

*An Analysis of Filipino Seafarers' Return Preparedness
and Perception of Successful Return*

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Abstract

A Filipino seafarer's return home is recognized by his family and society, as a culmination of a financially lucrative career and the achievement of lifelong objectives. This study aims to contextualize Cassarino's theory of preparedness and 1) identify the factors that seafarers consider when preparing for their retirement; 2) determine their level of preparedness for return to the Philippines; and 3) assess their individual perception of successful return and reintegration. Factors reflective of their Return Preparedness, through their successful resource mobilization of tangible, intangible and social capital, are operationalized (Cassarino,2004). Quantitatively, a pilot study and survey provide a demographic profile. Cramer Coefficient V was used to establish the association between Return Preparedness and Perception of Successful Return. Qualitatively, in-depth interviews of retired seafarers constitute the case studies corresponding to the different Levels of Preparedness and Perception of Successful Return. Research shows that: 1) Seafarers accumulate tangible resources in the form of savings, ownership of home, car, and a small business. Education of both children and the seafarer himself are necessary Intangible Resources. Social Capital Resource includes family relations with wife and children and their commitment to maintaining a simple life while the father is on board the ship. 2) Further contextualizing Cassarino's Theory on Return Preparedness, the study identified a Medium Level of Preparedness, wherein the value of family relations and support has altered the dynamics of perception of successful return. 3) The presence or lack of family support facilitates or hinders the seafarer's resource mobilization, influencing his perception of successful or unsuccessful return.

Keywords: Filipino Seafarer, Return Migration, Return Preparedness, Social Capital Reintegration

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Introduction

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, efforts have been made by the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Philippines to repatriate thousands of overseas Filipino workers who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. As of the first week of May 2020, there have been 24,422 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) repatriated to the Philippines. 70 percent of whom are sea-based labour migrants. (Tamayo, 2020) Most of these return migrants are unable to complete their migration cycle and are forced to return home due to unemployment brought about by the effects of the pandemic in their host country, or in the case of most seafarers, the cessation of operation of the global cruise ship industry. The impending issues now are the questions of how these return migrants are to successfully reintegrate into society and are they ready to finally come home for good.

It is estimated that the shipping industry accounts for almost 90 percent of movement in world trade. Globally, the industry employs more than 1.5 million seafarers, both officers and ratings or non-officers, including those in cargo, tankers, or cruise ships. In this number, one in every four global maritime professionals is Filipino, with the Philippines being the largest supplier of ratings for the maritime industry. (Borromeo,2020; ICS.2020) In 2017, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) reported 378,072 seafarers deployed. (POEA) “Demand for Filipino global maritime professional remains strong; a testament to the indomitable spirit of the Filipino, the dedication to service, and a commitment to excellence on the job.” (Borromeo, 2014)

A Filipino seafarer’s contribution to the Philippine economy is undeniably substantial, such that a seafarer’s return home is recognized by his family and the greater society, as a culmination of a financially lucrative career and a realization of lifelong objectives and ambitions. For this reason, their planned preparation for their retirement is one that must be seen as a model of a “calculated strategy,” carefully planned out and implemented and should not be an afterthought. (Cassarino, 2004)

Background of the Study

In studies of migrant workers in the Philippines, most of these focus on the OFW’s remittances and its contribution to the economy of the country. Emerging literature and discussion have been on the need to protect Household Service Workers (HSW) due to their vulnerable working conditions. (Dungo, N. et al. 2013; Asis, 2008) “Majority of these studies document and analyze either pre-deployment, deployment or on-site conditions and interventions.” (ILO, 1998) Lacking significantly are studies that have investigated the OFWs, especially of seafarers, that have returned, and have retired from working abroad. “Data on the return migration of Filipino workers are virtually non-existent.” (Asis, 2008)

“Today the attention paid by international organizations to the link between migration and development has highlighted the need to revisit approaches to return migration.” (Cassarino, 2004) The seafarer’s internationally protected maritime industry, the years of service and their experiences abroad, allow for ‘resource mobilization’ and ‘preparedness’ while on board and upon their return to the Philippines, their home country. It is believed that the migration cycle ends when the migrant returns home

for good and is then tasked to reintegrate back into the society, culturally and economically speaking. But it is essential to understand that return does not begin when the migrant comes home, initial preparation is conducted for the migrant to reintegrate back successfully and easily into their society.

