

Proposed Alternative Models for Licensing Filipino Seafarers

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Abstract

Licensing is evidence that one has spent time and money to gain access to a class of professionals that influence the safety, health, and welfare of the public and is charged to conform to codes of ethical conduct and standards. Licensure elevates an individual above other graduates and bestows permission to be legally responsible for activities within his specialization. Licensure will likewise enhance an individual's worth and value, provide a broader set of occupational options, and earn high respect from the public (Berson, 2012). A state's law governs the merchant marine profession. To practice the profession, one must complete an academic degree in marine courses, such as a BS in Marine Transportation or a BS in Marine Engineering. Seafarers must pass the required state board-written examinations. The passing grade is determined by a body of examiners, usually called the Board of Examiners or, as in the Philippine setting, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), which is designated by the law to perform the function of regulation (Geguiento, 2010, as cited by Palmejar, 2010). In the attempt to develop alternative models for acquiring professional licenses for Filipino seafarers, a descriptive exploratory study was conducted that involved seafarers, maritime education students, and graduates of maritime education programs. Schools offering maritime education in the National Capital Region, officially listed in the Commission of Higher Education- Maritime Higher Education Institution (CHED-MHEI), as well as Maritime Training Centers and Agencies, registered in the Department of Labor-Maritime Training Council (DOLE-MTC), comprised the research population from which respondents were selected employing non-probability, purposive sampling techniques, particularly maximum variation sampling. The assessment of the acceptability of the current licensing scheme ranged from neutral to slightly acceptable. Students (with CAR and on-board training and junior maritime students) generally favor Alternative Model B, as reflected in the high mean acceptability scores, while unlicensed seafarers showed interest in Alternative Models C and D, as shown in the high mean acceptability scores.

Keywords: Licensing Filipino Seafarers, licensing model, maritime licensing, licensure of maritime professionals