



Maximizing the Potentials of Filipino Female Maritime Seafarers in the Maritime Industry

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Abstract

Breaking into the male-dominated maritime industry is difficult for female seafarers. This study explored how the potentials of female seafarers can be maximized in the maritime industry. Having a mixed method research design, the quantitative part employed survey of female seafarers and interview of representatives from different sectors of the maritime industry where these females are employed. Findings indicate majority of female seafarers experienced resistance from sea-based employment on the belief that seafaring is ascribed for men only. Most respondents aspired to settle in land-based employment. On the other hand, land-based sectors of the maritime industry are accepting female seafarers. Interviewees confirmed available positions which suitably fit the qualifications of female graduates. To fully maximize their potentials and prepare them for land-based positions, interventions such as taking additional trainings and seminars and pursuing higher studies were suggested.

Keywords: *Female Seafarers; Sea-Based Employment; Land-Based Employment; Maximizing Potentials*

Introduction

The Philippines remains to be one of the top sources of seafarers to man merchant ships around the world. Filipino seafarers comprise more than 25 percent of the 1.5 million mariners worldwide, making them the single biggest nationality block in the global shipping industry according to the Department of Labor and Employment (2015). Also, Filipino seafarers are preferred because they are better trained and proficient in English (Dipasupil, 2016).

Shipping is historically known for being a male-dominated sector. But through the efforts of various organizations, like the International Maritime Organization (IMO) which conducted the study on Women in the Maritime Industry, had made a contribution in moving on to tradition of being male-dominated and to achieve gender equality

The Philippines ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) last August 5, 1981. In support to this, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) launched the Woman in Development Program in 1988 to boost the number of women in the maritime industry.

Since then, the maritime higher education institutions (MHEIs) in the Philippines have been accepting female enrollees supporting the integration of women in the seafaring sector. Statistics showed that 1,166 females were enrolled in BSMARE and 3,615 in BSMT during the SY 2015-2016 (MARINA, 2022). BSMARE female enrollees comprised only 1% of the total enrollment. On the other hand, females in the BSMT program comprised 3% of the program's total enrollment.

However, empowering women at sea is challenging. According to Zhang (2015), though the number of female maritime graduates gradually increases, not all of them are being accommodated by shipping companies. Ship owners, charterers, and ship managers of different nationalities still prefer to hire male seafarers especially for cargo vessels. This is evident in the Philippines' deployment record where males dominate females. Majority of ship-owners and principals believe that sea-based jobs require masculinity and should therefore be for males only. Due to this patriarchal belief of employers, female seafarers remain to be set aside. It is also believed that having women onboard will only result to disputes between male seafarers (Zhang, 2015).

Aside from the reluctance of employers in accepting female seafarers, there are other major challenges that female seafarers encountered onboard ships. Some of these are harassment and bullying as revealed in the study of Tangi (2016) where she interviewed 10 Filipino women marine officers. According to them, most of the incidents happened when they were junior officers.

However, a maritime career does not always mean a career at sea. Female seafarers should be aware that they can settle for a job ashore where their skills, knowledge and experience are valued. There are many sectors to get in as shipping is a massive industry (Mukherjee, 2017). The training and experience acquired from a career at sea can be used across industries ashore and many diverse areas.

Thus, this study focused on how to maximize the potentials of Filipino female seafarers in different sectors of the maritime industry. No study yet was conducted on this as previous studies dealt with their challenges onboard such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and other gender-related issues. Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What are the career aspirations of Filipino female seafarers?
2. What are the challenges that Filipino female seafarers encounter when applying for land-based and sea-based jobs?
3. What factors affect the acceptance and non-acceptance of female seafarers in sea-based jobs?
4. What interventions can be implemented to maximize the potentials of female seafarers?

Literature Review

Women at Sea

The merchant vessel remains to be a man's world where female seafarers are marginalized (Acejo and Abila, 2016). According to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) (2017) women working at sea are still rare to find. However, many of these women are already confronting prejudice and becoming important members of ships' crew. Women make up only an estimated 1.2% of the world's maritime workforce (ITF, 2017). According to the ITF report, the number of women seafarers is

rising. In 2020, there were an estimated 24,000 women seafarers, an increase of 46% since 2015. This increase in women seafarers also saw an increase in the number of women officers in 2020 at 0.85%, up from 0.7% in 2015.

Women seafarers are usually found in cruise and ferry sectors, where most vessels are covered by collective bargaining agreements that contain non-discrimination clauses (ITF, 2017). The ITF report also pointed out that the global pandemic paved the way for women seafarers to move from cruising to cargo where they are typically outnumbered 20:1 in an otherwise all-male crew. Women seafarers are usually younger than their male counterparts (ITF, 2017). Similar to ITF, Dalisay (2016) pointed out that relatively larger number of women seafarers serve on passenger vessels mostly in the passenger service categories, reflecting the division of labor by gender based on gender roles as there is still strong masculine cultural values that seafaring occupations required physical strengths and women are not suitable for such jobs (Dalisay, 2016). In general, women serve on those cargo vessels which have high standards. Vessels with poor conditions of work usually do not have women on them (Dalisay, 2016).

Reasons for the Low Number of Women in the Maritime Industry

Ship owners and trade unions have cited a number of reasons that impede the recruitment of women in the male dominated seafaring profession (Dalisay, 2016). Popescu and Varsami (2010) as cited by Dragomir and Surugiu (2013) claimed that the main reason for not employing women onboard centers on the lack of adequate separate facilities for women and the stringent physical requirements.

