

The Challenges of Foreign Cadets:

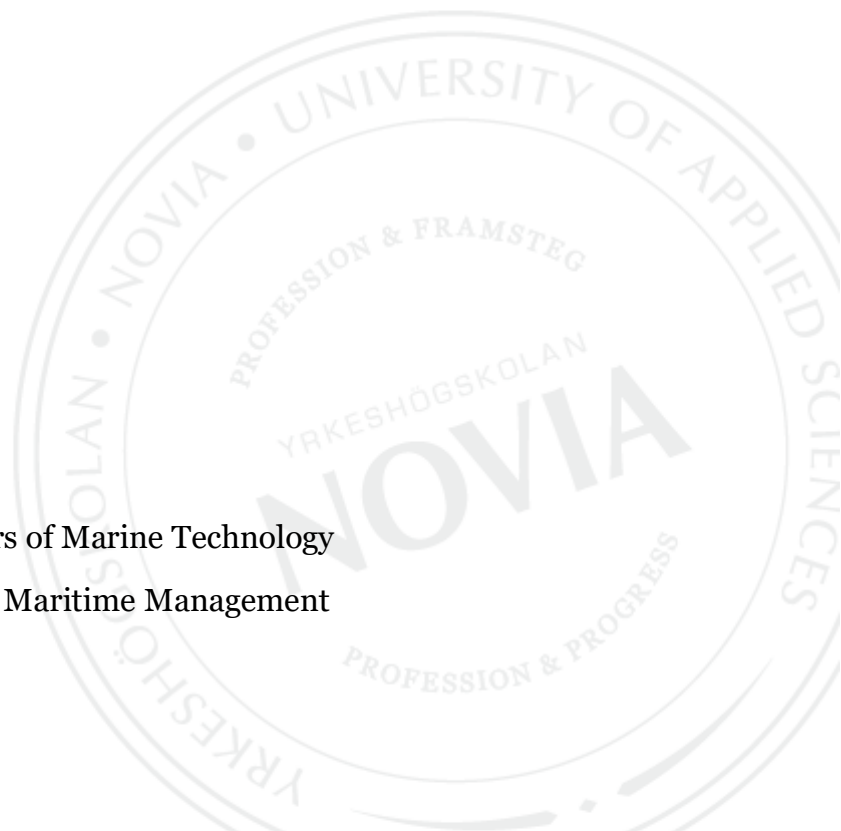
A case study of African cadets working on Finnish ships

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Appendices 1

Abstract

The supply and demand of seafarers has become globalized in the maritime industry. As such, multinational crewing is widespread at sea.

This thesis is a study about the challenges of African cadets working on Finnish ships. Using a structured interview the study aims to identify the main issues encountered and narrative analysis to understand and convey the experiences of the cadets.

The second part of the study explores the experiences of an African woman on board using an intersectional perspective. The author uses the same set of interview questions to reflect on her experiences.

Language: English

Key words: Cadets, African, Multinational, Women on board

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Objective and Research Question	1
1.2	Delimitation	2
1.3	Thesis outline	2
2	Multinational Crewing	3
2.1	Common issues of multinational crewing	3
3	Women in Maritime	5
3.1	Statistics	5
3.2	Issues women face	7
3.2.1	Loneliness and Isolation	7
3.2.2	Performance Pressure	8
3.2.3	Sexual harassment	8
3.3	Intersectionality and why it matters	9
4	Research Methodology	10
4.1	Sample group	11
4.2	Data collection and analysis	11
4.3	Structured Interview	12
5	Interview Responses	13
5.1	Work Related Attitudes	13
5.1.1	Do you feel welcomed when you join the ship?	13
5.1.2	Do language difficulties affect your work and to what extent?	14
5.1.3	Is task distribution explained to you appropriately?	15
5.1.4	Have you felt stressed at work? What contributes to this?	15
5.1.5	Finland vs Africa – individualist vs collectivist, how does this affect your work?	16
5.2	Workplace Interpersonal Relations	17
5.2.1	Do you experience loneliness on board?	17
5.2.2	Do you feel like you must work harder/prove yourself?	17
5.2.3	Do you feel supported by your supervisor on board?	17
5.2.4	Do you think there are negative stereotypes about Africans which affect your work?	18
5.2.5	If there is conflict on board is it handled professionally or is it ignored?	18
5.2.6	Have you ever experienced prejudice/discrimination? Even subtle, give examples.	19
5.3	Culture and Language and Future	20
5.3.1	Do you feel the need to be taught cultural awareness about Finnish culture?	20
5.3.2	Should Finnish seafarers be taught cultural awareness about working in mixed crews?	20
5.3.3	Do you think knowing how to speak Finnish would help you in your work? Must it be taught in school?	21
5.3.4	Given all your experiences, do you think you have a positive future in seafaring in Finland?	21
6	Summary of issues	22
6.1	Work Related Attitudes	22
6.2	Interpersonal Behaviour / Workplace Interpersonal Relations	23
6.3	Culture, Language and Future	23

7	<i>Critical examination</i>	23
8	<i>Recommendations and further research</i>	24
9	<i>Conclusion</i>	26
10	<i>Bibliography</i>	28

1 Introduction

This thesis was born out of the need to fill a gap that is not often thought about when considering the lives of seafarers on board ships. As a foreigner in my host country and its fleet, an African woman and a cadet early on in my career, I realized there were many challenges affecting life on board.

The maritime profession is a technical field and therefore not much emphasis is put on developing social skills, even in college. However, there is a void the education does not consider: human interaction. The ship is both a workplace and a home for the time spent on board. Several factors affect the wellbeing of seafarers on merchant vessels.

1.1 Objective and Research Question

It is uncommon for sociological studies to be done on the living experiences of seafarers. A similar study “Challenges of multinational crewing: a qualitative study with cadets” (Benker;ym., 2016) explores the central challenges faced by young German seafarers on German fleet. The article aims to provide an understanding of the young seafarer’s experience of living and working in multinational crews. However, in that study, the target group is not a minority on board.

This thesis aims to provide a new perspective and look at how a minority group adapts to seafaring as cadets. It delves into the challenges experienced by cadets of African nationality working on Finnish ships.

