

Stakeholder Satisfaction: Research Evaluation of Marine Engineering Cadets' Performance at Maritime University, Philippines

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ABSTRACT: This study was conducted to determine the level of stakeholder satisfaction and gather qualitative views and ideas among twenty five (25) company partners - - crew managers, personnel managers, training directors of the different shipping companies based in Manila, Philippines. These company-partners are directly involved in the evaluation of performance of marine engineering cadets, specifically of the Marine Engineering Department, John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime University-Molo, Iloilo City. The Performance Prism (PP) Theory was used in this study as theoretical framework to measure stakeholder satisfaction of different company partners. This is an innovative performance measurement and performance management framework of the second generation. Employing quantitative-qualitative method of analyzing the obtained data, the study entailed three phases, namely: (1) survey personally administered by the researchers, (2) the personal interview with the stakeholders, and (3) analysis of the results of the survey using descriptive statistical methods such as the mean, frequency count, and percentage. The information gathered through the interviews was used to validate the results by quantitative data analysis. The data-gathering instrument was the "Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey." Quantitative results revealed that the stakeholder satisfaction level was "moderately high" among marine engineering cadets in terms of communication, professionalism and trustworthiness, communication, discipline, loyalty, consistency of performance, leadership skills, honesty, industry, social responsibility, and initiative to be satisfactory. The different comments, remarks, suggestions, and responses derived from the interviews were used also in the study as qualitative data to enhance and validate the quantitative data. Furthermore, the qualitative views of the respondents were used to suggest some improvements and innovations in the learning process at Marine Engineering Department of Maritime University (JBLFMU-Molo, Iloilo City), Philippines.

1 INTRODUCTION

The stakeholders' satisfaction is considered as the critical investigation of the experiences and views of sets of people who have vested interests in the products and services delivered by an organization (Brooks, Milne, and Johansson, 2002). Furthermore, it was asserted that stakeholder research provides one important set of measures of organizational performance. It encompasses the experiences and perceptions of groups of people who have vested interests in the services delivered by the organization – customers, employees, strategic partners, and special-interest groups. 'Stakeholder satisfaction' is often used to represent the views of these groups, and a common approach to its measurement is to focus on the concept of 'satisfaction' either as an exogenous variable or as a construct based on various attributes of satisfaction. It is in this premise that stakeholders' satisfaction was considered as one of the processes of assessing/feedbacking regarding the

extent of skills and competencies demonstrated by the marine engineering cadets of Maritime University (JBLFMU-Molo, Iloilo City), Philippines. Hence, this research was conducted.

2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This investigation aimed to determine the level of satisfaction among stakeholders- - crew managers, personnel managers, training directors based in the different places of Manila, Philippines.

Specifically, the following questions were advanced:

- 1 What is the stakeholders' level of satisfaction of the performance of marine engineering cadets employed in the different shipping companies in terms of the following areas:
 - a) communication,
 - b) professionalism and trustworthiness,

- c) discipline,
- d) loyalty,
- e) consistency of performance,
- f) leadership skills,
- g) honesty,
- h) industry,
- i) social responsibility,
- j) initiative?

2 What suggestions do stakeholders have for performance improvements?

3 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

The present investigation was anchored on the theory entitled Stakeholder in the Evaluation of Organizational Performance (Chennell, 2000; Bayle, 2001; Brooks, Milne, and Johansson, 2002). It was further anchored on the theory known as the Performance Prism (PP). Cranfield University originated the utilization of the Performance Prism (PP) as an innovative performance measurement and performance management framework of the second generation (http://www.12manage.com/methods_performance_prism.html). As such, reciprocity is practiced by this strategy. In addition, this theoretical framework has five important facets: stakeholder satisfaction, stakeholder contribution, strategies, processes, and capabilities. It must be noted that these five facets are interlinked but may be distinct. Figure 1 below is the “Performance Prism” (PP).