According to Mukherjee (2021), one of the major difficulty that female seafarers are encountering from the very start until today is getting access to jobs and professional development in the maritime industry. This is also among the reasons for less women in the maritime. Lack of workplace support keeps women out of this career. Aspiring female seafarers perceive little chance of advancing in their field. Many women feel that they will be subjected to difficulties such as performance pressures or face a hard time moving up in the company.

Maritime colleges in the Philippines have training practices that reproduce the gender biases against women participation to seafaring because the socialization of cadets are fraught with the values and symbols of a hegemonic masculinity intent to silence other genders. Onboard ships, similar contradictory rubbing out and reproducing of gender differentials are observed. This shows how difficult controlling gender is (Acejo & Abila, 2016). However, Kitada (2013) pointed out that this norm is incorrect as modern ships are equipped with technology which does not require muscles to operate, and there are also some men who are not strong as such. She even traces as to how discrimination begins once female students start for their apprenticeship programme, saying: "Women cadets often cannot find a ship to get to be eligible for the Certificate of Competence".

According to Mukherjee (2021), the lack of awareness and information is one of the reasons why there are few women seafarers. Women have little knowledge or not aware of the careers in the maritime field. Schools play a major role in providing career guidance and awareness on career aspects in the maritime. It is necessary to improve career awareness and preparedness. She added that through the years, the number of Filipino seafarers deployed annually has been growing steadily since the 1970s but women seafarers have not benefited much from this global phenomenon. Clearly, male dominates the seafaring industry for around 97%. The gender gap in the seafaring industry is more apparent among officers and ratings. There is also a gender gap in the hotel and services department of passenger vessels or cruise liners but not as wide as officers and ratings.

Moreover, the gender gap in the seafaring industry is brought about by various factors. Based on interviews with stakeholders, patriarchal control and patriarchal beliefs are main reasons behind the

gender gap. Most of the shipping companies, shipping organizations, crewing and ship managers are still controlled by men. One of the most common patriarchal beliefs is the notion that men are superior while women are considered —the weaker sex. In the maritime sector, the notion that seafaring is a man's turf is also a patriarchal belief. Since work onboard requires heavy lifting and technical skills which are usually attributed to males, women are considered to have no place in the industry. Erroneous perceptions on male superiority are reinforced in the seafaring industry also because of male dominance and control of resources and decision- making. Patriarchal control and beliefs affect women seafarers in various ways in the maritime sector. They are evident in terms of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, company policies on women and maritime school policies on women.

The IMO and ILO have been working to boost women participation in the maritime sector. In 1988, IMO launched its Women In Development Program in the hope of attracting more women seafarers. Information campaigns were also conducted in the past two decades. The Women in Development approach; however, showed low results. The study of Tangi (2017), proposes the empowerment of women as a key to reducing the gender gap.

Gender-Related Issues

In a study of 3,300 seafarers, it found that women comprising less than 2% of the global seafaring workforce have significant barriers hindering their full participation and contribution to the industry (Justesen, et.al., 2024). Gender and nationality discrimination, certification difficulties, system bias, and challenges in transitioning from sea-based to shore-based roles. Gender discrimination remains to be a significant issue as confirmed by 29% of women respondents. Certification challenges also disproportionately affecting women particularly from developing countries where national qualifications may lack international recognition. Systemic bias and stereotypes often confine women to support and junior positions, exacerbating pay disparities and limiting career progression. Furthermore, career transitions to shore-based roles present additional difficulties for women, compounded by discrimination and family responsibilities. The study reported that by addressing these challenges, the maritime industry can capitalize on the skills of women seafarers of various nationalities, fostering a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future. In light with the forecasted need for seafarers, removing these barriers is crucial for both attaining gender equity and ensuring the long-term prosperity of the industry.

Harassment and bullying were revealed from an interviewed of 10 Filipino women marine officers (Tangi, 2016). According to them, most of the incidents happened when they were junior officers. These women seafarers are struggling to find balance between being viewed as serious professional seafarers and still be viewed as women. They are aware of the fact that if they dressed and beautified themselves, they could be giving men a wrong impression which can be the cause of disputes between the male crew onboard; therefore, they act and dress like men.

Bullying is a challenge but it would not influence women who have strong determination and know how to carry themselves (Manalo et. al., 2015). Sexual harassment is also rampant when there are only very few females onboard ships and the males do not have anyone to deal with except them. Harassment is more often on women, as they make up only an estimated two percent of the world's maritime workforce.

Manalo et.al. (2015) also added that even after female seafarers are trained, they may still be discriminated by ship owners who would not employ women. Once employed, women seafarers may also face lower pay even though they are doing the same work with other male colleagues. Women may also be denied the facilities or equipment available to male workers, which are a form of discrimination (Manalo et. al., 2015).

Kitada (2013) noted that maritime unions lament that gender-related issues continue to exist at sea, just like it does elsewhere in society. The Norwegian Seafarers Union (NSU), which affiliates with AMOSUP in collective agreements (CBA) for Filipino crews working on NIS-flagged vessels, says it sees an increased awareness on discrimination and gender-related issues, but they also have seen great results from years of focus on the problem.

While ship owners and crew managers still have to make a significant commitment to the development of female officers and crew, some employers insist that they are overlooking a minefield of talent. Given the number of women enrolled in the country's maritime schools however, Filipina seafarers or any female seafarers for that matter will not become an alternative to male seafarers anytime soon. The issue of who is the right person for the job should be settled not by gender but by competence (Kitada, 2013).

Women seafarer must be physically, emotionally and spiritually tough in order to overcome all kinds of obstacles and challenges that may come in this male-dominated profession (Dragomir & Surugui, 2013).

