In order to achieve this objective, the authors have identified the existing methods, approaches and instruments used in research on ethical and autotelic values with regard to TQM.

Taking into account the existing publication gap, the following research questions have been posed:

1. Which values are important for the development of employee commitment in TQM?
2. How can the existing system of organisational values be used in practice to explore the issue of commitment?
3. To what extent do the characteristics of TQM determine the commitment of employees to quality improvement?

2. Method

A literature review was carried out to determine the state of the research on the subject. It was conducted in accordance with a research methodology proposed by J.W. Creswell (2013). The applied procedure also followed the principles of research conducted in the areas of management and business (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). The review comprised selected academic research publication databases (Academic Search Ultimate, Business Source Ultimate, Education Resources Information Center, AGRICOLA, Open Dissertations, Green FILE and Eric). The review consisted of the following stages: (a) a general survey of publications on commitment; (b) a selection of keywords such as commitment, research method, TQM, management tasks; (c) a search for papers containing the selected keywords in the following databases: Academic Search Ultimate, including Business Source Ultimate, AGRICOLA, Open Dissertations, Green FILE, Newspaper Source, ERIC; (d) a reading of the selected publications (abstracts and, subsequently, whole texts); (e) a further selection of the publications with respect to the adopted research assumptions and objectives; (f) an arrangement and organisation of the publication content.

The logical course of the conducted review is illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 1).

In a general sense, commitment is defined as an employee's relative willingness to engage in continuous improvement and put effort into work that benefits customers (Peccei, Rosenthal, 1997). Commitment can take the form of beliefs expressed by top managers, as well as their participation in the fulfilment of specific tasks (Liang et al., 2007).

In the literature on the subject, there are relatively many different typologies of employee commitment and, consequently, quite a few different definitions of this concept. Typologies of commitment were proposed, among others, by Mayer and Schoorman (1998), Witt, Kacmar, Andrews (2001) and Bragg (2002). The most frequently mentioned types of commitment include: affective and continuance, aimed at remaining in the organisation, organisational, work-oriented, supervisory, "have-", "want-" or "should-type", affective and normative, calculative and behavioural.

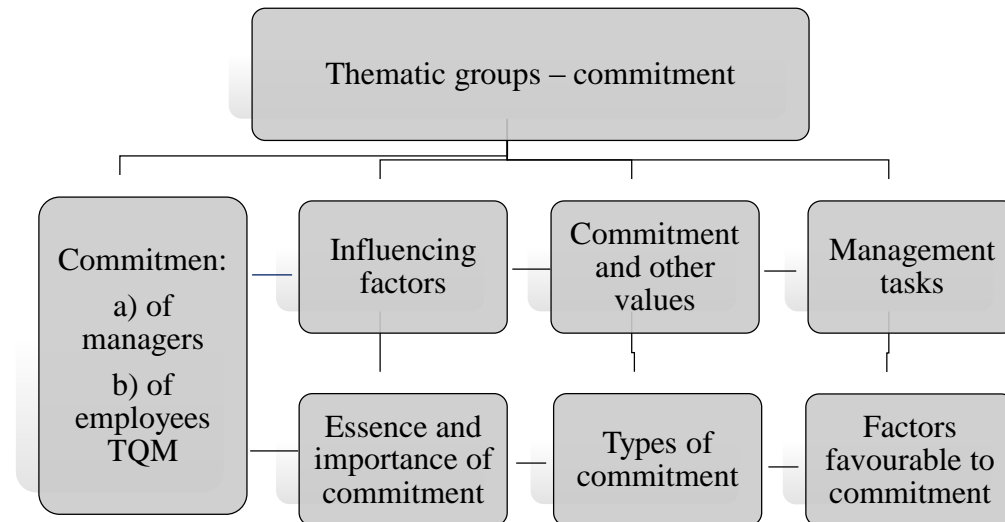


Figure 1. The essence and definitions of commitment.

Source: own elaboration.

The differences between the particular types of commitment determine the course of research processes. For example, organisational commitment is defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and commitment to a particular organisation. It can manifest itself in a strong belief in the unconditional acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to make significant effort for the benefit of an organisation or a strong desire to maintain membership in an organisation (Mowday et al., 1979; Luo, Qiao, 2020). Such a definition is close to the definition of affective commitment, which means "an employee's emotional attachment to an organisation. This commitment reflects the extent to which an individual wants to be in an organisation" (Spik, Klincewicz, 2008, p. 476).

Even within the particular types of commitment, different definitional approaches can also be found. Let us consider normative commitment. Reviewing various definitions, J.P. Meyer and N.M. Parfyonova (2010) note that over many years there have been different views on defining commitment. The term means a commitment to norms, values and internal beliefs that morally oblige an individual; a totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way that meets the goals and interests of an organisation; a stabilising force that acts to maintain the direction of behaviour when conditions of expectation/equality are not met; an assumed obligation to follow a particular path of action in pursuit of established objectives.

