

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN A MALE-DOMINATED WORLD OF WORK: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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Introduction

The maritime industry continues to be a male-dominated field, especially onboard. It may be that the physical structure of women could not cope with the task requirements? But do these really hinder women in dreaming to become part of this industry, much more to lead?

At present, there are more men than women, with a 65,998,630 estimated world population difference between the two, and approximately 107 boys are born for every 100 girls born (World Atlas, 2019). In this case, can women still thrive in the world of men?

Much has been said about women empowerment. Papa Seck of UN Women explained it as “There is no empowerment without rights, so women’s empowerment needs to be anchored in human rights which provide a universal framework for monitoring. For women to be empowered, they need resources, respect, and voice. This requires redressing women’s socioeconomic disadvantage, addressing stereotyping, stigma, and violence, and strengthening women’s agency, voice, and participation” (Rogers, 2018). Based on this definition, women can and has the right to be in a man’s world.

In maritime schools, there are women enrollees in the maritime programs – marine transportation and marine engineering. At the PMMA alone, where the

researchers are connected, there are 63 female students from 1st year to 4th year for second semester, school year 2020-2021. But, placing them onboard for shipboard training remains to be challenging. The fact is, the PMMA has already numerous memoranda of agreement with other shipping companies. Now, could you imagine other maritime institutions which do not have enough MOAs?

On the other hand, there are women professionals who pursue maritime career although they did not specialize in maritime programs. Adjusting to this, is very challenging, especially that maritime has jargons on its own.

According to Turnbull (2013), women seafarers experienced gender issues and concerns such as sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, unequal access to premium wage rates, etc. This proves that working in maritime is challenging for women.

Also, in the study made by Dela Cruz (2017), she noted that her respondents continue to feel that the glass ceiling remains for women working in maritime although there had been some improvements.

Nevertheless, there are those who come out victorious. There are women in maritime that defy the stigma that women cannot embrace the world of maritime. It is, therefore, the main objective of this phenomenological study on the lived experiences of women leaders in the male-dominated world of work. Specifically, it (1) uncovered some of the women who were able to break the glass ceiling in the maritime world, onboard and ashore; (2) documented their experiences while ascending to their current position; (3) understood the challenges they individually underwent as they rose from

the ranks; (4) identified values they utilized to overcome the challenges they met; and (5) documented their recommendations to aspiring women leaders in maritime.

This study may contribute to the understanding of how some women with leadership roles in male-dominated occupation managed to strive and rose up to their roles in their respective organizations despite the challenges they experienced.

Integrated Related Literature and Studies

Several literatures and studies were reviewed to provide better understanding and appreciation on the topic women leaders in a male-dominated world of work such as the maritime. Literatures and studies reviewed not only focused on maritime but as well on other male-dominated sectors as experienced by women. They are presented here by themes or topics.

Women Leaders in the 21st Century

The maritime industry is male-dominated. Accordingly, the Shipping sector has the lowest number of women in their workforce. Around 2017, there were only more than 17,000 female seafarers out of the total 449,000 working during that year. Despite the numerous studies about women and the quality of work they provide, there are still many who are oppose to having women in the industry (The Manila Times, 2017).

The United Nations began a program in 1976 that aims to promote equal rights and opportunities for women around the world. The program known as UN Women is a result of negotiations between the UN Member States and the advocacy of the Global Women's Movement. This includes the promotion and encouragement of respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of race, sex, color, and religion (UN Women, 2010).

Men and women, when working together, can reap better results. The breakthrough research conducted by the University of Pennsylvania supports this. Their research states that women's brains are wired differently than that of men. It also mentioned that women have the underlying ability to use both their intuitive and logical thinking in problem solving, while men are inclined more to stimulus and action. And when women are faced with very complex and uncertain situations, they have the ability to draw out more solutions, which can be very valuable (Chisholm, 2015). Thus, when they work together, logical thinking with immediate response and action can be expected.

Unfortunately, there are only an estimated 2% of the maritime seafaring workforce population that are women. This means that only about 23,000 women work in the maritime industry worldwide (Ozdemir & Albayrak, 2018). In the survey report conducted by Women in the Workplace (2018), there is only one in five women who often finds themselves the only woman, or one of the only women in their line of work. Also, it was mentioned that there were a lot of situations that a woman worker faces, or most likely face, every day in each of their own line of work. For instance, they face discrimination or microaggressions, like being a subject for degrading comments and sexual harassment, their co-workers are being disrespectful, and the managers or higher-ups are being biased. Thus, the report mentioned that companies and organizations should create a safer and more respectful environment where everyone can work their best without receiving hate (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

According to Martina Kessler (2014), there is an increase of women occupying leadership positions in the 21st century. Several reasons were mentioned that might have caused such increase, namely:

- (1) Women are known to have 'leading brains'. When an organization is faced with hard situations, there is a need to establish relationships of trust. And accordingly, a number of studies have shown that women are much more genuine and motivated in helping others and in investing more to the development of their staff;
- (2) Women are more inclusive than men. Although traditionally, this is seen as a weakness, women are involving more people in their decision making. It is said that considering the different perspectives of people is a way to avoid bias, balance the pros and cons, and improve the quality of making decisions;
- (3) Women's brains are better geared in language skills and their emotional systems are more powerful than men. These two reasons make women better listeners than men; and
- (4) Women are more motivated in helping others. They are more likely to promote teamwork and would often attribute their success to others' talents and hard work. They are also likely to give credit to their whole team.

In comparison, women and men lead with different styles. It is recommended that companies hire a good mix of both genders to be able to harness a wide diversity of views that will help in making better decisions (Chisholm, 2015).

Despite this, according to Stephanie Thomson (2017), women are still struggling to climb to the top of the ladder in this very male-dominated field, and the percentage of

female CEOs has dropped to 4%. However, there are still those who were able to break the glass ceiling.

Here are some Filipino women who managed to break the glass ceiling of the Philippines' maritime industry:

Captain Maria Kristina Javellana is the first Filipina to be a shipmaster of an overseas merchant ship. She is currently serving the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) flagged chemical/oil products tanker. In 2006, she started her career as a cadet and worked on international vessels. She spent years building her experience in managing specialized vessels such as oil and chemical tankers (International Registries, 2018). According to her, she assumed the shipmaster's position in May 2017.

Myrna Galang Daite-Alvarez is the first Filipina to become a deck officer in her class. She was a member of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy Class of 1997, which is being considered to be historic, as it is the first class with seven women who graduated, one of which was Myrna (Friends of WMU JAPAN Newsletter, 2021). She served PMMA in various capacities for 18 years up to her passing in 2020 (PMMA Alumni Association, 2020).

Jasmin Labarda, on the other hand, is the first Filipina to have manned an offshore oil vessel. She was 17 years old when she went aboard the ship. And as of 2017, she is the first Filipina to hold a senior position in the offshore oil industry (The Manila Times, 2017).

Then, Merle Jimenez-San Pedro who is the President of the Women in Maritime Philippines (Wimaphil) and WIMA Asia. Accordingly, she believes that there should be a balance of women population in the manly world of maritime. As the president of

Women in Maritime Associations (WIMA) Asia, she promoted women empowerment. Their organization, being under the guidance of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) gender program, together with 18-member countries, developed the SHE to Sea program that not only promotes women as seafarers but also being a part of all the sectors of the maritime industry (Torib, 2019).

These Filipinas are examples that women can work in what is considered as a man's world. However, even during the 21st century, women still face challenges, discrimination and inequality for choosing to work in the maritime industry. Organizations might have started to promote women empowerment, but companies should also take initiative in allowing an equal representation of women in the industry. Many companies are still reluctant to hire female seafarers. Eliminating these issues will provide equal opportunities for women and will be able to alleviate the gender gap (Mukherjee, 2019).

Barriers to Women Leadership

Several studies have looked into the barriers to women's leadership in male dominated industries or sectors.

Martin and Barnard (2013) conducted a study to explore the experiences of women who work in male-dominated occupations to develop an understanding of the unique challenges they face and to discover the strategies they use to remain motivated and persevere in these environments. Five women working in male-dominated jobs for a minimum of one year participated in this research. An unstructured in-depth interview was conducted with a "Tell me a little bit about yourself and your current work". Findings show that the unique challenges faced by women in male-dominated

occupations are formal and covert organizational practices that maintain discrimination and bias as specifically manifested in these forms: inadequate resources, unbiased infrastructure and policies; spillover of stereotypical gender roles and expectations that relate to women; lack of real transformation because of male resistance and prejudices. Another challenge pertains to women's unique physical, work identity and work-life balance needs such as physical and health related difficulties women experience; negative work-identity perceptions; and work-life balance.

Similarly, the study of Ozdemir and Albayrak (2018) delved into the problems that hinder women in maritime and the ways to overcome these problems. The study placed importance on increasing women in maritime jobs and also their effectiveness in their job performance. A survey and a workshop were the methods used in the study to gather data. Some of the questions in the survey were taken from the survey in MENTORESS (Maritime Education Network to Orient and Retain Women for Efficient Seagoing Services) Project. A total of 233 people responded to the survey consisting of 73 women and 160 men. For the workshop, cadets from maritime schools and professionals from maritime sector were present. The workshop provided insights on ways to help women cope with bias and problems reaching leadership positions. Findings revealed that the causes of problems can be grouped in three headings: problems of disapproval by men, problems deriving from lack of guidance and problems related with acquiring leadership skills. Problems of disapproval by men show that maritime is still seen as a man's job as always been considered in the past. There is strong prejudice against women especially on-board ships. The study also showed women need guidance and friendship. Feeling isolated due to strong prejudice from the

men, women seafarers find it hard to seek help or support from men. It is vital that support reach women in the most easily available means especially when they are at sea. Because women feel left out on-board ship and with all other negative perceptions that men have on them, causes women to work harder to prove themselves and get the positions they deserve. However, men are usually preferred in cases where they have equal qualifications. This brings women to be much better to be accepted as equal with men.

On the other hand, Norris and Inglehart's (2004) study focused on the lack of gender equality in political leadership. Many factors can be attributed to this situation, but this study looked into the role of political culture in the process. Do attitude towards women as political leaders play a significant role in hindering their empowerment? This research conducted its analysis from the World Values Surveys in 55 societies with the most recent wave conducted in 1995-1999. This paper noted that despite many official declarations of intent over the years by governments, NGOs and international agencies, major barriers continue to restrict women's advancement in public life. Results show that egalitarian attitude towards women in office are more widespread in post-industrial societies, reflecting broad patterns of socioeconomic development and cultural modernization. Empowerment of women remains a complex process in many developing and post-communist societies. Favorable attitudes towards women's leadership are not sufficient to produce effective breakthroughs in the structural and institutional barriers especially in the short term. An overnight change cannot be expected in the deep-rooted traditional beliefs about the appropriate division of sex roles prevalent in many developing and post-communist societies.

Strategies to Cope with the Challenges in a Male-dominated Workplace

The same studies that identified the barriers to women's taking on leadership roles also provided some strategies how they coped with the challenges.

The study of Ozdemir and Albayrak (2018) which investigated into the problems that hinder women in maritime also identified ways to overcome the barriers. Ozdemir and Albayrak recommended to provide female cadets and staff with effective networks and mentors, and emphasizing authentic leadership qualities in them.

Meanwhile, Martin and Barnard (2013) discovered the strategies women use to remain motivated and persevere in a male dominated environment. Elements of women's resilience in male-dominated occupations relevant to coping strategies and resources include appreciation of feminine advantage; adopting male characteristics; mentorship. In terms of motivational aspects of the work includes optimistic expectation of future career possibilities; challenging work and work engagement; and recognition and success. The study concluded that women in male-dominated occupations often work in conditions that do not cater for their unique needs because of covert and entrenched gender-biased organizational cultures. Very few supportive organizational practices are at the disposal of these women and organizations often leave them to their own devices when it comes to coping in their respective work places. Organizations can motivate women to remain in male-dominated work settings if they provide the women with tangible physical support and female-focused policies, visible career opportunities, challenges to entice their personal drive for achievement and different ways of recognizing their success. Gender balanced mentorship is vital for assisting these women to cope and persevere.

