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Initial Assessment of the Marinduque State University on the Implementation of an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) Certifiable to ISO 21001:2018

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the readiness of Marinduque State University (MarSU) to implement an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) certifiable to ISO 21001:2018 by evaluating institutional conformity, identifying implementation gaps, and determining certification readiness. A descriptive-evaluative research design was employed, involving key institutional stakeholders selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed ISO 21001:2018 assessment checklist and gap analysis matrix, supported by document analysis and semi-structured key informant interviews. Gap analysis was conducted to evaluate conformity with the standard and identify priority areas for improvement. Findings revealed that MarSU conformed to 19 of the 28 assessed clauses and sub-clauses, representing an overall conformity rate of 67.86%, while 32.14% were identified as nonconforming. Major strengths were observed in organizational context, leadership commitment, planning, performance evaluation, and continual improvement. However, deficiencies remained in Quality Policy approval, designated quality management responsibilities, resource provision, infrastructure, personnel competence, operational controls, and stakeholder satisfaction monitoring. The study concluded that MarSU possesses a functional EOMS and falls within the study's certifiable category, subject to addressing identified nonconformities. It recommends strengthening institutional documentation, resource management, stakeholder engagement, and continuous monitoring. As an institution-specific assessment, the findings have limited generalizability beyond MarSU. The study provides evidence-based guidance for institutional quality improvement and certification preparation, supporting Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) through sustainable educational governance and accountability.

Keywords: *Educational Organization Management System (EOMS), Gap Analysis, ISO 21001:2018, Marinduque State University, Quality Assurance, Readiness Assessment, State Universities and Colleges*

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are increasingly expected to demonstrate accountability, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement in delivering quality educational services. These expectations have encouraged universities to adopt internationally recognized quality management systems that support systematic planning, stakeholder engagement, and evidence-based decision-making. In the Philippines, Administrative Order No. 161, series of 2006, and Executive Order No. 605, series of 2007 promoted the institutionalization of ISO-based Quality Management Systems (QMS) in government agencies, including State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), to strengthen public service delivery, transparency, and organizational accountability (Supreme Court E-Library, 2006, 2007).

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

Although ISO 9001 provides a general framework for organizational quality management, ISO 21001:2018 specifically addresses the requirements of educational institutions by emphasizing learner-centered services, accessibility, stakeholder satisfaction, and continual improvement. Abu Bakar et al. (2024) highlighted the relevance of ISO 21001:2018 in strengthening educational management practices, while Syahrullah et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of gap analysis in assessing institutional conformity with educational management standards. Similarly, Raya et al. (2022) examined the implementation of ISO 21001:2018-based management systems in higher education, underscoring their relevance to institutional quality assurance. For Marinduque State University (MarSU), implementing an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) aligned with ISO 21001:2018 represents an opportunity to strengthen existing quality assurance mechanisms across its academic, administrative, and support services. However, successful implementation requires a systematic assessment of institutional practices, documented procedures, and organizational readiness. Evaluating the University's existing conformity with ISO 21001:2018 is therefore essential for identifying implementation gaps, establishing improvement priorities, and supporting its preparation for future certification.

1.2. Research Problem

Implementing an Educational Organization Management System aligned with ISO 21001:2018 requires educational institutions to demonstrate conformity with established requirements concerning organizational context, leadership, planning, support, operations, performance evaluation, and continual improvement. However, the existence of institutional quality assurance mechanisms does not automatically establish compliance with all requirements of the standard. Effective implementation depends on documented procedures, clearly assigned responsibilities, sufficient institutional resources, and consistent monitoring of organizational performance. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of institutional readiness and systematic assessment in implementing ISO 21001:2018. Syahrullah et al. (2022) demonstrated the relevance of gap analysis in identifying deficiencies within higher education quality assurance systems, while Raya et al. (2022) examined the implementation of educational management standards in higher education institutions. Abu Bakar et al. (2024) further discussed the role of ISO 21001:2018 in strengthening educational quality management. At Marinduque State University, the central concern was determining whether existing institutional policies, procedures, resources, and management practices adequately satisfied ISO 21001:2018 requirements. Without a systematic initial assessment, the University's level of conformity and areas requiring corrective action could not be clearly established. This condition highlighted the need for an evidence-based evaluation of institutional readiness before pursuing certification.

