

Crewing services of manning companies in the Philippines: A review of compliance to International Chamber of Shipping Manning Agency Guidelines

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Abstract

This study examines the compliance of a Metro Manila-based manning agency with the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) guidelines, specifically the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006. The research focuses on the effectiveness of crewing services and their alignment with international standards. Survey results suggest strong agreement ($M=4.59$) that crewing managers effectively fulfill their responsibilities, particularly in overseeing medical requirements, travel arrangements, and compliance with flag state laws. The highest-rated responsibilities were compliance with flag state laws ($M=4.66$) and managing travel arrangements ($M=4.67$). Further analysis assesses the alignment of agency practices with MLC 2006 standards, yielding a strong overall mean score ($M=4.59$). Key compliance areas, such as the absence of recruitment fees and certificate validation, were rated highly, while placement services received a slightly lower rating ($M=4.44$), indicating room for improvement. Regression analysis confirms that alignment with MLC 2006 standards significantly predicts the fulfillment of agency obligations ($R^2=0.67$, $p<0.001$), whereas mere compliance does not ($\beta=0.044$, $p=0.462$). This suggests that agencies must integrate international frameworks into operations rather than only meeting local regulatory minimums. Future research should explore how these standards influence agency performance in various maritime contexts. In conclusion, the studied manning agency demonstrates strong compliance with ICS and MLC 2006 guidelines, distinguishing it from other agencies facing recruitment inefficiencies and workforce retention challenges.

Keywords: *manning agency, shipping compliance, maritime labor convention*

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1. Introduction

According to the 2021 report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), maritime transport is the backbone of international trade and the global economy. Over 80% of the volume of international trade in goods is carried by sea, and the percentage is even higher for most developing countries. Today, ship-owners and company representatives require their agents not only to screen and select competent, highly trained crew but also to ensure that the processing and administration of crew members comply with a quality system. This includes maintaining personnel records for evaluation purposes and monitoring mandated training courses. Given their duty to employ seafarers, manning agencies are burdened with the responsibility of recruiting qualified and competent personnel.

The selection of competent seafarers is a critical aspect of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006. The convention sets out minimum requirements for seafarers to work on ships, including minimum age, medical fitness, and training. It also emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development to ensure seafarers remain competent in their duties. Due to these requirements, recruitment agencies face numerous challenges in the global seafarer labor market. For instance, skills shortages, competition from other industries, and evolving technologies are key issues facing manning agencies in Tanzania (Ally et al., 2024). Chinese seafarers, while increasingly important in the global market, often face perceptions of being low-cost labor with poor English skills. Although government initiatives have improved education and communication abilities (Tang et al., 2016), challenges remain in complying with international standards. Recruitment agencies are also expanding their services, which impacts the effectiveness of management systems (Тинькова et al., 2022). The success of organizations depends on attracting high-quality employees, requiring careful scrutiny of applicants' skills, experience, and behavioral traits (Iqbal et al., 2020). To address these challenges, joint training programs between manning agencies and maritime institutes are recommended (Ally et al., 2024).

Research has pointed out challenges in implementing the requirements (Fotteler et al., 2020). For instance, some shipping companies and flag states may exploit loopholes or circumstances to reduce the burden of implementing certain clauses of the convention. Many provisions from previous conventions relating to maritime labor before MLC 2006, especially those concerning the implementation of basic seafarer rights, were moved to Part B: Guidelines of the Code, which are non-mandatory for ratifying states. This means that these states are not

strictly required to follow these guidelines, allowing some shipping companies to opt out of implementation (Mantoju, 2021). To promote good practices, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has issued several guidelines that companies may adopt. ICS plays a crucial role in shaping the future of shipping by advocating for high operational standards and a regulatory environment that prioritizes safety, environmental protection, open markets, and fair competition (ICS, 2020). These guidelines, along with other international and domestic health protocols, provide standards for ship operators to prevent the spread of viruses, including hygiene measures and outbreak management plans (Arifin, 2020). However, implementation challenges persist, such as port entry restrictions and crew change difficulties (Arleiny et al., 2021).