Continuance commitment, on the other hand, is associated with employees perceiving a potential loss of organisational membership as very costly (Aziz et al., 2021), which may be due to either economic or social calculations.

Commitment is thus a complex construct, studied from a variety of perspectives and, consequently, rather difficult to conceptualise (Allen, 2016).

3. Commitment in research on TQM

In quality management, it has been accepted that commitment consists in assuming responsibility for processes put in place and is a crucial factor in moving from the stage of “business as usual” to the stage of “total quality” (Kanji, Asher, 1993, p. 36). The most common distinction is made between management commitment (cf. Sila, Ebrahimpour, 2003), and employee commitment. The latter is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 465).

Various publications dealing strictly with TQM contain theoretical sections focused on the importance of having all employees committed to their work and organisation. It was already Deming, Juran and Crosby who promoted the need for employee commitment to quality improvement processes. Most authors of classic works on quality management also emphasise the importance of continuous employee commitment in quality improvement (cf. Dale, 1999). It is assumed that commitment should lead to the practical utilisation of each employee’s ideas, experience and knowledge (Oakland, 1995).

Studies on commitment (cf. Oruma et al., 2014; Dubey et al., 2018; Campos et al., 2022) describe behavioural manifestations of commitment (e.g. setting of realistic quality goals, proper planning on quality management and creating quality management structures, staff education). Such an approach stemmed from the belief that TQM was a process requiring training, motivation, establishment of goals and directions for change, etc. Therefore, commitment was studied as an important factor in the success of TQM implementation and its absence was considered a barrier to this process (e.g. Soltani et al., 2005; Suleman, Gul, 2015).

Researchers also studied distinct types of commitment, such as affective commitment (Arunachalam, Palanichamy, 2017; Haffar et al., 2023), treating it as a category of a psychological state reflecting employees’ positive relationship with their organisation and causing them to want to stay with the same organisation (Alzoubi et al., 2023). Three different dimensions of commitment (affective, continuance and normative) (cf. Mendes et al., 2014) were used.

A significant proportion of the papers do not provide a definition of commitment or discuss the essence and significance of commitment in the theoretical section.

3.1. Methods of conducting research on commitment

Questionnaire-based, quantitative research is one of the most popular methods. Time-lagged surveys (Dong et al., 2023) are also an increasingly common approach, especially in studies focused on organisational behaviour.

Various questionnaires are used. One of these is the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Porter, Smith, 1970), which is meant to measure affective commitment (Kanning, Hill, 2013). Some studies use the three-factor organisational commitment scale comprising affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment and proposed by Allen and Meyer (cf. Meyer, Allen, 1991). As in other studies, meta-analyses are used (cf. Cilek, 2019).

Sometimes commitment is studied by means of observations, for example within the scope of work performed by students who write their graduation theses and dissertations (cf. Kubieniec, 2020).

3.2. Methods for measuring commitment in TQM

Previous research on the role and importance of commitment in TQM has mainly used quantitative questionnaire methods (cf. Mendes et al., 2014; Ismail, 2014; Suleman, Gul, 2015; Dubey et al., 2018; Hwang et al., 2020).

In some cases, the results of quantitative research have been enriched with qualitative suggestions (Chiarini et al., 2021; Kachwala et al., 2021). In very few cases, experimental (quasi-experimental) methods (Alzoubi et al., 2023) and the Delphi method (Chiarini et al., 2021) were applied. Still another research approach involved detailed and systematic literature reviews (cf. Kulenović et al., 2021; Ali, Johl, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021).

The table below describes the methods used to research commitment and presented in the scientific literature regarding TQM.

Table 1.

The methods for studying commitment within the context of TQM - selected examples

Authors	Participants, instrument	Research objectives	Definitions and dimensions of commitment	Results
Mendes et al. (2014)	A questionnaire targeting 82 academic researchers. Organisational commitment was operationalised by means of a nine-point scale developed by Cook and Wall (1980).	Exploring whether the adoption of TQM principles is associated with employees' more favourable attitudes regarding organisational commitment and citizenship behaviour.	Three different dimensions were used in the theoretical description: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.	The results supported the thesis that the adoption of TQM principles positively correlates with employees' more favourable attitudes towards organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Cont. table 1.

