

# Standard for Quality Assurance: the Case of Philippine Maritime College

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**ABSTRACT:** Higher education is challenged to be responsive to the current demands of quality education through the translation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that conform to internationally accepted standards. SCTW '95 mandates that maritime academies should ensure the development of competent manpower for maritime industry. John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime College has articulated adherence and compliance with ISO series of standards for Maritime Academies in the Philippines. This study evaluated the extent of deployment of QSS in eight key areas and its implication to the International Shipping Industry. Findings revealed that JBLFMC has a very high extent of deployment in all areas of QSS that indicates an extensive implementation of its processes, procedures and services. A remarkable implication signifies the global competitiveness of the graduates and an assurance of a world-class workforce trained in the academe with total quality system, committed to meet the challenges of the maritime industry.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Seafarers are the core elements of the shipping industry and the demand for skillful and competent seafarers has been growing. Due to the global nature of shipping industry, a necessity for a quality standards geared towards the assurance of attaining the mandated competencies by (STCW Convention '78, '95) has gained due importance.

This research was anchored with Quality Assurance as a philosophy and a process in which all the functions and activities of an institution shall be treated equally, planned, controlled and implemented in a systematic and scientific manner (Venkaiah, 1995:159).

Among the various maritime academies in the Philippines, John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime College is imperative in the attainment of quality assurance, as it indicates a strong workforce in the global shipping market. The JBLMC is recognized as one of the bearers of maritime education and training of excellence in the Philippines and in the world. As an educational institution, it has its quality standards geared toward the quest for excellence.

Guided by the quality policy which is "to comply with national and international standards and strive to exceed stakeholders expectations", the school asserts the full implementation of quality standard system which will lead to the attainment of quality assurance in the education and training of cadets.

Among the various maritime schools in the Philippines, John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime College is imperative to realize the importance of the establishment of a quality management system.

Since, its establishment in 1948 as Maritime Academy, the first in the coastal region of the Visayas and Mindanao, it has turned out competent, disciplined and values-oriented marine deck officers and engineers for both domestic and foreign shipping companies.

In 1997, JBLFMC in its intense propensity to be internationally competitive in maritime education started to seek registration of its Quality Management System (QMS) to the ISO 9000 series of standards/Rules for Maritime Academies and Training Center under a reputable international assessor the Det Norske Veritas (DNV), hence, the school was the first accredited maritime learning institution in the Philippines (Review Journal, 1998).

## 2 THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent of deployment of quality standards system of John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime College and establish its implication to the International Shipping Industry.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1 What is the extent of deployment of the Quality Standards System (QSS) by JBLFMC according to the following areas: (1) Mission, Goals and Objectives, (2) Corporate Plans, (3) Organization and Management, (4) Internal Control, (5) Human Resource Administration, (6) Plant and Facilities, (7) Academic Affairs, (8) Accounting and Finance
- 2 What are the implications of the findings to the Shipping Industry?

### 2.1 *Theoretical and Conceptual Framework*

In today's climate of intensely competitive international trade, companies must identify and put into place mechanisms that will facilitate success in world markets. Foremost among such mechanisms is International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification. ISO has agreed on a set of quality assurance and quality management standards and will certify companies that meet the quality standards worldwide (Anschutz, 1996).

In Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Anthony C. Fletcher (2004), discussed that hundreds of thousands of organizations around the world have pursued the development and registration of their Quality Management System (QMS) to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9000 series of standards with the perception that this is the first step in their pursuit of world-class performance.

In the words of Drystad (1994), by sharing and working together through the total quality systems approach, the schools can improve and provide better learning options to students, thus ensuring a world-class workforce.

The implementation of the Quality Standards System in maritime schools in accordance with the Rules for Quality Standard System is a vital tool in ensuring that all the requirements of the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW '78; as amended '95) are complied with, thus assuring that the Filipino Seafarers shall continue to be globally competitive (CHED Memorandum, 1998).

Section 35 of Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum #51 dated 1997 (Article 13) (Quality Standards System), provides that "Every maritime school shall develop and implement a quality standard system in accordance with the provisions of the policies, standards and guidelines" (CHED Memorandum, 1997).

Moreover, Section 36 of the same memorandum informs that "Recognizing that Filipino seafarers shall be globally competitive in compliance with 1995 amendments to STCW '78 as amended '95 and other international laws and conventions, the school facilities, equipment and teaching competencies shall be upgraded to meet the quality standards.

Owing to the fact that the country's economy depends heavily on seafarers and the quality of seafarers depends on the quality of graduates that the maritime schools produce, the only way of ensuring the quality of graduates in maritime schools, specifically in JBLFMC, is to fully implement the QSS.

The JBLFMC took the lead and got certified in 1997, way ahead of the CHED mandate. JBLFMC was the first in the Philippines and third in the world to get certified under the Det Norske Veritas (DNV) Rules for Maritime Academies (<http://jblcfbac.lasaltech.com/jblcf%20system.htm>).

It is a guideline providing a systematic structure to assess the quality standards system of John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime College.

The context determines that JBLFMC formulated the Quality Standards System in order to establish quality management system. Included in the context is the Det Norske Veritas and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) that ensures the deployment and compliance with quality standards.

Moreover, Input evaluation which is based in the eight (8) areas of Quality Standards System needs looking into.

