

Indian Sea Farers Along With Their Professional Amenities for Endurance

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Abstract

The need to deal separately with a specific category of workers is usually justified by either the unique conditions of their work or the necessity for their special protection. Both of these factors are fully applicable in the case of seafarers. This is primarily because for seafarers the ship is both a workplace and a home. Seafarers are a significantly large occupational group and their work is highly burdening and hazardous. The environmental, physical, chemical, biological and psychosocial factors have a great impact on their quality of work and life. The present study focuses on the stress and job satisfaction of the Indian sea farers who work on-board the ship. 56 nautical officers as well as marine engineers took part in this study. One job satisfaction questionnaire and one stress questionnaire, specifically designed for this study was administered on the participants. Results reveal that job satisfaction and stress are negatively related. t value is not significant in case of job satisfaction and stress when comparison was done between the Nautical Officers and Marine Engineers.

Keywords

Sea Farers, Stress, Job Satisfaction, Nautical Officers, Marine Engineers

I. Introduction

In the profession of seafarers, both physical and mental load are considered high. The work conditions and content of the work contains many potential stress factors. Maneuvering a ship has many mental stressing phases for both the deck and engine room officers and crews. Shipping technology is changing continuously putting more stress to the seafarers and possibly resulting in greater number of accidents. Good numbers of Seafarers are choosing shore jobs after a short period at sea.

Seafarers spend more time on board ship with few visits ashore during their duties on board the vessel. The seafarers work in an environment of multiple cultures, multiple languages with demand for higher skills. They are required to be ready for 24 hours either for normal operations or for catering to the requirements of contingencies. Thus, team work, stress tolerance, job satisfaction etc. appear to be relevant to the working life of sea. The study on behavioral profile of seafarers and their effect on accidents are likely to throw light in the common endeavor to minimize accidents, wastages and improve Risk Management Process. Remedial actions may help to reduce such accidents and wastage and may add to the quality of life of sea farers in particular and Indian Maritime Sector in general.

Due to the isolated work environment aboard ships, it is of paramount importance for seafarers to be in optimum condition at all times, such that they can respond to any emergencies on board; after all, the ship is their home. However, rules governing the way of life aboard merchant ships, such as work scheduling are less stringent than those of naval vessels, resulting in a possible neglect of the welfare of merchant seamen. This may lead to decreased job satisfaction and mental and physical wellbeing, thus contributing to the onset of stress which further exacerbates the problem of poor performance of duties. There are certain

unique characteristics of the seafarer's occupation that have to be considered when studying the psychological work environment on board ships. The occupations of seafarers and the crews on ships as a whole differ a lot from land based workplaces (Kristiansen, 2005).

Since seafarers work in shifts, the results are tough working hours and often time pressure connected to travelling time, and operations as unloading and loading of the cargo. There are many psychological stressors as result of the tough working hours. Fatigue, inadequate rest between watches and sleep loss by being woken unexpectedly often are seen as such stressors.

Another important stress factor for all crew groups is separation from home (Kristiansen, 2005). Missing the family and lack of contact during periods of illness at home are both typical situations which are also known from studies within the offshore industry (Kristiansen, 2005). Factors such as worry about family, lack of support from home and absence of stability in home life are mentioned as contributors to stress.

All the stated traits specifically apply for seafarers working on different type of ships. The unique functioning of crews has to be considered when studying factors that shape the psychological and the physical work environment on board ships. As variables these can be considered as an indicator of emotional well-being or psychological health.

Understanding human factors underlying major shipping accidents appears to be a topic of key importance for maritime policy and management. Studies show that around 80% of causes of marine accidents are attributable to human errors (Moore, 1993; National Research Council 1976).

Human error has traditionally been viewed as an individual cognitive, behavioural caused by carelessness or ignorance. However, there is a growing recognition of the influence of situational factors in provoking and shaping errors. (Carl, 2009) Situational factors such as inappropriate planning, wrong interpretation, poor communication, team support etc. can provide error traps for people to fall into.

Reason (1997) observed that to understand and manage human error, we need to focus on human condition and also on conditions in which people work.

Hill (1972) found that fewer men remain in the Merchant Navy for longer periods and look upon to sea as a short term career. This may be categorized as "wastage" since producing a Nautical Officer or a Marine Engineer cost to the society.