Through a qualitative study and initiating open ended questions to gauge the reality of the cadets who are not only a minority group on-board, but also at the educational institution, the research question is as follows:

1. What are the experiences of the cadets and how does this affect their future in seafaring?

1.2 Delimitation

The main limitations of this thesis are that the participants are of African nationality, have sailed under Finnish flag and have at least 60 days seagoing experience. The participants chosen are of African nationality because they are a minority on-board, and the author chose them because of similar cultural backgrounds which makes the author and participants relatable. Some participants have sea-time experience from vessels not under Finnish flag, this was not considered for this research paper as often those other vessels are more culturally diverse. Lastly, all participants had to have at least 60 days' sea-time to ensure they had actual experience which would provide constructive insight.

1.3 Thesis outline

This thesis is divided into 9 chapters. Chapter 1, Introduction deals with the objectives of the paper, research question, delimitation and contexture of the paper.

Chapter 2, Multinational crewing and Chapter 3, Women in maritime function as a literature review. These chapters exist to provide the reader with background information to promote a better understanding in context of the thesis. Chapter 2 briefly gives an account on the practice of multinational crewing in regards to ship operating costs. Mainly this chapter will focus on common issues caused by multinational crewing from various sources. Chapter 3 is about women in maritime. This chapter provides relevance as the author is a woman. This chapter provides statistics, the most common issues women on board encounter and a subchapter on intersectionality. The subchapter on intersectionality provides more scope for the reader so they can be attuned to the author's experience provided later in the thesis.

Chapter 4 is research methodology which consists of research methods, sample group, data collection and analysis and the structured interview.

Chapter 5 deals with the interview responses where the author tries to deduce meaning from the responses and adds direct quotations to emphasize this.

Chapter 6 is a summary of the issues identified from the responses. This is an overall grouping of the ideas and themes expressed.

Chapter 7 is the critical examination where the author gives an account of what challenges were faced to compile the thesis. This chapter explores topics such as research bias and interview question formulation for example.

Chapter 8 is further research and recommendations. In this chapter the author makes suggestions to further the research. Most importantly, the author makes recommendations on what can be improved to provide better experiences for foreign cadets.

Chapter 9 is the discussion/conclusion chapter about the experience of the author as the only African woman on board. The author uses the same structured interview to reflect on her experiences and create contrast from the male participant's responses.

2 Multinational Crewing

Globalization has impacted the shipping industry and this can be seen in aspects from ship building to ship manning. (Hu, 2017) Multinational crewing is manning of the ship involving individuals of several nationalities of a variety of cultures. Mixed nationality crewing has become commonplace as it is a flexible element in ship operations. Ship operational costs is defined as expenses involved in the day to day running of the ship- basically those costs such as crew, stores and maintenance.

The global growth of fleet has surpassed the supply of crews. (Deloitte, n.d) The declining number of seafarers from major ship owner countries (EU, USA and Japan) for example has been one of the reasons that pushed ship owners and employers to man their crews from various nationalities.(SUSETYO, 2010) The largest supply of seafarers (officers and ratings) are from China, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. (Shipping, n.d)

2.1 Common issues of multinational crewing

A vessel is a closed environment where people work and live together. Conflicts and misunderstandings can occur when cultural diversity is handled poorly. The human element is important to global shipping and requires seafarers to interact cross-culturally. Several studies done about multinational crewing struggle to find any true benefits of this practice, mostly only mentioning the economic benefits. (Horck, 2008)

The various studies about multinational crewing in the shipping industry identify certain challenges for example communication issues, language barrier, stereotyping and prejudice, loneliness and isolation.

The main issue identified by several studies show that language barrier and communication difficulties are most prominent. It is common that even when English is the working language onboard, it is often a second language. This brings along the issue of speaking English, but not always interpreting and understanding what is meant. This point is stressed in an article by Jan Horck (2008) where he states "If people do not understand the meaning of what is said due to weak English and cultural differences, prejudice, power distance and stereotyping, the entire industry will have a bad reputation." The article further highlights the importance of having competence in the ship's working language "not only to manage work and safety issues, but also to be able to socialize." (Horck, 2008) Where this is not attained, the crewmember can be alienated. The article also emphasizes that intercultural communication must be taught as it is not something humans are born with.

Another challenge of mixed nationality crewing is the size of the crew. Thirty years ago the average crew numbered 35-40 persons.(Horck, 2005) Nowadays this number has significantly reduced. Ashore this problem does not exist as there are many people to socialize with. On a vessel with 15 crewmembers for example, where majority are on watch or sleeping, socializing becomes complicated. In the article, getting the best from multicultural manning (Jan Horck, 2005) it is illustrated how to "not have anyone to talk to more than to say good morning or thank you" can lead to alienation especially for crew with long contracts.

Another publication claims that the main issue concerning multinational/multilingual crew is the human element on board ships. This has to do with how to work together and cooperate. Lack of cultural awareness and communication failures affect the human element. In addition, cultural differences which are present in mixed crews are complex, especially when disharmony is caused by miscommunication and misunderstanding. This then creates a problem for social interaction within this environment. (Susetyo, 2010)

3 Women in Maritime

Shipping has come a long way from its past, where it was believed that having women on board could bring bad luck. The first introduction to women sailing on ships was to some greater extent in the passenger cruise industry, where women occupied spaces as housekeeping staff, waitresses or worked in the kitchen. They occupied these spaces as they were considered more traditional female jobs.

3.1 Statistics

Statistics by International Transport Federation (ITF) show that women represent only two (2) percent of the world's 1,2 million seafarers, of which the majority are working in the cruise industry (Organization, n.d). It is estimated that women form 17% – 18% of the workforce on cruise vessels. (Organization, 2003)

Within Finland, Traficom (Finnish Transport and Communications Agency) is responsible for collecting data and statistics on seamen. The data is obtained from the seafarer's register. The statistics entail data about Finnish vessels with Finnish seafarers and seafarers of foreign nationality. Finnish seafarer's working on foreign vessels are also included where this information is available.

The table below is a statistic taken from Traficom's 2019 seafarer's statistics, which represents the occupations on board by gender in 2019 in foreign and domestic traffic. The departments listed in the table are: deck department, engine department and service department. The service department is further divided into restaurant staff, hotel staff, sales persons and other service staff. Per the table, in the deck department, the total number of women in foreign and domestic traffic was 134. Of those, 48 were officers and 87 ratings. The engine department has even less women, totalling 26. In comparison to the service sector on board which includes hotel, restaurant and sales, there were 1556 women on board. Considering the total amount of all occupations, women only make up 25% of the ship's overall workforce.

