Literature Review of Maritime Shipping

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Literature Review Final Draft

October 25, 2018

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A general browser search with Google on the topic of “maritime shipping in the CNMI” resulted in 50,700 hits mostly consisting of articles containing information about maritime happenings and events that surround the CNMI. The importance of the topic is that maritime shipping plays a big role in the CNMI. It is how most goods and supplies arrive from different areas around the world. The earliest article found so far is from the year 2008 which involved the subject of maritime shipping affecting the economy. Many of the literature surrounding the topic of maritime shipping in the CNMI seem to be non-academic, but there is also literature that has been found as early as 1997 about maritime shipping in general. The review of literature will discuss the various perspectives presented on the topic by secondary resources specifically on the performance of ships and maritime workers, the safety and risk management of maritime workers, and the working conditions that maritime workers need.

There are many ships for different purposes. There are general cargo ships and container ships. These are quite similar since both carry cargo. The difference between these two ships, however, is that cargo can be loaded and discharged much quicker than for general cargo ships, have a less required amount of crew members, and are much larger and faster than general cargo ships. There are ships that transport vehicles Then there are the tugs which are the called ‘the tractors’ of the shipping industry. There are many types of tugs for different purposes as well such as port tugs and coastal tugs (Barass, 2004). In the CNMI, these are the ships that are most familiar to the maritime workers here in the CNMI. The port tugs are the ones that bring in the general cargo and container ships.

Just as there are many ships for different purposes there are many different jobs for the crew members. Some of the many jobs are ship maintenance and deck work. This is basically keeping cleanliness, reporting any abnormalities, chipping, etc. This work seems unimportant at first, but it builds good seamanship (Bhattacharjee, 2017).

When working on a ship there are precautionary measures and processes to follow. The crew members identify what could go wrong and come up with a plan of what to do to prevent it. The process that is usually followed is identifying hazards, assess the risks concerned, apply controls to reduce risks, and monitor the effectiveness of those controls (Dasgupta, 2017). The most important risks to look out for is health and safety issues that may involve individuals directly or indirectly (Dasgupta, 2017).

Although there are these safety measures and precautions, there are still many things that need improvement or more awareness in the maritime shipping industry. Maritime jobs are starting to become more irrelevant according to Bikram Singh (2017). In other words, a shortage of skilled maritime workers. He states that “sometimes the seafarers are left high and dry without pay or at times underpaid”. Other reasons as to why maritime jobs are not being preferred are that the sea conditions are poor due to global warming and climate changing, modern era pirates, and salaries are not worth the amount of risk that maritime workers take (Bikram Singh, 2017). Some solutions are suggested to these problems, but not all are addressed. A suggestion for some of these problems is “having a national ocean workforce database and compile an annual report in ocean-related human resource development and needs” (An ocean blueprint for the 21st century, 2004). Considering that the suggestion was made before the problem occurred,

these conditions must not have been met yet or no form of action has been taken.

The design of ships, the performance of maritime workers, safety precautions, risk time management, and the working conditions of maritime workers have all been explained briefly throughout this paper and have provided more insight about maritime shipping. This information is very helpful in terms of defining the mechanics and inner workings in the maritime shipping industry. Although most of the literature is up-to-date, there are still some changes to be made in the maritime shipping industry for the better.

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