



# Quality standard implementation in the Thai seafood processing industry

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**Abstract** *The key findings on implementing ISO 9000 standard in the seafood industry, which is recognized as the leading export industry in Thailand, have been presented. The purpose of this study was to describe the current situation in ISO 9000 implementation, the characteristics, the strengths, the weaknesses, and problems of implementing a quality standard. Reports the finding of a mail questionnaire survey conducted on 178 selected seafood companies. The analysis of the survey data suggested that about 94 percent of companies obtained at least one quality standard. With further analysis, we also found that there are some different characteristics in terms of product type, production process, and purchasing policies among these selected companies. Results indicated that Thai seafood companies still lack enthusiasm regarding ISO 9000, compared with other countries in Asia. Finally, we found major problems in implementing ISO 9000 such as lack of understanding this quality standard and lack of support from the staff and management.*

## Introduction

The globalisation of the marketplace and the rapid improvement in high quality products has brought about a high level of market pressure worldwide. To become efficient, the majority of companies are being forced not only to change their old operational and management styles but also to develop better ways to ensure that customers are satisfied with the products. It is necessary for the industry as a whole to develop or adopt the quality system standard, very often associated with the ISO 9000 series.

In the literature, one can find considerable research related to benefits of companies who were certified ISO 9000 throughout the world. Brown and Van der Wiele (1995) proposed the benefits obtained with the ISO 9000 certification as follows: increase in company quality awareness, increase in product quality awareness, improvement in company management, improvement in customer relations, improvement of the products and services offered, improvement of the relationship within the organisation, and increase in customer satisfaction. Tsiotras and Gotzamani (1996) also found that the benefits of ISO 9000 series have been brought in basically for four reasons:

- (1) to improve the image and the reputation of the company;
- (2) to satisfy external requirement and market;
- (3) to facilitate and simplify the procedures and contracts with the clients; and finally
- (4) to improve productivity.