Taulukko 4. Merimiesammateissa tehdyt henkilötyövuodet sukupuolen mukaan ammattiryhmittäin, 2019
 Tabell 4. Årsverken i sjömansyrken enligt kön och yrkesgrupp, 2019

Ammattiryhmä ¹ Yrkesgrupp	Ulkomaan liikenne / Utrikes trafik			Kotimaan liikenne / Inrikes trafik			Kaikkiaan / Totalt		
	Miehet Män	Naiset Kvinnor	Yhteensä Totalt	Miehet Män	Naiset Kvinnor	Yhteensä Totalt	Miehet Män	Naiset Kvinnor	Yhteensä Totalt
	Henkilötyövuotta / Årsverken			Henkilötyövuotta / Årsverken			Henkilötyövuotta / Årsverken		
Kansiosasto / Däcksavdelningen									
päällystö / befäl	945	44	989	218	3	221	1163	48	1211
miehistö / manskap	918	57	975	165	30	194	1082	87	1169
Yhteensä / Totalt	1862	102	1964	383	33	416	2 245	134	2 380
Koneosasto / Maskinavdelningen									
päällystö / befäl	675	7	682	115	0	116	790	8	797
miehistö / manskap	530	18	548	17	0	17	547	19	565
Yhteensä / Totalt	1 205	25	1 230	132	1	133	1 337	26	1 363
Taluosasto / Ekonomiavdelningen									
ravintolahenkilökunta / restaurangpersonal	1113	1211	2 324	16	22	38	1129	1232	2362
hotellihenkilökunta / hotellpersonal	78	168	246	-	-	-	78	168	246
myymälähenkilökunta / försäljningspersonal	114	135	249	-	0	0	115	135	250
muu palveluhenkilökunta / övrig servicepersonal	137	21	157	1	-	1	137	21	158
Yhteensä / Totalt	1 442	1 534	2 977	17	22	38	1 459	1 556	3 015
Kaikkiaan / I allt	4 509	1 661	6 171	531	56	587	5 041	1 717	6 757

¹ Merenkulun toimet -luokitusta on päivitetty vuonna 2016. Taulukko on tehty uuden luokituksen mukaisesti / Förteckningen för befattningar inom sjöfarten har uppdaterats år 2016. Tabellen följer den nya förteckningen.

Table 1 Occupation by gender (TRAFICOM)

The chart below is an extract from Traficom's 2019 seafarer's statistics. The pie chart depicts the percentages of occupation by gender in foreign and domestic traffic. The chart is divided into the following categories: deck department (male), deck department (female), engine department (male), engine department (female), service department (male) and service department (female). It is a visual representation of the above table.

Kuva 5. Merimiesammateissa tehdyt henkilötyövuodet sukupuolen mukaan ammattiryhmittäin, 2019
 Figur 5. Årsverken i sjömansyrken enligt kön och yrkesgrupp, 2019

(henkilötyövuosia kaikkiaan 6 757 / årsverken totalt 6 757)

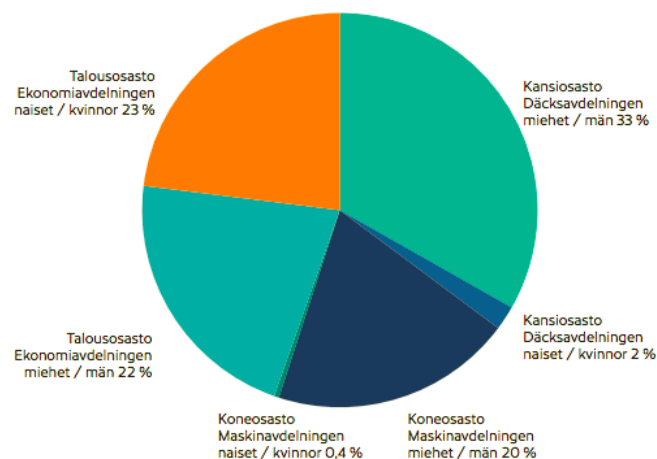


Figure 1 Percentage occupation by gender (TRAFICOM)

By using the total number of seafarers, the pie chart depicts what percentage each gender fills in their respective occupations. Within the deck department, women form 2% and in engine department 0,4%. The service department boasts the highest percentage of women at 23%. These statistics illustrate very clearly that even though the maritime sector has progressed, women are still mostly filling “traditional” roles in the service sector on ships and not in the technical departments.

3.2 Issues women face

The maritime sector is still very much male dominated. Women at sea, especially those who are involved in the deck and engine departments face many issues. To isolate the case, recall that most of the workforce comprising of women are in the service sector on board or work in the cruise ship industry.

3.2.1 Loneliness and Isolation

Very few women work in the marine departments: deck or engine. This poses a unique challenge of most likely being the only woman on board the entire ship. A fellow student at Aboa Mare did a survey about women on board cargo ships, where it was illustrated that 95% of the time, there is only one woman on board. (Pesonen)

8.2.4 Questions for women

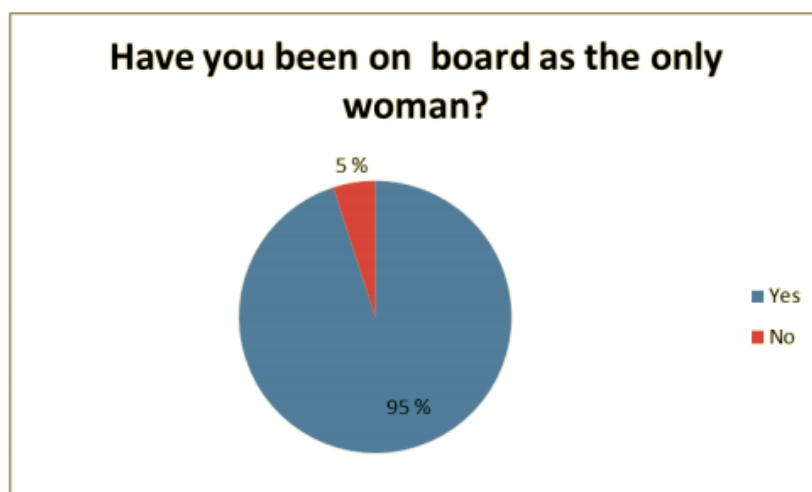


Figure 2 Only woman on board survey question (Ida Pesonen)

The situation where one is the only woman on board without camaraderie and interaction can lead to isolation and loneliness. This can negatively affect mental health.

3.2.2 Performance Pressure

Another common issue women on board face is performance pressure. Working on ships carries some gender bias in favour of men. Several studies done about women seafarers confirm that they feel they must work harder to prove their capabilities. A study done by the International Labour Organization about recruitment and retention of seafarers states that “women seafarers face scepticism over their abilities and competences to perform physically demanding tasks.” (International Labour Organization, 2019) Due to technological advancements, there is less physical strain on seafarers as some physical tasks have been taken over by automation. However, in the beginning of one’s training, especially as a deck rating, there are some physical tasks involved.

