

The STCW 1995 convention: awareness, attitude, and compliance among seafarers

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ABSTRACT: This survey research focused on the STCW 1995 and related awareness, attitude and compliance among 232 selected seafarers in the Philippines. Conducted in August 2004, the study utilized three researcher-made data-gathering instruments- the STCW 1995 Awareness Scale, STCW 1995 Attitude Scale, and Seafarer's Compliance with the STCW 1995 Code Rating Scale. Means, standard deviations, the *t*-test for independent samples, the One-Way Analysis of Variance, and the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis were the statistical tools used. Significance level for all inferential tests was set at .05. The study found out that, generally, the seafarers had "very high" level of awareness of, "neutral" attitude towards, and "above average" compliance with the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention.

1 INTRODUCTION

The maritime industry, more specifically the ship manning industry, faces fast paradigm shifts brought about by the rapid technological developments and fast-changing political environments worldwide. The demands on qualifications of ships' crews have dramatically changed since the implementation of the Standard of Training, Certification and Watch keeping (STCW) Code (STCW 1978 Convention and subsequent amendments in 1995).

Prior to the implementation of STCW 1978 and its subsequent amendments in 1995, the number of maritime schools in the country has increased tremendously. From a number of 41, maritime institutions mushroomed to 111, accounting for an increase of 170.73%. In 1994 alone, these maritime schools graduated 43,918 deck and engine cadets (Aldenese, 1995).

However, the need for more competent graduates is demanded in the global market. Aldenese (1995) observes that a good percentage of maritime graduates are not adequately competent. Since the maritime manning agencies operate on the global market, many of the Filipino ship officers and ratings need to comply with the international competency requirements for seafarers; hence, the need for their awareness of and compliance with the STCW requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention.

2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

This survey research aimed at ascertaining levels of awareness, attitude and compliance among selected seafarers in the Philippines in connection with the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention.

Specifically, the study aimed at determining the following:

1. The level of the Filipino seafarers' awareness of the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention;
2. The level of their attitude towards the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention;
3. The level of their compliance with the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention;
4. The significance of the differences in levels of awareness, attitude and compliance among the seafarers classified according to the personal factors of age, marital status and educational attainment;
5. The significance of the differences in levels of awareness, attitude and compliance among the seafarers classified according to the seafaring-related factors of license, manning company of last contract, shipping company of last contract, rank on board, number of years in present rank/position, department where assigned on board, and flag registration of last ship board;
6. The significant predictors of the seafarers' awareness, attitude and compliance; and

7. The significance of the relationships among the seafarers' awareness, attitude and compliance in relation to the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention.

3 METHODOLOGY

The participants of this study were the 232 seafarers selected through the two-stage sampling technique. The survey research method was employed in this study.

The independent variables included the seafarers' personal factors (age, marital status and educational attainment) and seafaring-related factors (license, manning company of last contract, shipping company of last contract, rank on board, number of year in present rank/position, department where assigned on board, and flag registration of last ship on board).

The moderator variable was the seafarers' awareness of the STCW 1995 convention. The seafarers' attitude towards and compliance with the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention were the dependent variables.

A researcher-made survey instrument was utilized to gather the data needed for the study. The instrument included four parts: (1) Information Form to gather data on the seafarer's personal and seafaring-related characteristics; (2) STCW 1995 Awareness Scale; (3) STCW 1995 Attitude Scale; and (4) Seafarer's STCW 1995 Code Compliance Rating Scale.

Means and standard deviations were the descriptive statistics used; the t-test for independent samples, the One-Way ANOVA, the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis, and the Pearson's *r*, the inferential statistics. Significance level for all inferential tests was set at .05 alpha.

4 FINDINGS

The findings showed that the seafarers had "very high" awareness of the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention. Their attitude was "neutral" and their compliance with the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention "above average".

The seafarers differed significantly in their attitude towards the STCW 1995 Convention when classified according to number of years in present position.

They also differed significantly in their compliance with the STCW 1995 Convention when classified according to educational attainment and department assigned.

Age was a significant predictor of the seafarers' awareness of the STCW 1995 Convention.

Department assigned on board and flag of registration were significant predictors of the seafarers' compliance with the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention.

Significant positive relationships existed between the seafarers' awareness and attitude; between their awareness and compliance; and between their attitude and compliance.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The seafarers' being very highly informed of the STCW 1995 Code—its intent, mandatory provisions, and technical standards—pointed out their acceptance of their mandated duty to be familiar with the STCW 1995 Code and its provisions, including the mandate that all Filipino cadets be required to follow a program of structured on board training documented in an approved training record book, based on the model developed by the International Shipping Federation (in Warsash Maritime Centre, 2002).

From the findings, it could be drawn that the seafarers were highly knowledgeable of the issues relevant to their training on board despite their seemingly ambivalent attitude towards the STCW 1995 Code.

As noted by the IMO and the ISF, the seafarers' on-board training might be deficient due to inadequate understanding about the purpose and conduct of the training. For instance, misunderstanding would occur between Filipino trainees and their foreign officers who might not be aware of the issues and concerns relevant to the training of Filipinos (Warsash Maritime Center, 2002).

One major international issue is the low number of Filipino junior officers promoted to senior officer level (International Shipping Federation (in Warsash Maritime Center, 2002). This could be due to lack of morale-boosting motivation from the seafarers' senior officers and their low career aspirations. One other reason is the ceiling for promotion imposed by some shipping companies.

The seafarers' lack of motivation must have stemmed from lack of self-confidence which could have been caused by poorly-founded basic education or vocational training. It could also be attributed to the non-transparency and cultural biases of company assessment schemes (International Shipping Federation, in Warsash Maritime Center, 2002).

The seafarers appeared to be very dedicated, committed, and conscientious in complying with the requirements of the STCW 1995 Convention. They

showed high regard for and commitment to quality standards, performing in accordance with the criteria set for assessing performance vis-à-vis international standards required of a seafarer.

In addition, the seafarers seemed to be willing to undergo temporary sacrifices to attain possible long-term rewards. They appeared to be determined, motivated, compliant, persistent, positive, committed, and self sacrificing.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are the recommendations based on the findings:

Development of an “academic ramp” in the form of a model course covering basic math, physics and other subjects relevant to maritime training in accordance with STCW standards and for possible adoption by the International Maritime Organization.

Development of a standard test of basic knowledge requirements necessary for maritime training in accordance with STCW standards.

Research to further identify knowledge gaps and differences between high-school educational standards in the Philippines and in other countries.

A replication of this study to validate the present findings is suggested. Other areas of concern should focus on manpower quality and competitiveness, managerial and/or leadership competence, and career paths for seafarers.

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