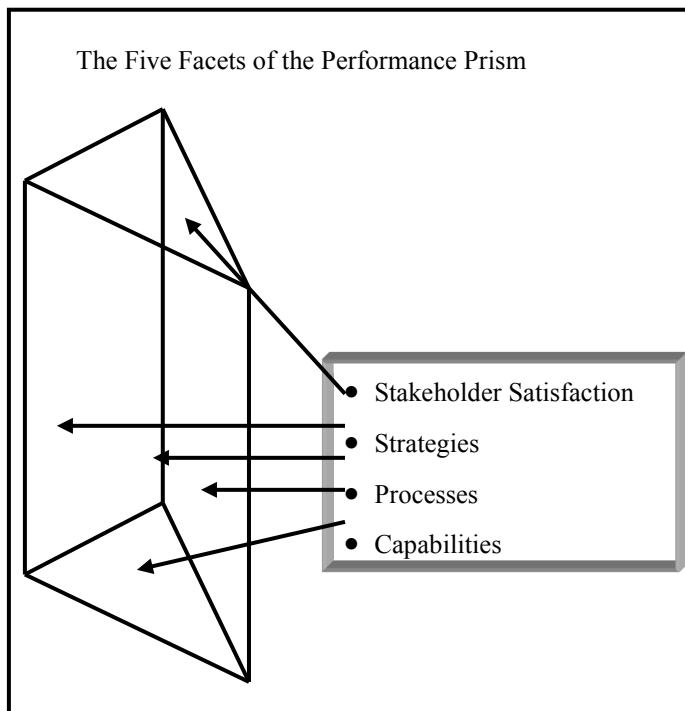


Figure 1. The performance prism (Cranfield University, http://www.12mange.com/methods_performance_prism.html).

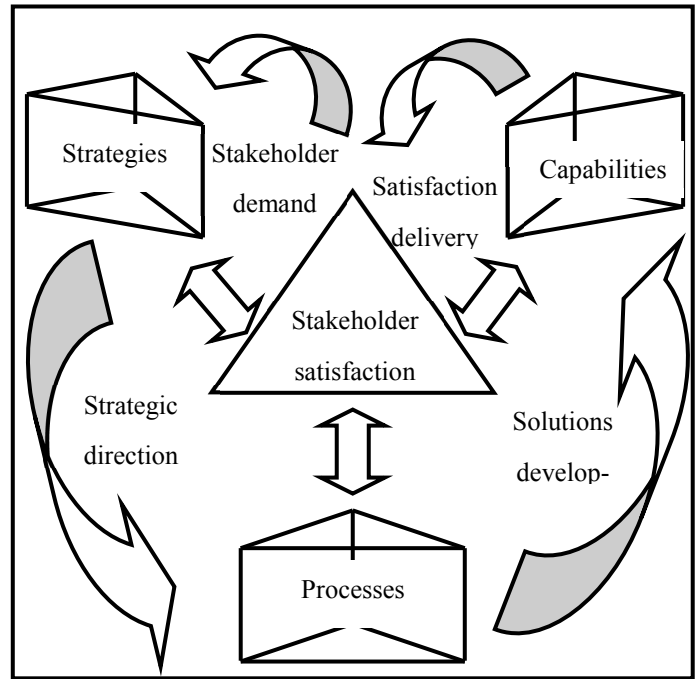


Figure 2. The expanded performance prism (Cranfield University).

Moreover, the underlying theoretical framework of the workability of the Performance Prism (PP) is the belief that for organizations aspiring to be successful in the long term must have a clear picture of who their stakeholders are and what they want (Brooks, Milne, and Johansson, 2002; Fletcher, Guthrie, Steane, Roos, and Pike, 2003). Consider the expanded model of the Performance Prism in Figure 2. This figure was used leading to the design of conceptual framework of this study.

Figure 2 clearly indicates in essence the interrelationships among the facets in the Performance Prism (PP). The proponents of this framework suggest that for a performance to possess quality, the process should start not from the strategies but from the stakeholders and basically on what they want.

In a similar manner, the theoretical framework of the Performance Prism (PP) has found its way on how this study has been conceptualized. Figure 3 shows the conceptual framework for this present investigation. The research framework was modified from the Figure 1 Performance Prism (PP) and Figure 2 (The Expanded Performance Prism) as deemed by the researchers with three phases.

