



The readiness of Filipino MRA-supported professions for labor mobility in ASEAN and RCEP

John Paolo R. Rivera, Ph.D.
Asian Institute of Management

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)



Stalemate in global trade negotiations resulting to greater RTAs



RCEP as a deep and forward-looking agreement

Rationale and Motivation



Opportunities
in RCEP

ASEAN's
centrality

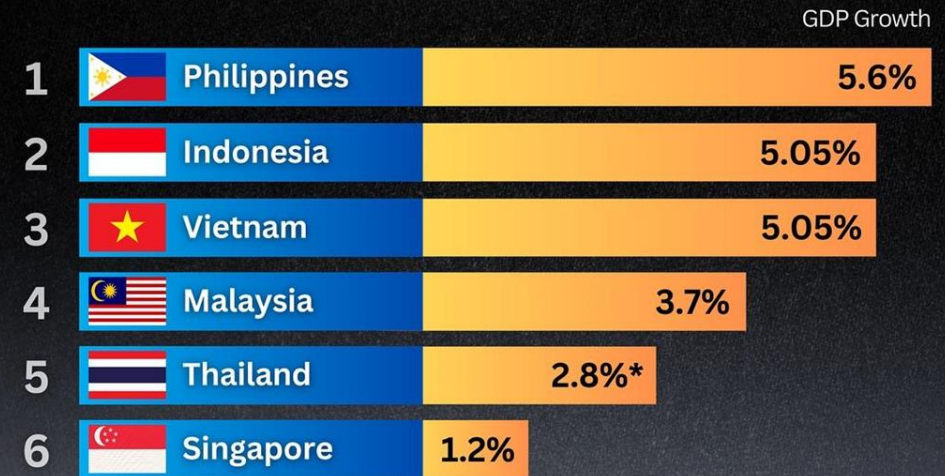
Trade in
services

Introduction

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

ASEAN-6 Economic Growth 2023

Full-year GDP growth rate in ASEAN-6 Economies in 2023



*Thailand's 2023 growth data is still projected, not final



Trade Competitiveness

- Fukunaga (2015)
 - Liberalization
 - reduction or elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers
 - Deregulation
 - reduction or dismantling of monopoly power and other domestic rules
- Tullao (2018)
 - invite foreign players that can expand income and employment among economies
 - respond to external pressures of competition.

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.



MRA and Compliance



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



Introduction: 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).
- These MRA frameworks have been 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?