On the other hand, the study of Sueda et. al (2020) provided evidence on how women were able to take on leadership roles amidst some challenges related to culture and not specifically in the context of male oriented workplace. Sueda et. al. employed a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective in four contexts: Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, and South African. The objective of the study was to contribute to the discourse of women in global leadership from the vantage point of different cultures. The participants were one Japanese, 61 Indonesian nurses and 79 care workers with 10 years' work experience, seven Korean women leaders, and 23 South Africans. In-depth interviews were employed. Findings showed that in the context of the Japanese respondent, there were both encouraging and discouraging factors on her road to top management position at micro, mezzo and macro levels. Each of the factors interacted with each other in a complex manner. At the macro level, male dominance was pervasive. However, when examined from a mezzo level perspective, some global companies made inroads in Japan, and promoted women to management positions in many of its regions. At the micro level, it revealed that qualities such as having an inquisitive mind, excellent command of English were factors to her being promoted to becoming the first female customer representative in the Asia Pacific Region. This broke down the barriers of not having a degree, her gender, and lack of knowledge about the system in terms of how to become a member of the upper management. The Japanese respondent worked with various levels of diversity as a director. According to the Japanese respondent, she recognized that being global refers to a state of mind. Globalization resides within the minds of people. For the Indonesian respondents, the factors motivating them to take global leadership role includes a strong global vision to

become a bridge between Indonesia and Japan to contribute to the wellbeing in both societies. Specifically, the respondents placed importance on their leadership experience as a preceptor, their Catholic religion that served as coping mechanism for the difficulties in taking leadership roles, and support from the organization in career development. Furthermore, deep appreciation for their superiors and maintaining good relationships with people were also factors that helped them move upward in their careers. On the other hand, factors that discouraged Indonesian women from taking on a leadership role included the lack of self-efficacy in terms of being a foreigner in a Japanese organization, negative feelings of being unmarried at their age (micro), a negative atmosphere in the workplace for an Indonesian to take on leadership role (mezzo), as well as the pressure of high expectations coming from their parents and Islamic teachings for getting married and raising children (mezzo and macro). The Korean findings showed that Korean women leaders implemented a balanced leadership style, which included both opening and closing behaviors. Building on the trust in their employee's potential and capabilities, Korean women leaders empowered their employees to concentrate on their tasks. Employees were encouraged to embrace the spirit of being experimental and take risks. The findings suggest that Korean women leaders place more importance on opening and embracing leadership behaviors than closing and controlling behaviors. Furthermore, findings also underlined the importance of an organization's support on diversity management, in terms of cultivating women leaders and enhancing their leadership effectiveness. The South African findings revealed women leaders emphasized that leadership is generally connected to their career, life values at work, workplace spirituality, holistic wellbeing,

and a leadership identity that is influenced by South African categories of race and gender. Furthermore, they place emphasis on cooperation and work ethics as well as strategic management.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

This study is about empowerment of women - women who were able to break glass ceiling in male-dominated occupations in the maritime industry. Empowerment is defined in the Balancing the Scales – Participants’ Manual (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development-Uganda, 1999) as “the process through which women mobilize to understand, identify and overcome the structural and underlying causes of discrimination and thus achieve equality of welfare, and equal access to resources”. An important theory to this study is the Women’s Empowerment Framework developed by Sara Hlupekile Longwe (1990). This framework is also referred to as Longwe Framework. The framework identifies five levels at which women’s development can be viewed in terms of equality. The extent to which these are present in any of the social and economic life determines the level of women’s empowerment (Handout 2 Women’s Empowerment Framework, n.d.). The five levels are arranged according to increasing importance and significance, as follows: Welfare, Access, Conscientisation, Participation, and Control. The Longwe Framework defines and describes the levels as follows:

Welfare refers to the material wellbeing of both men and women. Gender gaps at this level refer to gaps in the fulfilment of those basic needs and conditions that directly affect people's welfare. Common factors affecting women's welfare include their

heavy, often unremunerated workloads and their low nutritional intake - leading to poor health and reduced quality of life. Gaps in the welfare of women and men can only be reduced when there are equal opportunities and access to resources between men and women.

Access is defined as women's access to the factors of production on an equal basis with men; equal access to land, labor, credit, training, marketing facilities, and all public services and benefits. The proponent, Longwe, pointed out that equality of access is obtained by applying the principle of equality of opportunity (Handout, n.d.). Equality of access is seen as essential for women's development - the first step on the path to empowerment (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development-Uganda, 1999).

Conscientisation is the conscious understanding of the difference between sex and gender, and an awareness that gender roles are cultural and can be changed.

Participation is defined by Longwe as women's equal participation in decision-making process, in policy-making, planning, and administration (Handout, n.d.).

Control is defined as the "ability to direct or influence events, so that one's own interests are taken care of and protected". This is the ultimate level of equality and empowerment, in which women play an active role in the development process and resources and benefits are shared equally between women and men.

Gender gaps and concerns exist at these five levels and closing these gaps is important for development to take place for the full benefit of women and men. This framework is used to analyze gender issues in development programs.

Conceptual Framework

The study is about the women who take on leadership roles in the various sectors of the maritime industry. These women were able to penetrate an industry that was believed to be for men only. As a phenomenology research, this involves a detailed study of the women participants to discover information on what was experienced and how it was experienced so that others may learn from their experiences (Neubauer, B.E., Witkop, C.T. & Varpio, L., 2019).

According to Neubauer, et.al (2019), theories can help to focus inquiry and they can also be used to help understand the findings of the study. This is how the Longwe Framework was used in this study. The Longwe Framework was used to analyze the experiences of women taking on leadership roles in a male-dominant maritime industry. Specifically, the journey of women in ascending to their current positions was anchored on the five levels as well as the challenges encountered at each level.

Figure 1 presents the research paradigm where lived experiences of the participants were documented based on increasing importance and significance, from Welfare, Access, Conscientisation, Participation, and Control as they move upward.

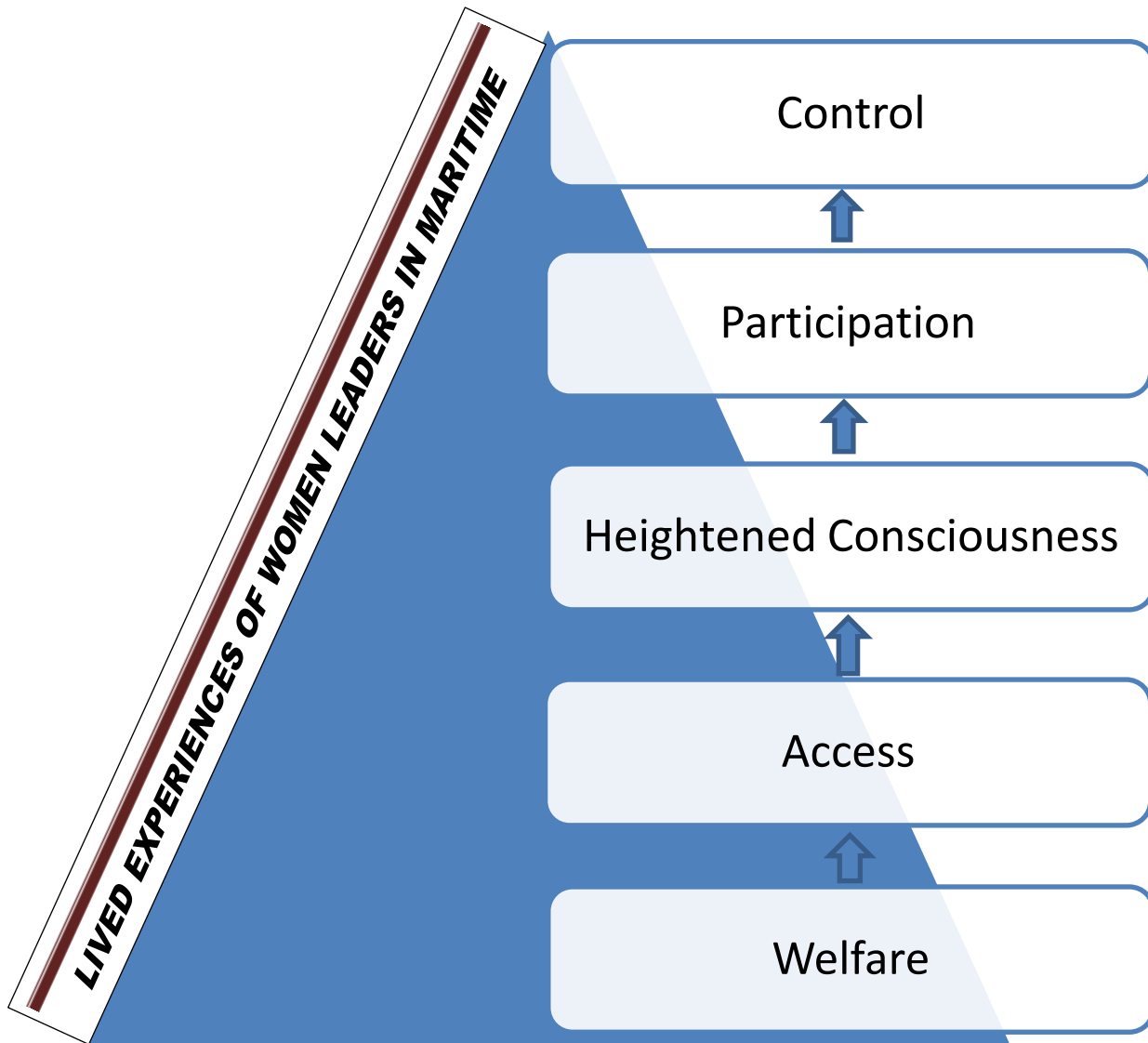
Relative to the study, questions related to how the respondent's welfare was considered, such as workload or fulfillment of their basis needs. Was there equal access to products and services? Were they respected as women? In making decisions, planning or policy-making, were they allowed to participate? And, were they empowered and provided the same benefits as that of men?

Guided by the theory, the participants were interviewed individually by allowing them to relate their lived experiences from the time they started working in the different

male-dominated units of the maritime industry and as they went up the ladder of success.

Figure 1

Research Paradigm



Central Question and Sub-questions

Central Question: What are the lived experiences of women leaders in the maritime industry?

Sub-questions:

1. What are their experiences while ascending to their current position, in terms of: (a) welfare; (b) access; (c) conscientisation; (d) participation; and (e) control?
2. What are the challenges they individually underwent as they rose from the ranks?
3. How did they overcome the challenges they met?

Scope and Delimitations

This study covers eight (8) purposively selected women-participants who are managers/leaders in the maritime field, specifically three women seafarers, two PCG officials, one MARINA official and two shipping company executives. Being phenomenological, the focus was limited to the personal experiences of the participants towards ascending to the current position they are now.

Significance of the Study

The result of this qualitative-phenomenological study is helpful to women working in maritime-related institutions, and shall support women empowerment in the field of maritime. This shall also be beneficial to maritime agencies that require the expertise of women, and shall maximize the potentials of women even in male-dominated offices.

METHODS

Research Design

This research is qualitative in nature. The qualitative method is used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant, and data collected shall not be amenable to counting or measuring. The technique is the 'semi-structured interview', which seeks views on a focused topic or, with key informants, for background information or an institutional perspective. It may also favor the 'in-depth interviews' to understand a condition, experience, or event from a personal perspective (Hammarberg, et. al., 2016).

To be more specific, the researchers performed the phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a form of qualitative research and a powerful approach for inquiry focusing on the study of an individual's lived experiences within the world (Neubauer, et.al., 2019).

Participants of the Study

Since this is qualitative, limited number of participants was selected through purposeful sampling. The participants were recruited and selected specifically because they can illuminate the issue being studied. The participants were eight women-leaders in their respective fields comprised of the following: three (3) women seafarers who are operational or management level officers, one (1) from the maritime administration, two (2) from PCG, and two (2) from shipping companies. All of them were middle to high level managers. Additionally, these participants were not necessarily graduates of maritime courses, but they have emerged as leaders in the maritime-related offices.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers observed the highest ethical standards by requesting permission from the subject-participants to record the conversation, allowed freedom of choice to participate or not, and has invoked the right to privacy when the participants choose to remain anonymous and not divulging very sensitive and confidential information.

Authors of literatures and studies were acknowledged properly and were included in the list of references.

Instrumentation and Validation

The instrument for this study was a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide about the journey of each participant to leadership, guided by the objectives of the study and the research paradigm.

Data Gathering Procedure

The initial task was the identification of the subject-participants. Then, a letter of request was forwarded for their participation that includes date and time for the interview. Once the schedule was set, the researchers proceeded with the data gathering. The conversations were recorded since it is crucial in capturing the statements of the participant. In addition, the researchers, at all times, took note of important statements.

Data Analysis

The audio data from the interview were transcribed verbatim to capture the exact words, phrases, etc. voiced by the participants. These were substantiated with the notes taken during the interview. They were arranged according to the objectives of the

study. Transcripts were coded by marking the sections that indicate the categories of responses. Afterwhich, the responses were organized by combining similar themes if needed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following provides the findings in reference to the objectives of the study. The discussions are based on the interviews made with the pre-identified interviewees and the presentation is guided by the sub-questions.

Profile of Interviewees

In this qualitative research, there were eight (8) participants who were interviewed to shed light on the matters being sought.