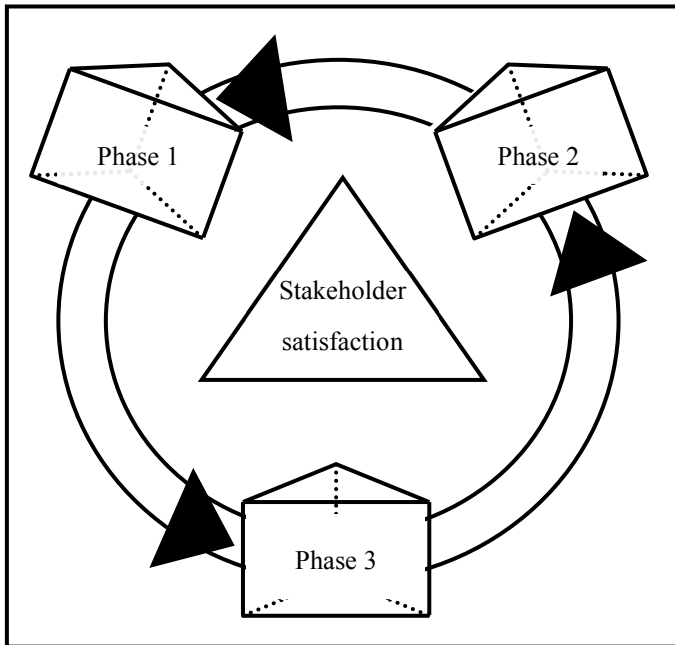


Figure 3. The conceptual framework of the present study.

The conceptual framework shows the different phases involved in order to determine stakeholder satisfaction. The different phases are further explained in the methodology.

4 METHOD

This study employed the quantitative-qualitative method of analysing the obtained data from the different company-partners of JBLFMU. The three (3) phases were the following:

- 1 survey personally administered by the researchers, the stakeholders were asked to rate the level of satisfaction using the scales of one to ten on required competencies exhibited by the marine engineering cadets.
- 2 personal interviews with the stakeholders (crew and personnel managers, training officers, and HRD heads of different company-partners) were conducted, the researchers believed that through the interviews, several suggestions were generated leading to the data that needed in establishing stakeholder satisfaction. In this regard the interview was utilised as one of the qualitative methods to further explain the stakeholders' satisfaction and suggestions. Interviews are "highly appropriate in studying process because depicting process requires detailed description" (Patton, 1990).
- 3 analysing the results of the survey using descriptive statistical method such as mean, frequency count, and percentage. The mean, frequency, and percentage were used to determine the level of stakeholders' satisfaction and grouping of each category. The information gathered through the

interviews was used to validate the results of quantitative data.

5 DATA-GATHERING INSTRUMENT

The data-gathering instrument in this research was the "Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey" which consisted of the following areas of competencies:

- a) communication,
- b) professionalism and trustworthiness,
- c) discipline,
- d) loyalty,
- e) consistency of performance,
- f) leadership skills,
- g) honesty,
- h) industry,
- i) social responsibility,
- j) initiative.

These areas were applied to the different levels of seafarers such as: engine ratings (electricians, fitters, oilers, and wipers) and engine cadets. The data-gathering instrument had rating scales of 1 to 10, which were arranged in ascending manner by the researchers. This data-gathering instrument was adopted from the "Stakeholders' Satisfaction Survey Scale" used by the Research Department of JBLFMU-Molo, Iloilo City, Philippines. The instrument was modified by the researchers for the purpose of this study, pilot-tested, and validated by the Members of Research Committee of Marine Engineering Department who were expert in maritime education, research, instrumentation, psychology, and statistics.

The following were the scales and descriptions of the data-gathering instrument used in this study:

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Description</i>
8.21-10.0	High
6.41-8.20	Moderately High
4.61-6.40	Neutral
2.81-4.60	Moderately Low
1.00-2.80	Low

6 PRODECURE

The research team determined the level of stakeholder satisfaction. Upon the approval of the administrator of JBLFMU-Molo, Iloilo City, Philippines, the members of the team administered the validated instruments to the respondents of the different shipping companies at Manila, Philippines last summer of 2008. The researchers stayed in Manila during the

distribution and gathering of data. The different places of Manila, Philippines that the researchers identified that had the shipping companies were:

- 1 Taft Avenue, Malate, Manila,
- 2 Ermita Center, Manila,
- 3 Roxas Boulevard, Malate, Manila,
- 4 U.N. Avenue, Ermita, Manila, and
- 5 Makati City, Metro Manila

These were the venues where these companies situated. The researchers collected the necessary data with the use of the instrument “Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey.” The qualitative data were gathered using interview process through open-ended questions.

The researchers went to the different shipping companies and requested the crew managers, personnel managers, training directors, and training officers to determine the level of stakeholder satisfaction by encircling the appropriate scales reflected in the data-gathering instruments. The respondents also listed down the comments and suggestions necessary to improve the education and training of the students while at the university as suggested by Kaplan and Norton (1996). These respondents were subjected also to interviews to gather the qualitative data needed for this study (Patton, 1990; Savage, Nix, Whitehead, and Blair, 1991). After collecting, retrieving, and gathering the accomplished data-gathering instruments, the researchers used appropriate statistical tools to analyze the quantitative data, while the qualitative data were separated and analyzed by determining the common thoughts, ideas, and comments of the respondents towards the goals of stakeholder satisfaction (Mitchell, angle, and Wood, 1997). The ideas, comments, and suggestions of the respondents were grouped and presented in tables as shown in the results’ section of this study.