Tangi (2017) noted a significant gender gap in careers at sea. It recommends a number of measures that can reduce that disparity in the maritime sector. The author also cited that achieving gender equality is one of the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations. While many sectors have reached strides in gender equality, it has remained an elusive dream in the maritime sector. The participation of women in the maritime sector in the Philippines has remained dismal although the country is one of the top suppliers of seafarers to the world fleet.

Female Seafarers in Shipping Companies

According to Mukherjee (2017), one of the major difficulty that female seafarers are encountering from the very start until today is getting access to jobs and professional development in the maritime industry. She added that company should take initiative to allow for an equal representation of women in the maritime industry and give them equal opportunities. There are many companies who are not willing to hire women seafarers. Every shipping company should have facilities and amenities to facilitate the dwelling of a women seafarer.

Maritime industry offers great employment opportunities for male and female seafarers alike. However, employment equality has been a problem haunting the industry for quite some time now. Unless some drastic steps are taken to bring awareness among prospective female seafarers and to enhance policies supporting their welfare, the numbers will continue to dwindle (Mukherjee, 2017).

Furthermore, according to T. Jong and K. Ye (2009), the Taiwan Ministry of Education and Ministry of Transportations tried to consult shipping industries to provide this internship opportunity, they were all rejected. Lastly, the largest scale shipping company-Evergreen reluctantly accepted, and created the first record on Taiwan maritime history that female students are onboard for internship training. In 1998, the first Taiwan female Deck Officer officially onboard a container ship. In 2004, Taiwan passenger vessel and bulk carrier started to use female Deck Officer, women navigation is moving to a sprouted stage. However, since then, women have a very hard time to enter navigation career. In 2006, Taiwan has only three shipping companies who hired female seafarers. By 2007, the first female Deck Officer group who entered navigation field was reaching the age suitable to get married, so they choose to transfer to land-base units or even to resign. In March 2008, Yang Ming Marine Transportation which is state-owned enterprise started a policy to hire female Deck Officer and became the breakthrough in history (Jong & Ye, 2009).

Also, Pallis, Bissias and Papachristou (2011) added that in Greece, the general public has always considered the maritime industry an important yet somewhat misapprehended industry. It has also been considered an industry of a homogenous sociological nature for its professionals (both ashore and at sea) dominated by a continuous resistance to greater inclusivity. Despite growing pressures for openness and adaptiveness, women are still extremely underrepresented both as merchant marine officers and upper scale executives ashore. Nevertheless, against a general decline in the total numbers of students and cadets, numbers of female students both in universities and merchant marine academies steadily –and surprisingly – increased over the past decade. Hence over the last decades, the industry has faced continuous decline in the number of young cadets enrolling on specific diplomas in merchant marine academies. On the contrary young undergraduates enrolling in specialized degrees –either in maritime economics or naval architecture– seem to attract the attention and enthusiasm of more adolescents. Although Greece is facing a rise in unemployment, affecting mostly young women, the shipping industry is still relatively unaffected yet reluctant to embrace women as officers or upper scale executives. Despite the shortages in mariners, traditional shipping companies do not seem particularly encouraging towards the future prospects of a mixed male and female crew aboard a ship. The notion of equal opportunities to both sexes seems too radical to be adopted in most cases in this particular industry (Pallis, Bissias, Papachristou, & Arapi, 2011).

Career Options for Women Seafarers after Sailing at Sea

A maritime career does not always have to be at sea. Mukherjee (2017) listed maritime sectors where seafarers can join and make a good fortune. Some of them are as follows:

1. **Maritime Lecturer / Instructor:** Maritime training institutions are growing in a good number. Experienced seafarers willing to teach can join such institutions. Seafarers can use their own experience and previous research to impart knowledge to the students, educate and prepare aspiring seafarers for life at sea so that they can perform their duties onboard diligently and efficiently. A number of maritime academies/universities run training vessels where deck officers or marine engineers can be engaged.
2. **Maritime Surveyor:** Any deck officer with a certificate of competency as a Master on a foreign going vessel and a ship's engineer a certificate of competency as a chief engineer are eligible to become a class surveyor for ships to check sea worthiness. A class surveyor is responsible for conducting surveys and inspections on ships structure and marine equipment according to national and international rules to determine overall condition and ensure quality and safety of ships.
3. **Maritime Author:** Another option for seafarers who have abandoned sailing after spending a long time at sea is to become an author. A seafarer can bring to the book her long experience of sailing and the knowledge she has gained over the years which should prove extremely useful to marine officers.
4. **Ship Broking and Chartering:** A ship broker is the one who acts as a negotiator between ship owners and charterers. Ship broker's role can be classified as finding ships for cargoes and cargo for ships. This function necessarily requires an in-depth knowledge of ship and cargoes, methods of loading and discharging of various cargoes, weather patterns etc.
5. **Ship Operation Management:** Ship management involves the process of managing the ship for an agreed period of time. Ship management has different areas to be looked after- commercial, operations, technical, crewing, finance, administration, quality and safety. A well experienced navigating officer can later join shipping companies ashore as fleet manager, safety and quality manager, training officer, technical manager and so on.
6. **Maritime Regulatory Authorities:** Government jobs are starting to get attractive again. Marine officers can also enjoy the benefits of government job. Seafarers with a certificate of competency

as a Master of a foreign going ship are also eligible to join the esteemed maritime regulatory authorities as responsible for conducting examinations for masters and mates or can join in higher posts.