Thus, the focus of this research are the Filipino seafarers who have returned and have retired from seafaring. This study specifically investigates their level of preparedness and their propensity to return home. Certain variables and conditions, which are reflective of their preparedness through their successful resource mobilization, is operationalized.

Theoretical Framework

Although many studies have been conducted to provide an overview of the literature on return migration, (Cassarino, 2004; De Haas, 2010; Massey,1993 in Meeteren, et al. 2014; Bueno & Prieto-Rosas, 2019; Kunuroglu, et al.,2016) some have made efforts to contextualize the existing theories on return migration through country-specific case studies. (Meeteren, et al. 2014, Naveed, et al. 2017, and Cassarino, 2008)

In these country – specific case studies, Meeteren, et al. (2014) conclude that one of the overarching factors necessary for a positive post-return migration is the favourable circumstances of the migrant while in the destination or host country. Being able to accumulate resources in time for his return home, migrants are able to satisfy social and financial expectations of people in his home country upon his return. (Van Houte and Davis, 2008 in Meeteren, et al. 2014, Cassarino,2008) Similarly, Naveed, et al. (2017) argue that migrants who are unable to integrate economically and socially in the host country results to return migration. Consequently, some migration theories consider return migration as a failure of the migration process. New Economics Labour Migration theory and the Structural approach highlight the important role of financial and economic resources brought back to the home country in determining failure or success of the return migration. (Batistella,2018; Cassarino 2004)

In the studies that have been conducted on return migrants in the Philippines, conclusions have been made on the value of reintegration programs in the successful return of migrants. (ILO,1998) However, as Batistella (2018) argues, return migrants have varying reasons behind their return and identifies return migrants as greatly influenced by the length of time spent in the host country and the favourable condition in the host and home country during their labour migration. (Batistella, 2018) Cerase in Cassarino, 2004)

Some literature such as Gmelch (1980), Chappell and Glennie (2010), Batistella (2018) and Cerase in Cassarino (2004), classified return migrants and identified their motivation to return to their home country. Contextualizing the Filipino return migrants, Asis (2008) notes that migrants “will continue to work abroad for as long as their health will allow them to, or if they have accumulated enough savings, or once their children have completed college education.” (Asis, 2008) Filipino return migrants are essentially categorized as those who have either 1) achieved their initial goals and are ready to go home; 2) reached retirement age; 3) family circumstances 4)

returned due to a crisis brought about by unforeseen situations in the host or home country.

Conceptual Framework

This study aims to contextualize Cassarino's theory on Return Migration by applying his concepts of preparedness and resource mobilization to the case of the Filipino seafarers. Return migrant's initial goals are met and occurs once financial resources are accumulated to sustain his return home. (Cassarino,2008) It is not enough that there is a willingness to return, Return Preparedness must be supported by the readiness to return, which can only be achieved when resources are mobilized. Using the social network theory, Cassarino identified tangible, intangible, and social capital as resources necessary for preparation. Willingness to return should be viewed as a part of readiness to return. Cassarino (2004) differentiates migrants according to their willingness and resource mobilization pattern as having 1) High; 2) Low; or 3) No Level of Preparedness.

