



Assessing the readiness of Filipino MRA-supported professions to participate in the mobility of skilled labor in the ASEAN region

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Introduction

- **ASEAN Economic Community**
 - Trade Competitiveness
 - Skilled Labor Mobility
 - Mutual Recognition Arrangements
 - Compliance with MRAs

Source: <https://theseanpost.com/article/realising-aseans-economic-ambitions>

ACHIEVEMENTS (AEC 2015)



Elimination of tariffs and facilitating trade



Advancing the services trade liberalisation agenda



Liberalising and facilitating investment



Streamlining and harmonising capital market regulatory frameworks and platforms



Facilitating skilled labour mobility



Promoting the development of regional frameworks in competition policy, consumer protection and intellectual property rights



Promoting connectivity and narrowing the development gap



Strengthening ASEAN's relationship with its external parties

FUTURE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN ASEAN (AEC 2025)



Engender more equitable and inclusive economic growth in ASEAN



Foster robust productivity growth through innovation, technology and human resource development



Promote the principles of good governance and transparency



Widen ASEAN people-to-people, institutional, and infrastructure connectivity



Create a more dynamic and resilient ASEAN, capable of responding and adjusting to emerging challenges



Incorporate a sustainable growth agenda



Promote the use of the ASEAN Protocol on Enhanced Dispute Settlement Mechanism (EDSM)



Reinforce ASEAN centrality in the emerging regional economic architecture



Work towards a common position and enhance ASEAN's role and voice in the global economic fora

On skilled labor mobility

- General Agreement on Trade in Services
- Modes of Supply
 - Mode 1: Cross Border Transactions
 - Mode 2: Consumption Abroad
 - Mode 3: Commercial Presence
 - Mode 4: Movement of Natural Persons
 - covers natural persons who are either service suppliers (e.g., independent professionals) or who work for a service supplier and who are present in another WTO member to supply a service.

On MRAs and compliance

Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)

18-19 July 2019,

- Mutual Recognition Arrangements
 - framework arrangements established in support of liberalizing and facilitating trade in services.
- Objectives:
 - to facilitate mobility of skilled labor and professionals in the region.
 - To work towards the adoption of best practices on standards and qualifications

On MRAs and compliance

- As of the moment, there are eight MRAs in ASEAN covering the following:
 - engineering services (December 2005);
 - nursing services (December 2006);
 - architectural services (November 2007)
 - surveying qualifications (November 2007)
 - dental practitioners (February 2009);
 - Medical practitioners (February 2009);
 - accountancy services (February 2009);
 - and tourism professionals (November 2012).
- Formalized among AMS for the mutual recognition of education and experiences obtained in the eight priority sectors.
- Through these recognition mechanisms (i.e., equivalence of registration, licensing requirements, reciprocity requirements), MRAs are able to contribute to the mobility of skilled professionals within the region.

Point of inquiry

- Are Filipino professions with MRA support (i.e., accountancy services, medical practitioners, architectural services, engineering services, and tourism professionals) ready to participate in the mobility of skilled professionals in ASEAN?
 - *How can we assure that Filipino professionals under accountancy services, medical practitioners, architectural services, engineering services, and tourism professionals, are prepared, in terms of education, continuing professional education, licensure examinations, experience and others, to be compliant with the existing MRAs for each profession?*

General objective and scope

- To review the HRD dimension of the various MRAs of the Philippines with the ASEAN region
 - To explore how can the Philippines prepare its skilled professionals to take advantage of participating in the ASEAN labor market given existing MRAs and the establishment of the AEC allowing for easier labor mobility.

– **Professional groups:** accountancy, services, medical

<u>MRA-groupings</u> (Hamanaka & Jusoh, 2016)		
<u>HIGHLY REGULATED</u> Dental Services Nursing Services Medical Practitioners	<u>REGULATED</u> Accountancy Architecture Engineering Services	<u>UNREGULATED</u> Tourism Professionals

Figure 1. *MRA-groupings according to Hamanaka and Jusoh (2016).*

Specific objectives

- To explore the contributions of MRAs in improving the quality of professionals in ASEAN;
- To review best practices among identified professional groups in the in the Philippines that can be shared with other professionals so they can also attain regional and international comparability;
- To identify the challenges facing Filipino professionals in complying with their respective MRAs;
- To create policy recommendations that can enhance the identified best practices and address the challenges of Filipino professionals so they can reap the benefits of the mobility of professionals in the region.