Ismail (2014)	A questionnaire sent to 691 teachers from 24 secondary schools (a five-point Likert scale). The questionnaire on TQM practices consisted of five elements: top management commitment; continuous improvement; customer orientation; personnel commitment; as well as training and education (Ismail, 2014).	An attempt to determine whether the dimensions of TQM practices are predictors of a school climate.	Commitment was one of the dimensions of TQM.	Personnel commitment, top management commitment and continuous improvement were the main predictors of a school climate. Top management commitment is the most important factor which contributes to the success of TQM practices in an organisation.
Oruma et al. (2014)	Questionnaires and structured questionnaires involving the participation of over 15 construction companies.	Identifying factors influencing the implementation of TQM in the construction industry.	The theoretical section describes the behavioural manifestations of commitment (e.g. setting realistic quality goals, properly planning quality management and developing a quality management structure create quality awareness and improve implementation of quality management systems).	The commitment of top management is a critical factor influencing the implementation of TQM in construction companies.
Suleman and Gul (2015)	A descriptive survey design was used, and a semi-structured questionnaire developed by the authors was used to collect information from respondents. Feedback was obtained from 72 school principals and 894 teachers.	An analysis of the challenges faced by public secondary schools in effectively implementing a comprehensive quality management system.	It was found that management commitment is important and contributes to meeting targets and achieving results, while a lack of commitment is a barrier to TQM implementation.	Besides other factors, a lack of management commitment is a barrier to TQM implementation.
Arunachalam and Palanichamy (2017)	A questionnaire survey. 450 participants (shop floor employees of three Indian manufacturing organisations).	Links between TQM and employee job satisfaction.	Commitment was measured using a four-item scale. Management commitment as well as affective commitment were examined.	The predictors of both job satisfaction and commitment were the same (except for the strength of prediction).

Cont. table 1.

Dubey et al. (2018)	A survey of 300 senior quality managers representing 300 automotive component manufacturers.	It proposes a theoretical model rooted in institutional and upper echelon theories that explain TQM diffusion via top management commitment.	The respondents were given a detailed description. Based on TQM principles, an assumption was made that commitment manifests itself in top management's formulating a strategy and sharing a TQM vision with everyone.	The findings indicate that institutional pressures significantly influence top management commitment in TQM. Subsequently, top management commitment influences the organisational diffusion of TQM through its acceptance, routinisation and assimilation.
Krajcsák (2019)	Two case studies.	Identifying motivational strategies that enable the implementation of total quality management and showing how they support employee commitment.	Normative and affective commitment was explored.	A TQM implementation project is not successful, the efforts to increase commitment are also likely to have a cultural impact. Extrinsic motivation plays a role in reinforcing normative commitment in the form of a sense of indebtedness. Intrinsic motivation promotes high levels of normative commitment as a moral obligation, as well as high levels of affective commitment.
Hwang et al. (2020)	8,417 survey responses collected from a large-sized IT service company in South Korea.	Understanding the effects that soft TQM practices have on employees.	Organisational commitment was examined.	The results show that the soft TQM practices enhance employees' readiness for change, thereby increasing their organisational commitment and reducing their turnover intention.

Cont. table 1.

Abimbola et al. (2020)	A questionnaire survey with a random selection of 350 respondents from a population of 11 faculties of a university with 2047 employees. The data used in this paper were obtained from a systematic review of the relevant literature.	The relationship between total quality management, employee commitment and competitive advantage in higher education institutions.	Employee commitment is an employee's attachment to their organisation.	A proper implementation of TQM practices combined with employee commitment will guarantee results in the form of competitive advantage measured in terms of growing revenue, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction.
Al-Maamari and Raju (2020)	360 workers (with a strong return of 60%) in Yemeni Oil Units.	The effects of employees' organisational commitment on TQM implementation.	The dimensions of organisational commitment were adapted from Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) tool used to calculate the basis of three dimensions: affective, normative and continuous commitment. Their measurements consisted of 18 items. The concept of organisational commitment was defined by means of quotation from other publications.	The organisational commitment of employees is crucial for the implementation of TQM.
Tonjang and Thawesaengskulthai (2020)	A systematic literature review (covering the period 1985-2019) divided into three stages: planning the review, conducting the review, reporting and disseminating the results.	Identifying the drivers of innovation.	Management commitment as one aspect of TQM.	The review identified the following six aspects of TQM and innovation management in healthcare: top management commitment, customer focus, continuous improvement, employee commitment, information and analysis, as well as process management.

Cont. table 1.