Learning from past accident is challenging. The sequence of events leading to an accident is in fact a case study and often appears to be unique to each such case. To learn from past accidents in a generalized form, drawing systematic, general and widely applicable factors into their causes and mapping casual patterns across several level of analysis was proposed by Carl in 2009.

Wall (1980) found that job-satisfaction and personality of shipmates are linked. He also found that personality profile of Sea-farers differs with the same for people working ashore. Hill (1972) found that quality of relationship on board becomes extremely important both horizontally and vertically between shipmates.

From the review of literature it has been observed that various studies have highlighted in finding factors which cause accidents on sea. The present study aims at empirical investigation of stress, team work, job satisfaction and related aspects and their roles in shipping. The study also proposes to assess job satisfaction level of Indian Sea-farers and their effects.

II. Method

A. Sample

In this project, data have been collected on the Indian Sea-farers in the officers' category (both Nautical and Marine Engineers). Due to difficulty of access to personnel in port and the time delays involved in using the post, it was decided to approach those officers who were registered in Indian Maritime University, Kolkata Campus. To facilitate collections of data in a short time period, relevant data have been collected from the participants to various post-sea courses conducted by Indian Maritime University, Kolkata Campus. Participants to those post-sea courses are being drawn from sea-farers working in various Shipping Lines (both Indian Flag vessels and Foreign Flag vessels). All participants were informed that participation was voluntary and about the confidentiality treatment of their reply.

B. Measures Used

The following measures have been used depending upon the purpose of the study.

1. The job satisfaction questionnaire consisted of 20 items as listed below.

- Leave
- Salary
- Catering
- Mail Facilities
- Interesting Work
- Promotion Prospects
- Training
- Working Conditions
- Accommodation
- Family Welfare
- Job Status
- Job Security
- Participation in Management
- Type of Trade
- Company Developments
- Provision of Uniform
- Individuality to Shore Staff
- Size of Crew
- Ship Type
- Continuity of Ships

2. The stress questionnaire was designed for the evaluation of subjective perception of work and the individual feeling of work-related stress. The questionnaire consisted of 10 items as listed below:

- Mental strain related to the complexity of work
- Lack of rewards for service
- Lack of self- confidence related to the organization of work
- Social relations
- Feeling of threat
- Physical onerousness
- Unpleasant work conditions
- Lack of control

- Lack of support
- Sense of responsibility

C. Procedure

The measures have been administered along with some socio economic information on the Nautical Officers as well as Marine Engineers. After collecting the data, these were scrutinized carefully and scoring was done accordingly. The data have been analysed and the findings have been presented in the result section.

D. Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Participants on Job Satisfaction and Stress Score

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Job Satisfaction	56	42.88	10.641
Stress	56	23.27	4.097

Table 2: Correlation Between Job Satisfaction and Stress (N = 56)

	Job Satisfaction	Stress
Job Satisfaction	1	-.044
Stress total	-.044	1

Table 3: Comparison of Mean, SD and t Values Between Two Groups

	Nautical (N= 47)		Engineer (N=9)		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Job Satisfaction	42.68	11.245	43.89	7.079	.420
Stress	23.64	3.881	21.33	4.873	1.340

E. Discussion

The concept of job satisfaction consists of the feelings and attitudes one has about one's job. It can be considered as the global feeling about the job, or as related constellation of attitudes about various aspects of the job (Riggio, 2009). There are two approaches to conceptualizing job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). One approach is global approach, which considers overall job satisfaction. This approach is used when the overall bottom line attitude is of interest. Overall satisfaction may be composite of numerous factors as satisfaction with pay, the type of work itself, working conditions, the type of supervision, company policies and procedures, relations with co-workers, and opportunities for promotion and advancement.

Stress plays a role in many environments. It is a determinant of functioning, health or performance. Job satisfaction may be the amount of perceived stress on board a ship. In the present study, job satisfaction and stress are negatively related. Spector (2003) revealed that there are many different conditions at job that might serve as job stressors. Comparison was done between two groups and result is presented in Table 3. t value is not significant in case of job satisfaction and stress between the Nautical Officers and Marine Engineers.

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