Significance of the study

- Provide another lens in analyzing MNP and the mobility of skilled workers through MRAs.
- Highlight policy relevance, implications, and strategies towards wealth formation through various forms and levels of training and education (i.e., professional courses in tertiary education) and research and development.
- Emphasize the importance of HRD as a critical aspect of MRA compliance and competitiveness.

Conceptual framework

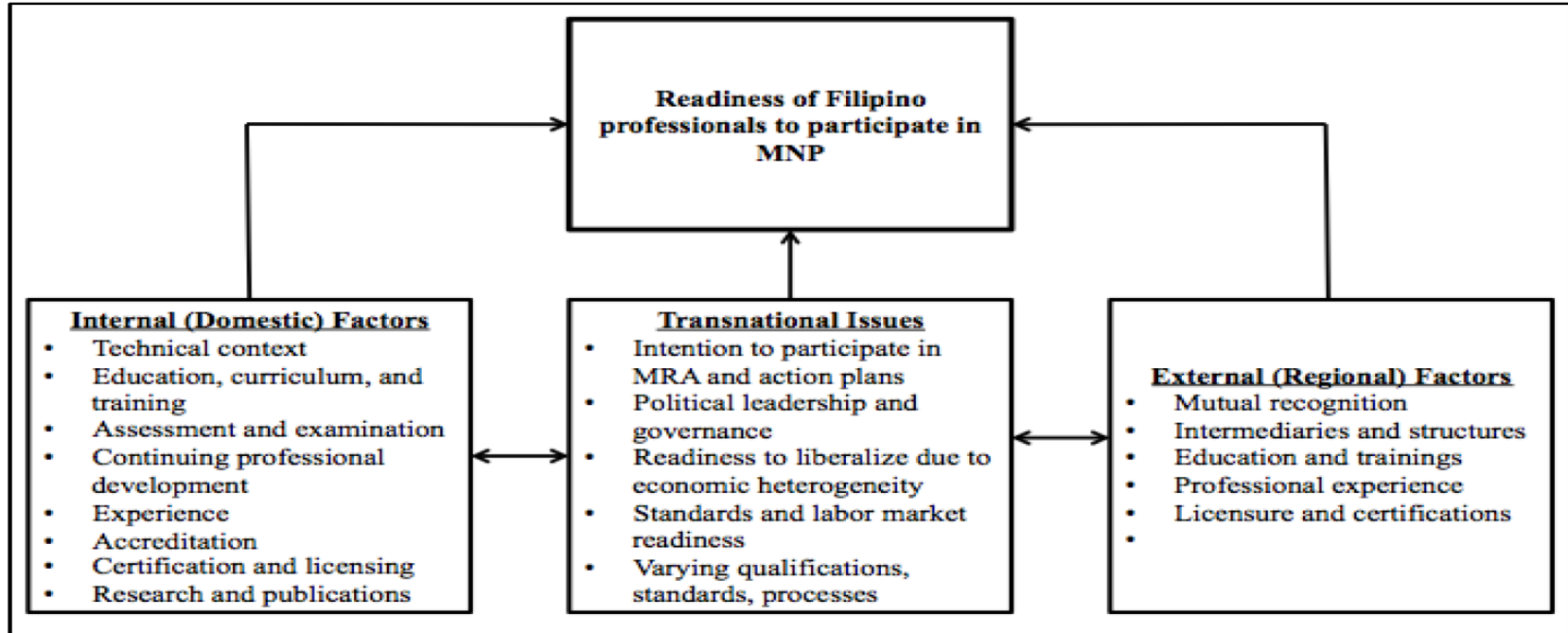


Figure 4. *Factors affecting readiness of Filipino professionals to participate in MNP*

