

UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF MERCHANT NAVY ON SEAFARERS IN THOOTHUKUDI

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ABSTRACT:

Understanding the economic conditions of the merchant navy on seafarers in Thoothukudi is the topic of research. This study is taken to analyze the income level of merchant navy personnel in Thoothukudi, to evaluate the housing and living standards supported by their earnings, and to study the impact of career duration. To assess the economic impact of working life balance and to study the job satisfaction of the merchant Navy. Primary and secondary data were used in this study to collect the data.. The purposive sampling technique is adopted to select 120 respondents who are used to understand the economic conditions of the Merchant Navy on seafarers in Thoothukudi. This study shows that most merchant navy seafarers have completed maritime courses and certifications. Most are employed in private shipping companies and hold Indian CDC certificates. Their income primarily falls between ₹51,000-₹1,00,000, with direct bank transfers as the preferred payment method. Financial priorities include long-term investments, family expenses, and savings. Job satisfaction is influenced by rank, experience, and company policies, while career duration plays a key role in job stability and retirement planning.

Keywords:

Socio-economic, maritime, CDC, Work-life balance, Voyages

INTRODUCTION :

The economic conditions of the merchant navy, particularly focusing on the impact on seafarers in Thoothukudi, are crucial in understanding the livelihood and challenges faced by those working in this sector. Thoothukudi, also known as Tuticorin, is a coastal city in Tamil Nadu, India, with a significant presence of maritime trade and shipping activities. The port plays a pivotal role in facilitating international and national trade, and as a result, seafarers from this region are integral to the operations of the merchant navy. This sector offers employment opportunities to many young men and women from Thoothukudi, providing

them with a steady income and a pathway for economic mobility. However, the economic conditions of these seafarers are shaped by various factors, including the global shipping industry's fluctuations, shipping company policies, wages, working conditions, and the impact of maritime regulations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Rai, A. (2020) Employer branding, a key aspect of Human Resource Management, has been extensively discussed in the literature, particularly through the instrumental-symbolic framework introduced by Cable and Turban (2001). This framework highlights instrumental attributes like pay, benefits, and career growth, and symbolic attributes such as organizational image, prestige, and values (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Edwards, 2009). While research has applied this framework across various industries, its use in the maritime sector remains limited, despite the unique challenges of seafaring, including isolation and global mobility (Raub & Streit, 2006). This study bridges the gap by examining Indian seafarers, focusing on how these attributes influence job attractiveness.

Shariah (2018) The literature identifies two key factors contributing to gaps in maritime training: globalization and technological advancements. Globalization has led to practices like flagging out, the emergence of a global labor market, and the shift of maritime education from Traditional Maritime Nations to emerging economies, resulting in inconsistent training standards, reduced investment by advancements have reduced crew sizes, changed job requirements, and rendered traditional apprenticeship models less effective, necessitating a shift toward cognitive learning approaches. The review recommends standardizing training, shipping companies, and resource limitations in training institutions. Technological enhancing resources, and aligning education with evolving technological needs.

Avey (2024). Research highlights the importance of Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Family Emotional Support, and Job Satisfaction in enhancing workforce well-being, particularly among seafarers. PsyCap, comprising Hope, Optimism, Self-Efficacy, and Resilience, positively influences job satisfaction and performance (Luthans et al., 2007). Family Emotional Support reduces stress and boosts emotional stability, indirectly improving job satisfaction (King et al., 1995). Seafarers, prone to mental health challenges due to occupational stress, benefit significantly from supportive work environments (Oldenburg et

al., 2010). Tools like the Generic Job Satisfaction Scale effectively measure workplace satisfaction (Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997), while studies indicate PsyCap mediates the relationship between external social factors and job satisfaction, fostering resilience and engagement (Avey et al., 2010). These insights emphasize the need for strategic HR practices to create supportive environments that enhance job satisfaction and performance in the maritime sector.

Fahim (2022) This review examines the impact of job stressors on the job satisfaction of merchant navy personnel, a profession marked by isolation and high stress. Research identifies psychological factors, such as loneliness and anxiety, and leadership styles as significant determinants of job satisfaction, while the effects of workload and performance appraisal are less conclusive. Regression analyses reveal that psychological factors and leadership have a substantial influence, whereas workload and performance appraisal show minimal impact. The findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions to reduce stress and enhance job satisfaction, providing valuable insights for policymakers and future research.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The limited awareness of financial planning and career advancement among Merchant Navy seafarers in Thoothukudi exacerbates their economic difficulties. Without access to proper financial education, many seafarers struggle to manage their earnings, save for the future, or invest in long-term goals. The evolving maritime industry, with its increasing automation and green shipping trends, demands new skills that are often not addressed in

current training programs. This limits the ability of seafarers to keep up with industry changes, hindering their career growth and income potential.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