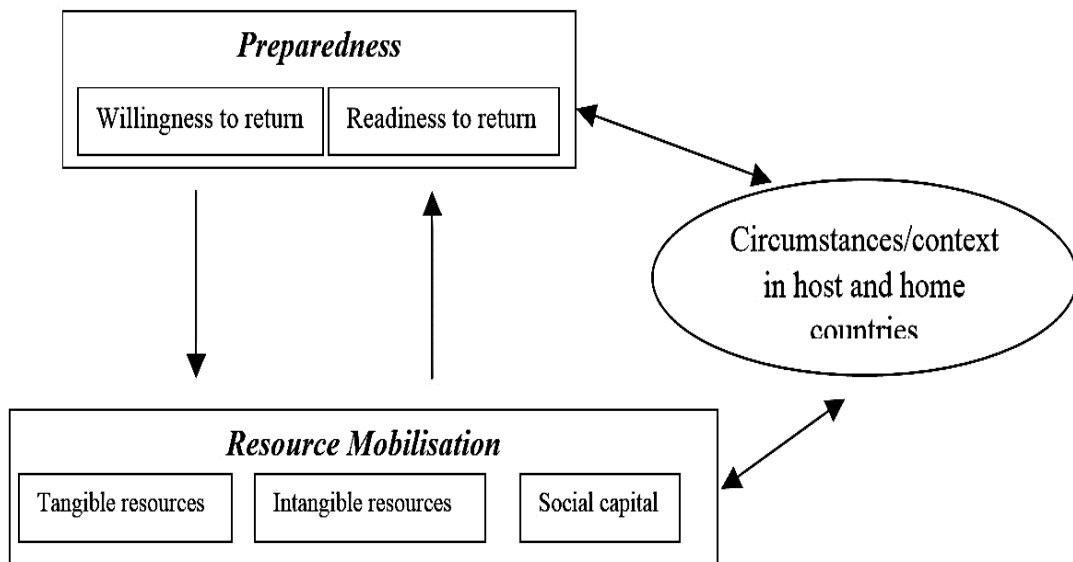


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Cassarino 2004:271)

Operational Framework

Given Cassarino's Return Preparedness Levels, this study examines the pattern and process of resource mobilization by Filipino seafarers and relates how or what are the resources mobilized for their preparation. Willingness to return, as part of the readiness to return, is indicated by the seafarers' decision to return after their contract ends or when they are able to achieve the financial goal, they have set for themselves. According to Cassarino (2004), migrants return after they have achieved the goal they have set for themselves before their departure.

These resources include 1) Tangible resources are financial resources that include social security, retirement package, medical benefits, remittances, investments and savings; 2)Intangible resources include friends, relationships, skills acquired during the migration experience; and 3) Social Capital includes the personal and family values, social background that the migrant brought with him prior to leaving and may

have developed during the migration process. “These are relations established prior to migration which the migrant was able to maintain through the migration experience, of whom the migrant believes can still help and facilitate his return home. These are beneficial relationships and “resources provided by the returnees’ families or households.” (Cassarino, 2004) Return Preparedness not only asks whether the migrant is willing to go home, but also asks whether the migrant is ready to go home.