1.3. Research Gap

Existing research has examined the implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in educational institutions, particularly its contribution to quality assurance, institutional governance, and continuous improvement. Syahrullah et al. (2022) investigated gaps between higher education quality assurance practices and ISO 21001:2018 requirements, while Raya et al. (2022) explored the implementation of an ISO-based educational management system. Abu Bakar et al. (2024) also reviewed the application of ISO 21001:2018 in academic institutions. Despite these contributions, the existing literature does not establish the specific level of conformity of Marinduque State University's management practices with ISO 21001:2018. In particular, the University's institutional strengths, documented nonconformities, and priority areas for improvement had not been systematically assessed within the scope of the present study. This institutional evidence gap limits the availability of context-specific information for certification planning. Accordingly, the study addresses this gap through a descriptive-evaluative assessment of existing EOMS practices, documentary evidence, and implementation requirements.

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess the readiness of Marinduque State University to implement an Educational Organization Management System certifiable to ISO 21001:2018. Specifically, it sought to determine the University's level of conformity with the requirements of Clauses 4 to 10, covering organizational context, leadership, planning, support, operations, performance evaluation, and improvement. It also aimed to identify existing institutional strengths, documented nonconformities, and implementation gaps affecting certification readiness. Furthermore, the study sought to determine the University's overall certifiability based on the assessment results and identify opportunities for institutional improvement. The findings were intended to provide an evidence-based foundation for corrective actions, strategic planning, and the continued development of the University's quality management system.

1.5. Significance and Practical Contribution of the Study

This study provides practical evidence to support Marinduque State University's efforts to strengthen institutional quality assurance and prepare for ISO 21001:2018 certification. By identifying areas of conformity and nonconformity, the assessment offers university administrators, quality assurance personnel, and institutional process owners a basis for prioritizing corrective actions, improving documented procedures, and strengthening resource management. The findings may also inform institutional planning, stakeholder engagement, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement initiatives across university campuses. Beyond its immediate institutional application, the study contributes a context-specific assessment of educational management system readiness within a Philippine state university. Its practical value lies in supporting systematic decision-making and the sustainable implementation of internationally recognized educational quality management standards.

1.6. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

This study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by supporting the development of an Educational Organization Management System that promotes learner-centered services, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement in higher education. Assessing conformity with ISO 21001:2018 provides a basis for strengthening educational processes, quality assurance mechanisms, and stakeholder-responsive institutional practices. The study also supports Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by emphasizing transparent governance, organizational accountability, clearly defined responsibilities, and evidence-based institutional management. Through the identification of implementation gaps and opportunities for improvement, the research

contributes to strengthening Marinduque State University's capacity to maintain a responsive, accountable, and sustainable educational management system.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design to assess the implementation status and certification readiness of the Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) at Marinduque State University (MarSU) based on ISO 21001:2018 requirements. The design facilitated a systematic examination of existing institutional policies, documented procedures, management practices, and organizational performance against the requirements of the standard. Through documentary assessment and gap analysis, the study identified areas of conformity, nonconformity, and opportunities for improvement. This approach was appropriate for evaluating institutional readiness and establishing evidence-based recommendations for strengthening the University's quality management system.

2.2. Research Locale

The study was conducted across all campuses of Marinduque State University in Marinduque, Philippines, covering academic units, administrative offices, and support service divisions. Data collection was undertaken from January to June 2026 to assess institutional practices related to the implementation of ISO 21001:2018. The respondents consisted of key institutional stakeholders directly involved in managing and implementing the University's Educational Organization Management System, particularly those responsible for instruction, research, extension services, and institutional operations. University officials, process owners, and unit heads provided relevant information regarding existing quality management practices, implementation challenges, and institutional improvement initiatives. The source manuscript did not specify the total number of respondents.

2.3. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was employed to select institutional stakeholders with direct knowledge of and involvement in the implementation and management of the University's Educational Organization Management System. Participants were identified based on their responsibilities within academic, administrative, and support service processes relevant to ISO 21001:2018 requirements. This sampling approach ensured that information was obtained from individuals familiar with institutional policies, operational procedures, quality assurance practices, and management responsibilities. The selection emphasized participants' institutional roles and their capacity to provide relevant evidence regarding existing implementation practices. No numerical sample-size determination procedure was reported in the source manuscript.

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through document analysis and semi-structured key informant interviews conducted during the January–June 2026 assessment period. Institutional records, including policies, manuals, strategic plans, operational guidelines, performance reports, and audit documentation, were examined using the ISO 21001:2018 assessment checklist. Interviews with university officials, process owners, and unit heads provided additional information regarding implementation practices, challenges, and improvement strategies. Evidence obtained from documentary reviews and interviews was subsequently examined using the gap analysis matrix to establish the University's level of conformity and identify institutional areas requiring further development.

