

Challenges in the Retention of PNTC Colleges' Marine Transportation Students

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Abstract

This study comprehensively investigates the challenges affecting the retention of Marine Transportation students at PNTC Colleges, a premier maritime higher education institution in the Philippines. While the institution consistently records high first-year enrollment, a marked attrition is observed before students commence onboard training, signaling persistent issues in student retention that mirror broader national and global trends in maritime education. The research seeks to identify and analyze the academic, institutional, and personal factors influencing student retention, while also examining the moderating effects of demographic variables such as age, sex, family income, civil status, and domicile. Employing a correlational research design, the study utilized a self-structured, content-validated questionnaire administered to a proportionally allocated sample of third-year Marine Transportation students. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Kruskal-Wallis H test, Wilcoxon Rank-Sum Test, and Spearman Rank-Order Correlation to establish patterns, group differences, and inter-variable relationships. Findings indicate that students generally encounter moderate to high levels of academic challenges, particularly in time management, grade performance, and intellectual development. Institutional challenges are mainly rooted in the lack of modern training equipment, insufficient academic support, and inadequacies in learning facilities. On a personal level, students reported significant difficulties in social adjustment, self-belonging, and self-efficacy, underscoring the multifaceted nature of retention barriers. The analysis revealed significant differences in academic, institutional, and personal challenges based on age, sex, and family income, but not for civil status and domicile. Notably, strong positive correlations were found between academic, institutional, and personal factors, demonstrating that these dimensions are interrelated and collectively impact student retention. The study concludes that retention is a complex, multidimensional issue influenced by both institutional structures and individual student characteristics. To address these concerns, the study recommends targeted interventions, including peer support systems, enhanced academic advising, improved facilities, financial aid programs, and psychosocial support services. Implementation of such strategies is vital not only to bolster retention rates at PNTC Colleges but also to inform policy and practice across the broader maritime education sector. The results underscore the importance of an integrated, data-informed approach to student support, with implications for institutional leaders, educators, policymakers, and industry partners committed to developing a robust and sustainable maritime workforce.

Keywords: student retention, maritime education, academic challenges, institutional support, personal challenges

