

## **The influence of soft factors on quality improvement and performance: perceptions from managers**

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of the paper is to investigate the influence of soft factors on quality improvement and performance and also to examine the link between quality improvement and organizational performance.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The paper uses data from perceptions from managers in 255 electrical and electronics (E&E) firms in Malaysia and it develops regression and correlation analysis to test the relationships between soft factors, quality improvement and organizational performance.

**Findings:** The following soft factors were found to have significant influence on quality improvement: management commitment; customer focus; employee involvement; training and education; and reward and recognition. Organizational performance was significantly influenced by the following soft factors: management commitment; customer focus; and employee involvement. Finally, this paper empirically shows that firm performance will increase when the organizations implement more quality improvement practices.

**Practical implications:** The results of this paper can be used by managers to prioritize the implementation of the soft factors. For instance, those factors that are found to have a positive impact on quality improvement practice and performance can be recommended to managers so that they can allocate resources to improve these factors to achieve higher organizational performance.

**Originality/value:** This paper identifies the soft factors that can influence the quality improvement practice and organizational performance in E&E Malaysian firms.

**Keyword:** Quality improvement; Organizational performance; Malaysia; Electronic industry; Managers