- 1.To analyze the income level of merchant navy personnel in Thoothukudi.
- 2 To evaluate the housing and living standards supported by their earnings.
- 3.To study the impact of career duration.
- 4.To assess the economic impact of work-life balance.
- 5.To study the job satisfaction of the merchant Navy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Sampling design	Purposive design
Period of the study	November 2024 to March 2025
Data based	Primary data
Test for Analysis	Percentage Analysis, Descriptive Statistics, One-sample t-test, Independent sample t-test test and One-way ANOVA

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY:

1. Time is one of the main hindrances which limit effective data collection.
2. The number of respondents is limited.
3. The area of study is limited to Thoothukudi, so the study doesn't apply to other cities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

TABLE SHOWING THE SATISFACTION LEVEL

SATISFACTION	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Basic needs are met with earnings	120	4.0000	1.02899
Financial security is ensured by the income	120	3.7417	.93031
Satisfaction with the current living standards	120	3.4250	1.11267
Earnings allow for a preferred location	120	3.3083	1.25555

Extended voyages in the merchant navy affect family life	120	3.5667	1.23488
The job responsibilities correspond with relevant skills and interests	120	3.5417	1.26289
Global economic changes directly affect salaries	120	3.4917	1.10762
The job allows me to achieve the financial goals that and set for myself	120	3.3583	1.19379
Avoid unnecessary expenses with a balanced work-life routine	120	3.5500	1.12907
Income enables the enjoyment of a good lifestyle	120	3.3750	1.19567
Satisfaction with job schedule	120	3.4667	1.06063
Security in the current job	120	3.4333	1.10563
Satisfaction with the promotion opportunities in the job	120	3.6167	1.21740
Satisfaction with the level of communication in the workplace	120	3.4917	1.11518
An improved work-life balance allows for spending during shore leave	120	3.6833	1.10752
Career duration has provided significant opportunities for promotions	120	3.4167	1.19230
Income supports maintaining a social status	120	3.4750	1.20895
Satisfaction with current income	120	3.5833	1.10449
Earnings enable home renovations and upgradations	120	3.6833	1.15942

INFERENCE:

The analysis reveals that respondents are most satisfied with their ability to meet basic needs, meaning 4.0000, SD= 1.028, indicating general agreement. Earnings enabling home renovations and upgrades mean 3.6833, SD = 1.1594 and satisfaction with current income mean 3.5833, SD 1.10449, also show moderate satisfaction. Conversely, satisfaction with current living standards means = 3.4250, SD 1.11267 and financial security means = 3.7417, SD 0.930, demonstrate a slightly lower perception, with financial security having the least variability. The lowest satisfaction is observed in career duration, providing promotion opportunities mean of 3.4167, SD 1.19230, indicating concerns about career growth.

ONE-SAMPLE T TEST

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference between perception and satisfaction.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant difference between perception and satisfaction.

TABLE SHOWING THE RELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND SATISFACTION

SATISFACTION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T VALUE	P VALUE
Basic needs are met with earnings	4.0000	1.02899	10.646	.000
Financial security is ensured by the income	3.7417	.93031	8.733	.000
Satisfaction with the current living standards	3.4250	1.11267	4.184	.000
Earnings allow for a preferred location	3.3083	1.25555	2.690	.008
Extended voyages in the merchant navy affect family life	3.5667	1.23488	5.027	.000

The job responsibilities correspond with relevant skills and interests	3.5417	1.26289	4.698	.000
Global economic changes directly affect salaries	3.4917	1.10762	4.863	.000
The job allows me to achieve the financial goals that and set for myself	3.3583	1.19379	3.288	.001
The physical and mental demands of the job are manageable with experience	3.4167	1.22703	3.720	.000
Avoid unnecessary expenses with a balanced work-life routine	3.5500	1.12907	5.336	.000
Income enables the enjoyment of a good lifestyle	3.3750	1.19567	3.436	.001
Satisfaction with job schedule	3.4667	1.06063	4.820	.000
Security in the current job	3.4333	1.10563	4.293	.000
Satisfaction with the promotion opportunities in job	3.6167	1. the 21740	5.549	.000
Satisfaction with the level of communication in workplace	3.4917	1.11518	4.830	.000
An improved work-life life bwork-lifelows to spend during shore leave	3.6833	1.10752	6.759	.000
Career duration has provided with opportunities for promotions	3.4167	1.19230	3.828	.000
Income supports maintaining a social status	3.4750	1.20895	4.304	.000
Satisfaction with current income	3.5833	1.10449	5.786	.000
Earnings enable home renovations and upgradations	3.6833	1.15942	6.456	.000

INFERENCE:

Each impact has a mean score, standard deviation, t-value, and p-value. The values for all impacts are .000, significance 0.05. A p-value < 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis (H_0) should be rejected. Since all p-values are statistically significant, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis(H_1). This means there is a significant difference between perception and satisfaction across all impacts.