7. Ports and Harbour Management and Pilotage: Ports have to move with the times in response to global shifts in maritime trade if they are to remain competitive. Hence they require efficient and skillful professionals to develop strategic business plans. Some of the jobs available in port operations involve technical work, administration, management, vessel traffic services and pilotage. Seafarers who have served in a senior capacity at sea have the required skill, knowledge and understanding and are therefore ideal for these posts (Mukherjee, 2017).

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a mixed method research design to explore how Filipino female seafarers' potentials can be maximized in the maritime industry. Specifically, a concurrent triangulation design was employed where the quantitative data sourced from the survey of female seafarers and the qualitative data from the interview of employers in the maritime industry were collected at the same time. Analysis for the quantitative and qualitative data was completed separately. Results were then compared or integrated.

The quantitative data analyzed using descriptive statistics include the career aspirations of female seafarers, and challenges encountered. On the other hand, thematic analysis was employed for the qualitative data on factors considered by employers in accepting female seafarers and interventions to maximize their potentials.

Respondents

The study respondents consisted of two sets: 1) female seafarers who are currently employed, and 2) representatives from maritime higher education institutions (MHEIs), maritime training institutions (MTIs), manning agencies/shipping companies, auditing companies, and government agencies such as the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Phil. Coast Guard (PCG), Phil. Ports Authority (PPA). Availability at the time of the study was a major consideration in selecting female seafarers. At the same time, snowballing technique was used in finding these respondents. This included referral of respondents, employers, classmates and associates in the maritime industry. A total of 35 female seafarers and 15 sector representatives responded to the study. In total, the study had 50 respondents.

Instrument

The study utilized two self-made instruments: 1) survey questionnaire for Filipino female seafarers and 2) expert interview questionnaire for sector representatives of the maritime industry. The survey questionnaire for female seafarers gathered data on their employment details, difficulties encountered when applying for jobs, how best to utilize or maximize their potential, and their career aspirations. The expert interview questions pertained to whether they were hiring female seafarers for sea-based or land-based jobs and the factors considered in hiring or not hiring them. Both instruments underwent validation. The survey questionnaire was pretested to five female seafarers. Limitation in the number of respondents to the pre-testing was noted by the few available female seafarers. On the other hand, the expert interview questionnaire was validated via team expert review of the questions in order to reduce ambiguity, leading questions, emotive questions and the like.

Procedure

The study employed a survey and an interview to gather data. The following procedures were followed:

Survey of Currently Employed Filipino Female Seafarers

1. Located the sample respondents. The researcher located them through the contact details provided. Social media was also utilized.
2. Administered the survey questionnaire. Upon locating the sample respondents, they were informed about the research including permission to administer. Once accepted by the respondent, they were oriented on the process of answering the questionnaire. Then the questionnaire was given to them to answer. The researcher waited until the respondent has completely answered all the items. Queries raised were addressed by the researcher.
3. Retrieved the survey questionnaire. After answering, the researcher collected the filled-out questionnaire. Items were checked as to completeness and consistency. Otherwise, the survey questionnaire was returned for correction or completion.

Expert Interview for Representatives of Different Sectors in the Maritime Industry

4. Identified the participating sector representatives. Once identified, letters were sent asking permission to conduct the interview at a set date and time.
5. Conducted the interview. The researcher conducted the interview using the interview schedule as guide. Answers were noted on the instrument. A recording of the interview was most convenient and facilitative in capturing the discussions during the interview. Clarifications and elaborations on some points discussed were made as necessary.
6. Closed the interview. The researcher extended her gratitude to the interviewee for participating in the interview. Informed the interviewee that the researcher may call back for items that may need further explanation or clarifications.

Data Analysis

Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. For the quantitative data from the survey questionnaires were processed using MS Excel. Data were encoded and the appropriate statistical tools were applied such as mean and percentage. Results were then presented in tabular form.

Meanwhile, qualitative data from the interview questionnaires were also processed in MS Excel. However, thematic analysis was done by identifying themes from the responses of interviewees for each question. Results from both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated for the final interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Participants

Female Seafarers

Respondents (37.14%) are between 22 to 24 years old. Most of them are single (77.14%) while others are married (22.86%). They are graduates of BS Marine Transportation (60%) and BS Marine Engineering (40%). As to their license, most of the respondents with a combined percentage of 85.71

have acquired or upgraded their license. Specifically, they are license holders of OIC Navigational Watch (42.86%) and OIC Engineering Watch (31.43). While few of them (14.29%) remain to have no license yet. In terms of employment, respondents are active seafarers (45.71%) while others are employed in land-based jobs (34.29%). Furthermore, 20.00% of respondents maximized their time by being active seafarers and being employed land-based during vacation.

It appears that most single female seafarers are still actively engaged in seafaring and married ones are employed in land-based. This suggests that their job preference is influenced by their marital status. According to Ljung and Widell (2014), women were more inclined to work ashore after having their own family and children. Therefore, a woman's family circumstance has a significant role in her career turning point.

In terms of the sector where they are currently employed, majority work in Manning Agencies/Shipping Companies (77.14%) (Table 1). They are followed by those working in government agencies (8.57%), maritime higher education institutions (5.71%) and maritime training institutions (2.86%). Worth noticing also some respondents (5.71%) are engaged in non-maritime related industries.

Current and previous positions held by respondents are also noted. Respondents claim their education and training background were put into good use in their current employment. It also appears that land-based employment in the maritime industry is very much open in accepting female maritime graduates.