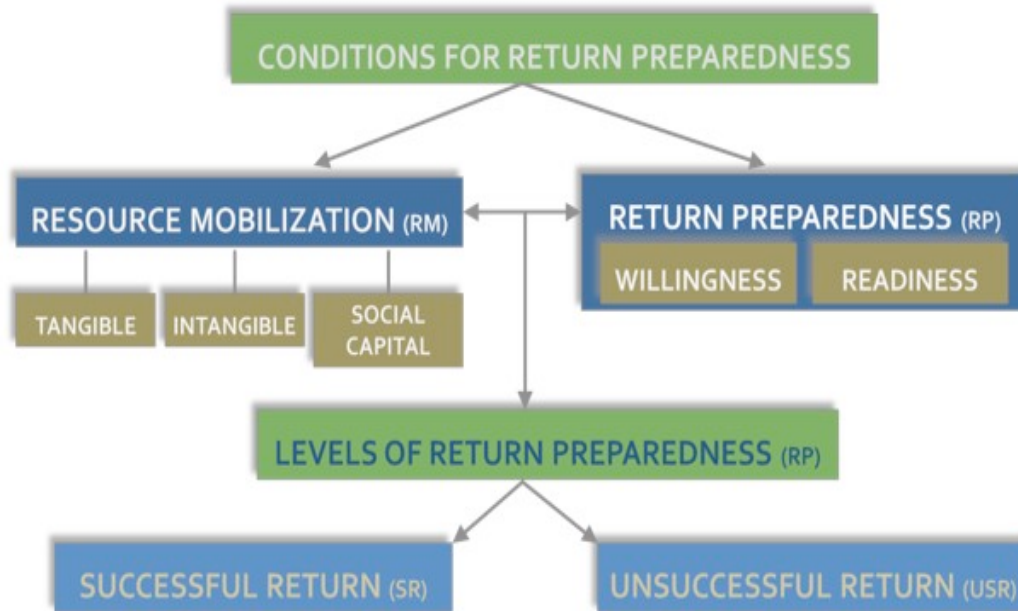


Figure 2: Operational Framework

Analytical Framework

Cassarino’s three levels of return preparedness are characterized as follows:

Preparedness	Mobilization of Resources	Perception of Successful Return
High	all forms of resources	Successful Return
Low	✓ tangible resources X intangible X social capital	Unsuccessful Return
No	X any form of resource	Unsuccessful Return
✓ - achieved x - not achieved		

Table 1: Analytical Framework: Level of Return Preparedness (Cassarino,2004)

High Level of Preparedness is a result of the ability to mobilize resources needed to realize their planned projects upon their return home. Low Level of Preparedness is a result of a migration experience that was too short to enable successful resource mobilization. This may be due to an unexpected event or the inability to realize their socio-economic goals in the host country. Some would have been able to mobilize tangible resources, and some returning home without any tangible nor social capital resources to rely on. No Level of Preparedness indicates the returnee not having the inclination to go home, was not able to prepare for any form of resource mobilization,

and thus, perceive their return home as unsuccessful and a failure of their migration process.

Research Question

The central research question of this study is as follows: How does the seafarer's process of preparation for return influence their perception of successful return? The study 1) identifies the factors that seafarers consider when preparing for their return home; 2) determines their level of preparedness for return to the Philippines; and 3) assesses their individual perception of successful return

Research Methodology

This study utilized a triangulated approach in the analysis of the central research question. Quantitatively, Cramer Coefficient V, a non-parametric statistic, was used to establish the association between Return Preparedness and Perception of Successful Return. This study had the migrant's Return Preparedness, as its independent variable and the Perception of Successful Return as the dependent variable.

The degree of association between two sets of attributes as measured by the Cramer coefficient may be found from a contingency table of frequencies of observations by:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{X^2}{N(L-1)}}$$

where $X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{(n_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}}$ and L is the minimum of the number of rows or columns in the contingency table.

The further use of quantitative approach provides a demographic profile of the respondents, and other data sets needed. Following a pilot study conducted by the author, a survey was conducted among forty retired seafarers. Survey data determined the respondent's process of resource mobilization, level of return preparedness, and perception of successful or unsuccessful return. In-depth interviews of retired seafarers were conducted to constitute the case studies corresponding to the three Levels of Preparedness. The respondents engaged in a self-evaluation of their level of preparedness and a self-assessment of their perception of successful or unsuccessful return.

Results and Discussion

High Correlation of Return Preparedness and Perception of Successful Return

The statistic Cramer Coefficient V was used to estimate the association of return preparedness and successful reintegration. A Cramer's V value of equal to 0 suggests that the variables or attributes are independent. On the other hand, a value of equal to 1 suggests very high association between the variables.

Respondents	Cramer's V value	Association
All Respondents	0.914	High
Officers	0.786	Moderately High
Non-Officers	0.6709	Moderate

Table 2: Degree of Association
Return Preparedness and Perception of Successful Return

The study reveals that there is a significantly high degree of association between Return Preparedness and Perception of Success Return for all respondents, a moderately high degree of association for seafarers holding an officer position, and a moderate degree of association for ratings or seafarers holding a non-officer position. It can be concluded that there is a high degree of association between the independent variable, Return Preparedness, and the dependent variable, Perception of Successful Return.

