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*Paper: Equity*

## **Influence of human dimensions on product quality**

Organisations are facing an increasing struggle to survive and gain competitive advantage in the ever expanding and competitive global marketplace. Further, state intervention in local markets has diminished, and organisations confront an increasing number of competitors. In the circumstances, many countries have embraced quality management concepts in order to improve their competitiveness in international as well as local markets. The literature suggests that human dimensions influence product quality and in turn, influence firm performance. However, a limited number of studies had empirically investigated the relationship between human dimensions and product quality.

In the above context, the objective of the current study is to investigate the relationship between product quality and six human dimensions, namely: leadership, strategic human resource planning, human resource information and documentation, human resource development, supplier relationship, and customer relationship in the Sri Lankan context. Thirty five export apparel firms that have implemented a formal quality management programme and that has been running for at least three years participated in the study. After a thorough review of literature, product quality was measured in terms of on-time delivery, customer complaints, and reject and rework rate, as those were identified as more common measures of product quality. For this study, it is hypothesised that each human dimension (leadership, strategic human resource planning, human resource information and documentation, human resource development, supplier relationship, and customer relationship) will significantly predict product quality.

It was found that leadership has the greatest impact on product quality, followed by human resource development and customer relationship. A discussion on the implications of the findings and research areas for further enquiry and understanding will be presented.