Kachwala et al. (2021)	An extensive literature survey and a questionnaire with positive statements. The respondents were hotel managers. In addition, interviews or telephone conversations/discussions were used. The questionnaire was sent to 186 people. A total of 142 responses were received, with a response rate of 76%.	Identifying the key dimensions of TQM that affect the overall quality of the hotel industry.	An operational definition of research variables and hypotheses. Top management commitment consists in providing support for employees' efforts aimed at continuous improvement. Employees are encouraged to solve problems.	The overall quality of the hotel sector is influenced by: 1) top management commitment, 2) organisational culture, 3) continuous improvement, and 4) service landscapes (physical environment and facilities).
Chiarini et al. (2021)	The Delphi method was used in the study. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to eleven experts to collect their opinions and suggestions. The quantitative results were supplemented with qualitative suggestions.	Identifying factors important for improving quality in small and medium-sized enterprises through internal audits.	Managers should be directly involved in internal audit procedures.	Management commitment is an important factor in quality improvement alongside audits and improvement initiatives (e.g. Lean tools). Top management commitment has a twofold positive impact: first, it motivates employees to achieve established goals and KPIs; second, it focuses on the importance of controlling and monitoring such goals and KPIs.
Ali and Johl (2021)	A review of the literature on TQM from an objective (soft) and subjective (hard) perspective. A total of 87 empirical studies from the years 1987-2019 were analysed.	Examining the present literature on TQM and its connection with industry 4.0.	Commitment as relevance and support for Quality 4.0; unity of quality objectives 4.0; acceptance of new technologies. In the traditional view: commitment, support for quality planning and execution, unity of purpose to achieve quality objectives.	Soft dimensions for the effective implementation of Quality 4.0 in business include top management commitment, customer focus, training and learning, as well as quality of big data and analysis.

Cont. table 1.

Zhang et al. (2021)	A bibliometric analysis of the existing literature on TQM in service enterprises collected from the Web of Science and Scopus databases.	Highlighting the major domains of and address the most prominent topics in the Total Quality Management field in the service sector.	Both management commitment and organisation-wide commitment were included in the analysis.	Top management commitment is a critical construct and managers should be aware of obstacles caused by its absence.
Kulenović et al. (2021)	A systematic literature review in three main stages (13 empirical papers published between 1995 and 2017): formulation of a problem to be solved by a systematic literature review; definition of criteria for inclusion and exclusion of papers; and search for and selection of papers. The selected papers were published in JCR (Journal Citation Reports of Thomson Reuters) and SJR (SCImago Journal and Country Rank by Scopus) journals.	Identifying the most important factors related to the successful implementation of TQM.	A compilation of other studies on commitment (initiative, support for individuals, communication of information, alignment of objectives with a vision).	Management commitment is a critical factor in TQM, alongside customer focus, training, procurement management, information and analysis, and process management.
Al-Maamari et al. (2021)	The survey was conducted on a sample of 360 employees of Yemen Oil Units selected using stratified random sampling methods. Data from completed questionnaires, which had a return rate of 60%, were subjected to structural equation modelling analysis.	Determining how Total Quality Management practices have an impact on individual readiness for change.	The study analysed organisational commitment as a mediator through which comprehensive quality management enhances individual readiness for change.	TQM practices foster organisational commitment and readiness for change.
Campos et al. (2022)	Data and evidence were collected by means of an online survey questionnaire completed by 32 employees. Interviews were conducted with senior managers to obtain further information.	Assessing how an enterprise's commitment to quality could be described in terms of willingness, involvement in quality matters and also to identify difficulties encountered by management and employees.	Commitment defined by behavioural traits. Senior executives act on suggestions how to improve the quality of services. The top management is seen by all as actively promoting quality within the company. Staff is given education and training in how to identify and act on quality and improvement opportunities.	Commitment to quality has a positive impact on the implementation of TQM. The more committed and willing employees are, the easier it is to implement TQM.

Cont. table 1.

Alzoubi et al. (2023)	A quasi-experimental multiple time series were conducted, starting in September 2017 and ending in June 2018. A sample of 140 nurses was selected using a stratified proportional random sampling technique. A total of 132 participants completed the study, 67 from the intervention group and 65 from the control group.	Assessing the impact of a comprehensive quality management intervention on the job performance and commitment of nurses working in state hospitals.	Commitment was treated as a psychological state reflecting nurses' positive relationship with a hospital, causing them to want to stay in the same organisation. A scale of 18 items was used to assess commitment. Affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment are the 3 sub-fields of measuring nurse commitment.	There were no significant differences in work performance or commitment between the intervention group and the control group. The educational intervention was effective in improving the work performance of the nurses in the intervention group. The greater commitment of the respondents in the intervention group was attributed to improved work performance.
Haffar et al. (2023)	The survey was conducted on a sample of 360 employees of Yemen Oil Units (YOU), selected using stratified random sampling methods. Data from completed questionnaires, which had a return rate of 60%, were subjected to structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis.	Assessing the impact of comprehensive quality management practices on individual readiness for change.	The subject of the study was affective commitment as discussed in the theoretical section.	TQM practices were linked to an increase in organisational commitment.

Source: own elaboration based on a review of the literature indicated in the table (2014-2023).