Resources Mobilized by Seafarers

The survey results illustrated the value seafarers put in mobilizing his resources prior to returning home. Both Officers and Ratings view return as inevitable, with retirement age as one factor that will determine the end of their seafaring career. This planned return when reaching retirement age of 60 years old is sometimes preempted by an unexpected event such as a medical issue. Being unprepared for a sudden return is contrary to their 'calculated strategy', a plan utilized even prior to deployment.

Survey findings show that mobilized resources of seafarers are manifested in the following:

TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE	SOCIAL CAPITAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • savings • ownership of home • ownership of car • purchase of real estate properties • small business • government pension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's education • self – education • social network of friends and family • knowledge of current conditions at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family relations • support from wife and children • commitment to a frugal lifestyle while the father is at sea

Table 3: Forms of Resources Mobilized by Filipino Seafarers

Resources mobilized, specifically tangible resources, are primarily determined by their rank on board, either an Officer or a Rating. Consequently, it will indicate their income range and their ability to accumulate wealth. Accumulated tangible resources include the ownership of homes, vehicles, and real estate properties. Business investments are assumed once all three are satisfied. For Officers though, there is a capacity for parallel accumulation, wherein gathering of earlier mentioned resources is done at the same time and rate as engaging in a business investment.

Intangible resources are mobilized by Filipino seafarers in the form of education, of both the seafarer and their children. The education of the children, specifically a college degree, provides a sense of assurance that their children will have better opportunities in the future. On the other hand, his education and skills development

are investments to achieve the goal of a higher rank, higher income range and higher probability of achieving the rest of his migration objectives. This objective may also be augmented by the possibility of engaging in land-based employment or income-generating activities upon his return home. Networks, in the form of professional contacts, developed while still on board, may serve as an intangible resource that can be accumulated over time.

Among migration objectives specified by the seafarers, both Officers and Ratings, view the education of their children as holding utmost priority. This is then followed by the relationship they have with their families left behind, more importantly with their wives. The wife is not only seen as a dependent who receives their monthly allocation but is also viewed as a partner in the efficient and effective management of the household and of their business ventures. This relationship can best serve as a social capital when the couple fosters a shared vision of economic stability in the future, articulated through constant communication, and are demonstrated by the family’s frugal lifestyle and consumption.

Role of Technology Use and Internet Access to Resource Mobilization

A dominant theme in the case studies is the reference to the significant role that internet access plays in the successful mobilization of resources, especially in terms of intangible and social capital resources. Among the challenges encountered by seafarers onboard the ship, homesickness and separation from the family are the ones that they find the hardest to manage. Some seafarers remember the years when the only form of communication with their families was of snail mail sent to their agencies, to be mailed to their families. This contributed to their feeling of disconnect from friends and family back home, causing a feeling of hopelessness and inaction on their part. Although internet access is not available on all ships, seafarers are aware of the possibility internet connectivity can bring to their professional and personal growth, but importantly, in fostering positive relations with their wife and children back home.

TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE	SOCIAL CAPITAL
Facilitates hands-on management of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • savings and investments via online banking • business via live CCTV access • public and private pension programs • “private investment” 	Enables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of mobile apps for self-care (physical and mental health) • access to information on safety at sea, seafarers’ rights, certification requirements • self-education thru distance learning • nurturing of personal and professional networks • seafarers to keep in touch with the realities of life on land 	Builds stronger: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family relations using social media and video chat apps • spousal communication to convey the seafarer’s essential values and future plans

Table 4: Role of Technology Use and Internet Access to Resource Mobilization

In terms of tangible resource mobilization, connectivity facilitates hands-on management of savings and stock market investments via online banking. In jest, they say that now, they feel more in control of their small business through access to live

CCTV footage of its daily operations. In addition, they can monitor their pension contributions and even engage in small time gambling which they refer to as “small private investments” while at sea.

Intangible resources, such as the knowledge to use mobile applications allows for access to necessary self-care and time-critical information on safety as sea. Visiting industry websites educate seafarers on their rights as seafarers, and they can update themselves on certification requirements even on board. Another opportunity for professional growth is the access to further studies through distance learning. Most importantly, social, and professional networks are now easier to develop and nurture using social media. Collectively, access to the internet has enabled seafarers to keep in touch with the realities of life on land.