The International Safety Management (ISM) Code, developed by the International Maritime Organization, is essential for ensuring safe ship operation and marine environmental protection (Ledys et al., 2023). Proper implementation of the ISM Code can significantly reduce accidents caused by human error and poor management systems, which account for a large percentage of maritime incidents. Overall, these guidelines and codes aim to create a safer and more efficient environment for both ship crews and onshore personnel in the maritime industry. While these guidelines are widely recognized and followed, they are not legally binding. They serve as a complement to international regulations and are essential for every maritime organization (ICS, 2020).

There is limited research that closely examines how manning agencies in the Philippines adhere to the guidelines set by the ICS. Most existing studies focus on global issues related to maritime labor but do not provide sufficient information about the actual practices of manning agencies in specific countries like the Philippines. Given that the country supplies a significant number of seafarers to the global market, it is important to understand how these agencies operate. Many international guidelines, such as those from the ICS and the MLC 2006 are not mandatory. As a result, agencies may choose not to fully comply with them, creating a gap between recommended practices and actual implementation. While previous research discusses global challenges in seafarer recruitment and training, there is limited evidence on how well these guidelines are applied in the daily operations of agencies in Metro Manila. Hence, there is a need to study the actual services provided by a selected manning agency to determine whether they meet ICS standards. This research aims to fill this gap by providing

local data that reflects the real situation in one of the world's most important sources of maritime labor.

This study reviews the crewing services offered by manning companies in the Philippines to assess their compliance with the ICS manning agency guidelines. Specifically, it evaluates a randomly selected manning agency in Metro Manila to determine whether its services adhere to these standards.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Recruitment and Retention Issues in Manning Companies

Based on existing literature, crew quality, challenges related to recruitment and retention, gender diversity, and the complexities of mixed-crewing are the main issues faced by manning agencies. The study by Jatau et al. (2002) emphasizes the vital role of a ship's crew in influencing the vessel's overall performance. It challenges the conventional belief that substandard ships always have substandard crews, asserting that the opposite is often true. Nguyen et al. (2014) explored the challenges of recruitment and retention specifically within the context of Vietnam and identified factors such as inadequate work experience, poor English proficiency, and ineffective recruitment and retention strategies as root causes of difficulties in maintaining a skilled maritime workforce. Additionally, Cahoon et al. (2014) reveal that shipping companies often fall short in their commitment to crew training, engage in subpar recruitment practices, and overlook critical employment contract issues. These shortcomings contribute to instability within the seafarer labor market. Furthermore, Jo (2010) highlights the significant gender imbalance in the maritime sector, identifying issues faced by female seafarers, including feelings of isolation, sexual discrimination, inadequate accommodations, and job dissatisfaction, all of which reinforce the male-dominated nature of the industry.

Based on these studies, there are multiple problems in the recruitment of seafarers. These range from inadequate work experience and poor English proficiency to ineffective retention strategies. While these research papers focus on recruitment challenges, there is currently no published study evaluating the impact of these issues on compliance with ICS guidelines. Considering that the ICS serves as a complementary guideline to support full adherence to the MLC 2006, the recruitment challenges identified may provide strong justification for closely examining the extent to which countries comply with ICS standards.

2.2. Compliance with MLC and STCW

The Philippines, a major seafarer-exporting country, has restructured its policies and agencies to comply with the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW), significantly influencing seafarer education, training, and employability (Galam, 2022). However, achieving regulatory compliance in the shipping industry remains challenging, and the perspectives of both workers and managers are crucial for understanding the factors that drive compliance (Sampson et al., 2014).

In Indonesia, a study of crossing crews in Eastern Indonesia found over 80% compliance with required certification. However, it also revealed widespread misconceptions regarding certificate requirements for various crew roles (Sulistiana & Rachman, 2023). Despite the STCW's comprehensive coverage of mariners' knowledge and skills, the rapidly evolving regulatory and technological landscape in the shipping industry necessitates continuous reassessment of training requirements. A recent study identified several shortcomings in the STCW framework, particularly its reactive nature, lack of detail, and an overemphasis on safety at the expense of environmental concerns (Ghaforian Masodzadeh et al., 2024). Additionally, the MLC 2006 aims to improve seafarers' working and living conditions, addressing issues such as wages, contracts, and social security. It complements existing maritime regulations and introduces an enforcement mechanism through shipboard certification (McConnell et al., 2011). However, its impact has been limited, with some seafarers reporting no significant improvements in conditions and an increase in administrative burdens (Fotteler et al., 2018). The MLC 2006 aligns with the International Labour Organization's Decent Work Agenda, focusing on employment creation, workers' rights, social protection, and social dialogue (Piñeiro, 2023).