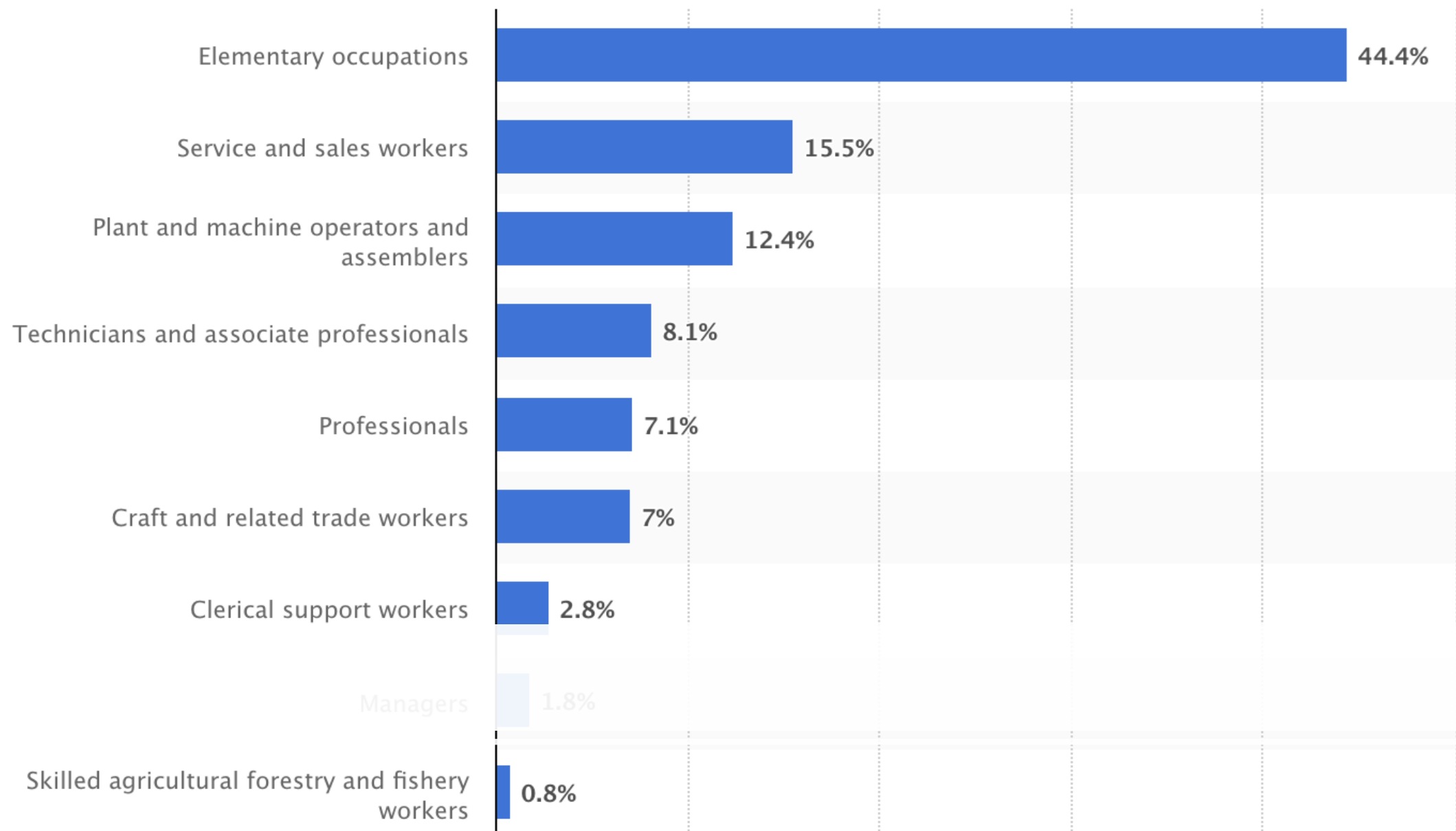
Scope

- Our study will cover the Philippines for the five priority sectors namely accountancy services, medical practitioners, architectural services, engineering services, and tourism professionals.

<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).*

Distribution of migrant workers from the Philippines in 2022, by occupation



New German labor law seen to attract more Filipino skilled workers

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

December 20, 2023, 3:14 pm

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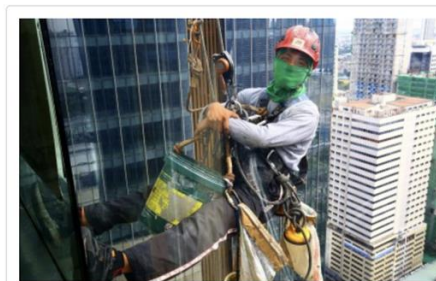
MANILA – The German Embassy in Manila is expecting increased interest among Filipinos to work in their country with the new labor law that makes it easier for foreigners with vocational training to migrate.

In a statement on Wednesday, the embassy said Germany had begun the phased implementation of the German Skilled Migration Act last November.

“Germany is welcoming skilled workers with open arms and full support,” said its Embassy’s Economic Counsellor Dr. David Klebs. “This law creates even better incentives for Filipino skilled workers to consider working in Germany.”

The act will introduce new channels for skilled workers from countries outside the European Union (EU) – including the Philippines – to immigrate to Germany.

Since last month, immigration opportunities have been broadened for workers with higher education qualifications through the EU Blue Card, featuring lowered salary thresholds, expanded eligibility, an extended list of professions, and facilitated family reunification.



SOMEBODY’S GOT TO DO IT. A window cleaner of a high-rise building in Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City manages to smile amid another tough day at work on Nov. 21, 2023. The German Embassy in Manila is expecting increased interest among Filipinos to work in Germany with the new labor law that makes it easier for foreigners with vocational training to migrate. (PNA photo by Joan Bondoc)

Filipino engineers and medical workers are leaving the Philippines.

Hundreds of jobs up in Austria for skilled Filipino workers

OCT 25, 2023 4:22 PM PHT

MICHELLE ABAD

HISTORY • HEALTH

From AIDS to COVID-19, America’s Medical System Has a Long History of Relying on Filipino Nurses to Fight on the Frontlines

Indicator of knowledge capital – number of publications in Elsevier Scopus journals (1996-2023)

Country	Accountung	Architecture	Engineering	Medicine	Tourism
Brunei Darussalam	52	14	1,760	1,545	20
Cambodia	10	10	394	3,490	28
Indonesia	1,539	1,263	77,637	48,493	1,030
Lao PDR	1	6	185	1,818	16
Myanmar	-	7	946	2,192	12
Malaysia	2,647	1,917	147,660	80,785	1,729
the Philippines	290	116	9,339	15,822	177
Singapore	1,450	1,221	127,421	95,655	594
Thailand	429	602	57,696	93,477	809
Viet Nam	820	511	34,965	21,693	469
China	8,750	30,372	3,388,042	2,005,477	7,516
Japan	1,196	11,823	793,449	1,143,074	989
Korea	1,728	5,184	452,756	424,886	2,744
Australia	8,768	6,280	263,239	649,159	9,117
New Zealand	2,088	1,053	35,555	103,613	2,704

Contribution



Analysis provide another lens in analyzing MNP and the mobility of skilled workers through MRAs.