3.2.3 Sexual harassment

One of the most harrowing issues women on board face is sexual harassment. The few studies done about women seafarers usually enquire about sexual harassment. The results of various studies reflect that sexual harassment is a problem on board. Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” (UN Women-Watch, n.d)

Male seafarers can also face sexual harassment, however, the majority of reported cases are by women. Sexual harassment is a concern for women seafarers aboard cargo ships. Women seafarers who have experienced sexual harassment rarely file complaints, out of fear of isolation, job loss, or not knowing who to report to. (International Labour Organization, 2019) Sexual harassment is a barrier to remaining the workforce. It is not conducive for women to work as this creates a hostile working environment.

The cruise ship industry has strict policies that have helped to reduce sexual harassment incidents. However, the cargo sector, where women are scarce has yet to give this issue the dedicated attention. (WISTA UK, n.d) In order to combat this, the

study about recruitment and retrenchment of seafarers suggests that knowledge about policies and their usage should be enhanced so that complainants of sexual harrasment do not fear negative consequences. This will aid in increased reporting of cases and allow for dialogue on how to solve the issue. (International Labour Organization, 2019)

3.3 Intersectionality and why it matters

Oxford dictionary defines intersectionality as “the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage”. These categories can be looked at singularly, however, intersectionality recognizes that at the intersection of these, one person can experience different forms of discrimination/disadvantage. For example: “a person is not, for example, a woman on one hand and disabled on the other; rather she is the combination of these at the same time, that is, a disabled woman.” (Christoffersen, 2017)

What is intersectionality?

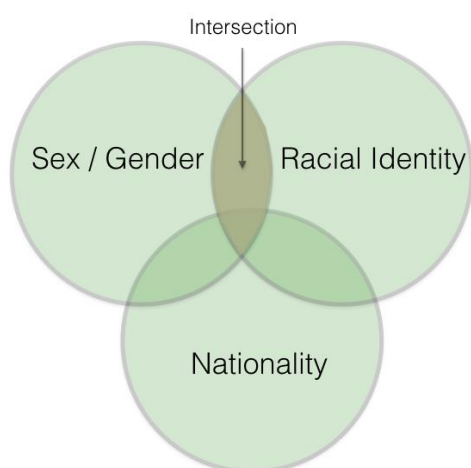


Figure 3 Intersectionality diagram (Esther Otto)

This theory is important for the scope of the thesis, as the author is the only African woman in the maritime institution and on the ships she has sailed. The challenges she has faced on board are unique to her, as they cannot be compared to Finnish female

cadets nor African male cadets working on ships. Womankind UK expresses: “A black woman may experience misogyny and racism, but she will experience misogyny differently from a white woman and racism differently from a black man.” (Taylor, 2019)

4 Research Methodology

The thesis was conducted in a qualitative manner. Qualitative data is descriptive and regards phenomena which can be observed but not measured, for example, language. The aim of qualitative data is to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures as clearly as possible to how it is lived/felt. One benefit of this method is that it allows one to study people or groups in their natural setting.

Choosing an adequate mode of research for this study was very important because the sample group is small. It was important to choose a method that would encourage the participants to share their experiences openly. After researching various modes of qualitative research, the author settled on peer to peer research. Peer research is defined as “Peer research, sometimes called ‘user focused research’ is research that is steered and conducted by people with lived experience of the issue being studied”. (Foundation, 2015)

This method has proven to be the most beneficial for the study because:

1. Peer research allows one access to the community being studied as they are from within this network themselves.
2. The participants are empowered through the study as the research is conducted “with and for” them.
3. A peer researcher has a lived experience of the content they wish to study and share. They possess experiential knowledge and inside understanding of the issues being studied.
4. Peer research allows for better data to be collected because the researcher shares common experiences with people being interviewed. This may reduce misunderstandings in interpretations and make the data more relevant. In

addition, the participants are more likely to respond honestly and openly which results in high quality data with more depth.

(Institute for Community Studies, n.d)

4.1 Sample group

The sample group consists of 5 participants, all male and of African nationality. Two (2) of the participants have graduated from the degree programme and three (3) are still enrolled at the institution. The years of enrolment to the degree programme of maritime management ranged from 2012 – 2015 for the participants. The seafarers were aged from 27 to 35 with seagoing experience from 70 days to 365 days. When on-board, the participants are part of the deck department, either as deck ratings or deck officer apprentices.

It was difficult to obtain more participants for the study for these reasons:

- Some of the African students enrolled at the institution did not have any or enough seagoing experience. To keep the integrity of the study, the author decided it was necessary that the participants had at least 60 days of seagoing experience.
- The institution could not easily identify the number of students of a certain nationality and was not allowed to give out any contact information of students.
- The author tried to find more participants through the common network but it was a futile attempt. Unfortunately, most of the participants had lost contact with older students and others had left the seafaring profession many years prior.

4.2 Data collection and analysis

The interviews were conducted via video call to establish human connection, gain rapport with the participants as well as to make the experience more personal. Peer research is usually conducted in face-to-face settings but due to social distancing regulations an alternative was requisite. During the time the interviews were meant

to take place, there were restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic. Novia followed directives from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), which included studies being conducted remotely. The author adhered to the directives to ensure everyone's safety.

All interviews were audio recorded for transcription purposes. The interviews were transcribed for later use to interpret what the participants explained in their own words. Transcribing ensures accuracy of data and allows the researcher to easily identify recurring themes.

For data analysis, the interview section headings were colour coded to aid in understanding the data. A narrative analysis approach was used to highlight the participant's thoughts, as well as find similarities and differences in certain aspects. Narrative analysis is a method used to analyze content from sources such as interviews of respondents, observations or surveys. The core of this method is to use the stories and experiences shared by people to answer the research questions. (Bhatia, n.d)

The participants did not give consent for their identities to be revealed, thus aliases will be used when directly quoting them.

4.3 Structured Interview

For this study, a structured interview was used. A structured interview is "one where the interviewer asks each participant the same set of questions in the exact same order in order to gather consistent and comparable data." (Scribes, 2018) Despite the interview questions being pre-determined, the participants were asked open-ended questions. Open ended questions are questions a researcher poses but does not provide answers for.