Despite its comprehensive framework, issues with implementation and adequacy persist (Aguda, 2017). While the Convention reinforces public governance by assigning responsibilities to flag states, port states, and labor-supplying countries, there remains significant room for improvement in both the standards themselves and the level of compliance across different countries (Piñeiro, 2023).

2.3. Seafarer Welfare

Seafarer welfare is a critical issue in the maritime industry, encompassing various aspects such as wages, social security benefits, and both onboard and shore-based facilities

(Zhang et al., 2020). The MLC has significantly influenced the industry by setting standards for shore leave and crew changes. However, gaps in welfare provision persist, particularly regarding internet access and the enforcement of MLC standards (Zuidema et al., 2023). Greek seafarers, for example, face poor labor conditions exacerbated by economic pressures (Zhang et al., 2020). To address these challenges, stakeholders, including charities, businesses, governments, and labor representatives, are collaborating to improve support systems through initiatives such as the Canadian National Seafarers' Welfare Board (Zuidema et al., 2023). Research highlights the need for welfare interventions both onboard and ashore to promote the well-being of seafarers (Progoulaki et al., 2013). The ongoing dialogue and research in this field contribute to a deeper understanding of crew welfare and its broader impacts.

Several factors affect the welfare of seafarers, especially those in training. Key stressors include separation from family, loneliness, fatigue, limited recreational opportunities, and sleep deprivation (Carotenuto et al., 2012). Additional stressors such as excessive workload, long contracts, lack of shore leave, and fear of job loss also contribute to declining well-being (Tetemadze et al., 2021). Organizational culture, support systems, and self-efficacy significantly influence seafarers' quality of life, with self-efficacy having both direct and indirect effects (Kim & Jang, 2018). Risk factors for poor mental health include younger age, being single, poor physical health, high job demands, long working hours, and lack of social support (Brooks & Greenberg, 2022).

While the Maritime Labour Convention (2006) outlines basic rights for seafarers, it does not fully address all dimensions of their well-being (Tetemadze et al., 2021). Raising awareness, enhancing organizational support, and developing effective coping strategies are essential for improving seafarer welfare (Carotenuto et al., 2012; Kim & Jang, 2018). Given the existing limitations of the convention and ongoing issues with compliance, this research further justifies the need to evaluate adherence to the ICS guidelines to ensure the comprehensive welfare of seafarers.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research adopts a quantitative research design to evaluate the level of compliance of crewing services provided by Manning Companies in the Philippines with the standards and guidelines established by the ICS for Manning Agencies. Specifically, the study utilizes a

prediction research design, which is aimed at identifying relationships among the research variables. In this context, the study examined the alignment of Manning Companies' practices with the guidelines of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and assesses the compliance of crewing managers. These two factors, the degree of alignment with ILO guidelines and the compliance of crewing managers served as the independent variables of the study. The prediction research design is appropriate in this research when the investigator seeks to measure multiple variables and determine the extent to which they correlate or influence one another. According to Creswell (2011), such designs are valuable in studies aimed at identifying predictive patterns and relationships. Thus, offering a more effective framework for understanding how specific factors contribute to outcomes of interest.

3.2. Participants of the Study

Table 1

Demographic profile of the participants

Demographic Variable	Subparameters	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-28	91	22.9
	29-37	115	28.9
	38-46	145	36.4
	47-55	40	10.1
	56-64	7	1.8
Gender	Male	393	98.7
	Female	5	1.3
Rank of the Respondents	Management	24	6.0
	Operational	84	21.1
	No Rank	290	72.9
Seagoing Experience (yrs)	1-8	225	56.5
	9-16	118	29.6
	17-24	36	9.0
	25-32	17	4.3
	33-40	2	0.5

For this research, seafarers serve as the participants. Seafarers were surveyed to determine if the shipping agencies from which they belong provided them with the necessary

services as provided by the ICS. Instead of manning agency executives/crewing managers, seafarers were selected to reduce biased responses that can be obtained from manning agency executives/ crewing managers. The objective is to gain insights on the manning company's operations in the Philippines regarding their compliance with ICS Manning Agency guidelines. A total of 400 seafarers from different crewing agencies participated in this study as reflected in table 1.