Analysis highlight several major 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

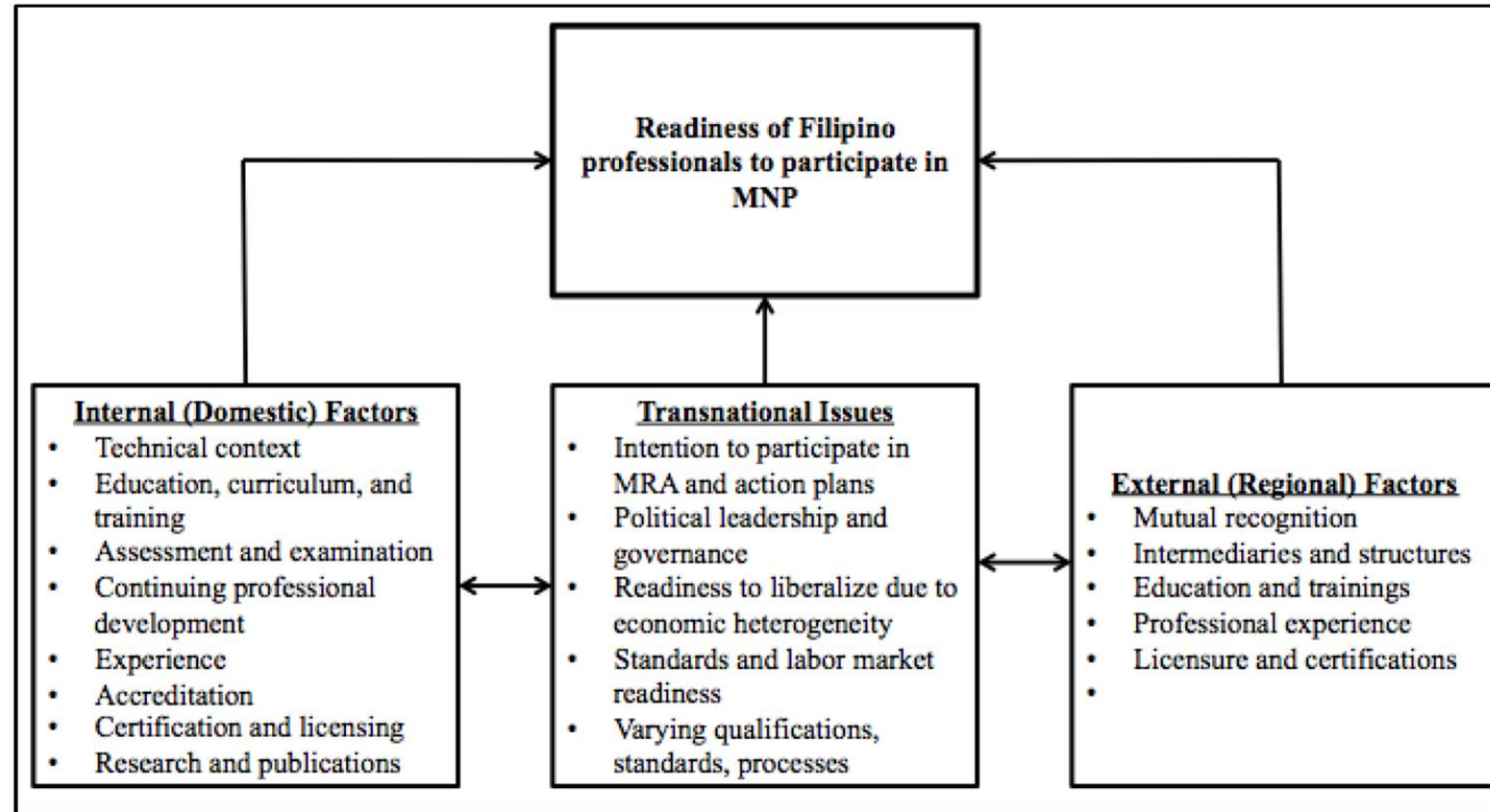


Figure 4. *Factors affecting readiness of Filipino professionals to participate in MNP*