The interview consisted of 20 questions, divided into 3 headings:

1. Work Related Attitudes

Attitudes are defined as our opinions, beliefs and feelings about aspects of our environment. Therefore, work related attitudes can be defined as attitudes relating to aspects of work or work settings. (Jerald Greenberg, 2003)

These questions cover topics about work environment, tasks and knowledge sharing, stress and language difficulties and how these affect their work.

2. Interpersonal Behaviour / Workplace Interpersonal Relations

Interpersonal behaviour is defined as actions and behaviours which are present in human interactions.

These questions deal with interpersonal behaviour regarding some of the common issues faced in a multinational/cultural workspace. These questions address sensitive topics such as loneliness, conflict, stereotypes and discrimination/prejudice.

3. Language and culture, Future

These questions deal with cultural awareness and Finnish language proficiency and its importance. Lastly, to conclude the interview, the participants are asked about how their experiences affect their future in seafaring in Finland.

5 Interview Responses

This section deals with the responses of the structured interview by the participants. Direct quotations are used for further emphasis.

5.1 Work Related Attitudes

5.1.1 Do you feel welcomed when you join the ship?

To begin the interview the participants were asked if they felt welcomed upon joining the ship. They valued feeling welcomed as this played a role in the working environment as well. 3 of the participants felt it was dependent on the ship as some were welcoming and others not so much. However, they all agreed it could be better. Two participants had quite strong opinions.

“When I was on the ship I felt like I had to prove to them that I was a good person. You don't get automatic acceptance and you have to prove that you are okay all the time. I felt welcomed by the organization but it's always

individuals on those ships that are unwelcoming and weird. Generally, the feeling is good but it could be better, 3/5. "(OL, 30)

"It's a very difficult question for me to answer because I don't take things personally. Even when I notice I'm not welcomed I make excuses, "oh it's normal" or "I am strange." It's sometimes strange in the beginning, I don't expect to be welcomed from my experience outside the sea so I don't think it's going to change when I get on board. I believe it's going to be more complex and in my mind, I'm prepared for that." (MO, 35)

5.1.2 Do language difficulties affect your work and to what extent?

Despite the maritime language being English, all the participants expressed some discomfort when it came to language difficulties and how this affects their work. The common theme is that the English used was limited, especially on smaller ships where the other crew members are more comfortable speaking Finnish, it could make it difficult. However, on bigger ships this problem rarely occurred.

"Yes it does. From the vessels that I've been on Finnlines was really good because there were Filipino officers, myself from Africa and a good chief officer who spoke English a lot. Some other vessels for instance the tugboat, it was a bit weird. If I didn't have my friends on board, it would have been the worst experience. On bigger vessels with international crew language difficulties don't affect me. But within domestic traffic it's difficult because the conversation is limited even though the main language is English." (AN, 27).

Two participants had very distinct situations in which language difficulties negatively affected them.

"I would say it does because some people on Finnish ships, although they speak English they prefer to speak Finnish. They don't want to embarrass themselves by speaking poor English, in that case some of them try as much as possible to speak Finnish. For example: a fellow cadet is given instructions by the supervisor. The guy is my colleague but now he becomes like my supervisor because the supervisor can't speak English." (BE, 35)

“Yes it does. In some cases, to be honest, I think it's intentional. In fact, I find it strange when after being with them a couple of days I realized oh you speak this good English. So why are you giving me that stress when you know I would never understand Finnish.” (MO, 34)

5.1.3 Is task distribution explained to you appropriately?

When one is new on the ship, it is common not to understand all tasks or how to do them correctly. The participants were asked if task distribution was explained appropriately; four of them felt it was not done well. One of the participants did not have this problem as he used the ISF Onboard Training Book as his ultimate guide.

“Not all the time. It's not the language, because if it's an important task and they want to get the message across, they will make sure everybody gets it. It's a problem that can be fixed.” (MO, 35)

“I would say not really, I just had to learn my way around the ship.” (BE, 35)

“Not really. Since you are the lowest-ranked they don't involve you in any communication or any decision they do it's always at the last moment that you know.” (CO, 34)

In one special case, language difficulties affected task distribution and one participant felt it caused a divide among students, “Tug boat bosun could not speak English so he went through a Finnish cadet and then would leave. The Finnish cadet will behave funny and delegate tasks aggressively. We are all students, but because they explained to him in Finnish, it created an environment where some people feel more important which was poor.” (AN, 27)

5.1.4 Have you felt stressed at work? What contributes to this?

Seafaring is known to be a physically and mentally demanding career. These conditions can lead to stress. The participants mostly felt physical stress from the job. It was a common sentiment that not having access to internet caused stress.

“The work can be stressful and also having no internet connection.” (BE, 35)

“Not so much stress psychologically but physical stress from repetitive tasks like chipping and changes in sleeping pattern which is common. Not having access to the

Internet is very stressful. You need to pay your rent, apply for something etc. Instead of sleeping, you keep going to the window to see if you have internet. You are disconnected.” (CO, 34)

“For me stress comes from not knowing what would happen. Onboard we have time to sleep so in a way I didn't really feel stressed, I just felt the work was hard.” (OL, 30)

5.1.5 Finland vs Africa – individualist vs collectivist, how does this affect your work?

Geert Hofstede, a well-known social psychologist studied the dimensions of culture. According to the dimensions, Finland is individualist and most African countries are collectivist. The dimension is defined as “The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. It has to do with whether people’s self-image is defined in terms of “I” or “We”. In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist societies people belong to ‘in groups’ that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.” (Hofstede, n.d)

The author explained the concept of cultural dimensions, particularly individualist vs collectivist societies. This framework is considered important in the business sector, especially in matters of intercultural communication. The participants were asked how this cultural dimension affected their work. The author was interested in what influence this dimension has on life at sea for the participants.

2 of the participants stated that it was very important to them as it encourages learning “Yes it does. Negative way because it is my mode of working. I like it because it is a big motivator , it helps learning which is most important. It leaves no room for mistakes, because you can re-check to get a perfect outcome. It is the best way to learn.” (MO, 35) and also aids as a method of double checking work “I think you learn more if you're doing it collectively because you bounce ideas off each other. The Finnish system is individualistic and I've adapted, so I don't expect to go with someone I just start by myself unless it's a task that requires more than one person to do.” (AN, 27)

2 other participants did not state how it affected them but rather that they knew this was the system in Finland and adapted accordingly.

“I would say it doesn't affect my work because I know that's how Finnish people are. There's no way somebody would join me like in Africa we do things together.” (BE, 35)

“I'm prepared for it. For me it doesn't apply.” (CO, 34)

1 participant did not mind the individualistic nature as it was favourable for him.