Process includes the assessment of the Quality Standards System and the identification of the strengths and weaknesses, which was made the bases for implications to the shipping industry.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

The participants of this study were the total population of 175 which includes the faculty members and administrative staff of JBLFMC in the Philippines. A descriptive quantitative and qualitative research was employed to conduct this study.

This investigation utilized a modified research instrument adopted from the study of Magramo (2003). It was based on the Quality Standards written in the Quality Management Manual of JBLFMC.

The data-gathering instrument was interpreted by the use of rubrics. Heidi Goodrich (2008) defines rubrics as a scoring tool that lists the criteria and specify the level or extent of performance for several levels of quality.

To determine the extent of deployment of QSS as indicated by the compliance of the respondents, the weighted mean was used, due to the varied number of respondents.

Analysis of documents gathered from management review reflective of internal audit and academic audit, was used as research method.

Moreover, personal observations were conducted by the researcher in several classes, to observe the teacher's teaching and student's learning.

It further looked into the implications of the findings to the shipping industry.

## 4 RESULTS

On the Extent of Deployment with the QSS in JBLCF according to Eight (8) Areas.

Table 1. Deployment with the QSS in JBLCF on Eight (8) Areas

AREAS	EXTENT OF DEPLOYMENT IN PERCENTAGE	INTERPRETATION
Mission, Goals, Objectives	94.90%	Very High
Corporate Plans and Strategies	94.86%	Very High
Organization and Management	92.65%	Very High
Internal Control	92.40%	Very High
Human Resource Management	93.10%	Very High
Plant and Facilities	92.50%	Very High
Academic Affairs	97.28%	Very High
Accounting/ Finance	100.00%	Very High
As a Whole	94.84%	Very High

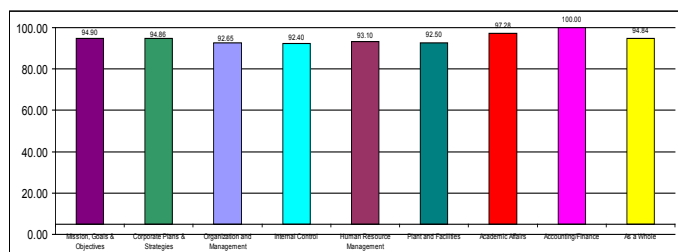


Figure 1. Graphical Presentation on the Extent of Compliance with the QSS in JBLCF on Eight (8) Areas

Table 1 above, demonstrates the extent of deployment of Quality Standards System (QSS) in eight (8) areas in JBLFMC. It is apparent that all eight (8) areas show great extent of deployment as experienced by respondents. Mission, Goals and Objectives, showed the interpretation that 90.94% of the respondents were convinced process and procedures mandated by the Quality Management Manual (QMM) relative to Mission, Goals and Objectives were deployed, thus attaining Very High extent.

Moreover, 94.86% of the respondents indicated that Corporate Plans and Strategies were implemented. Likewise, in Organization and Management, Internal Control, Human Resource Management, Plant

and Facilities, Academic Affairs and Accounting/Finance, obtained a corresponding respondents' percentage of 92.65, 92.40, 93.10, 92.50, 97.28 and 100.00 respectively. As a whole, 94.84% of the respondents manifested that JBLFMC is full deployment of its QSS. Consequently the school organization is in full conformity with QSS.

A qualitative analysis is presented hereunder:

The result showed that there was a very high extent of implementation in all areas of the quality standard system, which indicates that a well-integrated and innovative approach is deployed to all functional areas or work units.

### 4.1 Vision, Mission and Objectives

The appropriate and clearly defined mission, vision and objectives are most important in the college. The school's quality assurance system is articulated through the active integration of teaching, research, extension and engagement, which creates an innovative learning environment that stresses mastery of fundamentals, intellectual, discipline, creativity, problem solving and responsibility. Core values of the college is integrated in the classroom instruction, and the harmonization of school objectives and activities was established. Enhancing its historic strengths in Maritime education, a full commitment to excellence is demonstrated in the academic disciplines that ensure leadership for intellectual, cultural, social, economic and technological development in the nation and the world.

### 4.2 Corporate Plans

To ensure a quality plan that addresses the functions and operation of the school, a periodical environmental scanning is conducted through needs assessment, continuous improvement reports, internal and external audit. All concerns are reviewed, analyzed and used as springboard for institutional plan. All personnel were involved in the formulation of development plan, thus, giving sense in the implementation wherein synergy was apparent rather than competition. Coherence in every task was prevailing in the organizational climate. Resistance in the implementation of corporate plan was not remarkable. Institutional plan is anchored with vision, mission and objectives.

### 4.3 Organization and Management

Indicating an assurance of the full-commitment of faculty and administrative staff, a total involvement was explicitly demonstrated in quality related activities such as goal setting, planning, implementation and output utilization. This gave a sense of self-

worth to every member of the organization, thus, realizing the value of commitment.

Various approaches and strategies were deployed to ensure that employees (faculty and staff) are empowered thru enhancing their competencies and skills in-line with their specialization, thus responsibility and initiative for innovations are evidently articulated.

#### 4.4 *Internal Control*

Various departments of the college is interrelatedly functioning following a systemic approach. Appropriate documentation is strictly observed, to ensure the authenticity of information, activities and other related operations of the school.