Participant 1 (P1) is the president of the manning agency, CTI Group Phils Inc. P2 is the owner and CEO of Agile Maritime Resources. The company – Agile, is 26 years old and the participant (P2) has been sitting as CEO for the same number of years. P3 is the first female General Line Officer of the Philippine Coast Guard. She has been assigned to many positions, among which is the foreign posting as the Philippine Representative for Regional Cooperation on Anti-Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia or ReCAAP based in Singapore as the Manager, then promoted to Senior Manager, of the Research and Operations Unit. After a total of three and a half years in Singapore, she returned to the Philippines and was designated as Coast Guard Internal Auditor and eventually appointed in the Central Staff position as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Maritime Security Services, CG-14.

P4 is from the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and is appointed as the Deputy Administrator for Operations in 2018. P5 is a Master Mariner license holder on oil chemical tanker ships. P6 is currently a technical superintendent for Maersk Tankers Singapore Pte Ltd. P7 is an active seafarer, with a Master Mariner license

acquired in 2010, and has commanded a ship. Lastly, P8 has been with the Philippine Coast Guard for more than 20 years now. She is presently the Deputy Chief of CG Staff for Logistics, CG-4.

Lived Experiences while Ascending to Current Position

Welfare

This discussion on Welfare tackles the level of workload and fulfillment of needs of the respondents, in relation to those of men. It aims to find out if in the performance of their duties with the same position as their male counterpart, did they receive the same salary, or are the basic benefits made also available to them, such as leave benefits. Optimistically, inequalities, if any, in terms of salary, benefits and workload will be brought to light in this area.

Some of our respondents narrated that they have varying experiences in the performance of their jobs, as seen in the perspective of welfare, like in the case of P5. She started as a deck cadet in a bulk carrier ship. After completing her education at the PMMA, she became a junior deck cadet, and then went on-board again as a senior deck cadet. She experienced being discriminated onboard, hence, she requested not to finish her contract. Upon reporting to her agency, she tendered her resignation, believing that she will not grow in an unprofessional environment which discriminate against women. She then transferred to another company handling gasoline, jet fuel, diesel, and others, and where she was proposed to be promoted twice. Unfortunately, the office disapproved the proposal. As a result of the twice declined promotion, she resigned and landed a job as an instructor in a training center. While at the training center, a senior officer who was attending a training encouraged her to apply in another

shipping company as Second Mate/Officer. After her contract as Second Mate, she transferred to another agency where she was initially offered a lower position (as Third Mate) again, but she declined the offer. She was eventually hired as Second Mate after scrutiny of her previous onboard experiences. She had five (5) contracts as Second Mate/Officer, and one (1) contract as Trainee Chief Mate. She has already served six (6) contracts as a Chief Mate/Officer. P5 believes that her success took a bumpy road, filled with challenges. She emphasized the need for balance, observing the environment, blending in, and having the courage and determination to work, pushing herself to the limits all the time. She believes that the reason for not being hired twice is due to gender bias:

“Nasabi ko kasi iyong sa trabaho, pare-pareho lang din naman kami ng trabaho. Napapansin ko ‘yan sa mga pinapalitan ko, wala naman kaming pagkakaiba. Nasa sa ‘yo ‘yan kung paano mo dalhin ‘yong mga tao mo, kung paano mo ikakamada ‘yong trabaho mo and at the same time nasa sa ‘yo bilang tao kung ano kang klaseng tao, ‘yong pagpalaki sa ‘yo ng magulang mo. So sabi ko bakit ganon? Pag akyat ko pare-pareho din lang naman kayo ng trabaho at saka nagagawa mo naman ng maayos, magaganda naman ang resulta, ano ba ang alam niya na hindi ko alam? Kasi pare-pareho lang din naman kami, pare-pareho kami ng IG pare-pareho kami ng mga controls, pare-pareho kami ng mga pumps. I can’t see any reason why they can’t hire me. Ang isa lang na nakikita ko na hindrance diyan eh ‘yong pagiging babae mo, kasi ako, nanggaling na ako sa iba’t ibang klaseng pumps, I’ve been in Framo, in deep well pumps, Framo, Manflex. I’ve been also in a gear pump, I’ve been also in a centrifugal. So sabi ko, ano pa ba ng mga kailangan kong malaman na mga pumps? Pagdating naman sa tanker, I’ve been in a crude oil tanker, I’ve been in an oil chem tanker, I’ve been in a finished product tanker, so ano pa bang kailangan? Ang hindi ko lang nasakyan ‘yong mga stainless, ‘yong mga hardcore na mga acids na mga chemicals. So I cannot find any reason why they will not hire me? Kasi kung tutuusin sabi ko pare-pareho lang din naman kami ng nalalaman, so magkakaiba lang kami kung paano kami magdala ng tao, kung paano kami magkamada ng trabaho namin. So kung pagdating naman sa mga tao wala akong nakikitang sagabal kasi ang mga tao gustong gusto ‘yong patakarang ko. So I don’t find any reason. ‘Yon lang ang nakikita kong rason kasi babae, wala silang that much trust sa babae kasi ang iniisip kasi nila pag sabi

babae, “Ay ano ‘yan wala ‘yan, mahina ‘yan, uupo lang ‘yan, uutos lang ‘yan.” Eh ako di ako ganong klase ng tao pagdating sa trabaho. Pag sinabing baklasan, andon ako nakikibaklas ako. Pag hindi kaya ng mga tao, andon ako, sinasalo ko ‘yong trabaho. Literal humahawak ako ng spanner, lahat, name it. So kaya ‘yong mga tao ko gustong gusto ako ng mga tao ko. Kahit ngayon nga eh, tinatanong nila kung saan na ako, sama daw ako, ganon, isama daw nila ako, sama sila sa akin. I mean, so I don’t find any reason why they will not hire me. ‘Yan lang ang nag iisa, pagiging babae, it really makes a big difference pagdating sa hiring.” (P5)

On the other hand, P4 entered the government service at the Maritime Industry Administration in Cebu as a Research Assistant in 1985. She was eventually promoted as Senior Maritime Industry Specialist in Manila, slowly going up the ladder. She was then assigned as Officer-In-Charge Director of MARINA Regional Office XI in Davao, where she stayed for 20 years. In 2018, she moved back to Manila as she was given a presidential appointment as the Deputy Administrator for Operations of the agency. She describes her journey from being a Research Assistant to becoming the Deputy Administrator as not being easy. She explained that MARINA is an agency where the personnel are highly competent, and when opportunities are given, competition exists. She describes MARINA as an agency where there is gender balance in workload. She narrates, “Well, definitely it’s not easy because you know well in MARINA we have highly competent personnel, but it’s just that you have also to take the risk, like when I decided to get to the top, promotion at the head office medyo ang hirap.”

P3 of the Philippine Coast Guard started her career at the Armed Forces of the Philippines during her review of the Bar Exam, upon realizing that she will not have a job immediately while waiting for the Bar results. She was first assigned as a branch manager, legal branch of the discipline, law and order of the Deputy Chief of the AFP of J1. She transferred to the PCG in November, 1999 under the tutelage of the Flag

Officer in Command, Admiral Reuben Lista. She went to the Coast Guard Operating Forces, which is in-charge of the deployment of vessel and aircrafts. During that time, males were first sent to go onboard, as there was a limited number of vessels which could accommodate females; hence, P3 was assigned in the office. She worked as Operations Officer in the Coast Guard Operating Forces, assigned in the non-operating vessels or NRFS (Not Ready for Sea) vessels. She was designated as PCG Adjutant and was eventually sent to Malmo, Sweden for schooling. Upon her return from her schooling abroad, she was assigned to the Coast Guard Education and Training Command where she was designated as the Chief of Staff, and then as Superintendent of Maritime Reinforcement School. She was also assigned at the Command Research Institute of the PCG. She was then assigned to the Department of Transportation as the Chief of Staff of the Undersecretary for Operations. She was then given a foreign posting in Singapore as the Philippine Representative for Regional Cooperation on Anti-Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia or RECAP, where she served as the Manager of the Research and Operations Unit. She was promoted as Senior Manager for Research in the unit. After a total of three and a half years in Singapore, she returned to the Philippines, designated as Coast Guard Internal Auditor. She was then assigned at the Education and Training, before finally being assigned as Deputy Chief of Staff for Maritime Security and Services.

P3 thinks that her journey to the top is quite easy, thanks to her always exuding positive attitude, thinking about how to be of help or service to others, giving premium to her works in pursuit of excellence and not settling for compliance alone, and commitment. She also makes it a point to take care of the people under her wings to

ensure that they are happier and are thus more productive. She always believes that being flexible is a strength of a woman, as women tend to easily accept failures, apologies, and go right back up. She attributes her easy journey in the PCG to her being a woman:

“Ang mga babae kasi flexible sila. Unlike mga lalaki kapag pinapagalitan mo, nagtanim ng sama ng loob or ano sa mga iba. Tapos madali tayo mag-accept ng failure. Kapag may failure, nag-sosorry naman kaagad. Parang okay lang, wala namang mawawala sa atin, parang ganun. ‘Yon ang strength ng babae.” (P3)

P7 is a graduate of BS Marine Transportation at the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP). She narrated that she enrolled in this course to obey her parents, and due to financial reasons. Her first onboard experience was a deck cadet for six (6) months during the first semester of her sophomore year, and another six (6) months on the second semester of her junior year. After passing the board examination, she went onboard thrice as Third Mate/Officer, notwithstanding that she only had one month or less vacation in between each onboard assignment. She was eventually promoted as Second Mate/Officer, serving two contracts, and finally took the Chief Mate exam in 2008. She transferred to an offshore job in 2009 as a trainee (like a third officer). She endured the training in the offshore company, which was believed not to have any Filipino go beyond the Second Officer rank. Her hard work and effort paid off when she finally got promoted as Senior Chief Officer in 2019, and finally as the first Asian female captain in Technic FMC last December 2020. She also mentioned that she felt discriminated as to the salary because of her nationality. She remembers that she has a lower salary as an officer, compared to a Caucasian trainee. The same is

true for training opportunities. P7 was quick to say that her rise to the top was never easy. She recalls the following:

“Sa training opportunities bukod sa gender biased nandun din ‘yong racial discrimination, kasi base sa experience ko, ibang lahi let’s say for example, ang ibang lahi ang experience nila starting pa lang, kunyari from school or limited ship experience, pero mas mabilis pa rin promotion nila kumpara sa Pinoy na years or dekada na ang experience.” (P7)

P2 is a lawyer by profession, specializing in Corporate Law. She got into the crew supply business by accident. She was asked by a friend (now demised), who was then the owner of Avantgarde Shipping to handle the take over of a manning agency owned by another fellow. After the hand-over, she was further asked to hold over until the ex-sea captain who was serving his Resignation Notice with another crewing agency is ready to sit in the agency. But the sea captain was not able to assume the office due to certain legal complications. Thus, she was offered the job – she had doubts because she has zero competence in running a manning agency. But this friend was persistent – she was confident that she can handle the job given her legal background. She learned and she learned fast with blood, sweat and tears and loads of personal sacrifices. In 1997, she parted ways with her Avantgarde partners. She recalled the meeting with the German principals in Hamburg where she candidly asked them if they will be comfortable doing business with AGILE with her at the helm. There will be no more intervention with the top guns of Avantgarde. They replied with a resounding “YES”. She was humbled because the Germans will not continue doing business with AGILE unless they are confident that AGILE can deliver the service to their standards. As she recalls, “I had meeting with the German principals and I told- I asked them, “Will you be comfortable? it’s just me now, there will be no Avantgarde, there

would be no Gascon, no Levi.” So then they said, “yes,” because at that time, I had proven myself to them in the one year that we’ve been working and yes, they said, “Yes, we’ll go on with you, with Agile.”