Based on the demographics presented in table 1, majority of the respondents are aged 38-46 (36.4%) followed by respondents aged 29-37 (28.9%). 98.7 % of the respondents are male. Majority of the respondents are neither operational nor management level (72.9%). This percentage is composed of Bosun, Electrician, Oiler, etc. Majority of the respondents have 1-8 years of seagoing experience (56.5%).

The study used convenience sampling considering that crewing agencies have a fast-paced culture in their operations; the researcher can only survey available participants. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), convenience sampling is a type of sampling method where participants are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. In other words, the sample is composed of individuals who are easily accessible to the researcher and are willing to be a part of the study. However, while this sampling technique is easy and cost-effective, it has limitations. This technique might lead to a lack of generalizability, as the sample may not accurately reflect the broader population due to selection bias.

3.3. Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process

The research instrument employed in this study is divided into three portions, each designed to assess different facets of manning companies' compliance with ICS guidelines. The first portion focuses on "Crewing Manager Obligations," exploring the responsibilities and actions of crewing managers within these companies. The second portion, labeled "Alignment to International Labor Organization (ILO) Maritime Labor Convention (MLC)," evaluates the extent to which the manning companies' practices align with the stipulations of the ILO MLC. Finally, the third portion investigates "Manning Agency Obligations," exploring broader obligations of manning companies as outlined by the ICS guidelines.

The reliability of the research instrument was determined through the use of Cronbach Alpha, with an overall reliability index of 0.96. However separate reliability indices were also

computed for each subscale. Specifically, for the "Crewing Manager Obligations" section, the reliability index is 0.93, while the "Alignment to ILO MLC" section has a reliability index of 0.92. Similarly, the "Manning Agency Obligations" section has a strong reliability index of .93. The items included in these sections were carefully extracted from the ICS guidelines and underwent a validation process. Before the actual data collection, these items were content validated by two seafarers with experience in the industry, along with a research expert (Pentang, 2023). This comprehensive validation approach assures the instrument's validity and reliability in determining ICS compliance.

The researcher created an informed consent form that includes an explanation of the procedures, goals, and methods for processing information needed for the study. This consent form was submitted for approval to the Center for Research and Institutional Development to ensure it adheres to ethical standards. Upon approval of the informed consent form, the researcher has preceded to contact the selected crewing companies. The researcher requested approval to conduct the study within their organizations, explaining the study's objectives and the nature of data collection. The researcher visited companies in person to distribute the pen-and-paper surveys to the selected seafarer respondents.

3.4. Data Analysis

The weighted mean was used in determining the extent of compliance of crewing companies on the guidelines prescribed by the ICS specifically on crewing manager obligations, alignment with ILO Maritime Labour Convention and Manning Agency obligations. However, considering that this technique is descriptive in nature, inferences from these values alone are not conclusive. On the other hand, multiple regression was used to determine if compliance of crewing managers and alignment of the company to ILO Maritime labour convention predicts compliance to prescribed manning agency obligations. Since the independent variable is multidimensional, it contains multiple factors or predictors that can each influence the dependent variable. This is where multiple regression becomes highly relevant. Furthermore, relationships exist between these variables. Thus making it more appropriate to test it further thru multiple regression. In addition, the technique is appropriate since the data yielded from the survey is continuous in nature. Furthermore, regression analysis does not inherently establish causation, only correlation, and can be prone to overfitting or underfitting, potentially leading to inaccurate predictions.