7 RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents of this study were Greek, Japanese, Norwegian, Singaporean, Italian, German, and American. There were 25 respondents interviewed for this study. The distribution of the respondents was 1 president, 4 general managers, 2 directors, 1 deputy general manager, 1 junior executive assistant, 1 OIC, 7 crewing/manning managers, 1 administrative officer, 3 training managers/officers, 1 operation manager, 2 recruitment managers/officers, 1 cadet program manager.

8 RESULTS

The results of this study were presented into two sections. The first section dealt with the level of

stakeholder satisfaction and the next section discussed the suggestions given by the stakeholders in order to improve the performance of marine engineering cadets in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA).

The results of stakeholder satisfaction were ‘moderately high’ on the performance output of the marine engineering cadets when classified according to different areas. The interpretation and data analysis are based on the scales and descriptions of this study which previously discussed from the data-gathering instrument section. The following are the results of the study:

- a) communication skills was “moderately high” with the mean score of 7.1,
- b) trustworthiness was “moderately high” with the mean score of 7.1,
- c) discipline was “moderately high” with the mean score of 7.2,
- d) loyalty was “moderately high” with mean score of 7.3,
- e) consistency of performance was “moderately high” with mean score of 7.0 ,
- f) leadership skills was “moderately high” with the mean score of 7.0,
- g) honesty was “moderately high” with mean score of 7.2,
- h) industry was “moderately high” with mean score of 7.3,
- i) social responsibility was “moderately high” with mean score of 7.1, and
- j) initiative was finally “moderately high” with the mean score of 7.1.

Based on the different areas of competencies, the stakeholders indicated that the graduates employed in their companies performed to their satisfaction. The results employed the scale levels of 1.0 to 11.0 with the descriptions ranging from ‘low’ to ‘high,’ the stakeholder satisfaction level is “moderately high.”

The “moderately high” level of stakeholder satisfaction indicates the quality of training impacted from the educational institution. The results also imply the realization of the thrust of the University to provide competent and qualified graduates to the global maritime world. Undoubtedly, the University should also consider the availability of alternates or substitutes from other countries like China, India, and Pakistan in case the shipping/manning companies are not well satisfied with the performance of the graduates. The University needs to monitor their competitiveness in order to further improve the stakeholders’ level of satisfaction as well as to remain competitive as a major supplier of seafarers in the global maritime market. Interview results were processed and the “moderately high” level of satisfaction was further reinforced by the statements de-

rived from it. Based on the responses derived from the interview questions, the stakeholders' view the cadets' performance of Marine Engineering Department of JBLFMU-Molo, Iloilo City, Philippines was perceived to be satisfactory. Table 1 includes the responses to the interview questions. Note that the responses were edited for the purpose of this study.

Table 1. Answers to the Interview Questions with Reference to Stakeholder Satisfaction

“JBLFMU-Molo Graduates – as I personally observed and as what people have said -- have strong determination, hard working, never surrender for whatever difficulties they were facing onboard.”

“They know how to deal and can easily adopt with the attitude of their shipmate or even of foreign nationalities.”

“We, at the manning agency appreciate their good performance, they exert more effort in order to survive, and they show that they are capable of the work given to them. JBLFMU-Molo Graduates, Mabuhay.”

“Keep up the good work, we are looking forward to visiting JBLFMU-Molo in the future.”

“Lastly we are glad to hear about the unstoppable and continuous development in terms of education/trainings as well as the high quality of faculty and staff. We are also exerting our effort to promote JBLFMU-Molo to become well known around the globe.”

“The education and training of JBLFMU-Molo graduates who are employed in our company are outstanding, they have the necessary knowledge and skills needed, especially the fresh graduates. They are disciplined, which reflect the kind of training they received in school. We even employ JBLFMU-Molo graduates who are walk-in applicants in our Manpower Development and Cadetship Programs.”

“We trust the educational system of JBLFMU-Molo.”

“The graduates of JBLFMU-Molo are competent to do the tasks that have been given to them.”

“The education and training of JBLFMU-Molo graduates are to be proud of, we are very satisfied with their performance.”

“Put to the mind of your men, that education is their wealth. Above all, always praise God.”

“More power to the foundation you created”

“Keep up the good work”

“Because had worked for 7 years in Ancora Company, I have met many engineers and cadets. I have to say that the majority of them are satisfactory. They have good characters, willingness to work with others, and hard workers. Never have a problem with some of them. The cadets that I have met are clever, good educated, and willing to do the work assigned to them.”