Representatives of Different Sectors in the Maritime Industry

The respondents representing sectors of the maritime industry where female seafarers are employed are comprised of manning agency/shipping companies (5 or 33.33%). This representation also manifest the high number of female seafarers employed in manning/shipping companies. Other representatives come from maritime higher education institutions (MHEIs) (20%), maritime training institutions (MTIs) (20%), government agencies (20%), and auditing companies (6.37%).

Career Aspirations of Female Seafarers

The 35 respondents were asked about their career aspirations (Figure 1). More than half (62.86%) or 22 out of 35 respondents claim they want to work their way up to get a land-based position where they can use their education and training being maritime graduates. Likewise, majority of respondents aspire to get married and have a family (57.14%). Ironically, the least aspiration of the respondents is getting a sea-based employment (22.86%).

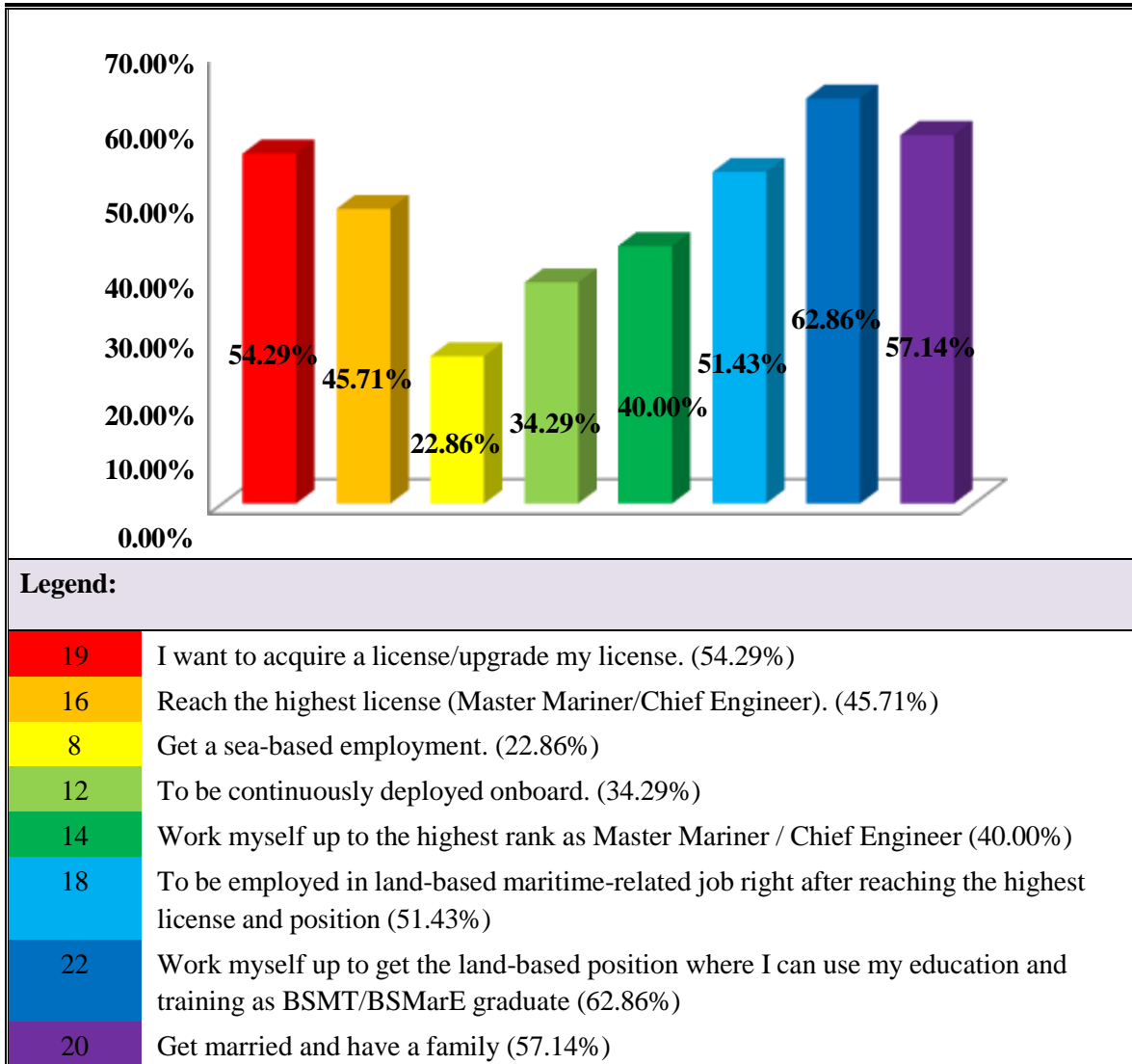


Figure 1. Career Aspirations of Female Maritime Graduates

The aspirations of female seafarers indicate that they will not stay long at sea and they rather work in land-based jobs related to their maritime profession. Female seafarers are aware that a maritime career is not limited to a career at sea. There are many sectors where female seafarers can be employed. As explained by Mukherjee (2017), shipping is a massive industry with many sectors to get in. Furthermore, Mukherjee stated that female seafarers are aware they can settle for a job ashore, which values their skills, knowledge and experience. The training and experience acquired from a career in shipping can be used across industries ashore and many diverse areas.

In addition, the respondents were asked which maritime sectors providing land-based employment they believe their potentials can be fully maximized. The ranking of their responses show that they can reach their full potential in 1) manning and shipping companies, 2) maritime training institutions, 3) maritime higher education institutions, 4) government agencies such as MARINA, PCG, PPA, and 5) auditing companies.