2.5. Data Analysis

The collected information was analyzed through gap analysis by comparing existing institutional practices and documented evidence against ISO 21001:2018 requirements. Each assessed clause and sub-clause was examined to determine conformity or nonconformity based on available institutional evidence. The assessment identified 19 conforming requirements out of 28 evaluated, corresponding to a conformity rate of 67.86%, while the remaining 32.14% represented nonconforming requirements. These results were interpreted using the study's maturity-based certifiability matrix to determine institutional certification readiness. The analysis also identified organizational strengths, implementation deficiencies, and priority improvement areas to support institutional planning and corrective actions.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to institutional research ethics requirements, with ethical clearance secured from the Marinduque State University Research Ethics Committee before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the assessment and voluntarily participated after providing informed consent. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, and identifying personal information was not disclosed. Data were collected through non-invasive documentary assessments and interviews. The author declared no conflict of interest, and the research received no external funding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Conformity with ISO 21001:2018 Requirements

Documentary evidence showed that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 4 of ISO 21001:2018. The university identified its internal and external context, recognized the needs and expectations of relevant stakeholders, clearly defined the scope of its Educational Organization Management System (EOMS), and established interconnected processes supporting curriculum development, admissions, instruction, assessment, and continual improvement. These findings were supported by strategic plans, environmental scanning reports, stakeholder assessment records, quality manuals, organizational charts, process flowcharts, and internal audit reports. The findings indicate that MarSU has established an organizational framework aligned with the requirements of Clause 4. However, continuous updating of institutional documents, consistent implementation across campuses, and stronger integration of contextual reviews into institutional planning remain necessary to sustain conformity. Document analysis revealed that MarSU substantially conforms to the leadership requirements of ISO 21001:2018. Top management demonstrated commitment through resource allocation, integration of quality objectives into institutional planning, management review participation, and learner-centered policies supported by grievance mechanisms and stakeholder feedback systems. However, conformity was not established for Clause 5.2 because the Quality Policy remained unapproved and had not been formally communicated. Likewise, Clause 5.3 lacked evidence of a formally designated Quality Management Representative with clearly documented responsibilities. These results suggest that while institutional leadership actively supports the EOMS, the absence of an approved and communicated Quality Policy and formally assigned quality management responsibilities limits full compliance. Addressing these gaps is necessary before certification.

The findings indicate that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 6 concerning planning. Documentary evidence confirmed that the university systematically identified risks and opportunities, established measurable quality objectives with corresponding implementation plans, and adopted structured procedures for managing institutional changes. These practices were supported by risk registers, operational plans, quality objectives matrices, change management documents, and management review records. The results demonstrate that MarSU has developed structured planning processes that support the effective implementation of the

EOMS. Nevertheless, regular updating of risk assessments, consistent monitoring of quality objective attainment across campuses, and thorough evaluation of planned organizational changes remain necessary to strengthen institutional conformity and continuous improvement. Documentary analysis showed that MarSU partially conforms to Clause 7 of ISO 21001:2018. The university demonstrated compliance in providing adequate personnel, maintaining an appropriate working environment, preserving organizational knowledge, establishing communication systems, and controlling documented information. Evidence included staffing plans, faculty deployment schedules, facility inspection reports, campus development plans, knowledge-sharing records, communication protocols, and document control procedures. However, insufficient documentary evidence was found for specific resource provision, infrastructure adequacy, monitoring and measurement equipment, competence requirements, and awareness of the Quality Policy because the policy had not yet been approved and disseminated. These findings indicate that MarSU has established essential support mechanisms necessary for EOMS implementation. Nevertheless, deficiencies in documentation related to resources, competence, infrastructure, monitoring equipment, and Quality Policy awareness limit full conformity. Strengthening these areas will improve institutional readiness for ISO 21001:2018 certification. The findings indicate that MarSU partially conforms to Clause 8 concerning operational processes. Documentary evidence confirmed systematic operational planning, curriculum design and development, controlled instructional delivery, grading procedures, certification processes, and mechanisms for addressing nonconforming outputs. These were supported by academic calendars, curriculum development records, instructional plans, faculty performance reports, learner assessment protocols, grading records, and remediation documentation. However, documentary evidence was insufficient regarding the determination and review of educational requirements, control of externally provided services, and procedures for safeguarding learner or stakeholder property.