5.2 Workplace Interpersonal Relations

5.2.1 Do you experience loneliness on board?

Four of the participants did not experience loneliness stating various reasons: being capable of handling it, introversion and knowing “the ship is a lonely environment”.

One participant has experienced loneliness and his last on board training magnified this, “Yes, there came a huge storm and I felt very sick. I couldn't report to anybody because everybody minds their own business. That officer (the participant was referring to the chief officer of that vessel) on the ship was extremely unapproachable.” (BE, 35)

5.2.2 Do you feel like you must work harder/prove yourself?

Two main issues were brought up from the responses: acceptance and performance pressure. 2 cadets felt they had to work hard because “I didn't get the feeling that they actually wanted me to work there because on the Finnish ships it's so competitive” (OL, 35) and “They didn't really consider me as one of the crew members on the ship, so they didn't have a specific task for me” (BE, 35).

In terms of performance pressure 1 cadet felt “When I'm working with him (chief officer) it feels like I have to go the extra mile.” (AN, 27) The other cadet expressed that there is an expectation that the cadet or junior officer must prove they are diligent. It was also mentioned that this depends on the individuals on the ship, on some ships you can work normal, “It depends on the kind of ship, some you don't really have to work hard and you just have to do your job.” (BE, 35)

5.2.3 Do you feel supported by your supervisor on board?

All the participants expressed they felt supported by their supervisor on board, who is normally the chief officer. The participants were happy when planning of their

training was discussed or specific tasks were prepared for them. However, in some cases where the bosun was the supervisor the support was not always so good, “The officers kind of supported you and wanted you to succeed, the ratings are weird people and see you as their competitors. The officers are more mature and experienced so they are more supportive.” (OL, 35)

5.2.4 Do you think there are negative stereotypes about Africans which affect your work?

Three of the participants felt there were negative stereotypes which affect their work for various reasons. One participant felt there were none and the other concluded that there may be but it is not covert.

One participant felt it was unfair to be expected to take insults/criticism without objection “Yes of course. You can always feel it especially because of the things that they say. It requires extraordinary efforts to be a black person on the ship because you have to be thick-skinned, and it's not fair.” (OL, 30)

Another participant felt African cadets were not approached with a positive outlook, “Definitely. As an African you have to prove yourself before you are accepted. They come with a negative mindset against you until you prove yourself.” (BE, 35)

The third participant felt his intelligence was always in question, on board and at school “Yes I would say there is because, it's the same thing that goes on in school. They feel you are from a third world country and some things are meant to not to be known. The only thing that you have surprised them with is that you speak English. They try to quickly find out this smartness, I don't know if they feel Africans are not smart initially or from their own experience or out of curiosity. I will take the third one, I try to be positive.”

5.2.5 If there is conflict on board is it handled professionally or is it ignored?

Four of the participants did not have any conflict on board. However, there was a common theme in their responses. They expressed that they avoided it as much possible because of the burden of handling it. One stated “if there's conflict on board we (Africans) don't always get the benefit of the doubt”. (AN, 27)

The fifth participant had one distinct conflict and an incident where he chose not to address it. In regards to the conflict he felt it was not handled well as the captain was not objective: “the captain said: “We have the crew which is necessary to man the ship so if there's any problem between crew and apprentice, the apprentice has to go.” (CO, 34) In the incident, the cadet felt the bosun was deliberately giving him misinformation which made him look bad in front of the captain. He tried to avoid the bosun because “If I have to complain I would have to go about it very directly but he was doing it subtly, not so obvious. I would have to point something that the rest haven't seen and it would seem like I'm making wild accusations. I would bring too much tension.” (CO, 34)

5.2.6 Have you ever experienced prejudice/discrimination? Even subtle, give examples.

Four of the participants experienced prejudice/discrimination and gave different accounts of this. The various accounts are:

1. “Yes I have. But it's the subtle discrimination, but it's there. There were some individuals who really didn't like that there were foreigners on board Finnish Flag ship.” (OL, 30) He also stated that majority follow the law but the individuals who don't, stick out.
2. One cadet was denied access to the bridge whilst the Finnish cadet was granted access. “Yes I have. I was on the ship with a Finnish colleague (Rauma school) and they gave him all the information he wanted. I was on the bridge and I wanted to learn how to use the wheel and the officer told me it's not allowed. Later when that officer left and a new one came, I realized that it was allowed. He just didn't want me to come on the bridge but they were teaching the Finnish guy.” (BE, 35)
3. On one vessel, the chief officer let everyone else go out but did not grant shore leave to the cadet and a fellow Filipino rating.
4. One cadet felt he experienced linguistic discrimination without knowing it. “For example, I didn't know the engineer (tug boat) spoke even little English. He made it so difficult that if we needed to communicate or needed to do

something, I felt he was putting me under stress because he knew I didn't understand what he was saying." (MO, 35)

5.3 Culture and Language and Future

5.3.1 Do you feel the need to be taught cultural awareness about Finnish culture?

This question elicited various responses from the participants. 3 of the participants felt it was important to have this knowledge. 2 did not feel the need to be taught, their reasons being: it is more important to learn the language and that what may be taught during cultural awareness training will not translate to reality.

"I think it's good to teach people. For me it wasn't necessary because I already lived in Finland for two years before going on board so I knew what to expect from the culture. For a new person, they need to learn and know what to expect from the culture. Education is never a bad thing." (OL, 30)

"Yes I think so. there are certain aspects of their culture we still don't understand. It would help in the job, what's okay in my culture may not be in theirs." (AN, 27)

"Honestly I don't think so because even what you will be taught under cultural awareness is a different translation of what you will experience. It is not enough to prepare me for the shock of reality." (CO, 34)

5.3.2 Should Finnish seafarers be taught cultural awareness about working in mixed crews?

Some Finnish flagged ships still have a mostly homogeneous crew; therefore, they do not have much exposure to multiculturalism. 3 of the participants felt it would be beneficial for Finnish seafarers to be taught cultural awareness, as it will benefit all parties. It was also expressed that it would be better if a foreigner taught it to them.

"Yes it's a two-way street. It will benefit everyone." (AN, 27)

"Yes I think Finnish seafarers should be taught that. Because first of all it's a job that entails working with people from different cultures as we have English speaking crew on Finnish flag ships." (OL, 30)

1 participant felt it would make no difference to those seafarers who don't want to learn "I think it would be nice but I don't know if it's possible. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. I don't know if it would be very effective." (CO, 34)

5.3.3 Do you think knowing how to speak Finnish would help you in your work? Must it be taught in school?

Despite the fact that Finnish is included in the curriculum of the degree programme, the participants felt it was insufficient. All participants stressed how important it is to be able to speak at least some Finnish even though the working language on board is English. One participant put it best: "English is the language of instruction, but Finnish is the language of communication."