Social capital, in the form of family relations, are further strengthened with the positive use of social media and some video chat applications on their gadgets. Seafarers have seen the improvement in their relationships with their spouse and children when it comes to conveying their personal thoughts, values and plans for the future.

Case Presentation

As the study progressed, data showed that some respondents do not necessarily fit the three levels of preparedness as Cassarino (2004) has earlier established. As he posits that, “returnees differ from one another not only in terms of motivation, but also in terms of levels of preparedness and patterns of resource mobilization.” (Cassarino,2004)

Case #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Level of Return Preparedness	High		Low		No				
Job Rank	Officer	Rating	Officer	Rating	Officer	Rating	Officer	Rating	
Tangible	✓	✓	✓	✓	No Case	x	x	✓	
Intangible	✓	✓	x	x		x	✓	x	
Social Capital	✓	✓	x	x		x	✓	✓	
Perception of Successful / Unsuccessful Return	✓	✓	x	x		x	✓	✓	
✓ - achieved	x - not achieved								

Table 5: Presentation of Cases

Case 1: Officer with High Level of Preparedness

This case highlights the ability of a seafarer with an Officer position to successfully accumulate all forms of resources. Professional training facilitated his engagement in business partnerships with friends, which significantly contributed to his wealth accumulation. He attributes his success to his wife, for her close supervision and management of their business, and his children, who understood and realized the family’s dedication to a frugal lifestyle. This case fulfills Cassarino’s conditions for Return Preparedness which are tangible, intangible, and social capital, confirming the case of a Successful Returnee.

Case 3: Officer with Low Level of Preparedness

This Officer's case highlights the role of intangible resources, such as the education of the children, as a very good indication of a resource mobilized. Unfortunately, his savings was not enough to sustain his unexpected illness which forced him to return home. As Cassarino's theory notes, those migrants who were not able to satisfy all the migration objectives, for this Officers' case was savings, were considered to have a Low Level of Return Preparedness. To be a Master Mariner involved many years of training and further education, which this Officer diligently pursued. Considering an Officer's salary range, the education of both his and his children were given the most importance due to the family's shared vision of investing in the future. Thus, this seafarer regrets not being able to send his youngest son to college due to insufficient funds.

Case 5: Officer with No Level of Preparedness

This study had the initial goal of identifying cases for all levels of preparedness, however, after much examination among the Officers surveyed and interviewed, there was an absence of an Officer who exhibited an inability to gather and accrue any form of resource. This may be attributed to idea of improbability. As one Officer interviewee articulated, *"Not possible. With all the opportunities and money that passed through our hands, it is quite impossible for an Officer not to be able to save nor acquire any form of property."*

Case 2: Ratings with High Level of Preparedness

The case of High Preparedness of a Rating illustrates the role the wife in the implementation process of a seafarer's objectives. This seafarer attributes his returning home earlier than the usual retirement age due to the financial security his family and investments were able to provide him. Engaging in a small enterprise he set up while on vacation and internet connectivity on board enabled him to guide his wife through the everyday operations of their business and through major decisions in the home front. The return preparedness exhibited by this seafarer was evident in the resources he was able to mobilize, from a home, vehicles, education of the children and a harmonious and complementary relationship with his wife and business partner.

Case 4: Ratings Low Level of Preparedness

The case of Low Level of preparedness of Rating reveals that his willingness to return was influenced primarily by the resources he has or has not accumulated. He expressed regret for not being able to support his wife in the management of their taxi business, which he says could have been their means of sustainable income. The weak social capital, specifically his communication with his wife throughout the years of seafaring, may have contributed to the underdevelopment of his tangible resource.