3.5. Research Ethics

To ensure that ethical guidelines are not violated, the researchers ensured that the research protocol are carried out ethically by complying with the APA Ethical Guidelines for Research (2017) and the AIMS Research Ethics Policies. In terms of confidentiality, the researcher ensured that no traces of personal information were disclosed. Furthermore, the researcher allowed respondents to withdraw for any reason when the respondent sees it fit.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings obtained from the analysis of data collected during the study and discusses their implications with respect to the research objectives. The analysis focuses on key constructs such as compliance to crewing manager obligation, alignment of crewing services to ILO maritime labor convention and agreement to fulfillment of manning agency obligations

4.1. Compliance of Manning Agencies to ICS Guidelines

The results of the study show that seafarers perceive a high level of compliance and performance from their crewing managers and manning agencies. Across the three major parameters evaluated, compliance to crewing manager obligation ($M = 4.59$), alignment of crewing services to ILO Maritime Labor Convention ($M = 4.59$), and fulfillment of manning agency obligations ($M = 4.57$), the overall mean score was 4.58, interpreted as “strongly agree.” This indicates that, generally, seafarers believe that crewing and manning agencies are performing their duties effectively and in accordance with industry regulations and international labor conventions.

Table 2

Summary of key parameters from ICS Guidelines

Parameter	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Compliance to crewing manager obligation	4.59	Strongly Agree
Alignment of crewing services to ILO Maritime Labor Convention	4.59	Strongly Agree
Agreement to fulfillment of manning agency obligations	4.57	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.58	Strongly Agree

In terms of compliance with crewing manager obligations, the highest-rated aspects were ensuring compliance with flag state laws, overseeing travel arrangements, and managing medical requirements. This aligns with findings from Viersanova and Osypenko (2021), who emphasized the vital role of crewing managers in ensuring that seafarers are properly selected and comply with operational standards. Zakharchenko et al. (2020) also support this, stating that human factors and the quality of crew selection significantly influence the efficiency and safety of maritime operations. The study's findings suggest that crewing managers in the surveyed agencies are meeting these core responsibilities. Additionally, the provision and oversight of training and development, as required by the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW), were also rated positively by respondents.

Regarding the alignment of crewing services with the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006), seafarers strongly agreed that they experienced no unjust charges for medical certification, seafarer identification documents, or placement services. Certificates were reportedly validated thoroughly, and mechanisms were in place to prevent abandonment in foreign ports. Respondents also felt well-informed of their rights and duties. This is consistent with the goal of the MLC to ensure decent working and living conditions for seafarers (Mahmood, 2020). While most items were rated highly, “orderly operation of placement services” was the only aspect rated slightly lower, though still within the “agree” range. Challenges in MLC implementation, particularly in developing countries, have been noted in previous studies (Mahmood, 2020; Cahya, 2022), but such issues were not prominently reflected in this study. The consistency of the findings with MLC standards indicates that the agencies surveyed are effectively implementing core MLC principles.

In terms of the fulfillment of manning agency obligations, seafarers strongly agreed that agencies accurately communicated employment terms, protected their personal data, and did not engage in discriminatory practices or blacklisting. They also observed transparency and responsiveness to issues. This supports the findings of Rama Nugraha et al. (2024), who highlighted that service quality and transparency influence satisfaction with manning agencies. Although all areas received positive feedback, the item concerning the agency’s payment for STCW training received a slightly lower score of 4.37 (“agree”), suggesting that while support for training is present, there may be room for improvement in financial support for required certifications. Research by Merdekawati et al. (2022) and Kelana et al. (2023) identified overlapping regulatory frameworks and certification issues as ongoing challenges for manning

agencies. Nevertheless, the present study's findings suggest that such issues were not major concerns for the respondents. Moreover, while exploitative practices like using unpaid utility workers have been reported in the literature (Galam, 2019), the surveyed seafarers did not report experiencing such situations.

Overall, the study affirms that both crewing managers and manning agencies are performing their roles in a manner that aligns with international standards, labor conventions, and seafarer expectations. The findings reinforce the idea that effective crewing practices, particularly those that uphold transparency, compliance, and welfare, play a crucial role in maintaining the competitiveness and integrity of the maritime industry (Viersanova & Osypenko, 2021; Danchenko, 2019). However, continuous improvement is needed, particularly in financing seafarer training and ensuring orderly operations of placement services, to further align with global best practices.