"Knowing how to speak Finnish would really help you because you would understand the subtle things they are talking about and help in conversation. I would encourage anybody who wants to go on the ship to learn Finnish. The school could create an intensive Finnish course for about 3 months before you go on the ship." (OL, 30)

"It must be taught in school because we do Finnish for 1 week for a 5-year program. It should be taught at every level like physics 1 to physics 4, you can have Finnish 1-4, 3 weeks each so that your level of Finnish develops. You must not be fluent but you should be able to make conversation." (AN, 27)

"It definitely would. It's not necessary but it's one of the excuses given. If you learn the language you break down that hurdle. The introduction to Finnish in school was a complete joke." (CO, 34)

5.3.4 Given all your experiences, do you think you have a positive future in seafaring in Finland?

This question was asked to gauge whether the participants felt they could start their careers in Finland after their education. All the participants felt they had no future career advancement in Finland. 3 of the participants felt they were out of the selection pool for employment as other nationalities have priority. 1 participant felt the language was a major barrier to advance his career in Finland. 1 participant disliked the working environment on ships, therefore chose to no longer pursue seafaring.

“No. I just need my licence. I don’t have any reason to be encouraged to feel there’s a future for my seafaring. I haven’t seen any ordinary reasons that promises a good future here. I think every foreigner in the school should be able to see that. Nobody has gotten a job as a foreigner from our school.” (MO, 35)

“To be honest I think it's going to be very challenging because you must start from the bottom, and from the bottom they are outsourcing from the Philippines or wherever is cheaper. Where do you get the chance to get in and get a company to give you a job in Finland? I think the chances are slim of getting something permanent here.” (CO, 34)

“I don't want to work in Finland anymore. They have a good system of one month on one month off. It's difficult to grow to a certain level because they hire first EU, then US then other countries and Africans last. If it is an international company then that's good but if it's just Finnish based, Finnish company then it’s difficult for foreigners to grow.” (AN, 27)

6 Summary of issues

This chapter is a final summary of the issues identified from the interview responses by their respective headings.

6.1 Work Related Attitudes

The cadets felt the welcoming on board could be improved and that the feeling of being welcomed depended on the ship one was on. Language barrier was a fundamental issue addressed by the cadets. It affected work and caused discomfort. It created issues on board when information was not properly communicated. The cadets did not experience work-related stress, rather they felt the work was hard. However, lack of internet connection caused stress and resulted in feelings of disconnection. There were varied responses regarding the effect of individualism versus collectivism on work. Two cadets stated it was the best way to learn, two cadets stated that they were aware that is the system in Finland and didn’t have further expectations and one cadet preferred the individualistic approach.

6.2 Interpersonal Behaviour / Workplace Interpersonal Relations

Four of the cadets did not experience loneliness owing to the fact that the ship is a lonely environment. One cadet experienced loneliness which was exacerbated by the unapproachability of the chief officer. Cadets felt unwanted and not part of the crew because acceptance was not good. They experienced performance pressure by going the extra mile during work or having to prove diligence. The cadets felt supported by officers on board. They did not always feel supported when the bosun was supervisor, as ratings perceived cadets as competition. Three cadets were negatively affected by stereotypes based on things said by some crew members, having to prove oneself before acceptance and not sharing information because of nationality status. Four cadets did not encounter conflict, however, the consensus was that they avoided it, to prevent the burden of handling it. There was one case of conflict, which was handled unprofessionally due to unfair bias by the captain. Four accounts of discrimination were stated such as subtle discrimination, denial of access to bridge but allowing another cadet, denial of shore leave but allowing crew and linguistic discrimination which resulted in communication difficulties.

6.3 Culture, Language and Future

Cadets agreed that cultural awareness about Finnish culture was important, especially for new cadets. Cultural awareness also important for Finnish seafarers as it benefits everyone as seafaring is a people's business. It was stressed that Finnish language competency is fundamental. It would make work more conducive and help in conversation. Cadets state that Finnish language course at the educational institution was inadequate. All the cadets felt they had no positive future in seafaring in Finland. Reasons include lack of representation of foreigners in workforce (non-European), challenges to get a job, language barrier and no growth prospects.

7 Critical examination

Compiling a qualitative research paper is not an easy task. There's a lot of information from the participants which needs to be collected, transcribed, analysed and then formulated to make sense. One of the main challenges is that qualitative research elicits so much data, especially from the interviews. It was difficult to use narrative

analysis to give enough context in the responses without drawing out the thesis with too much text. Another challenge of this research paper is that there is not enough literature on multinational crewing from a sociological perspective. Most literature about multinational crewing is in conjunction with vessel safety and communication.

Another challenge was being aware of researcher bias and how my own experiences affect the research. In the interviews, I tried as much as possible to probe when I had insufficient information or when I did not understand. I also repeated what the participants said in certain circumstances to make sure I understood what they were trying to convey within context to interpret correctly. All the participants know me personally and are aware of some of the challenges I've faced. However, during the interviews, I shared as little as possible about my own experiences so as not to "taint" their answers. Some of the topics explored in the thesis are very sensitive. It was a challenge to write in a way that expresses the responses without making the thesis come across as negative.

I recognize that some of the interview questions could have been formulated better, as sometimes I had to specify what I meant by certain questions. Analysis of the data also showed that some questions asked did not elicit responses that answered the research question. Nonetheless, they remain in the structured interview questionnaire.

8 Recommendations and further research

To ensure foreign cadets can integrate and operate effectively as part of the ship's crew for the short time they are on board (approximately 6 weeks on Finnish-flagged vessels), certain conditions should be present. To create these conditions, it would be most beneficial for the maritime institution, the Apprentice Mill and shipping companies to work together.

Firstly, it is vital that a high level of the ship's working language is maintained. In international traffic, the working language is always English. Officers and ratings must have this capability. This will solve issues such as having another cadet be a pseudo-translator. As was evident in the study, the African cadets felt powerless in the instances where another cadet took on a supervisory role because the information was not shared among them equally.

