

**CERTIFICATION TO ISO 9001:2008 STANDARD AND MARKET
COMPETITIVENESS OF LOCAL MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN RWANDA: A
CASE STUDY OF SULFO RWANDA INDUSTRIES LTD.**

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Abstract: Basing on National Export Strategy elaborated in 2011 and aligned with EDPRS and vision 2020, the export of products and services could be increased to 11.5% in 2020. However few companies are committed to comply with the requirements of Quality Management System which are helpful for market access. Those companies which are ISO certified have gained acknowledgement and credibility of their products and services at the international level. So far, in Rwanda, there was no study done on the role played by certification to ISO standards in the market competitiveness. This study aimed to assess the contribution of ISO 9001:2008 certification to the market competitiveness of local manufacturing companies in Rwanda with a focus on SULFO Rwanda Industries Ltd. The methodologies employed spearman correlation and student t-tests. Based on a sample of 63 employees, 68 customers and the review of financial statements of SULFO Rwanda Industries, the findings report a significant difference between sales revenue, Return on Investment (ROI), and market share for the period before and after certification. Findings also report a positive and significant relationship between certification to ISO 9001:2008 and market competitiveness. Thus, it can be said that ISO certified company experience the benefits of certification through the increase of sales revenue, ROI and market share which also implies increased customer loyalty, confidence and a larger customer base. This study will help non-ISO certified companies to consider investing in a suitable quality management system, possibly leading to ISO 9001:2008.

Key words: ISO, ISO 9001:2008, Competitiveness, Rwanda