P8 held a number of positions including as the Deputy of the Office of the DCS for International Affairs, Asst. DCS for Logistics and Assistant Director of the Office of the Maritime Strategy and Special Concerns. She also served as the Director of the Satellite Training Institute under the Maritime Safety Services Command or MSSTI. At the third year of her service in 2004 she was nominated for a scholarship at the World Maritime University in Malmo, Sweden. During that time, said nomination became an issue to some of her colleagues in the organization as it will be the first time that the PCG will be nominating a female and a junior officer to the said university. Despite the many challenges, to include non-inclusion in the promotion, she decided to stay firm and pushed through in studying at the said university in May 2015. She narrates this experience:

“... isa ako sa nakaexperience ng ...during when I was still an ensign, ... so, I’m only three years pa lang sa service, I was nominated for a scholarship in WMU, and during that time that I will be the first female officer who will be sent there, so medyo naging controversial sa amin, let’s say, before, nagrerequire sila ng sa barko, during that time, our leadership is not that... siguro hindi pa ganon ka open for female positions so, ‘yong let’s say in my case, nagrequest kami nun na maassign sa barko so hindi ganon kadali na maapprove ka kasi ang iniisip talaga nila na barko are for the male, so it’s more on operations mga ganon. Although yung isang kaklase ko, she’s one of the first commanding officer sa barko namin and at the same time meron na rin kaming pilot from our class so ‘yon. Anyway, ayon nung nag-apply ako sa WMU, it became a big deal na medyo yun nga nagkaproblema kasi meron mga nagreact talaga na parang to the point na medyo hinarang ‘yong ano ko... kinuwestiyon ‘yong application ko sa WMU. But then let’s say ako thankful ako, it’s not actually the organization but rather ang school, ang WMU mismo ‘yong nagrequest sa akin na ‘yon nga, pa-go pa rin despite kung internal man kami medyo may problema, ...’yong school

nirequest talaga ako so that time nag start na 'yong gender mainstreaming sa WMU.” (P8)

P1 is a graduate of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy, and is now the President of CTI Group Phils., Inc. She first worked as an oiler of a vessel after graduation sometime in 2000. She then landed a job as a training instructor when she stopped sailing, after which, she started in various land-based jobs which includes training centers and manning agencies. She indicated that she was aware of the stiff competition in the industry, being a woman, and she initially dreamed of reaching only up to the Third Engineer level. She believes she was lucky enough to have acquired a Second Engineer license and to be in her current position. Nevertheless, she still believes that her path was quite easy, despite some challenges and discriminations she has received from her male counterparts over the years. Several factors made her ascent to the top quite easy. These factors will be discussed in the latter part of this paper.

Based on the above enumerated experiences shared by the respondents, it is notable that the welfare of women in the maritime industry continues to be a challenge that has yet to be addressed. In terms of promotion alone, most women are kept at a level for so long, which is not the case with their male counterparts they started work with (Aggrey, 2000). As a summary, out of the eight (8) respondents, only two (2) signified that their journey to the top has been relatively easy, while the remaining six (6) believed that they had rather challenging roads as they went up the corporate ladder.

Access

In terms of women's equal access to training, marketing facilities and all public services and benefits as with the men, almost all of the respondents were given the opportunities to attend trainings/schoolings. Perhaps due to the gender mainstreaming efforts done by relevant agencies and offices both local and foreign, the availability of services that cater to women's needs in the maritime industry are also in place.

P1 shared that the training opportunities given to her male counterparts were also available for her, and she does not recall any instance wherein the opportunity was given to her male counterpart because of gender bias. Also, during her onboard days, the toilet for ratings and junior officers were common. However, now that she works in an office setting, the ladies room and breastfeeding area are already provided as required by the Department of Labor and Employment. Notably, she shares that she enjoyed the same basic salary as her male counterpart, and same benefits such as sabbatical leave, study leave, and others.

P3 experienced staying in the medical room during her onboard service for lack of facilities for female personnel. During that time, there were only four (4) PCG vessels. She gladly stated, however, that nowadays, the PCG was able to acquire more vessels, and they have become gender-responsive. She also mentioned that in the PCG, they have a homesteading program, wherein you will be assigned to your province. At the PCG Headquarters, they also have a day care center where their kids can play, and which also serves as lactation room for mothers, "Sa breastfeeding, parang 'yon na rin 'yon, 'yong day care center. Doon sila, pero wala naman akong nakikitang nagdadala ng bata, ng baby. Or 'yong mga iba, 'yong may mga officer's

privilege nila ano, sa quarters nila dinadala 'yong mga bata. Kapag kailangan na nilang magpadede, balik sila ng quarters magpa-dede sila.” The PCG gives equal opportunity for loan packages for both male and female personnel.

In 2016, after P8's graduation, she admitted that the option of going out of the service and looking for a better and more “fair” work environment also came into her mind...” naisip ko before na magresign na lang to have a more equal playing field and better career opportunity”. But then she was recalled and directed to report immediately back to work. She did and was designated as the Flag Secretary of the then Commandant of the PCG. She recalled the CPCG advising her to just do her job with professionalism, passion and efficiency and everything will come easy. She followed this advise and disregarded all the questions and doubts that came with her past experience, True enough, she was subsequently assigned to various offices and entrusted with several vital positions. She was subsequently promoted and advanced in her career. For her, this is a sign that she has earned the trust of her superiors and for that she is truly grateful. One example was her present position of being the DCS for Logistics. It may be noted that she is the first female officer entrusted by the Command to hold said position as this was held by male officers ever since. Said position is very crucial as this requires firm decision-making abilities and at the same time a compassionate heart.

P4 believes that in her agency, the MARINA, balance is observed, as there are lady surveyors, lady inspectors, and in fact in the management, there are more lady directors than men. She is not sure about the imbalance in workload because, according to her, it is the nature of women to volunteer for more work. Promotion-wise,

she had no experience of not being promoted due to being a woman. She, however, recalled being asked about how she compares herself with her men co-workers. Because of the question, she thought that her boss prefers to have men employees because they can go out together, have drinks together, and talk about a variety of things as men. “That was only my personal perceptions that time. I was myself biased or felt prejudiced. Mas gusto yata ng boss ko ‘yong lalaki, kayang kaya nila, they can always go out, they can go out drinking, madami silang mapag-usapan. And we women, we don’t feel comfortable with that kind of environment. But I have my own realization, as well. May maganda din na babae ka. So that your exposures to inuman and night outing is limited.”

P5 explained that there is no difference in workload between her and her male counterparts:

“Wala, I can tell you wala, kasi pag nag hand over ka lalo ngayon, halimbawa kasi ngayon we are already senior so we are in a management level so pag once na hinand over sa ‘yo ‘yan, hand over talaga ‘yan, totally lahat ‘yan iyo ‘yan, over time, maintenance, repairs, lahat ng tao sa ‘yo ‘yan. Lahat lahat so walang pagkakaiba, wala talaga. Pare-pareho lahat walang binawas, dadagdag lang. So, in charge ka ng work hours rest ng tao, in charge ka ng mga orders, mga maintenance mo, mga job maintenance mo, lahat lahat mga repairs mo iyo lahat, papeles iyo lahat yan, lahat lahat pati ‘yong mga sira diyan iyo ‘yan lahat. So wala, walang pinagkaiba, wala ring binawas, minsan nga nagdadagdag pa nga. Andon naman sa job description, pero I mean minsan mataunan mo na ‘yong mga pupuntahan mo may mga sira so ako kasi ‘yong tipo ng tao na kapag may mga sira akong mga gamit hindi ko kaya ‘yan so hinahanapan ko siya ng paraan para mapagana and thankfully napagana ko naman. So kumbaga siyempre dagdag kasi maintenance ka lang, mga repairs, I mean kailangan mo pa yan i-schedule. So ‘yon ang ibig kong sabihin pero pare-pareho kami lahat as in totally pare-pareho yan.” (P5)

Mostly, salaries are also standardized and fixed for every position being served.

P7 recalls that the workload is the same for her and her counterpart. She also recalls that there was a case of a Caucasian who has little experience but received a promotion, while the Filipinos would take years before getting promoted. As to facilities, the newer vessels have separate toilets for male and female, while the old ones could only provide shared restrooms.

“Yung workload po pare pareho pero ‘yong stigma po or ‘yong stereotyping ‘yon ‘yong mahirap kasi kunyari, bago mo pa gawin ‘yong trabaho iisipin na nila hindi mo kaya kasi babae ka. So ‘yon, pareho lang kayo ng workload pero ‘yong opportunity na rin na binibigay sa ‘yo na dapat binibigay sa lalaki minsan hindi pa maibibigay kasi nga andun na ‘yong “babae kasi ‘yan e,” so dapat si lalaki, pero ‘yong trabaho, ‘yong hirap, pareho. Mas mahirap pa nga lang sa babae kasi it’s either babawasan nila ‘yong opportunity or mababa... kunyari sa isang bago, parehong bagong babae o bagong lalaki, ang mas iisipin palang nila, ang mas kaya is ‘yong lalaki kasi dahil lang sa gender niya. Pero ano... pareho lang ‘yan ng ano ha ng... baka nga kunyari ang babae let’s say topnotcher siya or whatever, pero eto, mas mataas pa rin ‘yong pagka kilala, opportunity na ibibigay sa lalaki, kasi nga dahil lalaki sya.” (P7)

P2 had a diverse experience when it comes to learning the ropes of the industry. She is thankful for the German friends and colleagues who were very generous with their time in teaching her the ropes of the business. Visiting the crew on board is a big part of her journey to learning. Meeting the ship’s commands and engaging them in discussion on crew matters gave her wide perspective of seafaring.

It can be noted that generally, these successful women leaders who have set their hearts on shipping, have equal access to promotion, training, and other necessary facilities. In the government, women are given equal opportunities as their male counterparts due to Gender and Development mainstreaming programs. Offshore and onboard sectors are also given this support, through training and fellowships as a

constant element of the International Maritime Organisation's strategies to develop women potential in the maritime business (Cristina, 2013).

Conscientisation

A notch higher in the the Longwe's Framework features Conscientisation, which refers to the difference between sex and gender, and an awareness that gender roles are cultural and can therefore be changed. This topic aims to discuss if women leaders were respected in the industry despite their gender.

P1 believes that generally, she was respected as a woman. However, she also experienced being disrespected in work. She recalls that she had a Chief Engineer before who did not want to have female crew and he did not want any help from her if it is beyond her scope of work. She further recalls that one time, the crew were working on the main engine, and P1, being a fourth engineer, was assigned to the maintenance of auxiliary machineries, main engine not being a part of it. The Chief Engineer did not allow P1 to help them. On another instance, she was subjected to sexual harassment when she saw a man peeping through while she was taking a shower in a passenger ship. She reported the offender to the Master at once. She said that she did not know the reason of the offender for committing such act, whether the offender liked her, or any other reason. The situation did not hinder her from pursuing her career. It made her more careful instead. She did not recall having any activities which were intended solely for men or for women, as they are always equally tasked for both men and women.

P3 shared that she did not have any experience of sexual harassment. She believes that this is due to the fact that a person would determine if she will be harassed or not. It is to her belief that should a person show that she can be harassed,

then she will be harassed; a person setting a barrier from another person will not be a subject of harassment. During her schooling in Sweden, she prayed a lot and was determined to come home to her husband. “Siguro ano ‘yan, nasa tao kung magpapaharass ka. Kung gusto mong harassin ka, mahaharass ka talaga. Pero if you set your barrier na parang “oops”, parang huwag kang masyadong ano ba dahil senior ka, parang you are below the belt. Nakikiramdam ‘yan sila kung kaya kang pasukan. Lyon ang observation ko dyan. Katulad nung nasa Sweden tayo, hindi maiiwasan na may mga mag aano talaga dyan, mag-aattempt, mag-ttry, kung kaya kang bolahin. Pero ‘yon nga ang ano ko lang dyan, ang strength ko lang palagi, parang dasal at umuwi ka ng buo sa asawa mo.”

One good activity that P3 shared in relation to sexual harassment is the holding of tea party every Thursday in PCG, wherein female employees join and share their problems. Participants impart harassment stories, which P3 directly reported to the Commanding Officer. Eventually, harassment cases lessened, if not totally eradicated, due to this activity. There was also a GAD Focal Point System established in the Coast Guard units, with the Committee on Decorum and Investigation investigating all sexual harassment cases. P3 also does not recall having any activity which is intended only for males, and not for females, as activities are intended for both.

In the numerous occasions she went on her ship visit P2 has not experienced any form of sexual harassment. AGILE is manning tankers. Unfortunately, there are no female officers or ratings on board. The European commands and ratings are happy to welcome her on board because it is quite a rarity to have the lady at the helm of the crewing agency to do the ship visit herself. “I think it depends on how you conduct

yourself but no amorous advances...physical amorous advances, none, but of course they are very pleased. You know the thing is like when I go onboard the ship and I've been to many, right? The crew would always say to me "Ma'am you know, we know you're coming," I said "Why?" "...because all the command they took a bath." They say, "you can tell that a lady is coming, the ship smells different," You know those are things but no physical, no. I don't think... they have too much respect I was sent there by the owners of the ship."

P4 was once invited by a stakeholder for lunch, which she accepted, but later found out that they will be dining without anyone in tow. Although the conversation during lunch went around the problems of the stakeholder, she felt uncomfortable. After then, she vowed not to accept any meetings over meals once again, and any discussions related to business must be done at the office. She did not experience any other form as harassment, and credits it to the idea that she might not issue a permit to whosoever would harass her. She explains, "Wala naman akong na feel na harassment. I believed that if you just behave and maintain proper decorum, irerespeto ka rin siguro naman talaga, basta ang feeling ko nga takot pa sila sa akin. "Takot" in a way that they (stakeholders) should never be wrong on me. For the consequences might be greater. Or men just simply respect me the way I am."