4. A system of values in TQM

4.1. Commitment and other values

There is a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of TQM, procedural justice and affective commitment (Golparvar, Oreizie, 2009). Affective commitment fully mediates the effects of TQM and justice on intention to remain an employee (Brooks, Zeitz, 1999). Commitment to organisational change, and this is sometimes the case at the beginning of a TQM implementation process, requires organisational justice. Organisational justice is strongly related to commitment to organisational change, with the strongest relations being between procedural justice and affective commitment to change. Furthermore, resistance to change does not significantly correlate with justice or commitment to change (Foster, 2010).

Only distributive justice predicts organisational commitment among victims of downsizing, while procedural justice is a stronger predictor among survivors of downsizing and unaffected employees (Clay-Warner et al., 2005). Organisational justice has been identified as an important contributor to employee commitment to an organisation (Rahman et al., 2016). In other studies, both distributive justice and procedural justice have been shown to cause an increase in organisational commitment. And procedural justice has resulted in an increase in the value of public services (Jang et al., 2021).

There is a consensus that TQM requires not only commitment, but also that commitment be based on trust in others (Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow, 2003). Teamwork, organisational communication and organisational trust are positively associated with affective commitment (Boon et al., 2006). The level of trust in superiors influences the level of employee commitment (Michaeli et al., 2009). Both values are extremely important for knowledge sharing processes (Hashim, Tan, 2015).

4.2. Relationships between other values

Justice is regarded as a superior value and therefore, it constitutes a basis for trust. Organisational justice positively influences trust regardless of cultural background. This has been confirmed by studies conducted in the USA, China, Germany and India (Pillai et al., 2001).

At the same time, however, managerial trust, by influencing interactional justice, has a significant impact on employee behaviour and performance (Aryee et al., 2002). According to Kickull, Gundryn and Posig (2005), however, the strongest value is trust. When trust is low, the need for justice increases. Employees feel that the organisation does not respect their values and treats them unfairly. Trust influences the assessment of justice. It has a greater impact on interactional justice than on distributive and procedural justice (Stinglhamber et al., 2006).

Research shows that commitment can be a source of trust and, vice versa, trust in an organisation may positively influence commitment and performance (Tan, Lim, 2009). Bou and Beltrán (2005) have found that TQM influences employee attitudes manifested in trust, participation and commitment. These attitudes must be reinforced by the commitment of top management (Bou, Beltrán, 2005). Commitment can lead to trust and both values are indispensable for effective cooperation (Walton et al., 2008).

Job satisfaction largely depends on distributive justice (Kumar et al., 2009). Leaders' commitment and the resulting satisfaction does not always trigger employees' satisfaction, but can foster temporary commitment (Bugdol, 2010). Solidarity fosters employees' collective effort (cf. Richardson, 2008) and can therefore be an important value in quality improvement processes. Solidarity requires trust (Myers, Johnson, 2004). Solidarity among employees generates high levels of job satisfaction (Hodson, 1997).

Organisational values are essential for instrumental values. For example, responsibility requires trust (Ammeter et al., 2004). For employees, self-control is impossible without trust.

Independence comes with job satisfaction, innovative solutions, improved performance, self-determination as well as a sense of ownership and responsibility (Tingo, Mseti, 2022). Highly independent employees prefer to be assigned to meaningful tasks on which they can demonstrate their creativity and use initiative. They become satisfied when they are offered decision making freedom and job enrichment (Cromie, 2000).

4.3. Commitment as an organisational value in TQM

To put it simply, similarly to affective commitment, commitment to quality improvement is dependent on the ethical values of TQM (integrity, fairness, respect). Ethical values are the foundation of organisational values. Distributive, procedural, but also interactional justice influences trust and facilitates employee commitment to quality improvement and affective commitment. If commitment is appreciated and, at the same time, the soft elements of TQM are properly implemented (i.e. employees are adequately supported, trained and empowered), satisfaction can occur. At the same time, however, organisational values need the tools of instrumental values such as courage, self-control, independence and responsibility.

Table 2.

The significance of values in TQM

Values	Role in TQM	Notes on TQM research	Bad practice
Organisational			
Justice	Organisational, procedural and distributive justice are essential for employee commitment to the implementation and maintenance of TQM (Brooks, Zeitz, 1999; Ali et al., 2020). In TQM, organisational justice is a predictor of improvement in work-related employee attitudes and quality-related performance (Durairatnam et al., 2019).	Impartiality and retributive justice have not been researched.	Use of employee rankings. A negative aspect of rankings is that they can encourage unethical behaviour whose objective is to improve one's own position relative to competitors (Piest, Schreck, 2021). Lack of procedural justice. If procedural justice is not maintained, then quality objectives do not fulfil a motivational function (Bugdol, Jedynek, 2021). Lack of respect for and appreciation of the efforts made by employees. It is important to remember that interpersonal justice is maintained when superiors treat employees "with respect and sensitivity and explain the rationale for decisions thoroughly" (Inoue et al., 2009). Establishment of numerical targets only (E. Deming emphasised their destructive role). Bonuses dependent on collective effort. Greed as the root cause of injustice (Wang, Murnighan, 2011).

