

## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between people-related total quality management (PTQM) practices and employee work attitudes, as well as the impact of the specific PTQM practices on work attitudes in the context of the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The five PTQM practices included top management commitment, employee empowerment, training, employee involvement and teamwork. Employee work attitudes comprised job satisfaction, affective commitment, job involvement and turnover intention. Data collected from the machine operator-level employees in the top 100 apparel exporters in Sri Lanka were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling.

**Findings:** The findings suggest that the PTQM practices were significant drivers of job involvement but not job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intentions. It was also found that teamwork, training and employee involvement were the most important PTQM practices towards employee work attitudes. Top management commitment drove affective commitment and job involvement, whilst employee empowerment was important only for job involvement.

**Research limitations:** The research only considered the top 100 apparel exporters in Sri Lanka and hence care has to be taken for the findings to represent the entire manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka.

**Originality/value:** Based on the perceptions of floor level employees which is rarely investigated in the PTQM domain, the paper presents an interesting perspective on the relationship between the PTQM practices and employee work attitudes. Besides making theoretical contributions, the findings offer valuable insights to the management of Sri Lankan apparel companies by highlighting the PTQM practices which need to be strengthened.

**Keywords:** People-related TQM, job satisfaction, affective commitment, job involvement, turnover intention.