**Defining the role of the quality manager and its relationship with organizational resilience and success**

**Abstract**

Recent years have seen a number of quality standards violations in Israel and around the world. These incidents have negatively impacted on product use and damaged companies’ images and profits. This situation was exacerbated during the coronavirus pandemic when many governments imposed social distancing regulations. As a result, there has been a growing awareness of a crisis in food safety and quality, even in organizations that have good quality control systems, including regulations for monitoring and controlling product quality. I argue that the status of quality managers needs to be institutionalized because their ability to perform well in their role depends on the culture in the organizations employing them. Currently, authority is conferred upon quality managers by virtue of their position within their employing organizations, and not by regulators. This study argues that the profitability of companies in Israel is harmed by a poor culture around quality control, including by a tendency for companies to employ quality managers who lack knowledge and authority. Anker and Lurie (2022) argue that the difficulty in characterizing quality managers as experts is a result of the vague and even ambiguous nature of their role. Quality managers must recognize and use different communication styles, and the extent of their success depends to a large extent on the culture of their employing organizations.

This work expands on past research on the authority and expertise of quality managers in Israel, first in terms of other semi-professional roles in their employing organizations, and second by comparing the expertise and authority of quality managers in different sectors. Further, it examines how quality managers handle challenges in their day-to-day work in routine times and emergencies. The study also explores the roles of quality managers within the structure of their employing organizations, the mutual relations between them and other roles (which may be considered more professional) through qualitative interviews and observations with quality managers, and a quantitative questionnaire to cross-check the data obtained in the previous stages.

Limitations: It is not possible to assess the degree to which the findings of this study can be generalized to the entire population of quality managers in Israel and in other countries.

**Keywords**: quality, quality manager, Israeli Society for Quality, expert, authority

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

* 1. **Research subject and research questions**

This study expands on existing work examining the authority and expertise of quality managers as a profession, with respect to their colleagues in other semi-professional roles (i.e., who have similar status to quality managers within their employing organizations) and in various business sectors, in particular in light of the increase in food and drug standards violations (Ministry of Health website2). The study examines the role of quality managers within the structure of their employing organizations and the interrelationships between quality managers and other semi-professional employees through qualitative interviews and discussions with quality managers, and a quantitative questionnaire to cross-check the data obtained in the previous stages.

An increase in serious quality standards violations in recent years has affected daily consumption of certain products and damaged companies' images and profits. The coronavirus pandemic exacerbated issues around food safety and quality. Some of these quality violations occurred in large organizations that have good quality control infrastructures, with employees whose role is to monitor and control product quality, such as Similac, Strauss, Tnuva, Peri Hagalil, and Baxter Healthcare.

In most organizations, quality managers are responsible for product quality. However, in Israel and other countries, the role of the quality manager is not well-defined, and any authority they have is effectively conferred on them by their employing organizations rather than government regulators. Anker and Lurie (2022) argue that the difficulty in characterizing quality managers as experts lies in the vague and even ambiguous nature of the role. Quality managers must recognize and use different communication styles, and the degree of their success depends mainly on the culture in their employing organizations. Anker and Lurie’s 2022 study was undertaken within a broader context of recognized professions (including medicine and law), and showed that quality managers require relevant knowledge of their employing organization's field as well as training in quality control and assurance. Some respondents thought that quality managers should be granted official regulatory authority by giving them professional status. Others believed that authority should be conferred on quality managers by their employing organizations (Anker & Lurie, 2022).

I argue that the profitability of companies in Israel is harmed by a poor culture of quality control, including a tendency for companies to hire quality managers who lack knowledge and authority. This paper expands on past work examining the authority and expertise of quality managers with regard to other semi-professional roles (i.e., those with the same status in the employing organization), including, inter alia, marketing managers, operations managers, production managers, planning and control managers, and human resources managers. This work also examines the authority and expertise of quality managers in different sectors, in light of the rise in standards violations in food and drugs manufacturing (Ministry of Health website2).

The study will include in-depth interviews with quality managers from different sectors and observations of their activities to understand how they deal with day-to-day work challenges. The research will use an integrated methodology, incorporating qualitative (interviews and observations) and quantitative research (questionnaires).

The study will include three chapters:

1. Chapter 1 will provide a review of the literature on the status of quality managers in various industry sectors in the context of their expertise and authority, completing the information that still needs to be published (Anker & Lurie, 2022).
2. Chapter 2 – Test analysis. This chapter will examine the authority and expertise of quality managers in their employing organizations with respect to other semi-professional roles in the same organization (i.e., those that have the same status), including: marketing manager, operations manager, production manager, planning and control manager, and human resources manager. The work will rely on a study of the organizations’ internal documents. The following questions will be asked:

* Who defines the job description for the quality manager position?
* Who defines the work plan for quality control?
* Who approves the work plan for quality control?
* Are any success indicators defined for the position?
* To whom does the quality manager report when there is an exception in the organization?
* To whom does the quality manager report when there is an exception outside the organization?