Cont. table 2.

Trust	The dominant component of TQM (Bugdol, 2013). It contributes to employee commitment (Ray, 1994) and is important for customer satisfaction (Venkatakrisnan et al., 2023).	While managers' behaviour matters, we know little about the other dimensions of trust (trustworthiness, reliability, competence, predictability, benevolence). We know little about other types of trust (e.g. particularistic, altruistic, rational-collective).	Establishment of unrealistic objectives, failure to keep promises, lack of fairness (Bugdol, 2012). Lack of reliability, dependability, predictability of behaviour.
Commitment	Management commitment is important in the implementation and subsequent maintenance of TQM (Petry, 1992; Oakland, 1995; Kassicieh, Yourstone, 1998; Sila, Ebrahimpour, 2003; Soltani et al., 2005; Goh, 2015, Tonjang, Thawesaengskulthai, 2020).	There is a problem of anticipatory commitment (when commitment precedes trust and formal arrangements, it destroy the process of trust formation).	Misallocation of resources, lack of reciprocity, unfair incentivisation and remuneration, excessive commitment related to the mutual licensing of unethical behaviours) (cf. Klotz, Bolino, 2013). Lack of justice prevents the development of trust and inevitably leads to political behaviours within an organisation (Othman, 2008). Violation of a psychological contract. Even when a psychological contract is being performed, but there is a low level of interactional justice, the level of commitment decreases, regardless of the level of procedural justice (Thompson, Bunderson, 2003).
Solidarity	Solidarity and spirituality are values and features of TQM (Fort, 1995), as well as a condition for its success (Green, 2012). Solidarity creates emotional trust that allows cooperation (Huy, 2000). It is important for knowledge sharing processes (Werdiningsih, Pudjiarti, 2001).	So far, there is a lack of research on solidarity in the context of defending the interests of individual stakeholders (e.g. when their interests are threatened by unethical goals).	Lack of a common purpose or interest, exclusion of groups or individuals. Mutual resentments and animosities (cf. Morgan, Pulignano, 2020).
Satisfaction	It is key to ensuring better business operations and is important for customer satisfaction, especially in services (Kurdi et al., 2020). Job satisfaction can be a source of commitment (Mo, Borbon, 2022).		Lack of support, motivation (Varma, 2017). Stress, poor communication (Hee et al., 2018).

Cont. table 2.

Instrumental			
Responsibility	TQM requires responsibility for overall processes (Kanji, Asher, 1993) and responsible autonomy based on self-control (Snape et al., 1995), as well as responsibility for one's own actions (Pankaj, Naman, Kunal, 2013). Employee accountability is inextricably linked to commitment and contributes to quality improvement (Liu, 2021).	An interesting issue is that of blurred responsibility (i.e. situations in which someone is formally responsible for something but does not feel so).	Blurred responsibility. Lack of connection between responsibility and qualifications (cf. ISO 9001: 2015). Lack of delegation of authority and responsibility (cf. Gul et al., 2012). Superiors' willingness to share power, allocate autonomy and responsibility may unintentionally increase unethical pro-organisational behaviour among employees. This occurs by intensifying their moral disengagement (Dennerlein, Kirkman, 2022).
Self-control	TQM requires a shift from external control to self-control (Godfrey et al., 1997). It allows for a rapid location of defects (Lavy, 1994). It provides immediate feedback on quality problems, allowing them to be rectified quickly (De Ruyter, Cardew-Hall, Hodgson, 2002).	Self-control is not only a form of work organisation, quality assurance, but whether an employee has the potential to quickly overcome a crisis or difficulty, has a sense of control (cf. Kim et al., 2018).	Lack of knowledge of processes, quality requirements, inability to identify and monitor processes. Lack of a sense of agency. A system of progressive discipline that prevents employees from re-commitment (a system of discipline should assume that employees can exercise self-control and re-commitment) (Osigweh, Chimezie, Hutchison, 1989).
Independence	Employee autonomy can have a positive impact on employee performance (Tingo, Mseti, 2022). Independence relates to the ways in which audits are carried out, which contributes to reinforcing the principles of TQM (Al Ghani, 2018).	Independence should be considered from the point of view of different organisational structures and tasks performed. In the case of audits, auditors' independence in the context of huge competition for clients is an interesting topic.	An overly strong functional division, derogatory, insulting supervision triggers counter-productive behaviour that manifests itself in acts of vandalism, increased staff mobility, and such behavioural manifestations are not good for quality (Wei, Si, 2013).
Courage	It is essential in the implementation of an organisation's strategic vision and is a way of stimulating employee initiative (Snyder, 2010), it can have an impact on all TQM principles (Moccia, 2016).	An interesting research topic could be the perception of people who are courageous, who, while helping their leaders, take responsibility for their work themselves, without blindly following the leaders (Javaid et al., 2023).	The main enemy is the fear of assessment and failure to achieve planned results (Deming, 1986). Fear causes employees to stop communicating and not share their knowledge, which leads to serious problems in quality improvement and innovation (Gambarotto, Cammozzo, 2010).