Methodology

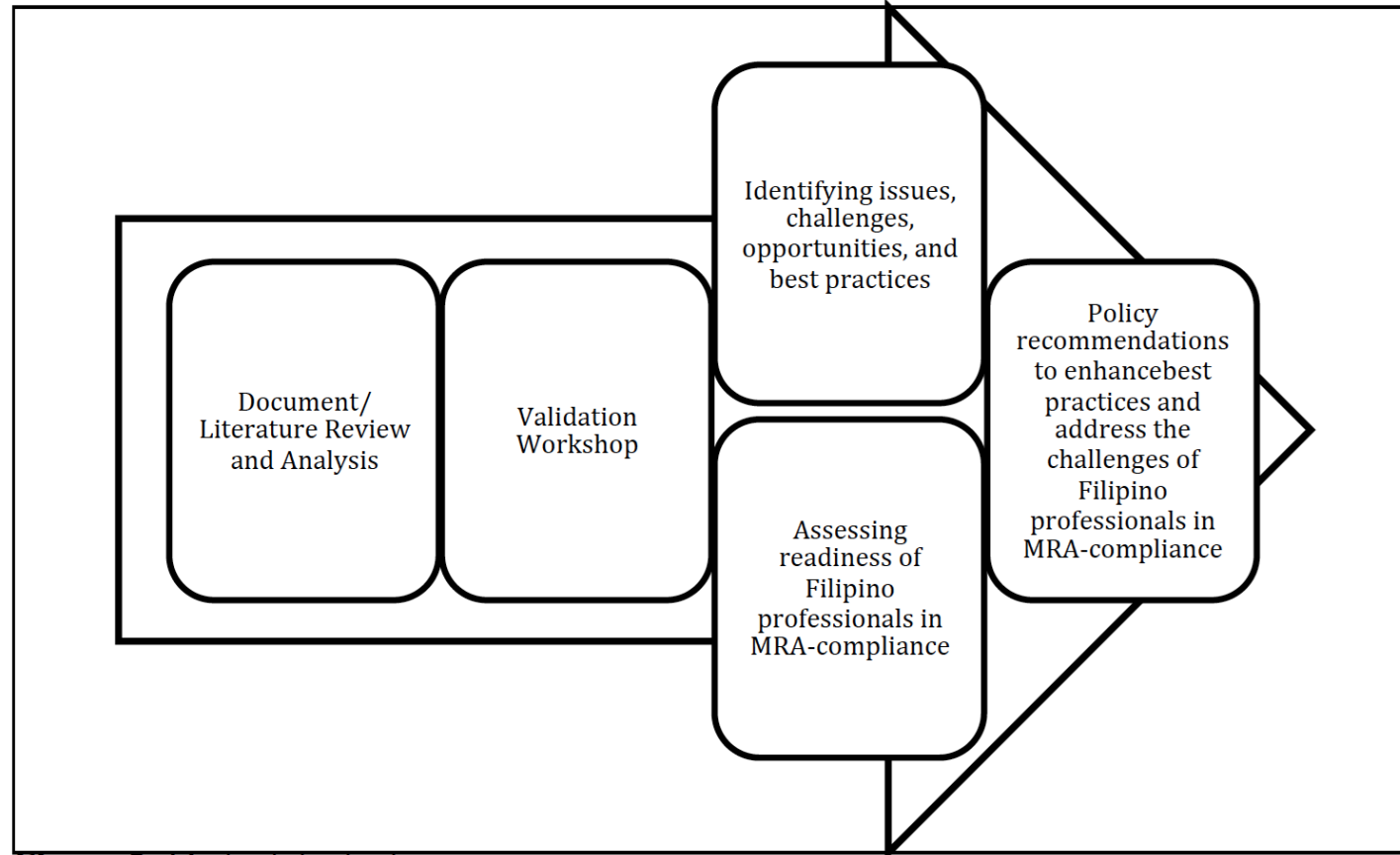


Figure 5. *Methodological outcomes.*

Key Findings



We have seen that 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 ready to participate in the mobility of labor in the region.

Key Findings



We found that 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 ready for MNP.



The generation of knowledge through research stimulates technological development and the creation new practices that upgrade human resource practices.

Key Findings

To sustain this readiness, there is a need to continuously augment and improve on 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.

Moral of the story



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 so that together, they can strengthen the program design, delivery, and quality control of professional degree programs.

Recommendations (1)

- **Reform domestic regulations and liberalize professions**
 - Liberalizing professions, where the Philippines has inadequate supply of, may stimulate skill base growth as more professionals can take part in key sectors that promotes faster local productivity growth

Recommendations (2)

- **Conduct research and development**
 - Build knowledge capital (i.e., accumulation of research and development) to stimulate:
 - technological development
 - generate patents
 - introduce innovations
 - drive economies of scale
 - create new methodologies that upgrade the practice of professions.

Recommendations (3)

- **Institute developmental CPD**

- Rather than mandating professionals to attend inconsequential seminars and unnecessary training for compliance, shift CPD programs towards lifelong education that will enhance the conduct of professional instruction and practice.

Recommendations (4)

- **Look into MRAs and domestic regulations**
 - View MRAs and domestic regulations as a motivating factor for professionals to upgrade their human resource dimensions that will make them comparable with professionals from other economies.
 - Compel higher education institutions to benchmark with partner economies in terms of curriculum design, teaching pedagogies, and learning outcomes so that education standards are also comparable