1. Chapter 3 – Test analysis. This chapter will examine the authority of quality managers in different sectors (including pharmaceuticals, food, service, industry, high-tech, military, voluntary).

The data obtained in Chapter 2 will be further examined via interviews and observations with quality managers.

In the follow-up studies, we will address the following questions:

1. Is it essential that every organization appoint an individual or team responsible for quality control? Through a critical analysis of the findings obtained through the qualitative and quantitative parts of this study, I will examine the importance of the role of the quality manager in organizations;
2. What is the authority of a quality manager in an organization compared to other semi-professional roles in the same organization?
3. Does the authority of quality managers and their influence within their employing organizations differ among industry sectors?
4. How do quality managers deal with challenges in their day-to-day work?
   1. **The purpose of the study**

Anker and Lurie (2022) argue that the difficulty in defining quality managers as experts lies in the vague and even ambiguous nature of the role. Quality managers must recognize and use different communication styles, and the extent of their success depends to a large extent on the culture in their employing organizations. Anker and Lurie’s study was undertaken within the broader context of pharmaceuticals and law.

In this study, we will expand the examination of the authority and expertise of the quality managers with respect to other semi-professional or quasi-professional managerial roles in their employing organization (inter alia, marketing, operations, production, planning and control, human resources) and also compare the authority of quality managers in various sectors (pharmaceuticals, food, industry, the service industry, hi-tech, and the military). I will also examine how quality managers deal with the challenges they face in their day-to-day work (in both routine and emergency times). This work will rely on internal documents from employing organizations that show the position of quality managers within the organizational structure, the interrelationships between quality managers and other semi-professional or quasi-professional roles, as well as interviews and observations with quality managers, and a questionnaire to cross-check the data gathered in the previous stages.

* 1. **Research hypotheses**

The research hypothesis is that differences in the expertise and authority of quality managers with respect to that of other semi-professional or quasi-professional roles in their employing organizations (e.g., marketing manager, operations manager, production manager, planning and control manager, human resources manager) and with respect to various market sectors (pharmaceuticals, food, industry and service, hi-tech, military), negatively impacts on their ability to prevent quality violations. The research hypothesis was formulated based on a literature review of critical terms: expertise, authority, organizational culture, and extreme events. The theoretical basis of the research was examined by Anker and Lurie (2022).

* 1. **Research methodologies**

 The research will be conducted in two stages:

1. **Structural analysis.** In this stage, I will examine the authority and expertise of quality managers in their employing organizations with respect to other semi-professional or quasi-professional roles with the same status. I will examine the position of the quality managers within the organizational structure and the interrelationships between them and other semi-professional employees.

2. **Qualitative and quantitative analysis.** In this stage, I will compare the authority of quality managers within different industry sectors, using data obtained in the first stage of the study via interviews and observations with quality managers, and a questionnaire to cross-reference the data obtained in the previous stages.

The triangulation method requires that the data produced by the various research methods be comparable and that several independent measurements be made (Jick, 1979).

1. Qualitative /observations—a sample of experts. In-depth interviews will be conducted with quality managers from the industry, service, food, medical, hi-tech, and military sectors. All interviewees will have over 10 years of experience in quality. The interviewees will also be asked to describe how they deal with challenges in their day-to-day work.
2. Quantitative—a closed questionnaire will be sent to quality managers by email, posted on the website of the Israeli Quality Association, and made available at leading quality control conferences in Israel. The respondents will be from various sectors including industrial, service, food, medical, high-tech, and military sectors and differed in terms of their seniority and experience in quality control.
   1. **The importance of the research and its expected contributions**

This is a groundbreaking study on quality control that aims to deepen knowledge and clarify important issues in this field. Its findings can help connect the expertise and authority of quality managers in their employing organizations and in various industry sectors to deepen this knowledge further.

Which was done in the broader context of recognized professions (Anker & Lurie, 2022),

In the last decade, there has been a trend toward standardizing the professional status of various roles, including that of quality managers. This study can therefore serve as a theoretical anchor to help strengthen the role of quality manager and support professional development, including through reclassifying quality managers as professionals, which in turn will help them contribute to IA and organizations.

* 1. **Limitations of the study**

The extent to which the findings of this study can be generalized to the entire population of quality managers in Israel and globally, or even across industry sectors, is not clear. The organizations examined in the qualitative section of the study were not selected at random, while the quantitative survey was sent to as many quality personnel in Israel as possible, some of whom are affiliated with the Israeli Society for Quality, which may influence their position in the field and the discourse.