“JBLFMU graduate has good character, hard worker, willing to learn.”

Based on the responses to the second problem posed by this investigation, “what suggestions do stakeholders have for performance improvements?” Three common suggestions/recommendations emerged: there is a need to enhance the three areas: Value formation, general education subjects like Math and English, and Skills and Trainings. Figure 4 shows the results.

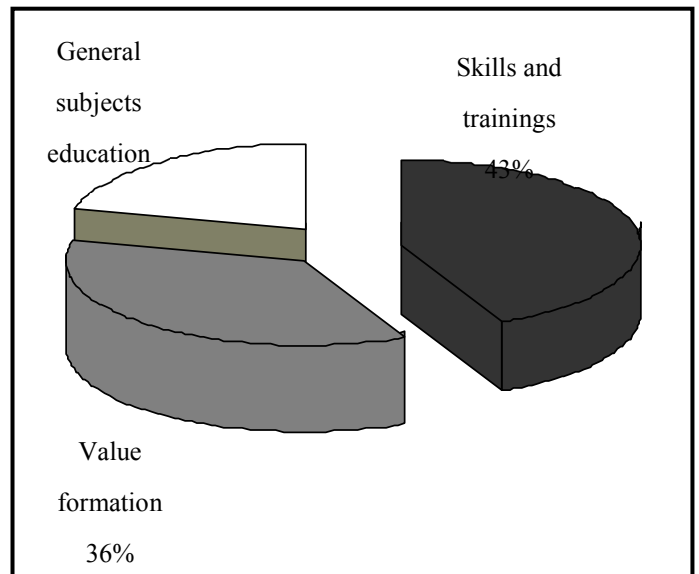


Figure 4. Stakeholder's suggestions for performance improvement

This figure shows the three areas that have to be looked into by the institution. From the responses, Skills and Trainings ranked first priority with 43% of the total responses; Value formation ranked second with 36 % of the total responses, and General Education subjects with 21 % of the total responses. University has to reconsider certain measures and reforms to improve these areas.

The Table 2 reflects the different answers of the marine engineering cadets during the interviews conducted by the researchers. These were presented in this study as qualitative data and used to enhance the quantitative results of this study.

Table 2. Answers to the interview questions with reference to stakeholder suggestions on the institution's performance improvement

“The graduates' loyalty is observed to be a declining trend. Some have a demanding attitude problem.”

“The attitude is not showing respect, (walang po at opo).”

“Although we believe that JBLFMU-Molo strives to give excellent education and training to their graduates, still there are some areas which need concern. Obviously, on top is their poor knowledge in Math. Lately we have been hearing of poor discipline among cadets. There were complaints of arrogance while onboard and even when dealing with office staff during vacation while reporting to the office: Thus, these graduates (1) need to improve on their discipline, (2) ensure clear understanding of the principle of internal combustion engine, (3)improve their mathematics, (4)teach and give exercises on training actual ships piping diagram and electrical schematic diagram, and (5)ensure their clear understanding of theory and principle of separation of fluids.”

“Graduates need to study hard and have patience.”

“Give all responsibilities to all graduates of JBLFMU-Molo for giving taking licensure exam”

“I have nothing to suggest only some of them need more experience. “Mathematics difficulty needs to be addressed.”

“English difficulty must be looked into.”

The present study also discovered that, despite stakeholders' satisfaction of the JBLFMU graduates' performance on board, they have advanced some comments, remarks, suggestions, and recommendations on the kind of training that the Marine Engineering Department, JBLFMU-Molo, Iloilo City, Philippines has for the students with special emphasis on the improvement of value formation, enhancement of general education courses, as well as skills and trainings. Note that the interviewees' responses were edited for the purpose of this research but the contexts of the responses were retained.

9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study yielded a favorable level of stakeholder satisfaction of educational performance, although, a more careful look at the suggestions/recommendations from the stakeholders reveal an equally difficult challenge to the institution that has gained a good reputation in the field of seafaring industry. The maritime university has to look into the curriculum and review offerings that turn out better results as far as content and allied courses are concerned. This way, stakeholders' suggestions can be addressed. Research design like this one must be continuously done to elicit issues and queries about an educational performance and thus feed backs can be taken as challenges for more improved educational and institutional reforms. Direct and specific feedback scheme may be done to stimulate administrators and other stakeholders concerned to act, ad-

dress lapses, and definitely improve institutional output.

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