P5 received an indecent proposal from her Captain when she was a Third Mate, offering to give her whatever she wants and she will have it, although she never made mention about any physical advances made. She decided to ignore the situation and just laugh about it. She believes that if she had just entertained the words of the Captain, she herself could have easily been promoted. However, she is not inclined

about doing actions which are offensive to standards of decency, and wants to get a promotion for her skills and hard work. As she is the one who makes activities onboard, she made sure that all planned activities include both the male and female crew, so as to eliminate discrimination. Nevertheless, she felt respected in her work assignments. “Ang taas ng tingin nila sa ‘kin, saka pagdating sa trabaho sila yung mga tipong tropa na kahit anong oras mo sila tawagin andiyan sila sa ‘yo”.

P6 received verbal and abusive harassment in the sense that things were made difficult for her at work, like being asked to be awake 24/7. She recalls that she received an indecent proposal from one officer, but she strongly retorted. There were instances, however, when, in the line of work, some body parts were touched unintentionally, but she does not see them as harassment because of the cramped work area, like during overhauling in a small compartment. She also encountered being in a ship where the Captain and all the other officers were other nationalities and she was the only Filipino officer. Being so, they suggested to her that she eats at the mess hall for the crew, despite being an officer. She, however, stayed in the officer’s dining area, despite not being included in the officers’ conversations. The officers eventually recognized her persistence and started talking to her over meals.

P7 was alert in raising any uncomfortable jokes in order to draw the line of decency and professionalism. She recalls an instance wherein an AB was cracking jokes on a sensitive and private subject, which, individually would be interpreted differently.

Given the above experiences shared by the respondents, it is notable that effective coping mechanisms are helpful in addressing the issues of harassment,

intimidation, discrimination, antagonism in the maritime industry. As they were proven to have established longer-term careers, the respondents have invariably referred to their personal resilience to better cope with the environment (Turnbull, 2013).

Participation

Participation in this area means that our respondents take part in decision-making, policy-making, planning and administration. It seeks to know their involvement in such aspects, enjoining them to share their personal experiences which demonstrate such, and a recollection of whether their opinions and recommendations are considered. It also seeks to gather inputs as to the measures they have made in case that their involvements were not given weight.

In the office setting of P1, most of the employees are women, and they are actively involved in most of the planning and any activities in the office. She shares that maybe, should she not feel involved, she would be disappointed because women are now contributing more to the society and she believes that men and women equally share knowledge and expertise.

Being a part of the Central Staff in the PCG Headquarters, P3's job is more on policy-making, and doctrine development. She emphasized that she has a big influence on policies. Now that the West Philippine Sea is a big issue on maritime security, she arms herself with provisions of the law in order to make a point, citing provisions of the UNCLOS if the need arises. Her recommendations or opinions are being considered during meetings, especially when she was an internal auditor.

“Ang trabaho kasi namin is more on policy-making, doctrine development, so malaki ‘yong influence namin on policy. ‘Yong sa akin maritime security, mabigat kasi ‘yong ano ngayon, pinaka hot issue on West PH Sea pero wala namang discrimination so far as long as ‘yon nga...”

Maingay kasi ako, kung ano 'yong nasa mind ko, when I speak, mayroon talaga akong provisions of law, kaya napapakinggan ako ng mga lalaki kasi alam ko naman kung sino ang mga maiingay dyan na mga lalaki, 'yong mga boka-boka lang sila ng bibig. Kapag tinapatan mo 'yan ng batas o policy, may alam naman tayo sa Malmo, Sweden. According to, UNCLOS, ano na 'yan sila, hihina na 'yan sila, magtatago.” (P3)

Being the Deputy Administrator for Operations, P4 strongly believes that her opinions and recommendations are being respected and valued. She credits this from her rising from the ranks until she was appointed by the President in 2018. Proud that she has already served under three retired generals, she is thankful that the Administrators that she worked for listen to her inputs, her contributions, and felt that they are grateful that she is very supportive and open to help, both in managing the personnel and policy formulation. “They always seek my inputs, my ideas maybe because I rose from the ranks, I have worked in... I've been in MARINA for more than 3 decades. They listen, they listen to my inputs, to my contributions and in fact they're very thankful for me that I'm very supportive and open to help of course, manage the personnel and in policy formulation, they do listen.”

P5's fellow seafarers respect highly of her. She believes this is because she, as a Chief Mate, is hands on in her job. As an example, she narrated that whenever there was something that needed to be fixed in the pump room, she would go to the area and help the crew in fixing it, notwithstanding her gender or rank. It is for this reason that her crew think highly of her; that they enunciate that they want to come with her, should she decide to transfer to another company.

P6 strongly believes that once you reach the level of Master, the crew will always respect you because of the title of a Master. However, she cannot deny the fact that there were still challenges in terms of getting the respect from some of the other senior

officers. For example, when a breakdown of equipment happened onboard, they tried to hide things from her. She made it a point to emphasize to them that she is still the overall responsible person so she has to know everything. In some cases, she believes that it is not only her gender that is being challenged, but her authority as well. She said that as she showed them that she knows what she is doing, that is when the professional respect comes in.

“Parang they don’t want to discuss it, these things also to... they tried to hide things from you and that I don’t like. Kaya sabi ko nga sa kanila in the end, “I am still the overall responsible person here so I have to know everything.” So hindi lang kasi yung gender mo na yung na-cha-challenge eh, even ‘yong level of authority mo and decision making mo so ‘yong knowledge mo na-cha-challenge na rin at some point ganun. Kasi parang ‘yong iba maiisip lang nila na kaya lang naman naging Kapitan ‘yan kasi ganito baka hindi nakaranas ng mga mga manual vessels ‘yan o baka puro lang ‘yan bago ‘yong barko o automated ‘yong barko na nasakyan niya. May mga ganon ang part na reason behind that. But you know, eventually, like what I’ve said na parang as you show them na alam mo ‘yong ginagawa mo, na alam mo ‘yong trabaho mo, then that’s where the you know, the professional respect would really go in.” (P6)

P7 had parts in planning and policy-making onboard, since she is on a management level. She recalls an instance when, being new in a certain vessel and coming from diverse operations, her co-workers did not listen to her as she was trying to make a point. After a few months, an incident happened, proving that the point she was making was correct. As she recalls the following:

“So nung ako po ‘yong nagbibigay ng input that time, ayaw nila maniwala, so gusto nilang sundin ko ‘yong ginagawa nila eh alam ko na nga mali, so simple lang, di ko gagawin, kasi ako naman ‘yong in charge that time kunyari, ako naman nasa DP so di ko gagawin. So nagkaroon ‘yon ng inis sa kanila, okay, ito naman po mangyari nun, after few months dun sa ginagawa nilang ‘yon nagkaron ng insidente, ‘yong tubo nabali kasi sobrang ah... that was my main point na bakit hindi kailangan gawin ‘yong pinapagawa nila. There was one na second mate nun that time nagsabi siya, sabi niya, “Meron Diyos talaga,” Sabi niya kasi daw biglang all of a

sudden daw may mga tao na nanghihingi na ng opinion sa 'kin. Kumbaga hinayaan ko muna sila for a few contracts then a few months kumbaga sa bida, sige pabugbog ka muna or sila muna bida and then all of a sudden biglang "ah... may punto pala 'yong sinasabi niya," ganon." (P7)

In an organization where seniority is important, P8 recognizes that she needs to follow orders especially of her superiors. With her experience, she considers herself blessed that her superiors respect her and considers her decisions regardless of gender. She is grateful for the trust accorded to her, as she explained "na eversince lalaki po 'yong humahawak, kasi this even involve 'yong sa lahat ng barko, lahat ng barko namin, lahat... lahat ng coastguard, lahat ng assets namin ganon. So, before parang this is a man's job parang, pero ngayon open na sila, open rin... luckily, we have mga previous commandants namin na open minded na. Isa pa, naging deputy din pala ako ng International Affairs so isa din 'yon sa mga sensitive din na positions before and 'yon nga. To be able 'yong pagkatiwalaan ka ng mga boss to recommend decisions na very crucial so, to include 'yong sa West Philippine Sea, malaking bagay na rin 'yon na ma-earn mo 'yon and for somebody to make, to have, to provide siguro a good decision parang ganon. Helpful din siguro na 'yon nga na na-earn ko rin siguro 'yong ano nila trust ng organization."

Participation of women in the maritime industry is seemed to be increasing, as shared by our respondents. Almost all of them gave positive responses to the question of whether or not their voices are heard or recommendations considered when establishing policies. Due to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, several action plans were crafted to address the need to strengthen issues on women's participation, specifically on the inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the production process itself (UN

Basic Facts, p. 236). Also, there are women organizations which helped to improve the quality of life. By gaining access to well-paid jobs and receiving the respect due to women, it has also contributed to the advancement of women, enhanced their active and equal participation in development, and has raised the awareness to attain gender equality (UN, 1998).

Control

This area aims to determine if the women leaders were able to influence or direct events. Control is considered to be the ultimate level of equality and empowerment, in which women play an active role in the development process and resources, and benefits are shared equally between men and women.

P1 shared that she was given a free hand in the implementation of internal policies. She, however, did not elaborate any further how this was exemplified. She feels the respect of her superiors. In order to empower herself, she made sure that she is knowledgeable in the field, studying matters which are related to the maritime industry. Attending seminars, and keeping herself updated on what is happening, as well as taking the time to listen to her staff and crew to know their concerns are ways she did to keep herself abreast.

Being the owner and president of Agile Maritime Resources, P2 had no problems in implementing new policies to her company, and the way she manages the business. AGILE has a service culture. AGILE treats their seafarers as clients. AGILE had the foresight to ensure that their seafarers who were stranded in Manila during the first hard lockdown in March 2020 will have sufficient food and shelter by asking their principals way ahead of the scheduled lockdown to subsidise the living expenses of

the crew. The Principals responded with alacrity to which AGILE is very grateful. AGILE was able to extend assistance to stranded seafarers from other crewing agencies by providing them with hot meals and hygiene kits. “So this is something that I’ve changed, the culture. I tried, even here in the company we have a different culture regarding seafarer, the way we deal with seafarers.”

P3 explained that all policies in the PCG should be approved by the Commandant. She further explained that she can implement new policies for as long as they are approved by the Commandant. Based on her explanations, she has the authority for matters within her office, but if it concerns the whole of the Coast Guard Agency, it has to seek the approval of the Commandant. Respect by her superiors are also felt, in the sense that they would comply to her recommendations, for example, in presentations that they send to her for comments. She considers education and social engineering to be her most effective methods to empower herself. Early on, she had established support groups which help her now in the performance of her duties, especially when there are needs to follow up important documents. Her narration on this aspect goes:

“Free hand to implement especially if it’s approved by the Commandant. Kasi lahat ng mga policies namin should be approved by the Commandant unless mayroon din mga policies o regulation when the Commandant said direct the Commandant or the directive to intensify their maritime patrol, isusulat ko ‘yan as policy or directive doon sa mga Commanders but I am signing for the Commandant kasi may direct ano siya or handwritten insertion nya. Pero lahat ng mga policies namin dapat may complete-staff work dadaan sa mga concerned staff before approval ni Commandant. Pero within the office, I have the full hand to implement policies.” (P3)

In the case of P4, she made mention that she experienced having a subordinate who would not follow her direction. Although she does not believe that it was because

of her being a lady boss, but because it just so happens in any organization that there exists a problem child. She addressed such scenario by talking to the person involved in order to clarify the reason for the resistance. Thankfully, resistance did not happen often and can be easily resolved. Working in MARINA for 36 years and being appointed as the Deputy Administrator, she explained that she still could not feel her power, but only because it depends on how one defines power. Since stakeholders from the regional offices are still calling her to ask for advice which she openly shares them, she believes that power does not mean to control or to dominate someone, but to be used properly so that the stakeholders are also happy with the way they handle their jobs. As she explains:

“Well meron talaga yan in any organization... but doesn’t mean that because you’re a lady boss they refuse to follow orders or they don’t believe in you being a woman, di naman pero meron talagang ganon. Meron talagang may problem child in any organization saka I always give naman a chance to anyone to talk, kinakausap ko kung baka may problema kinakausap ko or baka hindi naintindihan kasi yung resistance may reason yun. It might be a misunderstanding or suffering from challenges within.” (P4)

P5 has very minimal experiences of having subordinates who disrespect her. She believes that she earned the respect and confidence of her subordinates because she works hard and joins them whenever something has to be fixed, not settling for just giving orders around. She had no issues with her superiors all throughout her contracts, and she shared that they acknowledge and respect her as well. She recalls the situations as follows:

“Meron pero very minimal eh, kasi pag once kasi na nakilala-usually kasi nangyayari yan sa unang sampa ko palang... pero very rare na nangyayari sa akin kasi pag once kasi nakikita na nila ako na lumabas na ako mahihiya na sila sa akin kasi as per sabi ko sa ‘yo hindi ako ‘yong tipong umuupo lang kasi sa computer eh. So, hands on kasi ako

pagdating sa trabaho kaya kumbaga very very rare, once in a blue moon mo makikita 'yang mga pasaway and once na meron pang hindi susunod sa 'yo very ano 'yan siya. Very rare na mangyari at saka at the same time very light lang siya hindi siya 'yong tipong hindi talaga niya sinunod ganon.” (P5)

The experience shared by P6 includes the time when she was still Second Mate or Chief Mate, she would hang out with her crew, attending jamming sessions and others. However, when she became a Captain, she noticed that the crew grew some distance from her, simply because they respect her position. She believes that being a woman has not yet reached the level of being the counterpart of men in general, and that regardless of rank, there would always be hesitation. Even so, she said that in more diversified vessels manned by other nationality, she gets treated equally, not as the woman master, but as the master, which shows the difference in recognition.

