

The Adaptation to Shipboard Working Environment of Selected Filipino Seafarers During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study was designed to analyse the adaptation of selected Filipino seafarers towards the shipboard working environment specifically on work-related (ship routine) and worker-related (seafarer well-being) aspects during the Covid-19. The measures to adapt were also investigated. Employing qualitative design, data were obtained using an unstructured questionnaire from purposively sampled Filipino seafarers (N=6) via face-to-face interview. This is the limit of this study which there were only 6 respondents and predominantly have access to an internet connection or near the location of one of the researchers. Interview transcript was thematically analysed to establish themes and patterns. The results indicated that the work-related difficulties experienced by the seafarers during the Covid-19 pandemic involve the constant sanitation protocol and the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as facemasks and bodysuits. While the worker-related difficulties involve lack of relaxation, sudden changes of behavior of crewmates, contract shortening and extension and strict health protocols. Work-related coping measures were proper sanitation, social distancing and constant use of handheld radios for communication while worker-related measures were application of discipline and sacrifice of shore leave.

Keywords: *adaptation, Covid-19, Filipino seafarers, shipboard*

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Introduction

The maritime industry has been continuously operating across the world despite the presence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Seafarers have therefore learned to adapt on this new reality. However, the degree to adapt remained a challenge as extended hours, restricted access to and from the ship, lack of updated information among others became hard for some Filipino seafarers to adjust. The study was designed to analyze the adaptation of selected Filipino seafarers towards the shipboard working environment specifically on work-related (ship routine) and worker-related (seafarer well-being) aspects during the Covid-19. The measures to adapt were also investigated.

Methodology

Employing qualitative design, data were obtained using an unstructured questionnaire from purposively sampled Filipino seafarers (N=6) via face-to-face interview. Interview transcript was thematically analyzed to establish themes and patterns.

Findings

Results indicated that the work-related difficulties experienced by the seafarers during the Covid-19 pandemic involve the constant sanitation protocol and the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as facemasks and bodysuits. While the worker-related difficulties involve lack of relaxation, sudden changes of behavior of crewmates, contract shortening and extension and strict health protocols. Work-related coping measures were proper sanitation, social distancing and constant use of handheld radios for communication while worker-related measures were application of discipline and sacrifice of shore leave.

Conclusion

Generally, the participants indicated a hard adaptation towards the shipboard working environment during the Covid-19 pandemic as it affected their work routine and well-being. Nonetheless, their coping measures have helped them in some way to slowly adapt to their new working environment.

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