Female Seafarers' Challenges Encountered in Applying for Sea-based and Land-based Jobs

Respondents encountered difficulties when applying for sea-based jobs (Table 1). While none of them indicated difficulties when applying for land-based jobs.

Table 1: Challenges Encountered by Female Seafarers

Challenges Encountered by Female Seafarers
A. Manning agencies do not entertain female applicants for sea-based employment
B. Ship-owners do not accept female seafarers
C. Given less priority in the application process. Application accepted but made me wait until such time when no male applicants are available, only then they consider my application.
D. Accepted. However, they intend to assign me to a position not related to my course.

Most of the respondents, 60.87%, (combined A and/or B responses) cited that manning agencies and ship owners do not entertain and accept female applicants for sea-based employment. These manning agencies are dependent on the ship-owners' or principals' crew requirements. Acceptance of female seafarers is dependent on the decision of ship-owners. Additionally, respondents claimed that should they be hired, they would be assigned in catering-related roles such as Mess Girl or Steward, where their education and training would be of little help.

Other respondents at 47.83% (C responses) said that they are given less priority in the application process and made to wait until such time when no male applicants are available.

These results indicate that seafaring remains to be a profession for males. Despite the efforts of IMO in promoting gender equality in the industry, ship-owners are resistant in providing opportunities for females to be part of their workforce. Thus, female seafarers have difficulties applying for sea-based employment. This could be one of the reasons they divert their career to land-based employment. Furthermore, according to Mukherjee (2017), one of the major difficulty that female seafarers encountered from the very start until today is getting access to jobs and professional development in the maritime industry. This attributed to less women in the maritime sector. Lack of workplace support kept women out of this career.

According to Zhang (2015), the biggest obstacle for female seafarers to get maritime positions is the opposition of ship-owners and shipping managers. Most shipping companies, shipping organizations, crewing and ship managers are still controlled by men. Tangi (2017) attributed gender gap in seafaring to patriarchal control and patriarchal beliefs. One most common patriarchal views is men are superior while women are the weaker sex. There is also a notion that seafaring is a man's turf. Thus, women are considered to have no place in seafaring. Tangi continued to explain that erroneous perceptions on male superiority were reinforced in seafaring because of male dominance, control of resources and decision-making. These two factors – patriarchal control and beliefs have affected women seafarers in their pursuit to penetrate a male dominated industry.

On the other hand, there are female seafarers who did not encounter difficulties applying for sea-based jobs (34.78%) (Table 2). According to them, they were scholars or sponsored by shipping companies (26.09%), recommended by family or relatives working in shipping companies and manning agencies (4.35%), and they possess the qualifications required by the company (4.35%). The "padrino system" paved the way for respondents to penetrate the maritime industry.

Table 2: Reasons for Not Encountering Difficulties in Applying for Sea-based Jobs

Response	F
Scholar/sponsored by shipping companies.	26.09%
I have the qualifications that the company was looking for as maritime graduate	4.35%
Recommended by family relatives working in shipping companies/manning agencies	4.35%

Factors Affecting the Acceptance and Non-Acceptance of Female Maritime Graduates in Sea-based and Land-based Jobs.

An expert interview with sector representatives was utilized to identify the factors considered in accepting or not accepting female seafarers. Results show that most sectors are accepting female seafarers (80%). Looking into specific sectors, sea-based job or seafaring had only 7% acceptance for females. On the other hand, as presented in Table 3, 53% are accepting female seafarers for positions in land-based jobs. Meanwhile, 20% pertains to the sectors who accept female seafarers for both sea-based and land-based employment.

Table 3. Whether Shipping Companies are Accepting Female Seafarers or Not

RESPONSE	%
Accepting Both Landbased and Seabased	20%
Accepting - Seabased	7%
Accepting - landbased	53%
Not Accepting,	20%

In addition, the current positions held by female seafarers in the interviewees' companies/offices are show in Table 4. It also includes other positions where females can be more productive, being graduates of maritime programs.

Table 4. Land-based Maritime Related Positions

Maritime Sector	Current Positions Occupied by Female Seafarers	Possible Land-based Positions for Female Seafarers
Manning Agencies / Shipping Companies	Ship Operator Crewing Manager	Crewing Officer Recruitment Officer
Maritime Higher Education Institution	Instructor / Professor Staff Quality Assurance Staff	Dean of Maritime College Admin & Academic Support
Maritime Training Institution	Training Specialist and Development Instructor	Research Officer Course Development Research Officer

<i>Government</i>	<i>Agencies</i>	
MARINA	Auditor	Board of Examiner Assessor Quality Management Officer
Phil. Coast Guard	ENS & LT / Operations Officer LCDR / Chief of Staff, Coast CDR / Commanding Officer – SAR CDR / Commanding Officer – MSS	
Phil. Ports Authority	Harbour Operations Officer Harbour Master	Port Manager
Auditing Company		Auditor Certification Officer

According to the interviewees, the following factors were considered in the acceptance and non-acceptance of female seafarers in their respective companies/offices.

Acceptance

- Having Scholarship / Sponsorship / Existing Partnership with MHEIs. There were shipping companies who had partnerships with universities, colleges and even government agencies such as Philippine Coast Guard that offer sponsorship for the cadets.
- Educational Background and Technical Expertise. It was always advantageous for sectors of the maritime industry to hire maritime graduates for office positions due to their educational background which also comes with familiarization and technical expertise. Female seafarers were most likely to settle down for a land-based employment later. On the other hand, maritime sectors were in need of employees for permanent office positions.
- Previously Employed as Seafarer in the Same Company. Female seafarers who previously sailed are likely to be accepted in land-based positions of the same company where they sailed. There were shipping companies that offer office work for their female seafarers during their vacation to maximize their time. Later on, these female seafarers might consider working in the office permanently and be absorbed by their company. Muhkerjee (2017) explained that shipping companies prefer to absorb officers who have worked onboard their vessels as they already developed relationship with them. It was easier for the company to work with employees who have a fair idea about the company. Similarly, Magramo & Eler (2012) mentioned companies hiring female maritime graduates actually are preparing them for office positions. Women were more organized and more appropriate to work in the office after they had acquired the necessary shipboard experience, training and knowledge of running a ship.

