

Recruitment procedure in Luxury or Cruise ships; Basis of a sustainable Recruitment Model for Filipino Seafarers

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of the global cruise industry has intensified the demand for highly qualified seafaring officers capable of operating in multicultural, service-oriented, and safety-critical environments. Despite the Philippines being one of the world's largest suppliers of maritime labor, Filipino seafaring officers remain underrepresented in officer positions on luxury and cruise ships. This study investigated the recruitment and selection practices of Philippine manning agencies to identify critical recruitment determinants and develop a sustainable recruitment model that enhances the competitiveness of Filipino seafarers in the international cruise sector. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 47 licensed manning agencies in Metro Manila, comprising 20 agencies specializing in cruise ships and 27 agencies deploying officers to container ships, tankers, bulk carriers, and other merchant vessels. Data were collected using a validated and reliability-tested survey instrument and analyzed through weighted mean, independent-samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and post hoc multiple comparison procedures. The findings indicate that recruitment and selection procedures are generally implemented at a high level and demonstrate substantial compliance with international maritime regulations, particularly the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006, as amended) and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW). However, agencies recruiting for cruise ships place significantly greater emphasis on communication proficiency, intercultural competence, adaptability, leadership, teamwork, and other non-technical competencies than agencies serving conventional merchant vessels. Although recruitment systems exhibit strong procedural alignment, persistent challenges—including documentation inconsistencies, communication barriers, deployment delays, and workforce attrition—highlight opportunities for continuous process improvement. Drawing on these findings, the study proposes a Sustainable Recruitment Model that integrates technical qualifications with behavioral and intercultural competencies to strengthen recruitment quality, regulatory compliance, and workforce sustainability. The model provides an evidence-based framework for manning agencies, cruise operators, maritime higher education institutions, and maritime regulators seeking to improve recruitment effectiveness and expand employment opportunities for Filipino seafaring officers in the global cruise industry. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge in maritime human resource management by offering empirical evidence and a practical recruitment framework that supports sustainable workforce development, enhances organizational competitiveness, and reinforces the Philippines' strategic position as a leading supplier of competent maritime professionals.

Keywords: Filipino seafarers; cruise ship recruitment; maritime human resource management; sustainable recruitment model; cultural competence; STCW compliance.