Case 6: Ratings with No Level of Preparedness

This case of No Preparedness by a Rating is an example of a "one day millionaire" mentality. This mindset was not only exemplified by the seafarer but also his wife, children, and other dependents. Gambling, capricious consumption and a low regard for the future, has exacerbated the lack of shared family value of future economic stability. In addition, the presence of multiple tiers of dependency made it more challenging to sustain his household and reach his initial goals. Having his in laws - mother, father, brother, and sister in law- as his additional dependents has put a tremendous amount of pressure on the income-earning capabilities of the seafarer.

The hindrances for resource mobilization were overwhelming. This seafarer is finding it difficult to grasp the idea that his life did not turn out the way he planned it.

Emergence of a Medium Level of Preparedness

Considering the cases presented, it is necessary to discuss the cases which were exposed to having a Medium Level of Preparedness. This Medium Level of Preparedness is not present in Cassarino’s theory of Resource Mobilization and Levels of Return Preparedness, but it emerged as an essential factor in the perception of Return Preparedness and consequently the perception of Successful Return.

It can be argued that, a seafarer’s perception of his preparedness to come home is dependent on the amount and types of resources mobilized, tangible, intangible and social capital. However, equally important is the significance of looking at the hierarchy of their goals and the capacity for parallel accumulation during the seafarer’s career, as observed in the cases presented above.

The study suggests that tangible resource, one of the easiest to accumulate among the three, is not necessarily the most crucial factor to mobilize which will consequently indicate preparedness to return. As the two cases below reveal, although unable to achieve all three forms of resources, seafarers still perceived a sense of achievement and contentment upon their return home, which will be articulated in the emerging Level of Medium Preparedness.

Preparedness	Mobilization of Resources	Perception of Successful Return
High	all forms of resources	Successful Return
Medium	x all three resources ✓ tangible & social capital intangible & social capital	Successful Return
Low	✓ tangible resources x intangible x social capital	Unsuccessful Return
No	x any form of resource	Unsuccessful Return
✓ - achieved x - not achieved		

Table 6: Emergence of Medium Level of Preparedness

Research shows that the emergence of a Medium Level of Preparedness is manifested in the successful mobilization of social capital resource in the form of 1) close family relations characterized by positive communications between seafarer and family members; 2) spouses viewed as a partner in the efficient and effective management of both the household and the business investment as well; 3) sometimes allowing for a parallel accumulation of wealth by the seafarer and the spouse left behind; 4) an alignment of family and seafarer’s values and a shared vision of economic future demonstrated by the family’s frugal lifestyle and consumption.

Case 7 Officer with Medium Level of Preparedness

This case represents a returnee that made use of his intangible resource. In this case, the seafarer’s former superior on board, gave him an opportunity to establish a

manning agency. Upon his return, this new business venture sustained his household beyond his seafaring career. His wife’s employment as a college professor allowed for parallel accumulation of wealth. Although he perceives himself as being less prepared financially, he viewed his economic opportunities in his home country as his source of return preparedness. Despite the fear and the uncertainties of leaving a lucrative career as a seafarer, he managed to venture into other career opportunities in the same maritime industry. This illustrates the role of networks as an intangible resource and social capital which can likewise be one of the decisive factors to return.

Case 8: Ratings with Medium Level of Preparedness

This Rating was able to accumulate tangible, social capital and partially, intangible resources. He has fostered harmonious relationships in the home front which enabled him to maximize the benefits of seafaring. He was able to accumulate wealth that not many Rating seafarers can boast of. His son’s education topped the bill of priority goals achieved. His wife’s ability for parallel accumulation, augmented their household financial requirements. Although his own education, which he would have wanted to pursue, took a back seat during his seafaring career, he doesn’t regret focusing all their resources in providing for their son. He attributes his and his wife’s joint effort and parallel motivations, as the source of their success as a seafaring family.

Social Capital has Altered the Dynamics of Perception of Successful Return

It was earlier established that a High Level of Preparedness will most likely result to a perception of successful return. While a Low Level or No Level of Preparedness will result to a perception of unsuccessful return. As can be observed, a Medium Level of Preparedness is distinctly differentiated and positioned between High and Low Level of Return Preparedness within the framework of Cassarino.