The results suggest that MarSU has implemented structured operational procedures supporting educational service delivery. However, formal procedures for identifying stakeholder requirements, monitoring outsourced services, and protecting stakeholder property require further development to achieve full compliance with ISO 21001:2018 operational requirements. Documentary review revealed that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 9 of ISO 21001:2018. The university demonstrated established systems for monitoring institutional performance, conducting internal audits, and performing management reviews through key performance indicators, audit programs, audit reports, and scheduled management review activities. However, documentary evidence was insufficient to demonstrate a systematic process for monitoring learner and stakeholder satisfaction, as existing feedback mechanisms lacked consolidated procedures, trend analysis, and documented follow-up actions. These findings indicate that institutional performance evaluation mechanisms are largely established and functioning. Nonetheless, the absence of a comprehensive stakeholder satisfaction monitoring system represents a significant gap that should be addressed to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and meet ISO 21001:2018 requirements. The findings indicate that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 10 on continual improvement. Documentary evidence confirmed that the university identifies opportunities for improvement, implements corrective actions for identified nonconformities, and sustains continual enhancement of its Educational Organization Management System through quality improvement plans, corrective action records, root-cause analyses, performance monitoring reports, and institutional planning documents. The findings are consistent with the principle that ISO 21001:2018 supports systematic monitoring, institutional accountability, and continuous improvement (ISO, 2018, as cited in the literature review by Bilal et al.). The results demonstrate that MarSU has institutionalized mechanisms for continual improvement through corrective action and performance monitoring. These practices support organizational adaptability and reinforce the university's commitment to

maintaining and improving the effectiveness of its Educational Organization Management System, consistent with ISO 21001:2018 principles (ISO, 2018, as cited in the literature review by Bilal et al.).

3.2 Overall Conformity with ISO 21001:2018

The documentary assessment showed that MarSU conforms to 19 of the 28 ISO 21001:2018 clauses and sub-clauses evaluated, representing an overall conformity rate of 67.86%, while 32.14% of the assessed requirements were identified as nonconforming. The conforming areas included Clause 4 (Context of the Organization), Clause 5.1 (Leadership and Commitment), Clause 6 (Planning), selected requirements under Clause 7 (Support), selected operational requirements under Clause 8, most provisions of Clause 9 (Performance Evaluation), and Clause 10 (Improvement). Nonconformities were identified in Clause 5.2 (Quality Policy), Clause 5.3 (Organizational Roles and Responsibilities), selected provisions of Clause 7 concerning resources, infrastructure, competence, and awareness, selected operational requirements under Clause 8, and Clause 9.1.2 relating to stakeholder satisfaction monitoring. The results indicate that MarSU has established a functional Educational Organization Management System with documented procedures supporting most ISO 21001:2018 requirements. However, several areas require formalization, stronger documentation, and consistent implementation before full conformity can be demonstrated.

The identified deficiencies primarily reflect incomplete documentation and inconsistent monitoring rather than the absence of institutional practices, suggesting that the remaining gaps can be addressed through systematic corrective actions. Based on the assessment, MarSU falls within the "Certifiable" category of the maturity-based certifiability matrix. The identified nonconformities fall within the 21–40% range of audit findings, indicating a reactive but systematic management approach. Although several requirements remain only partially satisfied, the institution has already initiated corrective measures and planned improvements to address existing deficiencies. These findings suggest that the university possesses an operational management system capable of achieving certification after implementing the necessary corrective actions. Transitioning from reactive responses to proactive quality management through continuous monitoring, standardized procedures, and institutionalized improvements will strengthen overall maturity and certification readiness.

3.3 Established Gaps in the Implementation of ISO 21001:2018

The assessment identified several leadership-related deficiencies. The university had not yet approved or formally communicated its Quality Policy, resulting in limited awareness among faculty, staff, learners, and other stakeholders. Likewise, documentary evidence confirming the formal designation of a Quality Management Representative was unavailable, creating uncertainty regarding authority and accountability within the Educational Organization Management System. These findings indicate that while leadership supports quality management initiatives, formal approval, communication, and documentation remain essential for demonstrating conformity with ISO 21001:2018. Clear organizational responsibilities and an officially communicated Quality Policy would strengthen institutional accountability and governance. The documentary review identified deficiencies related to human resources, infrastructure, and awareness. The BTLEd program lacked the required number of regular faculty members, several university facilities were not covered by insurance documentation, and personnel awareness of the Quality Policy could not be verified because the policy remained unapproved and undistributed.