Cont. table 2.

Activity	Activity is linked to employees' participation in training and teamwork (Kabak et al., 2014). Active employee participation is a feature of TQM. TQM requires that both individual employees and groups of employees be active (Krasachol, Tannock, 1999).	There is a lack of studies on the weaknesses of training and teamwork in TQM (which is due to the character of tasks and team building stages).	A lack of information about the state of pursued objectives and a lack of trust constitute serious barriers to employee activity (cf. Bou, Beltrán, 2005). In the case of training courses, one barrier is a lack of support on the part of a supervisor and motivation to learn (Kim et al., 2020).
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Source: own elaboration based on a review of the literature cited in the table (2014-2023).

5. Proposal for research on commitment

The conducted literature review shows that commitment is a complex construct. If we want to explore commitment in TQM, we should propose its precise definition.

If we refer to employee commitment to TQM, we can look at the term from the point of view of the theory of values and assume that commitment occurs when a community of values occurs (Affective commitment, 2001). Such a community of values is indispensable for the occurrence of appropriate forms of behaviour. These include: constantly striving to improve products through process improvement, actively participating in the implementation and setting of quality objectives, participating in quality team management reviews and quality improvement training, participating in processes aimed at providing support to other employees who request it. Firstly, we can establish whether such behaviour occurs, but the key issues will be those relating to other organisational values.

If, following philosophers, we assume that the basis of trust and, consequently, continuance commitment is justice, then we should ask employees about their subjective sense of justice, but at the same time explore the managerial factors constituting obstacles and barriers to justice. We know from research that trust is undermined by establishing unrealistic objectives and failing to deliver on promises (Bugdol, 2012, 2014), and if procedural justice is not maintained, quality goals do not fulfil a motivational function (Bugdol, Jedynek, 2021). Procedural justice ensures that employees participate in decision-making processes and have a real influence on their organisation's performance. Interpersonal justice, on the other hand, is maintained when superiors treat employees "with respect and sensitivity and explain the rationale for decisions thoroughly" (Inoue et al., 2009, p. 75).

When examining the drivers of commitment, we should, on a process audit basis, determine to what extent the allocation of resources is fair, how the remuneration system works (whether employees with the same qualifications and tasks receive similar or the same salaries), whether there is an excessive development of citizenship behaviour, how well the psychological contract is complied with.

As far as instrumental values are concerned, each of them needs to be properly diagnosed. For example, if we are examining the conditions conducive to self-control, it is important to establish whether employees have knowledge of the process approach and to what extent they are provided with opportunities to identify and monitor processes.

6. Characteristics of TQM and commitment

Most publications on the characteristics of TQM refer to not only commitment, but also leadership, empowerment, teamwork, customer orientation and process approach. The question arises: how do these basic characteristics of TQM determine employees' commitment to quality improvement?

Table 3.
Characteristics of TQM and commitment

Characteristics of TQM	Relevance to commitment	Comments
Leadership	Transactional leaders may engage employees, but they do not necessarily evoke passion. Transformational leaders focus on the achievement of goals – this is how they stimulate commitment. Charismatic leaders can trigger full commitment and additional effort (Yahaya, Ebrahim, 2016).	Anticipatory commitment causes confusion, disorientation. High quality is sometimes achieved under immense pressure which intensifies fear (Bugdol, 2020).
Empowerment	There are positive relationships between structural empowerment and commitment (cf. Fragkos et al., 2020).	Empowerment can evoke a fear of responsibility (Andrade et al., 2017), and thus prevent the development of commitment.
Teamwork	Teamwork and commitment are important elements of quality programmes (Heath, 1989). Teamwork behaviours influence team commitment (Sheng et al., 2010).	Lack of plans to carry out can undermine group work (Deming 1986). Commitment depends on the types of tasks and the stage at which teams are put together. Employee commitment can depend on the support provided by management, individual commitment and the quality of a team leader (Mobolade, Akinade, 2021).
Customer orientation	Authentic leadership can affect employees' customer orientation (Ribeiro et al., 2020). Affective commitment acts as a mediator between abusive supervision and proactive customer service performance (Zang et al., 2021). Honesty and humility influence a leadership style, which in turn positively influences salespersons' customer orientation and the quality of personal relationships (Kirkland et al., 2021).	An excessive customer orientation means that the needs and expectations of employees can become less relevant, which consequently prevents authentic and dedicated commitment.

