

Quality Approaches for Mass-Produced Fashion: A Study in Malaysian Garment Manufacturing

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Abstract : Garment manufacturing industry involves sequential processes that are subjected to uncontrollable variations. The industry depends on the skill of labour in handling the varieties of fabrics and accessories, machines, and also a complicated sewing operation. Due to these reasons, garment manufacturers created systems to monitor and control the product's quality regularly by conducting quality approaches to minimize variation. The aims of this research were to ascertain the quality approaches deployed by Malaysian garment manufacturers in three key areas-quality systems and tools; quality control and types of inspection; sampling procedures chosen for garment inspection. The focus of this research also aimed to distinguish quality approaches used by companies that supplied the finished garments to both domestic and international markets. The feedback from each of company's representatives was obtained using the online survey, which comprised of five sections and 44 questions on the organizational profile and quality approaches used in the garment industry. The results revealed that almost all companies had established their own mechanism of process control by conducting a series of quality inspection for daily production either it was formally been set up or vice versa. Quality inspection was the predominant quality control activity in the garment manufacturing and the level of complexity of these activities was substantially dictated by the customers. AQL-based sampling was utilized by companies dealing with the export market, whilst almost all the companies that only concentrated on the domestic market were comfortable using their own sampling procedures for garment inspection. This research provides an insight into the implementation of quality approaches that were perceived as important and useful in the garment manufacturing sector, which is truly labour-intensive.

Keywords : garment manufacturing, quality approaches, quality control, inspection, Acceptance Quality Limit (AQL), sampling

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