TABLE SHOWING THE CAREER DURATION INCOME

SATISFACTION	CAREER DURATION INCOME				T value	P-value
	YES		NO			
	mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Basic needs are met with earnings	4.0122	1.08.291	3.9737	.91495	.1.90 .202	.142
Financial security is ensured by the income	3.8780	.83725	3.4474	1.05772	2.406 2.220	.169
Satisfaction with the current living standards	3.4146	1.11057	3.4474	1.13179	-.149 -.148	.932
Earnings allow for a preferred location	3.2805	1.23002	3.3684	1.32382	-.356 -.346	.358
Extended voyages in the merchant navy affect family life	3.6463	1.15867	3.3947	1.38602	1.039 .973	.119
The Job responsibilities correspond with relevant skills and interests	3.6098	1.23484	3.3947	1.32623	.867 .844	.627

Global economic changes directly affect salaries.	3.5122	1.08005	3.4474	1.17858	.297 .288	.460
The physical and mental demands of the job are manageable with experience	3.3049	1.20379	3.6579	1.25798	-1.473 -1.449	.950
Avoid unnecessary expenses with a balanced work-life routine	3.5488	1.17749	3.5526	1.03185	-.017 -.018	.283
Income enables the enjoyment of good lifestyle	3.414 a	1.24674	3.2895	1.08821	.532 .559	.095
Satisfaction with job schedule	3.4146	1.06518	3.5789	1.05604	-.788 -.791	.821
Security in current job	3. the 4024	1.08707	3.5000	1.15665	-.448 -.438	.448
Satisfaction with the promotion opportunities in the job	3.5854	1.24674	3.6842	1.16492	-.412 -.423	.593
Satisfaction with level of communication in the workplace	3.4756	1.07984	3.5263	1.20218	-.231 -.222	.307

An improved work-life balance allows for spending during shore leave	3.7317	1.14449	3.5789	1.03013	.701 .729	.334
Career duration has provided significant opportunities for promotions	3.4878	1.19.922	3.2632	1.17828	.960 .966	.625
Income supports maintaining a social status	3.4756	1.18869	3.4737	1.26783	.008 .008	.777
Satisfaction with current income	3.5976	1.07565	3.5526	1.17858	.206 .200	.610
Earnings enable home renovations and upgradations	3.7195	1.13610	3.6053	1.22009	.501 .488	.705

INFERENCE:

The independent sample t-test examined the impact of career duration income on job satisfaction, comparing p-values to the 0.05 significance level. The results indicate that some factors, like "Global economic changes affecting salaries" ($t = 2.97$, $p = 0.046$), showed a significant difference, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), confirming that income influences satisfaction in this area. Conversely, factors like "Avoiding unnecessary expenses with a balanced work-life routine" ($t = -0.017$, $p = 0.283$) were not statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of H_0 , suggesting no meaningful difference. Overall, the findings highlight that while income impacts job satisfaction in areas related to financial

stability and economic changes, other aspects remain unaffected, emphasizing that career duration income is not the sole determinant of job satisfaction.

TABLE SHOWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF QUALIFICATION AND SATISFACTION

SATISFACTION/ RANK		SUM SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	P VALUE
S1	Between Groups	1.401	3	.467	.435	.729
	Within Groups	124.599	116	1.074		
	Total	126.000	119			
S2	Between Groups	3.645	3	1.215	1.419	.241
	Within Groups	99.346	116	.856		
	Total	102.992	119			
S3	Between Groups	8.086	3	2.695	2.246	.087
	Within Groups	139.239	116	1.200		
	Total	147.325	119			
S4	Between Groups	29.766	3	9.922	7.293	.000
	Within Groups	157.826	116	1.361		
	Total	187.592	119			
S5	Between Groups	9.555	3	3.185	2.149	.098
	Within Groups	171.912	116	1.482		
	Total	181.467	119			
S6	Between Groups	12.287	3	4.096	2.677	.050
	Within Groups	177.504	116	1.530		
	Total	189.792	119			
S7	Between Groups	9.225	3	3.075	2.608	.055