To foster harmonious living on board where cadets can interact with the Finns, a more intensive Finnish course should be provided by the maritime institution. Currently, the institution only provides a very basic course which lasts about 2 weeks. One participant suggested having a course “Finnish 1-6” for example, the same way mathematics and physics is structured. Each level could be 3 weeks to allow for growth and vocabulary. The results of the study clearly illustrate that all cadets felt that not being able to speak or understand conversational Finnish was a disadvantage. This disadvantage does not only affect the time on board, but also life after graduation. One can only speculate that having Finnish proficiency would allow cadets to be considered for jobs, which was a major concern.

Despite the short period spent on board, cadets should be familiarized with the ships policies, especially regarding anti-discrimination and reporting policies. The maritime institution in conjunction with the Apprentice Mill should develop a policy for reporting incidents as well. Currently, the only way to track feedback from the cadets about the ships they have been on is a google form by the Apprentice Mill. The students need a safe space where they are supported and do not fear negative consequences.

Because this research paper has quite narrow limitations and a small sample group, it only provides a fraction of the picture. To widen the lens, a good starting point would be recruiting more students of African nationality to share their experiences. It can even be taken one step further and include students who are non-European to form a full picture of the challenges faced. Another angle would be involving Finnish/European students to gain insight in regards to topics such as stereotypes, discrimination, language and communication and cultural awareness. With such comprehensive data compiled, a root cause analysis should be conducted. The goal of this root cause analysis would be to find the root causes of certain problems/events described by the students, understand how to fix and learn from the issues and lastly apply this analysis systematically to prevent future issues. (Tableu, n.d) This would assist all parties involved; the cadets, educational institution and shipping companies to foster better working environments and well-rounded officers and ratings who care about the element.

9 Conclusion

It was important to me to share my personal experiences as it was so unique. As stated in the chapter 3, women in maritime, intersectionality is important to understand my experiences. I am a woman and I am African. I have experienced sexism at sea as well as prejudice because of my race. Where my Finnish female colleagues may experience sexism, they do not deal with racial issues. Where my African male colleagues deal with racial issues, they do not face sexism. It was at this juncture in reflecting on my experiences, that I realized there is an overlap of phenomena. To maintain cohesiveness of the thesis, I used the structured interview of the participants to identify and reflect on the main challenges I faced.

Under work-related attitudes, the biggest barrier I faced was language issues. Language difficulties were a problem in the beginning of my training, especially as a deck rating. I did not have enough experience and therefore relied heavily on the bosun who acted as supervisor. Where the bosun did not speak enough English, it made it complicated to work. I believe that despite the language barrier, there are other methods to communicate. I recall working on a tug boat and the bosun could not speak any English. For every task he assigned me, he showed me what to do and then watched if I did it correctly or not. He was very patient and because we did not share a common language, he used actions to teach me instead. On another ship, the bosun could speak English, albeit poorly. He was non-communicative and dismissive. He did not try to bridge the gap to enable me to learn and do my job.

The majority of issues I faced on board were interpersonal issues which are discussed in chapter 3, issues women face. I felt very lonely when I was on board. This is due to several factors: the crew was not social in general and everyone retired to their cabins after work as well as being the only woman on board. I think my age also played a factor as I was usually the youngest on board, therefore it was difficult to establish a connection with the men. I felt I had to work harder to gain acceptance. On some ships, the way some of the men spoke, it made me feel I was in the wrong place.

I believe I experienced prejudice/discrimination. On one ship, I experienced verbal sexual harassment but at the time it happened, I did not realize what it was because the person kept posing them as “jokes”. I wanted to address it to the captain, however, this person made these sexual “jokes” in front of the captain and he laughed

as well. I did not report these incidents as I felt the captain would not take it seriously because he joined in the laughter.

I have experienced many counts of hostility and aggression. On one ship, where 2 participants of this study worked with me, the captain raised his voice at me often but never at the 2 other cadets. On another ship, the bosun would assign tasks but be very vague. In one specific incident, he said “today paint the car deck”, however, he told me I was not allowed to mix the paint. He disappeared and I could not locate him. The chief officer found me doing nothing several times and reprimanded me. It was only after he realized this was a pattern with the bosun that he confronted the bosun.

I cannot stress enough the importance of being taught cultural awareness on Finnish culture. It would have been beneficial to me especially early on in my career as I had no close contact with Finnish people in general before going to sea. I don't think knowing how to speak Finnish is necessary to do your job. However, it would help immensely in bridging the language barrier and aid better communication. Despite English being the maritime language, sometimes when you are given information, it is condensed. You don't get the full scope like you would if this same information was given in Finnish.

I am not confident I have a future in seafaring in Finland because getting one's foot into the job market is difficult. In addition to this is the lack of representation of foreigners like myself and the participants, which paints a bleak picture. Lastly, I have endured a lot of distressing incidents on board and did not have an institutional support system which resulted in a lot of anxiety. I realized after the interviews that even though the participants faced some challenges, generally they had no qualms about joining a new ship. A transcript from the interview showed me that my experience is valid and deserves to be shared: Esther: “One thing I've realized now, through all the interviews, is that you guys have many more positive experiences than me.” MO (35): “Your case is extremely different. You might be the last African girl in the school. You cannot in any situation, with discrimination or anything, compare.”

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Appendices

The Challenges of African Cadets Interview Questions

Name:

Study year:

Completed:

Number of sea days:

Ship types:

WORK RELATED ATTITUDES

1. Do you feel welcomed when you join the ship?
2. Do language difficulties affect your daily work and to what extent?
3. Is task distribution explained to you appropriately?
4. How does the work environment influence your work and wellbeing on board?
5. Do you feel encouraged to grow and learn new things?
6. Have you felt stressed at work? What contributes to this?
7. How is the knowledge sharing? Is there transference of skills?
8. Finland vs Africa – individualist vs collectivist, how does this affect your work?

INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOUR/ WORKPLACE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

9. Do you experience loneliness on board?
10. Do other crew members try to interact with you off duty?
11. Do you feel like you must work harder/prove yourself?
12. Do you feel supported by your supervisor on board?
13. Do you think there are negative stereotypes about Africans which affect your work on board?
14. If there is conflict, is it handled professionally or is it ignored?
15. Have you ever experienced prejudice/discrimination? Even subtle, give examples.

CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND FUTURE

16. Did you experience culture shock from land to sea?
17. Do you feel the need to be taught cultural awareness about Finnish culture?
18. Should Finnish seafarers be taught cultural awareness about working in mixed crews?
19. Do you think knowing how to speak Finnish would help you in your work? Must it be taught in school?
20. Given all your experiences, do you think you have a positive future in seafaring in Finland?