Support to Gender Equality in the Industry. The general welfare is always a prioritized by the maritime industry, particularly government institutions. Therefore, they promote gender equality and accommodate both sexes in any position applicable. For instance, Philippine Coast Guard has a partnership with Philippine Merchant Marine Academy wherein the cadets of any gender are considered and they can be assigned onboard and in offices land-based. Furthermore, certain foreign principals like Europeans trust the abilities of female seafarers.

Non-Acceptance

- Preference of Foreign Principals. In terms of sea-based employment, manning agencies were reluctant to hire female seafarers due to the requirements set by their principals. This resulted from their unpleasant experiences employing female seafarers. Similarly, Zhang (2015) and Dalisay (2016), echoed the concern on companies' hesitation in accepting female seafarers that results to their very minimal employment prospects despite promotion by the government and nautical schools. In addition, ship owners are avoiding extra costs when they deploy female seafarers because they had to modify the ship's amenities to accommodate them.
- Physiological Aspect. Maritime sectors also considered the physiological aspect of a woman. As mentioned in the interview, there were positions or certain tasks that required masculinity and it would be hazardous if they let a woman do the work. As explained by Dalisay (2016), there was still strong masculine cultural values that seafaring occupation required physical strengths and women were not suitable for such jobs.

Interventions to Maximize the Potentials of Female Maritime Graduates in Land-based and Sea-based Jobs

Representatives of the maritime sectors identified possible interventions to maximize the potential of female seafarers in jobs ashore and at sea (Figure 2).

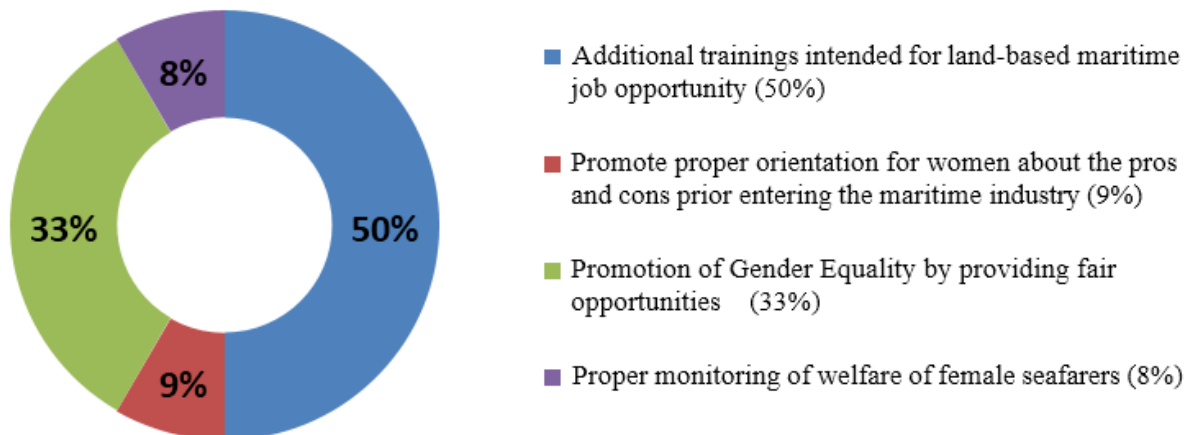


Figure 2. Interventions to be Implemented to Maximize the Potentials of Female Maritime Graduates

- Additional trainings intended for land-based maritime job opportunity. Most interviewees (50%) from maritime sectors who accepted female seafarers claimed that trainings, seminars, and education in order to have additional credentials for them to be competitive and to secure maritime land-based employment. Furthermore, female seafarers who do not have any license yet can take and pass the civil service eligibility examination in order to be accepted in maritime-related government agencies.
- Promote proper orientation for women prior entering the maritime industry. Understanding the hurdles that female maritime aspirants may face, maritime higher education institutions (MHEIs) should educate and acquaint female maritime aspirants about the maritime industry and the challenges ahead once they pursue a career at sea. MHEIs should have concern for their students and avoid misguiding and misinforming them about the real situation in the industry. Respondents claimed this intervention was to properly guide female aspirants towards a career at sea.

- Promote Gender Equality by providing fair opportunities. Respondents specifically from government agencies and manning agencies/shipping companies (33%) believed that potentials of female seafarers in the maritime industry can be maximized by providing fair opportunities for them. Supported by the study of Mukherjee (2017) and Ljung & Widell (2014), it was acceptable that women will not work at sea for a long time. However, providing them with the opportunity to practice their education and gain experience onboard may help them become more competent and improve their technical expertise, which may also benefit other maritime sectors requiring technical experts in shore jobs. This will maximize their potential as maritime graduates.
- Proper monitoring of welfare of female seafarers. The intention of this intervention is for female seafarers to achieve full potential as seafarers (8%). It will only be feasible if their safety and well-being are sufficiently monitored. If female seafarers perceive their employers value them and they have someone to turn to in the event of being harassed or discriminated at sea, they will feel more comfortable and carry out their duties and responsibilities more effectively.