4.2. Crew Managers' Compliance and Alignment with ILO Predicts Fulfillment of Manning Agency Obligations

Table 3

Results of the regression analysis

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10874.368	2	5437.184	403.514	.000 ^b
Residual	5322.456	395	13.475		
Total	16196.824	397			
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.819 ^a	0.67	0.67	3.67	

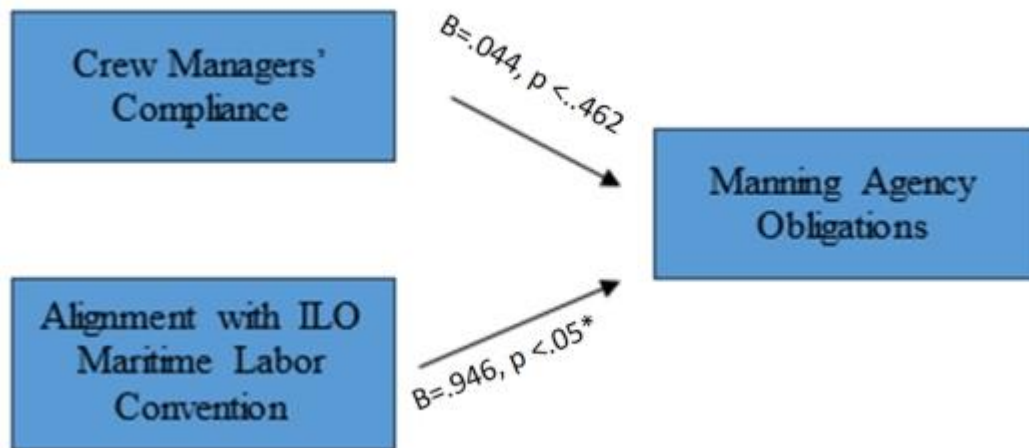
Based on the results of the multiple linear regression, it can be observed that the equation is significant. The regression analysis shows that crewing managers' compliance and alignment with ILO conventions play a significant role in predicting manning agency obligations. The model explains about 67.2% of the variability in the obligations, which is a substantial proportion. This indicates that the predictors are strongly associated with the dependent variable. The statistical test for the model, $F(2,395)=403.514, p<.001$ ($F(2, 395) = 403.514, p < .001$), suggests that the relationship demonstrated in this

study is significant. In addition, the small residual mean square value ($MSE = 13.475$) denotes that the model fits the data well.

Furthermore, the findings showcase the importance of complying with ILO conventions to meet what is expected to manning agencies. Thus, ensuring compliance and alignment with these international standards would contribute significantly to the effective operation of manning agencies. However, the unexplained variance (32.8%) further suggests that there might be other factors may also influence manning agency obligations.

Figure 1

Regression model



Based on the R square, it can be seen that the independent variables explain 67% of the variability of our dependent variable. However, crew managers' compliance do not significantly predict compliance to manning agency obligations. Crew managers' compliance shows a non-significant relationship with manning agency obligations ($\beta=.044$, $p<.462$), indicating that compliance alone does not significantly predict obligations. In contrast, alignment with the ILO Maritime Labor Convention has a significant relationship with manning agency obligations ($\beta=.946$, $p<.05$). This suggests that alignment with international labor standards is a critical factor in determining manning agency responsibilities.

The results show that crew managers' compliance does not have a significant effect on manning agency obligations. This is demonstrated by a standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .044$) and a p-value greater than .462, which is well above the commonly accepted significance level of .05. A non-significant result means that there is not enough statistical evidence to say that

changes in crew managers' compliance are related to changes in how manning agencies meet their obligations. This can be explained by the fact that even if crew managers follow the rules or procedures, it does not strongly influence whether the agency as a whole fulfills its responsibilities. This may be because compliance at the individual level does not always reflect compliance at the organizational level.