These results suggest that strengthening staffing, infrastructure protection, and institutional communication will improve the university's support systems. Addressing these resource-

related concerns will also enhance organizational resilience and compliance with ISO 21001:2018 requirements. Operational assessment revealed inconsistencies between course syllabi and examination content, insufficient monitoring of outsourced water services, and inadequate safeguards for learner-owned property such as thesis manuscripts. These findings indicate weaknesses in documenting educational requirements, monitoring external providers, and protecting stakeholder property. The identified operational deficiencies may affect assessment validity, health and safety assurance, and the protection of institutional resources. Establishing formal procedures for curriculum alignment, external service monitoring, and property management would strengthen operational conformity with ISO 21001:2018. The review found that although faculty teaching evaluations were conducted, there was insufficient evidence that the results were systematically analyzed or used for continuous improvement. Records demonstrating trend analysis, follow-up actions, and the integration of stakeholder feedback into institutional decision-making were unavailable. These findings indicate that stakeholder feedback mechanisms should extend beyond data collection to include systematic analysis and documented improvement initiatives. Utilizing evaluation results more effectively would strengthen evidence-based decision-making and continuous quality improvement within the university.

3.4 Opportunities for Improvement

The assessment identified opportunities to improve governance by designating a Data Protection Officer (DPO) for each campus, strengthening inclusive policies in the Student Handbook, conducting regular echo-trainings on institutional services and updates, and improving waste management practices. Additional improvements include broadening stakeholder participation in evaluating security services, reinforcing food safety compliance, ensuring concessionaires comply with regulatory requirements, and promoting the exclusive use of licensed software. These findings suggest that strengthening governance, data privacy, environmental management, and stakeholder participation will improve institutional resilience and support sustained compliance with ISO 21001:2018. These initiatives also reinforce accountability, operational efficiency, and institutional quality assurance. The documentary review highlighted opportunities to improve document management through regular updating of manuals, forms, and institutional references, implementation of effective version control systems, proper completion of records requiring signatures, centralized records management, standardization of institutional forms, and alignment of assigned responsibilities with official mandates. The assessment also recommended implementing preventive maintenance schedules for university facilities. These recommendations emphasize the importance of maintaining accurate, current, and controlled documented information to strengthen institutional consistency and compliance. Improved records governance and document control will enhance accountability, facilitate audits, and support continual improvement across university operations.

The assessment recommended strengthening institutional risk registers across all campuses, updating organizational documents to reflect the university's conversion to Marinduque State University, establishing systematic stakeholder feedback mechanisms, consistently monitoring institutional performance, and improving the use of standardized assessment rubrics. The review further recommended involving industry partners in curriculum review, ensuring instructional materials undergo formal approval, assigning faculty based on qualifications, and addressing the structural condition of the Auxiliary Building. These findings indicate that continuous improvement should extend beyond compliance toward proactive institutional development. Strengthening risk management, stakeholder engagement, curriculum relevance, instructional quality, and facility maintenance will improve organizational effectiveness, promote evidence-based decision-making, and enhance MarSU's readiness for sustained ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The initial assessment found that Marinduque State University has established a substantially functional Educational Organization Management System aligned with ISO 21001:2018, demonstrating strong conformity in organizational context, leadership, planning, and several support, operational, performance evaluation, and improvement processes. However, key gaps remain in the approval and communication of the Quality Policy, formal designation of the Quality Management Representative, resource provision, infrastructure, personnel competence, and stakeholder property management. Overall, the University is positioned for ISO 21001:2018 certification provided that these identified nonconformities are addressed through strengthened institutional procedures, documentation, and continuous monitoring.

Marinduque State University should strengthen its Educational Organization Management System by formally approving and communicating the Quality Policy, designating the Quality Management Representative through official authority, addressing staffing and infrastructure needs, enhancing curriculum alignment, monitoring outsourced services, protecting learner property, improving stakeholder feedback mechanisms, harmonizing institutional documents, strengthening information systems, and sustaining continuous monitoring and quality improvement to achieve and maintain ISO 21001:2018 certification.

The study did not explicitly present a separate section describing its limitations. Instead, it focused on assessing Marinduque State University's readiness for ISO 21001:2018 implementation by identifying areas of conformity, nonconformity, and corresponding recommendations for institutional improvement.

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