On the other hand, female seafarers also provided insights on how their potential, being maritime graduates, can be maximized in the maritime industry (Figure 3).

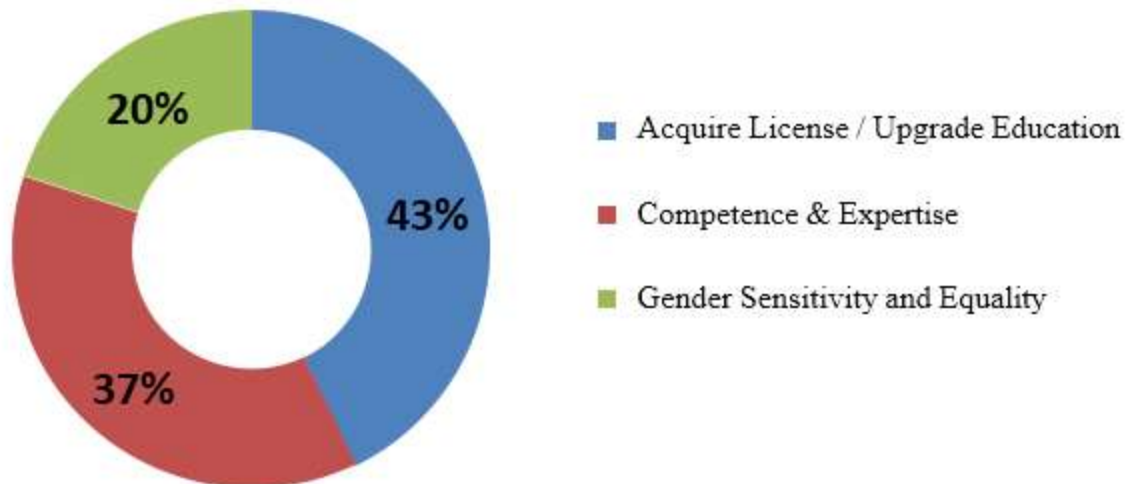


Figure 3. Maximization of Potential in the Maritime Industry: The Female Maritime Graduates' Perspective

- Acquire License / Upgrade Education. Forty-three (43) percent of the respondents believed that having a license or upgrading education is essential for them to penetrate the maritime industry and maximize their potentials. They claimed that it will be easier for them find work in maritime sectors that were recently hiring female seafarers.
- Competence and Expertise. Meanwhile, respondents (37%) considered competence and expertise as key players for the maximization of their potential in the maritime industry. According to Mukherjee (2021) seagoing experience is vital and realistic. But female maritime graduates must know that job opportunities ashore values their skills, knowledge and experience. The training and experience acquired from a career in shipping can be used across industries ashore and many diverse areas.
- Gender Sensitivity and Equality. Lastly, gender equality (20%) was essential for the female seafarers especially for sea-based employment. It was very important for female seafarers to have shipboard experience as primary requirement to attain their license, competence and expertise.

Conclusion

A career at sea is not a long-term career for female seafarers. Their preference is to have a job ashore especially once they get married and have their own family. It would therefore be very challenging for the maritime industry to produce women seafarers who will reach the highest position onboard.

Female seafarers will continue to experience challenges entering into a male dominated industry. Patriarchal control and beliefs continue to exist which hindered the acceptance of women into the industry. Most of shipping companies, shipping organizations, crewing and ship managers are still dominated by men.

Female seafarers' employment opportunities were supported by scholarships and their educational attainment and technical expertise. However, some sectors' preference for masculinity and long-term sea experience made it difficult for female seafarers to find employment. In addition, the physiological aspect of a woman and their short-term seafaring experience were also factors affecting acceptance in the industry.

Female seafarers can be employed land-based with additional interventions to enhance their knowledge and skills in office operations. Shipping companies preferred to absorb officers for land-based employment who had already worked onboard their vessels as they already established relationship with them. MHEIs and MTIs are in need of professionals with seafaring experience to teach and develop training programs. Also, government agencies like MARINA, PCG and PPA offer land-based employment for female seafarers. They could also pursue employment in auditing companies.

In the final analysis, maximizing the potentials of Filipino female seafarers depends on the willingness of sectors in the maritime industry to accept and welcome them in sea- based or land-based employment.

Recommendations

For Filipino Female Maritime Graduates

- Aside from acquiring license, consider investing in additional trainings and seminars applicable to land-based opportunities in maritime industry.
- Pursue further formal education like Master's or Doctoral degrees related to the maritime industry, as this will help them break into any sector of the industry.
- Have a professional eligibility, if no license yet, as additional credential for employment in maritime-related government offices.

For Manning Agencies/Shipping Companies

- Open opportunities for females through cadetship programs.

For Maritime Higher Education Institution

- Proper orientation for female maritime aspirants prior entering the maritime industry. Before finally accepting females for maritime programs, a maritime career orientation should be conducted especially for women as they face more challenges once they get onboard. Possible positions listed in the framework should be included in the career orientation of students. MHEIs having

partnership with shipping companies should continue this arrangement as one strategy by which female maritime graduates can easily be accepted for shipboard jobs.

For Government Agencies

- Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) together with CHED and MHEIs, should consider developing additional maritime related bachelor programs like BS Shipping Management or Maritime Administration or add additional maritime related courses to business programs. This could also be an area for future research.

Researchers

- Salary differences between land-based and sea-based employment can be subject for future research regarding female maritime graduates. Furthermore, female seafarers in domestic shipping and other sectors not covered in this study can also be an area for future research.

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