P7 strengthened her position as the Captain by asking for help from the previous Captain whom she worked with for several years, and who knows her well enough. The recognition and congratulatory message received from the directors also empowered her in a way, because they recognize her position, and support her. Likewise, when there were cases wherein others would have ideas contrary to her decisions, she would explain thoroughly until they finally understand. She takes note of the opportunities to speak her mind, despite the differences in their ideas. She had continuous plans for advancement, but since she recognizes that the only constant thing is change, she would rather keep her plans to herself at the moment.

While it is true that P8 experienced challenges before, things are far different nowadays. Some 15 years ago, it was very hard for the female to request to be assigned aboardship nor to get a scholarship abroad. As per experience, it was really a

challenge. Eventually, things have changed. She even mentioned that one of the PCG's first female Commanding Officer aboardship is from her class, as well as, the first female fixed-wing pilot.

Given the above-mentioned experiences of our respondents, it can be noted that generally, these women leaders gained significant level of control in the development process and resources of their areas of authority. They were able to implement policies, and were able to control the day to day operations of their offices/work assignments. They received respect from their superiors and subordinates, and empowered by their offices/agencies such that they can exercise their influence.

Challenges Encountered

The maritime industry has been known to be a work environment solely dominated by men. There may be women but they are only few. Over the years, developments have taken place and women's labor market and lifestyles have evolved. They have upgraded their educational backgrounds which enabled them to enter into male dominated industries, one of which is shipping (Theotakas 2014 as cited in Arulnayagam, 2020). To date, women represent nearly 2% of the workforce in the maritime industry (MacNeil & Gosh, 2016). In spite of the significant progress in empowering women, achieving gender equality remains a slow process and barriers still exist which block women from fully contributing their potentials at all levels in society (Zhao, Tyzack, Anderson, & Onoakpovike, 2013 as cited in Arulnayagam, 2020). This study answers the central question: What are the lived experiences of women leaders in the maritime industry? Particularly this section focuses on the challenges they have encountered in a male dominated environment. The following

themes emerged from the analysis of the interview transcriptions: cultural adaptation, discrimination, stereotyping, and harassment.

Cultural Adaptation

Transitioning to a new work environment is not always easy. More so, that the new work environment is ascribed as masculine. It takes time for a person to assimilate into the new culture (Cultural adaptation, 2015 August). Everything has to be learned again for a person to be able to live and function within it. This means creating new relationships, adjusting to the work culture, and interacting with people of other nationalities. A respondent articulated her experience in dealing with another nationality and the expectation that work will be delivered according to their standards, as stated:

“I was dealing with German principal, okay, and the Germans have a standard of their own, a standard far beyond the standard of anybody in Europe, okay, and it cannot be anything else, you cannot deliver a work less than the standards the German....and I’m not used to dealing with harsh people.” (P2)

Coming from a different work background, dealing with the seafarers and the principals were all learnings for the respondent.

Discrimination

Most of the women respondents encountered discrimination in their work places. Discrimination is the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people or groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, or sexual orientation (Discrimination, 2019 October). Discrimination takes in many forms such as due to race, gender, age, or sexual orientation. Gender identity or sexual orientation discrimination is among the most common as experienced by respondents both onboard ship and in offices.

According to them, this happened during employment hiring, promotion, and availment of scholarship. One respondent's scholarship application was questioned on the premise that the scholarship was only for men:

“My application for a WMU scholarship was questioned. The bottomline was I do not deserve it because the slot is for men.” (“kinuwestiyon yung application ko sa WMU... talagang bottomline parang hindi mas deserve, ahm... merong ano na parang it’s a slot for men...”) (P8)

Another respondent also expressed difficulty getting into a shipboard assignment due to the notion that shipboard job is for men only.

“We requested for a shipboard assignment but it was not easy to get approved because they think that ships are for male only since it is more on operations.” (“nagrequest kami nun na maassign sa barko so hindi ganon kadali na ma-approve ka kasi ang iniisip talaga nila na barko are for the male, ano, so its more on operations mga ganon. “) (P8)

Radhika Menon (Times of India, 2020 as cited in Arulnayagam, 2020) pointed out that the presence of women onboard is not welcome. This is the reason women are undermined, misjudged and ill-treated when they foray into a male-bastion. Furthermore, Abdelall (2008) as cited in (Arulnayagam, 2020), attribute the unwelcomed presence of women onboard based on superstitions that women would be “potential source of malevolence or bad luck”. These facts still remain in seafaring communities (Zhao et.al., 2017 as cited in Arulnayagam, 2020). The analysis results of the present study revealed that men counterparts of the respondents are not comfortable having women in their workplace like the ship. There is some resistance on their part to accept women as co-workers. They do not know how to deal with having women onboard. This results to unfair treatment of women in their workplace, as articulated by these respondents:

“He said that it is a challenge for him because he doesn’t want to fight with me because I’m a woman.” (sabi niya challenge nga daw sa part niya it’s because na he doesn’t want to fight with me because I’m a woman). (P6)

“You know, I am afraid of you,” sabi ko, “Why are you afraid of me?” sabi ko, “...you will do your job, I will do my job that’s all,” sabi kong ganon sa kanya sabi ko, “Why you should be afraid of me? We are here to work. You do your job as chief mate I will do my job as third mate. We will have no problems other than that I don’t care, you do your job sa chief mate I do my job as third mate finished, wala na tayong pag uusapan,” (P5)

Respondents explained that their co-workers were prejudiced with women as being stereotyped as weak and do not know the job: *“Ay ano ‘yan wala ‘yan, mahina ‘yan, uupo lang ‘yan, uutos lang ‘yan,” (P5).*

Another respondent expressed that her application for shipboard job was rejected twice merely because of her being a woman. She could not find any reason why they will not hire her given her qualifications and work experience, as stated:

“I have been exposed to different types of pumps – Framo, deep well pumps, Manflex, gear pump. I’ve been also in centrifugal. So what else do I need to know about pumps? In terms of tanker, I’ve also boarded a crude oil tanker, oil chemical, finished product. What other experience do they need from me?” (P5)

A respondent narrates her hardships onboard where her colleagues were trying to test her ability in work.

Pero ‘yong mga pahirap na...’yong malaking hose nga, let’s just say mga 4 inches bitbit bitbit namin ‘yon kasi magba-vacuum kami ng tangke, eh ‘yong tangke namin is mga 20-25 meters kalalim, bababaan ‘yon, iba-vacuum mo sa baba, naglilinis kami, nagkukuskos kami. Para talagang alam mo ‘yon, ‘yong all around ka, na sinusubukan, tinettest, kasi sabi, “Oh ginusto mo ‘yan eh,” kailangan equality diba? Pero minsan feeling ko sobra na kasi pagka sila may pahinga, bakit ako di, wala ako pahinga? Alam mo yun? Pagkatapos ko magtrabaho gagamitin nanaman ako ng ibang opisyal, “Oh, Maria you have to do this, you have to do that.” Pati ba naman pagtimpla ng kape ako pa? (P6)

The respondent also reported a discrimination in one of the ships where she was the only Filipino officer.

“The captain told me to eat in the ratings’ mess hall since all Filipinos are there. I was feeling isolated, they talk in their own language, they do not talk to me and they do not let me join them. But I still show up in the officers’ mess because I am an officer and I have my seat there.”
“sinabihan talaga ako ni Kapitan na, “you can also eat in the rating ... sa crew na mess hall kasi puro Filipino dun. Tapos ina-isolate ako, tapos sila nag uusap sila at their own language di ako kinakausap and hindi ako sinasali, pero ako show up show up pa din ako everyday kasi opisyal ako eh, eto ‘yong upuan ko eh, diba? (P6)

Harassment

Harassment onboard as experienced by the women-seafarers take the form of verbal and sexual as expressed in the following statements of the respondents:

“.. just tell me what you want and you will have it,” (P5)

“there was one time that I was taking a shower and I saw him peeping, I reported him to the Master.” (P1)

Another form of harassment experienced onboard is bullying like shouting as cited by a respondent:

“...tas sisindakin ka pa, sisigawan ka pa, ibu bully ka and all diba? tapos babagsakan ka and it’s not only sa mga external parties even ‘yong mga nakasama ko talaga onboard, even my fellow Senior officers, ratings and all...” (P6)

Stereotyping

The United Nations Human Rights (n.d.) describe gender stereotype as a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are ought to be possessed by, or performed by, women or men. Gender stereotyping

becomes detrimental to women or men when it hinders their capacity to develop themselves personally or professionally and in making choices involving their lives.

While women are now accepted in male-dominated profession such as seafaring, however, stereotyping is still common among seafarers. The experiences of the respondents indicate that generally work onboard is still for men, as articulated by these:

“Shipboard job is for men and not women. That is why men are deployed onboard first before the women.” (P3)

“Women have no equal access to opportunity because of the misconception or stereotyping that women can’t do the job that are mostly dominated by men.” (P7)

“I had a Chief engineer before who didn’t want to have female crew nor didn’t he want me to help him if it’s beyond my work scope.” (P1)

Kitada (2016) explained that hegemonic masculinity is symbolically positioned onboard ship and it becomes difficult when women enter into the seafaring profession. Accordingly, women’s “difference” can create a chaotic situation on ships. The experience of one respondent illustrates this:

“Those quarrels onboard always involve myself, as if I am the source of their differences. I had the feeling that I am the miss universe because I am always involved you know that. It seems you are also the root cause of the troubles in the ship. It looks like the males are having troubles because they have a woman with them...but really I am not involved “(... tapos ‘yong mga away sa barko, ikaw lagi ‘yong ini-involve na parang ikaw ‘yong pinag aawayan kasi sabi o feeling ko parang miss universe naman ako, hindi naman ako mai-involve pero alam mo ‘yon? ‘yong parang nagagamit na rin din ‘yong ikaw dyan na nagkakagulo ‘yong barko. Para ipakita nila na o nagkakagulo sila ‘yong mga babae pero sila naman ang may... kumbaga eh choose naman nila ‘yon wala naman akong... wala na man involvement ‘yong pagkababae ko don diba) (P6)

The climb in the career ladder of women respondents has not been easy. Challenges were met along the way but for the respondents, these challenges were turned as opportunity for them to show that women can also do the job ascribed for men. They were able to get the trust of their colleagues.

“You know, I underestimated you,” ‘yon ang sabi niya sa akin. “I didn’t expect that you can do this job, very good, I am very impressed. I cannot say anymore anything to you, I underestimated you.” (P5)

Overcoming Challenges

No one is exempted from challenges. As Kariba (2020) pinpointed, these challenges can be professional or personal in nature, which could either make or break people; that facing them could help build one’s character, strengthen fortitude and shine down a light of who one truly is.

In the interviews made of the eight (8) participants, they related that they underwent several challenges in different angles and shades. But certain values assisted them to triumph over them.

When asked to what values she attributes her status, P2 responded humility and empathy. Humility to admit what she does not know and to ask reliable senior people in the industry for insights. To never stop learning. Empathy to put herself in the boots of the foreign principals, safety shoes of the seafarers and slippers of the seafarer’s families. She credits this to her humble beginnings. She had her share of critics in the industry because she speaks her mind out and is averse to politicking. But she takes the criticism as a tool for self improvement. She said that she took all the bricks thrown at her and built bridge to reach out to her critics. She said:

"I had a good mentor and I had so many good people who helped me learn the business. I am still learning. It's a continuous process."

"When you do not know something, and you recognize that you do not know, you start learning from it and you grow."

"I have better idea now than when I started, but I cannot still say that I know. So, if I do not know, I ask questions."

"Stones that were thrown on my side or on my way, I used them to build blocks, to build a home."

"I am wired as a lawyer, so I'm into details. The Germans want facts. So, I said to them you have been into shipping... I just got now; my background and orientation are different, that's why when I ask questions, I am trying to learn it in the way my mind is wired. So, please answer the question without sarcasm."