Cont. table 3.

Process approach	Process improvement requires the commitment of all employees. If processes are improved on a continuous basis, commitment is maintained (Oakland, 1995).	A lack of appreciation for process improvement efforts results in demotivation and a decline in commitment (Lam et al., 2015).
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Source: own elaboration based on a review of the literature cited in the table (2014-2023).

7. Limitations

A literature review is not a perfect research method as it focuses on studies conducted in different cultures, organisations and using different research approaches.

There are many relationships and dependences between the different values that are not described in this paper. The adopted research approach is mainly suitable for large organisations.

8. Discussion and further research

Firstly, it should be noted that identifying simple cause and effect relationships can be an unreliable method. Organisational values can fulfil a modifying function or they can be the direct cause of the social processes taking place. Over time, it turns out that certain types of values have a greater impact on one value and others on another. For example, commitment requires trust and vice versa. Under certain conditions and situations, procedural justice influences employee commitment and distributive justice influences employee satisfaction (Kumar et al., 2009). Satisfaction is a stronger predictor of productivity than organisational commitment (Malik et al., 2010).

Secondly, the existing theoretical foundations showing the relations between TQM and ethical values and virtues (Moccia, 2016) can be used to develop different theoretical models. It is sufficient to refer to justice as a basis for trust and commitment. This value is also a virtue, whose importance was emphasised by Aristotle, Plato and Thomas Aquinas. But alongside justice, they also listed temperance, prudence and fortitude. New research approaches can be developed on this basis.

Thirdly, what is already a treasury of knowledge about commitment in TQM must not be discarded. After all, it is possible to use the various ideas concerning approaches to and factors of commitment contained in the research that has already been carried out. For example, it has so far been stressed that the level of commitment depends on institutional pressures (Dubey et al., 2018), appropriate human resource management practices (Bou, Beltrán, 2005), appropriate attitudes of managers (Soltani et al., 2005) and the orientation of efforts towards

achieving quality goals (Bou, Beltrán, 2005). Barriers preventing commitment have also been pointed out (Soltani et al., 2005). All these findings and identified factors can be linked to organisational values.

There exist numerous opportunities for conducting further research. The demonstrative and anticipatory types of commitment have so far attracted the attention of few researchers and appear to be particularly attractive topics. There is no unanimity of opinion on the nature of commitment. Some practitioners believe that demonstrative commitment is needed; others claim that commitment should be closely linked to the pursuit of established objectives and remuneration systems. In TQM, demonstrative commitment is needed, but a lot can depend on other variables such as cost assessment, the authority enjoyed by those demonstrating commitment or the existing level of trust.

In the case of anticipatory commitment, what is important is the knowledge of those responsible for the TQM implementation process and the level of their bond with the organisation. In summary, management commitment continues to be a fascinating research topic in the context of TQM.

When commitment precedes trust and formal agreements, it can undermine the process of trust formation. This is the case in commercial activities, but then the determining factor in the final assessment is how this commitment is perceived. Excessive commitment is suspicious and repulsive, which can cause counterparties to adopt defensive attitudes or to withdraw from cooperation.

Based on the conducted review, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H.1. The lower the level of justice, the higher the level of employee commitment.

In this case, interpersonal trust is an intervening variable.

H.2. The stronger the instrumental values are embraced and upheld, the higher the level of commitment.

In the latter case, each value should be measured separately.

9. Conclusion

Employee commitment requires the coexistence of other values, primarily justice in its interactional, distributive, restorative and procedural variants. Interpersonal trust is needed. If these values are deeply embedded in the organisational culture, there is an appropriate level of employee satisfaction, which can be a prerequisite for customer satisfaction.

In TQM, instrumental values such as self-control, responsibility, independence, courage and initiative play an important role in sustaining and achieving commitment. This system is based on ethical values (honesty, respect, fairness, integrity), which are essential to achieving commitment.

The existing system of organisational values can be used in practice to study commitment. A research questionnaire may include questions on individual values and factors influencing them. Such factors can be divided into managerial (no rankings, a fair remuneration system, correct allocation of resources) and relational (managerial support, respect for others, fair treatment, etc.). The basic principles of TQM foster commitment, but much depends on other variables such as management styles, appreciation of employees' effort, involvement of others in teamwork and employees' ability to assume responsibility.

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