Methodology

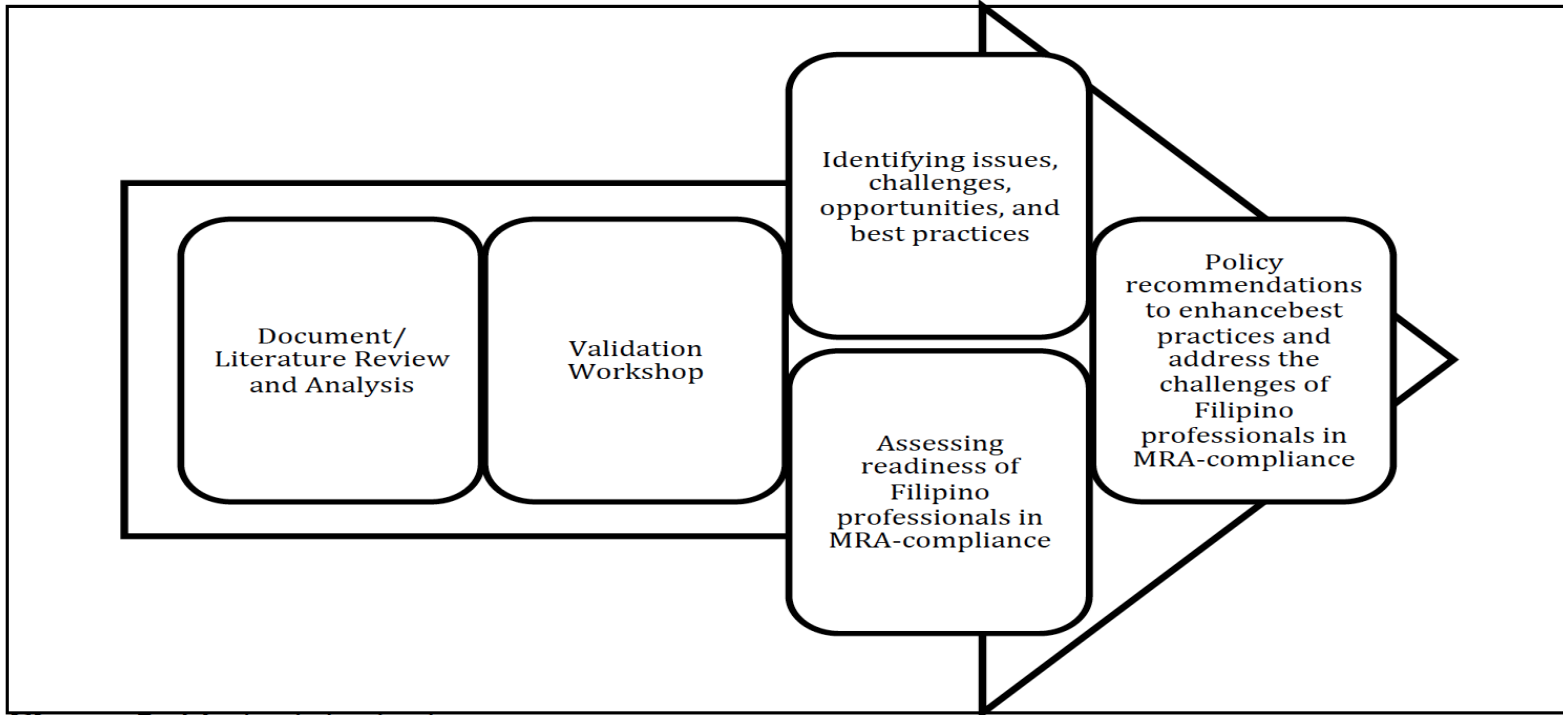


Figure 5. *Methodological outcomes.*

Validation workshop



Professional group:	Representative from:
Accountancy	DLSU Accountancy Department; UST College of Accountancy
Medicine	Philippine Medical Association
Architecture	Palafox Associates
Engineering	Philippine Institute of Chemical Engineers; DLSU College of Engineering
Tourism and Hospitality	LPU College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management; AIM Conference Center Manila; Rajah Travel Corporation; AIM-Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism

Discussion points:

On faculty – somewhat comparable; needs stricter implementation

- Minimum requirements for teaching in a respective discipline
 - Completion of advanced graduate degree (MA/MS; PhD).
- Proportion of faculty members in a typical HEI with advanced graduate degree
 - Most have masters degree; few have doctoral degree
- Comparability with regional (ASEAN) standards
 - Qualifications relative to other ASEAN countries

Discussion points:

On curriculum – comparable with regional and international standards

- Comparability of professional courses and academic programs offered by HEIs with regional/international standards
 - Degrees offered in the Philippines are aligned with international standards
 - Recognized by international bodies

Discussion points:

On CPE/CPD – needs liberalization; too regulatory

- Sufficiency of CPE programs for Filipino professionals to be compliant with MRAs
- Alternative and relevant CPE programs that will:
 - make Filipino professionals competitive with regional counterparts
 - enable them to participate in the regional mobility of professionals?

Discussion points

On research – slowly catching up but still lagging behind; weak research culture; lack of scientists

- Role of research making regional
- R&D pro stimula



PH lacks 19,000 scientists in research and dev't - Bam Aquino

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Some statistics

Table 2. Distribution of OFWs by Major Occupation Group and Remittances – Professionals

Number of OFWs – % to total Total Cash Remittance of % to total

Table 5. Indicator of knowledge capital – number of publications in Elsevier Scopus journals (1996-2017)

Country	Accounting	Architecture	Chemical Engineering	Engineering	Medicine	Tourism
Brunei Darussalam	6	4	6	6	909	6
Cambodia	4	2	9	4	1,924	9
Indonesia	149	146	80	149	10,506	80
Lao PDR	-	2	10	-	1,025	10
Myanmar	-	-	-	-	831	-
Malaysia	915	485	505	915	38,565	505
the Philippines	146	17	28	146	6,952	28
Singapore	803	588	336	803	54,582	336
Thailand	130	183	253	130	50,902	253
Viet Nam	43	66	48	43	8,217	48

Source: Scimago Country Rank (<http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php>)

Source: Survey on Overseas Filipinos (SOF), Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) (<https://psa.gov.ph>)

Discussion Points

On licensure exam – varies according to professional groups and organizations but consistent with international practice

- Appropriateness of allowing fresh graduates to take licensure examination immediately
 - Others: Allowed
 - Architecture/Medicine: requires prior work experience before taking licensure examination
 - Tourism: no licensure exam but has certifications

Summary of findings

- MRAs have compelled professionals to continuously improve on their respective crafts.
- Requirements stipulated in MRAs compelled sending countries to upgrade their educational systems, training, accreditation, certifications, licensing, and professional regulatory frameworks to enforce a higher standards in the conduct of professional service.
- Filipino professionals are generally comparable with other ASEAN professionals to participate in the mobility of labor in the region.

Summary of findings

- No single AMS serves as benchmark for best practices.
- Varying levels of development among AMS - not yet willing to relinquish full control over their professional standards.
- On the aspects of: education, curriculum, training; assessment and examination; accreditation; and certification and licensing, Filipino professionals are comparable.
- Generation of knowledge through research stimulates technological development and the creation new practices that upgrade human resource practices.

Summary of findings

- To sustain this readiness:
 - Continuous improvement in the education of faculties handling professional degree programs not only through developmental CPD but also through research and publication.
- CPD should be developmental rather than regulatory
- Although not all are practicable, research outputs can generate patents, innovations, and new methodologies that can contribute to the development of society in the long run.

Lessons for ASEAN/APEC Economies



- There is a link between MRAs and HRD through the development of social capital.
 - Strengthen associations of APEC universities towards benchmarking of curriculum, pedagogies, and learning standards.
- The coming together of regulators and professional organizations should complement the discussions of HEIs.
 - Together, they can strengthen the program design, delivery, and quality control of professional degree programs.

The background features a stylized world map with several orange location pins and dashed lines connecting them, symbolizing global mobility. In the foreground, there are four stylized human figures: a woman with long black hair, a man with short black hair, a woman wearing a yellow hard hat, and a man in a white lab coat with a stethoscope around his neck. The text is overlaid on this scene.

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THANK YOU