	Within Groups	136.767	116	1.179		
	Total	145.992	119			
S8	Between Groups	9.340	3	3.113	2.254	.086
	Within Groups	160.252	116	1.381		
	Total	169.592	119			
S9	Between Groups	12.519	3	4.173	2.905	.038
	Within Groups	166.648	116	1.437		
	Total	179.167	119			
S10	Between Groups	4.610	3	1.537	1.212	.309
	Within Groups	147.090	116	1.268		
	Total	151.700	119			
S11	Between Groups	9.638	3	3.213	2.322	.079
	Within Groups	160.487	116	1.384		
	Total	170.125	119			
S12	Between Groups	30.889	3	10.296	11.598	.000
	Within Groups	102.978	116	.888		
	Total	133.867	119			
S13	Between Groups	11.507	3	3.836	3.321	.022
	Within Groups	133.959	116	1.155		
	Total	145.467	119			
S14	Between Groups	25.095	3	8.365	6.415	.000
	Within Groups	151.272	116	1.304		
	Total	176.367	119			
S15	Between Groups	14.052	3	4.684	4.056	.009
	Within Groups	133.940	116	1.155		

	Total	147.992	119			
S16	Between Groups	10.570	3	3.523	3.019	.033
	Within Groups	135.397	116	1.167		
	Total	145.967	119			
S17	Between Groups	19.248	3	6.416	4.964	.003
	Within Groups	149.919	116	1.292		
	Total	169.167	119			
S18	Between Groups	4.905	3	1.635	1.122	.343
	Within Groups	169.020	116	1.457		
	Total	173.925	119			
S19	Between Groups	12.376	3	4.125	3.604	.016
	Within Groups	132.791	116	1.145		
	Total	145.167	119			
S20	Between Groups	14.631	3	4.877	3.892	.011
	Within Groups	145.336	116	1.253		
	Total	159.967	119			

INFERENCE:

The above table ANOVA shows a significant value stated with <0.01 , and it is less than 0.05. Hence, I reject the null hypothesis and conclude by accepting that there is a significant difference between the effectiveness of qualification and satisfaction. The higher F value is 11.598 for effectiveness, further supporting and motivating the stronger influence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION :

- Respondents reported the highest satisfaction in meeting their basic needs (mean = 4.000, SD = 1.028). Satisfaction with income (mean = 3.5833, SD = 1.1049) and financial security (mean = 3.7417, SD = 0.930) showed moderate satisfaction, while career promotion opportunities had the lowest satisfaction (mean = 3.4167, SD = 1.1923), indicating career growth concerns. The p-value is 0.000 (significant at

<0.05). Overall Perception and Satisfaction p-value: 0.000 (Significant at <0.05.) The null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

- Career Duration Income Impact on Job Satisfaction. Global economic changes affecting salaries:t-value: 2.97, p-value: 0.046 (Significant at <0.05) Null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Avoiding unnecessary expenses with a balanced work-life routine: t-value: -0.017, p-value: 0.283 (Not significant at >0.05 Null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.
- Effectiveness of Qualification and Satisfaction. F-value: 11.598, p-value: <0.01 (Significant) Null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Overall, statistical results confirm significant differences in satisfaction based on financial security, career growth, and qualifications, except for personal financial habits, which showed no meaningful impact. The null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, confirming a significant difference between perception and satisfaction.

SUGGESTIONS

- Companies should provide structured promotion opportunities to address concerns about career duration.
- More training programs for career advancement should be introduced to increase salaries.
- Financial planning workshops should be conducted to help employees manage housing and savings efficiently.
- More flexible contracts and working conditions should be introduced to attract talent.
- Policies should be made to improve merchant navy working conditions and income stability.
- Introduce mentor-propriatorship young professionals to enhance career longevity.
- Provide structured career progression with clear promotion paths
- Encourage long-term retention through loyalty bonuses and extended contracts.
- Offer financial planning sessions to help seafarers manage earnings effectively.
- Introduce investment advisory services for long-term wealth management.
- Advocate for salary standardization across private and government shipping companies, rotating work schedules to reduce long voyages and increase shore leave.
- Provide better internet access onboard to maintain communication with family.

CONCLUSION:

The merchant navy is appealing due to its high initial salaries and international career opportunities, although increasing competition and global economic factors affect income trends. Despite these challenges, the majority of respondents are satisfied with their earnings, living standards, and career prospects, viewing their profession as a stable and rewarding career choice.

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