The findings of this study can be critically analyzed through the integrated perspectives of service quality theory, maritime labor economics, and strategic human resource management. The lack of a significant relationship between crew managers' compliance and manning agency obligations aligns with modern service quality theory, which emphasizes that organizational service outcomes depend not only on frontline employee performance but also on organizational factors. As Grönroos (2016) highlights, true service quality is a function of both technical outcomes and functional delivery processes, meaning that even if individual managers comply with protocols, broader institutional alignment is required to ensure consistent service delivery. In the realm of maritime labor economics, the significant role of alignment with the ILO MLC underscores the increasing importance of institutional compliance with global labor standards. As noted by Kramar (2014), sustainable HRM focuses on embedding ethical, compliant, and performance-based practices into the organization's core systems. The disconnect between individual compliance and organizational obligations in this study may reflect weak organizational integration of HR practices. Thus, suggesting that without strategic alignment, individual efforts have limited impact.

5. Conclusion

The manning agencies studied in this research demonstrate strong compliance with the ICS guidelines and MLC 2006 standards. Compared to findings in the literature, the sampled manning agencies appear compliant with these guidelines, especially considering that other agencies often face issues such as recruitment inefficiencies, lack of gender diversity, and weak retention strategies. This study serves as a valuable model or benchmark for other developing countries and emerging maritime hubs by illustrating how manning agencies can achieve strong compliance with international standards like the ICS guidelines and MLC 2006. Through the integration of digital systems, continuous professional development, and data-driven monitoring, the research outlines practical and scalable strategies that can be adapted to various regulatory and operational contexts.

Based on the study's findings, the following stakeholder-specific and prioritized recommendations are proposed:

For manning agencies: Invest in digital platforms to streamline placement processes and ensure that basic regulatory requirements are met before transactions proceed. This will enhance both compliance and operational efficiency.

For seafarers: Ensure access to clear communication about rights, responsibilities, and available resources, supported by continuous professional development programs.

For policymakers and regulators: Mandate the integration of centralized digital compliance systems and align ILO conventions with licensing requirements to reinforce accountability. Regular audits should be institutionalized to monitor performance.

For researchers: Adopt a mixed-methods approach in future studies to explore under-researched factors such as leadership and technology. This can provide deeper insights into agency practices and help establish benchmarks for developing maritime nations.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire

Directions: Below are parameters that would assess the compliance of your manning agency with the guidelines mandated by the International Chamber of Shipping. Please indicate your agreeableness on the statements by putting a check mark on the appropriate Likert scale below:

5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Neutral, 2- Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree

Compliance of Crewing Managers to their Obligations					
	5	4	3	2	1
The crew manager has strictly authenticated my seafarer license.					
My seafaring experience is the basis of my employment					
The crew manager ensures that flag state laws of the ships are complied					
The crew manager oversees my travel arrangements					
The crew manager administers my payroll					
The crew manager manages my medical requirements					
The crew manager administers my replacements and leave applications					
The crew manager provides for my training as per STCW requirements.					
The crew manager oversees my overall training and development					
Seafarers has access to an accountable system for finding employment					
ILO Maritime Labor Convention and Its Alignment On Crewing Services	5	4	3	2	1
Seafarers has access to an accountable system for finding employment					
Placement services are operated in an orderly manner					
No fees or other charges for seafarer recruitment or placement, or for providing employment to seafarers are encountered					
No fees or other charges for seafarer medical certificate.					
No fees or other charges for seafarer SIRB and a passport.					
I am informed of my rights and duties under my employment agreements prior to or in the process of engagement					
Certificates are thoroughly validated.					
There are proper mechanisms in place to ensure that seafarers will not be stranded in foreign ports.					
Any complaint is responded to diligently by trained personnel					
There is an established system of protection to compensate seafarers for monetary loss.					
Fulfillment of Manning Agency Obligations	5	4	3	2	1
The manning agency accurately describe the terms and conditions/remuneration for employment					
The manning agency does not adopt any discriminatory practices,					
The agency does not operate any blacklists of people					
The manning agency emphasizes the seafarers job description onboard					
The manning company demonstrates awareness of applicable flag and labor supply state of laws					
The Manning agency pays for STCW training requirements					
The manning agency ensure that my personal data is protected					
The Manning agency is transparent in its operations					
The manning agency responds to problems and are willing to resolve this quickly					
The manning agency monitors the crew performance onboard					