"I always credit what we have achieved to Agile. I always credited it to our crew. If we do not have good crew, we will not have good principals."

"I am happy where I am now, creating more jobs for Filipinos. I also set up another company where we give training for nurses to go to Germany."

"Because of my exposure, I am able to meet people who are very good employers, paying well and treating people well. We have principals who care. They are very strict, but they are fair, very fair."

"Because I have a strong character, and I speak my mind, all my friends were worried that I will not come across well when I spoke with our middle eastern principals, and even with our Japanese principals. But I told my friends – if I cannot be me, then I am faking it, right? I can only be me. And I am thankful, I able to work well with these principals."

"I come from a very simple, very humble background, so I think my feet is planted on the ground. I know where I came from." (P2)

Relationship with her people or crew is important for her, and empathy is an emphasized value as she narrated:

"As with the crew, I have learned to talk to them, to connect with them. I know when to put my corporate hat and I know when to take it off. I speak to them in their language, and I've learned by going onboard the ship. I have good rapport with my crew"

“I feel for my crew and my employees. Everybody works, no work-from-home (WFH) scheme. Because if WFH there will be less pay. I put myself in the situation of our employees.”

“When the lockdown happened on March 16, 2020, some crew were affected by the lockdown – those on training and those who were about to depart to join their ships. So, I communicated with the principals and requested them to subsidize the overhead expenses until the lockdown is lifted. Our crew were well attended and well provided. We even have the opportunity to feed some crew from other companies who were also stranded. This is because of my corporate background, having foresight and getting something concrete from the principals.”

“After this interview, I am going to interview the cadets from the domestic trade. These are the guys that nobody wanted, and you cannot imagine the hardships they have to go through and how many manning agencies turned them down because of their age and they didn’t come from the right school. So far, I have been quite successful in getting them to become officers.”

“Yung mga tao na iyan, nakita mo paghihirap nila, iyong struggle nila. Iyong iba ang sweldo P200 a month, iyong iba, wala. Iyong iba nagbayad para makasakay. Iyong iba hindi daw makasakay dahil walang backer. Pero may mga pangarap sila, lahat sila gusto makatulong sa pamilya, at ginagawa nila lahat para maabot iyong pangarap nila. So, when we had a top management meeting with our German principals two years ago, we made a presentation about this case. When our principals went back to Germany, I received an email stating that they will get 50% of cadets from us and the 50% is from IMEC. And these cadets go onboard as ratings, and we have very good positive experience because they really work hard. Some even got promoted to fourth engineers and third officers on LNG.” (P2)

When asked about harassment, she said. *“...I think it depends on how you conduct yourself. Also, they have much respect knowing that I was sent onboard by the owner of the ship; I am the boss of the Filipino crew.”*

P3 mentioned about positivity, confidence, prayer and religious beliefs, crediting to whom it is due, listens to advices, being straightforward, flexibility, contentment, wisdom through experience, social engineering, excellence and compassion, family as source of strength.

The following were her related supporting statements:

“When I was about to go home, Admiral Lista gave me career advice, the seat of government is in Manila. Pag umuwi ka ng Davao, makakalimutan ka. And I am grateful; Kung ano ako ngayon, siya iyon”.

“Even if they have made the decision, and I am not comfortable with it, I ask questions and I tell them that it could mean Audit Observation Memorandum (AOM) for them and it would affect their retirement”.

“I always stand when I am on the right ground. Siguro ang advantage ko, I have knowledge of the law. I know my rights and they know my capability as a woman.”

“Hindi ako marunong magalit or magtampo. Kung meron man akong sama ng loob ngayon, bukas wala na. Tapos kung inaaway ako, hindi ko siya aawayin. The more na pagalitan or kalabanin ako, the more na malove ko iyong person. Kasi I always consider myself as a favorite daughter of God, parang iyon na-instill sa mind ko kaya confident ako humarap, parang iyon strength ko.”

“In every position I have, hindi ko ginagamit siya as personal. I always take it kung paano ako makatulong o makaserve sa ibang tao. I want to be the deliverer of good news.”

“I give premium to my works. Hindi ako kampante lang, parang gusto ko excellence, as if this will be my last.”

“Wisdom through experience. Huwag mo ilagay ang power or rank sa ulo mo.”

“Because I know the procedure, and I just want to make things straight. I know my stand and I cannot just waive on my right.”

“Guided ako palagi ng Diyos.”

“Excellence and compassion. Excellence in my work, in my dealings, and compassion for people.”

“Ang pangarap ko lang maging Kapitan. Masaya na ako. Kung ano meron ka, dapat happy ka. Sobra-sobra na narating ko.”

“Our strength is our family kasi sila ang constant sa buhay natin. Huwag natin isama sila sa career natin. Hindi maiiwasan na may mga frustrations tayo sa career, pero pag-uwi mo maka-gain ka ng strength sa family mo.”
(P3)

P3 also spoke of generosity and kindness to subordinates. She believes that having good relationship with your staff, making them happy means inspiring them to provide better output.

“I see to it na inaalagaan ko mga tao ko, their morale and welfare. When my people are happy, mas mataas ang productivity nila. At hindi ka nila pababayaan. Kahit hindi ko iutos, nagdedeliver sila ng trabaho, magugulat ka na lang. Tapos ikwekwento nila kung paano ko sila treated, iyon ang nagbi-build ng career reputation ko.”

“Money is not an issue, kasi nahahanapan iyan. Kapag may guilt feeling ako nagpapakain ako sa mga staff ko; kapag masaya ako, nagpapakain din ako. Pero dapat alam mo din iyong limitations para hindi ka abusuhin.”

“Relationship with the people - the people you meet all the way up are the same when you go down. Kaya kami, bumababa kami sa admin pag nagpa-follow-up. Napaka effective ng personal relationship o social engineering. Sila din makakatulong sa iyo later. Kapag may papel ako kailangan from DOTR, madali ko lang makuha dahil meron ako support group na nabuo noong andun pa ako.” (P3)

When asked about harassment, she said. *“Nasa tao kung magpapa-harass ka. Kung gusto mo harassin ka, maha-harass ka talaga. Pero if you set your barrier. At kung meron mag-attempt, sabihan ko na puwede kita kasuhan, ganyan agad. Also, dasal palagi at umuwi ka ng buo sa asawa mo”*

P4 articulates the importance of not being vindictive. After getting promoted, some filed a case on her. So, when they became her staff, instead of getting even, she expressed her feelings to them to let go of those pains and moved on. She also mentioned that she never thought of abusing her power over them. They all became good friends. She even worked for the promotion of all of them during her stint as the director. She believes that she has no right to deprive anyone of his/her opportunity.

“Hindi ko talaga ma-feel yung power given by this position or abuse itong power, hindi. Pero naisip ko din empleyado ko na sila, sabi ko papaano na

to, pahihirapan ko ba sila?" Kasi noon they filed a case against me. I mean, they attacked my family. Sabi ko mas lugi naman. So, instead, I talked to them and expressed it and I managed na to let go all those pains and move on, and siguro naman na feel na rin nila yun." (P4)

According to her, it is important that you do not practice bias or anger or envy, especially at work.

"Balansehin mo talaga kasi holding this post, you can do everything that you want. Pwede mong pahirapan yung ship owner, pwede mong ipasara yung shipping company, pwedeng ipasarado yung shipyard, because regulatory body ka, you can, if you want to control the boat, kung papahirapan mo talaga yung stakeholder eh talagang maisasara sila. But you have to understand din that they have their investment. But number, i-set aside mo yung personal mo, set aside mo talaga yan. Hindi mo pwedeng dalhin dito sa opisina kasi kung bitbitin mo palagi yan, magalit ka at along the way, magkaroon kayo ng mga misunderstanding...mahirap, kawawa naman sila".

"The way you manage people, especially that we are tracking policies, so it will affect anyone in the industry. Tapos yung may bias ka, may envy ka or galit ka. A ship owner filed a case against me when I was a Regional Director. Sa totoo lang kung gagamitin ko yung power ko, aba eh pahihirapan ko yung ship owner na yun. Hindi ko yan, hindi ko iga-grant yan. I will recommend a negative recommendation for that ship owner. Pero hindi ko ginawa. Dapat hindi ka vindictive kasi mahirap iyon. And this applies to your people, to your subordinates, your directors and your stakeholders. Dapat, i-set aside talaga yan when you decide things. Yun lang naman. Dapat talaga i-maintain mo yan pero medyo challenging talaga yan kasi tao lang din tayo, as I said I always buy things with things, really. Ayoko i-complicate yung buhay." (P4)

A stakeholder also filed a case against her in view of issuing not favorable decisions. However, she still manages to balance her decisions and dealings with them until recently.

P5 reveals the importance of modelling and teamwork, as she said, *"pagdating sa trabaho, pag sinabing baklasan andon ako nakikibaklas. Pag hindi kaya ng mga tao, andun ako sinasalo ko 'yong trabaho. Literally, humahawak ako ng spanner, etc."*

At work, she earned the respect of her co-workers as reflected in this narration:

“Iyong mga tao ko kahit ngayon, tinatanong nila kung saan na ako, sama daw sila sa akin. Iyong iba nagsasabi na pag umuwi daw ako or pag lilipat ng ibang company. Dalhin ko daw sila at hindi lang po iisang tao ang nagsabi sa akin at hindi lang sa company na ito. Sa mga previous ko din na company gusto nila akong makasama kasi magaan daw akong kasama pagdating sa trabaho kaya doon ko nakita na ‘yong respeto ng tao hindi ‘yan pinepwera, kailangan kasi pakitaan mo sila. You have to earn their trust and in order for you to earn their trust, you have to give your trust to them, so that they will give you their trust also and doon nabi-build ang magandang team work. Sabi pa nila magkapitan ka na kasi para masaya ulit tayo dito. Sabi ko sa kanila hindi ako nagmamadali. It’s God’s will, its God’s plan in God’s time, in God’s place. Ang importante sa akin matapos ko ng maayos ang kontrata ko magawa ko ‘yong mga dapat gawin, may naayos ako, at least alam mo iyong pasalamat na ako ng owner, pasalamat na ako ng company masaya na ako dun sa ganon. Sabi ko, iyong promotion ko, it will just follow.” (P5)

She is also guided by her father as she shared, “My father says, learn to love your job. Do not go for popularity. Popularity will just follow as long as you do your job well and you love your job because if you love your job you will have a very good performance, the result is very good performance, if you have a good performance the owner and the company will be very happy for you and that’s the time that they will give you promotion.” “So ako Ma’am I live with my father’s words of wisdom, iyon ang bilin niya lagi sa akin kaya ako hindi ako nasisilaw sa taas ng sweldo. I don’t care, what I care is what the environment and the team that I will be having. I don’t care about kung ilang milyon iyong sinesweldo mo. I don’t care kahit bago pa ‘yan kung mga balasubas makakasama mo wala iyan. Hindi ka magkakaroon ng magandang buhay, ng magandang kontrata kaya iyan masasabi ko, trust is earned.”

She also reiterated the importance of firmness in decision making. She said: “you have to have the balls and you have to have a very good decision making kasi pag once na wala kang decision making wala ‘yan. You have to be firm, pag sinabi mong hindi, hindi, pag yes, yes. Kailangan may bayag ka kasi pag wala kang bayag at lagi ka

nalang ni-nerbiyos nerbiyos, walang mangyayari sa buhay mo, wala kayong matatapos na trabaho, wala kayong mare-repair”.

On harassment, she said “hindi mo maiiwasan meron magkakagusto sa iyo na mga kasama mo. Sinabihan ako na sabihin ko lang daw kung anong gusto ko, ibibigay daw n’ya. Pero hindi ko pinansin, tinawanan ko lang. Sabi n’ya, you are bad. I said, I want to be promoted because I know my job, I have the skills, I have the knowledge. Sabi ko hindi ako ‘yong tipong pa popromote dahil sa ibang bagay. Kasi once kasi Ma’am halimbawa magaganyan ka kasi di maiwasan may ganyan eh na very ano ba, nagmamadali sila na ma-promote. Alam mo Ma’am mapapahiya ka rin, kasi pagdating sa trabaho hindi mo alam trabaho mo, tatawanan ka ng ibang tao.”

She also stated “in this journey, you have to know how to balance, you have to observe your environment, you have to blend in your environment, you have to have the balls to work and you have to have discipline and you have to have a stock of patience, which makes it a bumpy road. I don’t want to compare myself to others, kaya ko narating china-challenge sarili ko. Ayokong kinukumpara ko sarili ko sa iba because in the first place we are different. We are totally different people. Ang akin naman kaya ako nakarating sa ganito kasi pinupush ko sarili ko, china-challenge ko sarili ko eh. Sabi ko next challenge okay, sige ganito iyong next position mo, gusto ko i-challenge sarili ko kasi gusto ko patunayan sa sarili ko hindi para patunayan sa ibang tao. Gusto kong patunayan sa sarili ko na kaya ko, kasi I don’t want to live my life na at the end of the day I will regret that I did not do it. At least I have tried to do it. If I fail then at least I have tried. I will not have regrets, at least you have tried your best. I just want to leave a mark.”