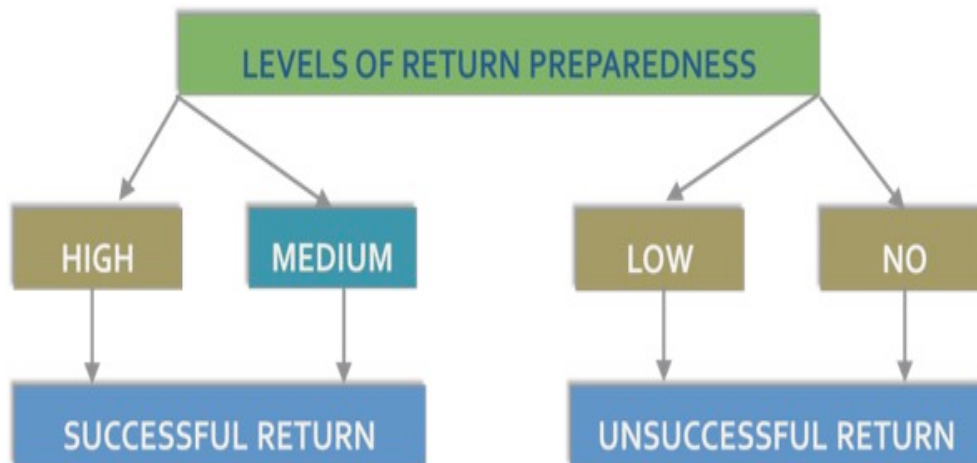


Figure 3: Medium Level of Preparedness and Perception of Successful Return

For all cases, including the emerged Medium Level of Return Preparedness, social capital can be observed to be the common denominator, primarily provided by the wives and other family members through a directed and focused initiative to achieve financial stability of the household in the post seafaring years. The emergence of a Medium Level of Preparedness is attributed to the perception of social capital as a crucial factor in the perception of successful return.

Contrary to Cassarino's Level of High Return Preparedness, the proposed Medium Level of Return Preparedness has only partially achieved migration objectives. This is a level of preparedness that can be differentiated from the sets of level of preparedness defined by Cassarino. Just as he reiterated, there will be a range of levels of preparedness that can come out of every return migrant's experience. The emergence of the Medium Level of Preparedness may be an enrichment of an existing theory, Cassarino's Theory on Return Preparedness, by further studies and with Filipino seafarers as an illustration. It is necessary to further recognize and understand the realities of Filipino seafarers that were not fully accounted for by the theory.

Conclusion

The data show how the seafarer from the beginning of his career pursued actively a focused struggle to prepare himself for his successful return while on board the ship. The directed pursuit included not only himself but the whole family in one collaborated agenda and vision for a better economic life after seafaring. This was even made possible through a commitment among family members even before leaving the ship, especially directed by the wife at home, for a lifestyle that is frugal, simple and focused on specific objectives in the economic pillars of a post seafaring family life. These struggles and initiatives are pursued diligently as revealed in the survey findings, and further unfolded in the illustrative cases chosen for the study.

Achievement of set objectives constitutes High Preparedness to Return. Thus, any abrupt stop in their seafaring which can be due to medical, personal or other paralyzing issues, may find the seafarer either extending their stay longer to make up for lost time, or be forced or mandated to return home constituting either Low or No Preparedness to return.

The Willingness to Return refers to whether the return is voluntary or forced. Mandatory Return, due to accidents or injuries on board the ship may catch the seafarer unprepared to return home. Forced return can obstruct a seafarer's preparation mainly due to his calculated time to acquire the necessary resources to constitute his preparations. Voluntary return may be perceived as an early perception of readiness to return; and mandated return can lead to a Low Preparedness or a No Level of Preparedness to return.

A Medium Level of Preparedness has emerged that encapsulates the experience of some returnee. Despite the inability to achieve all three resources, some respondents still deem themselves as successful returnees. In the case of Filipino seafarer returnees, social capital has altered the dynamics of their perception of successful return. It can either facilitate or hinder the realization of return preparedness and one's successful return.

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