P6 responds straightforwardly when being challenged as a woman, as she narrated:

“One time when I was having an argument with my Chief officer, sabi niya na challenge nga daw sa part niya it’s because he doesn’t want to fight with me because I’m a woman. So, then ibinalik ko sa kanya iyong statement na ganon. Don’t ever use my gender as a form of excuse of your incompetence, simply because you don’t like dun sa sinasabi ko... Kasi nakita mo nga ako nag o-overhaul ng cargo valve na mga 10 or 16 inches iyong diameter na valve, ako mismo iyong nag oover haul...nasa harapan ka lang nakatingin and that time you didn’t even use my gender as an excuse that you should be the one doing it. And now you’re telling me it’s because you don’t like iyong decision na ginagawa ko, you’re telling me na it’s because I’m a woman?” (P6)

As to being a female master, she said:

“Pag may mga trouble kami sa barko, for example nagkaroon kami ng breakdown of equipment onboard, so they would always call me and they would always tell me, we have breakdown, how will we gonna do it? So kapagka magbibigay ako ng decision making sa kanila I have to ensure na may alam din ako. Eventually, as you show them na alam mo yung ginagawa mo, na alam mo yung trabaho mo, then that’s where they accept you; the professional respect would really go in.” (P6)

Finally, she mentioned the importance of having the right attitude, passion, knowing your purpose in life and faith in God as evidenced by her statements:

“I think no matter how knowledgeable or how skillful you are, if you don’t have the right attitude to that job, then you will never go along the way, you will never reach the top of your career.”

“I come along this way because of my passion in what I do. I love what I do, so I don’t consider it like trabaho lang na kailangan ko sumahod. Instead in everything that I do, I put my heart into it and I make sure that I served a purpose doon sa mga nakakasama ko, and in every vessel na pinupuntahan ko I considered it as my second home and I treat everybody as a family. So, we take care of each other. Ganun ko siya inembrace itong profession na ito. That’s what I am, regardless of difficulties, hindi ko na inisip na mag quit. Those difficulties, I turn them to challenges where I can improve more. I’m maybe not the smartest Captain, no, I’m maybe not that skillful on this kind of job but I can be proud that I have that right attitude towards this job because I... that’s how I loved it, that’s how I’m so passionate about. And when I leave, probably they will forget about my

face but at least I leave a mark with them, traces that once upon a time I sailed with this lady master or once upon a time I encountered a Filipina officer who taught me or whom I gained experience.

“Kaya napili ko na dito na muna ako sa shore because this is the right place din siguro sa akin where I can serve more of my purpose.”

“In everything I do, I always entrust and I always surrender it to God, so fear in Him, ‘yon lang talaga kapit lang talaga sa kanya because nothing is impossible.” (P6)

She also mentioned that teamwork is very important, no person can get the credit alone for the success and safe operation of the vessel.

P7 initially spoke of faith and the strength of prayer in facing challenges when she said: *“It was a long process po. Guided by the prayer Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. First, observe muna. Then reflect, kung kailangan ng serenity or courage. Of course, when we take action, we need all the courage we can muster.”*

Additionally, she mentioned doing one’s best, discipline, compassion, humility, accountability and responsibility as recognized in the following narration:

“Believe that you truly deserve it and do your best.”

“Prayers are really answered.”

“It is not only about gaining skills or competence, kundi pagtibayin mo ang pang-unawa mo emotionally and mentally against stresses.”

“Discipline – mental, emotional and physical strengths. Hindi ka babaling sa makakasama sa iyo like food tripping or walang exercise.”

“Compassion and understanding. Kasi meron po akong rights, pero meron ding rights iyong iba. So, I wanna hear their side para matuto din ako, maging mas malawak ang vision at horizon ko.”

“I also consult or ask questions from those more experienced than me so I can make the best decision. After getting advises, I then come up with the best decision based on all available information. I am fully aware of the

consequences of any decisions and take accountability and full responsibility, hence it is very important to both consult others, learn from them and also listen to my own personal voice and experience.” (P7)

When asked about harassment, she said *“People will disrespect you if you allow them. When I was a fresh graduate we had an AB na meron pagkabastos magsalita. I talked to him privately. I told him I don’t like that. I drew the line.”*

P1 responded through a written interview. In overcoming the hindrances/issues, she answered: *“Aside from showing them what I was capable of, I also explained to them that, not all well experienced Masters or Chief Engineers can handle a business such as manning. I may not be that well experienced officer on board the ship, but having my experience on board and experience in managing the crew is already enough to handle my job well. I know the sentiments of being a seafarer, and at the same time, I know the business side. I think that is the advantage of those seafarers that are now successfully running manning agencies.”*

Moreover, she said *“Make sure that you properly deliver the requirements of your clients. That way, you’ll gain their trust and they will continue to work with you. One example was when we had a new vessel delivery last June 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic just started and our crews were still in their provinces. The ship owner was very anxious if we could deliver it on time, and yes, we proved to them that we could do it. We delivered it on time”.*

She also considers her response to hindrances as effective when she said *“because in my short experience as the business owner, I experienced being*

questioned regarding my capabilities, but still, our principals and shipowners are with us, working hand in hand. So, I think it's effective."

When asked about harassment, she answered that *"I immediately reported him to the master. It didn't hinder me to pursue my career. I became more careful instead"*.

P8 discussed about professionalism and giving one's best in work, waiting for the right time, willingness to learn through research and asking capable people, provide legal basis and careful in uttering words, tolerance for subordinates, proper balance, and dedication. The following were the statements from her:

"I believe that to be successful in a male-dominated organization, one just have to be professional. When I work, I give my best. I did not use my gender as an excuse in doing the job. With all the tasks that were given to me, I just tried to comply as efficiently as I could. And I think that's how I eventually gained their respect."

"In the PCG, respect is very important, service reputation is very important. Your work and your performance should always be excellent. Despite the limited resources and regardless of gender. As a female officer, this may sometimes be limited by being a mother at the same time. And thus it is very important to learn how to balance work and family." (P8)

In terms of harassment, she only spoke of work-related issues which she was able to overcome using the different values that she mentioned.

To summarize the responses of the eight participants regarding overcoming challenges, the following were noted: job excellence is something common in most of the participants, as they narrated that to overcome any challenge, they proved their worth by doing their best. Being happy of what they have is mostly implied in their narration. Dedication, discipline and commitment to work make the difference. Their practice of professionalism leads to service reputation. They also believe in respecting both their officers and subordinates, but must be straightforward when necessary.

Contentment is also visible in most of them and they do not use their positions to take advantage of others. They acknowledge that their team helps them to succeed, an act of humility. For those who faced some form of harassment, most of them articulated that it happens only when you allow them to do this to you. It is noticeable that family has an impact in their lives and in their way of handling things. They are prayerful and have faith in God.

Participants' Recommendations to Aspiring Women in Maritime

Believing that these women leaders can inspire other women to join maritime, a man's world, the researchers asked them to provide recommendations as their parting statements.

P2 spoke about passion. As she said *"If you have passion in your heart and your faith in the Almighty, you will never go wrong because you will always have your feet on the ground"*. She continued *"we are given roles to play in this world, and if given the opportunity to provide employment and to give hope, use it in a good way, not to oppress people; don't take advantage of people. And if given the authority or power, use that to make a difference."*

P3 mentioned *"our best weapon is to equip ourselves with knowledge, with education. That in everything we do, we put our heart on it. Stand when you are on the right ground. Never let go of your family because they are our constant. They are our strength when we fail and when we succeed. Have good relationship with our fellow because the people we meet in going up are the same people we meet when we go down. Our position is but temporary. When we retire, everything we enjoy in the office*

will no longer be available. So, do not be consumed by it. It will be easier to adjust. Finally, be God-fearing, prayerful and ask for His guidance.”

P4 suggested to live simply, practice humility, not to prove one's worth to anyone or comparing self to others because there is no peace of mind in such, as she said *“Well, talagang live simply. Simple lang, humble. You don't have to prove your worth, of who you are kasi kung may struggle ka within to prove to anyone na magaling ka, you want to compete, medyo wala kang peace of mind. Sabi ko nga, narating ko na itong posisyon ko, I don't have to prove anything to anyone that I'm worth this position. Kasi pag iniisip mo palagi iyan parang hindi ka makakatulog”.*

P5 tells those aspiring women *“please don't stop your dream. Keep dreaming. Have a bunch of discipline to yourself, collect all the knowledge, collect all the skills and have passion for your work and don't forget always you know to pray, to trust God in everything you do, ask help from Him because you know nothing is impossible and believe in yourself, stop comparing yourself to other people, it will not help. Believe in yourself. One step at a time. You can get your goal, just don't stop dreaming. We can do it. Girl power.”*

In fact, she has guided other women seafarers in her company by saying to them *“pagdating sa trabaho, trabaho, be one of the boys, Kasi bini-briefing ko sila, makisama kayo ng maayos ayokong may masabi sila sa ating mga babae at pagdating sa tabaho magtrabaho kayo ng maayos. Pag may problema kayo sabihin niyo sa akin gawan natin ng paraan kasi pag once hindi inigatan iyong trabaho natin, once na may isang babae na pumalpak sa atin, lahat tayo damay. Kaya yan ang ingatan niyo. Lagi ako*

andiyan naka-alalay sa kanila, sa lahat ng mga trabaho. So thankfully, I'm very happy kasi maganda iyong mga feedback sa kanila nung bumaba ako."

P6 gave her final thoughts for those who ever aspire to become a seafarer *"...that this job is not cash cow, but rather make it a point that you find it in your heart that this is something that you love to do. And you have to be more passionate about it, and as you go up to the ladder, as you improve your skills, your knowledge and all, you have to ensure also that those behind you will also be lifted up. So, hindi lang 'yong puro sarili mo lang. Then, at the same time, don't quit. As a woman, never ever use your gender as a form of an excuse to anything, but you are there because you deserved to be there for a certain position, you have to serve well. So regardless kung ano ng sabihin nila sa iyo, you don't need to compete with anybody, only yourself. Also, don't forget the basics, kasi sa sobrang techy na ng mga tao, when they come onboard, there may be some vessels that are fully innovated, but some ay manual pa. Kaya minsan parang nagkakaroon ng mga challenges 'yong mga baguhan kasi when an automated system crushes down or breaks down parang they don't know what to do next, iyong trouble shooting skills nila parang mahina na, parang iyong next course of action nila parang humihina na, kasi they are always too reliant on the technology. Technology is good but like I've said huwag nila kalimutan pa rin 'yong basic, basic knowledge kasi minsan iyon ang nawawala. And again, no matter how good you are, no matter how skillful you are, pero kung wala kang right attitude, that is also a recipe of disaster onboard. I mean you can commit a lot of mistakes when you are ashore, when you are in your school, when you are on training, because that's how you learn. But onboard the vessel, a simple carelessness and simple mistakes nagiging source of big*

disaster or an accident. You have to be emotionally and spiritually strong when you are onboard because you are always subject to a lot of situations. Kung may four seasons sa weather, meron ka rin nun sa sarili mo. It's either iyong mga nakasama mo onboard sa trabaho mo, the way you interact with other people, the way you interact with external parties and also kung hindi ganon ka strong iyong foundation mo, you will easily break down. Finally, don't rely your happiness to anybody."

P7 advised *"do not to let negativities affect you. If people do not believe in you or that there is no opportunity, do not let that put you down. Instead, work hard for it. 'Kapag may tiyaga, may nilaga'. We have to give time for the things that we want to achieve. And in the end, whatever we achieve in life, they are only positions. What people will remember is our kindness. God will also ask us what we did on earth, how we used the talents He gave and how we treat others. So never be afraid to aim high; there is no limitation to that. With determination, clear mind, and a good heart, everything can be achieved."*

P8 tells to her juniors *"there is no little or low position, you have to do your best. Put best effort when you do something. Also, malaking bagay ang pakikisama. Marami akong na-survive na mission impossible dahil tinulungan ako ng mga kasamahan ko, ng team ko. Most importantly, prayer is the secret."* Furthermore, she mentioned about trustworthiness, integrity, service reputation and performance.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The outcomes of this study could be translated into a short video clip capturing some of the interview parts taken during the research proper, which can be uploaded and accessed online with the permission of the participants. This material can be

utilized by individuals and institutions to inform women that maritime is not limited to seafaring and that women can also thrive in a man's world.

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