



DIVERSE CULTURAL SAFETY DYNAMICS: EXPERIENCES OF FILIPINO SEAFARER ON INTERNATIONAL VESSELS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the diverse culture experiences of Filipino seafarers onboard international seagoing vessels. Specifically, the study delved into the experiences of the informant on the diverse culture when onboard international seagoing vessels and on how they with the challenges encountered on the diverse culture when onboard international vessels. This study utilized transcendental phenomenology to explore the lived experiences of Filipino seafarers aboard multicultural international vessels. The research focused on understanding these experiences without delving into the reasons behind them, allowing participants' perceptions and cultural encounters to emerge naturally. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten experienced seafarers from the Cebu Reliable and Excellent Seafarers Training Center (CREST), ensuring rich insights. The interviews explored participants' experiences at sea and their coping mechanisms. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis method, identifying key themes that reflected the participants' shared experiences. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly upheld throughout the process. The research ensured trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, emphasizing reflexivity to minimize researcher bias. This study come up with eleven emergent themes from the narratives of the informants. For the positive experiences of the informants, the emergent themes are: 1) *Personal Growth and Cultural Appreciation*, 2) *Positive Work Environment and Teamwork*, and 3) *Professional Development and Recognition*; For the negative experiences of the informants, the emergent themes are 1) *Frustrations with Cultural Misunderstandings*, 2) *Challenging Work Environment and Conflict*, and 3) *Barriers to Professional Growth and Recognition*; and For the strategies of the informants in coping the challenges they encountered onboard international vessels, the emergent themes are: 1) *Navigating Interpersonal Relationships*, 2) *Teamwork and Collaboration*, 3) *Commitment to Responsibility and Effective Communication in the Workplace*, 4) *Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity*, and 5) *Support Systems and Resources*.

Keywords: Multicultural Crews, Maritime Safety, Intercultural Communication, Filipino Seafarers, Cultural Diversity at Sea, Shipboard Safety Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of global trade and advancements in maritime technology has increased both the quantity and capacity of ships. Although modern ships are operated with smaller crews, the overall rise in the number of vessels has boosted the demand for skilled maritime workers. Shipowners and operators have been recruiting seafarers from their nations and abroad to address the shortage. This necessity has escalated the prevalence of multinational crews in the maritime industry alongside competition and operational costs. However, the diversity within crews, while beneficial in many aspects, poses a risk of cultural conflicts that could compromise the safety of the vessel and its cargo (Inegol & Yildirim, 2024).

Modern shipping is a highly international, multicultural, and technological industry with intense economic efficiency and profitability demands. The ship crews are multinational, and many crewmembers come from emerging maritime nations, such as the Philippines and China. Despite advances in technology, some 80 % of all accidents are, according to studies, caused by human error. Intercultural cooperation, communication, fatigue, and the language skills of a seafarer are the most critical issues that contribute to maritime safety on the individual level. Furthermore, more training in understanding other cultures is needed (Berg et al., 2013).



In the society, people might have many differences. Hence, it isn't a hindrance to come up as one. Onboard ships, it is hard to have a co-worker with different languages, cultures, and ethnicities. I came up with this study to know what are the possibilities in coping with other's perspectives of life, the way they live, and their view towards life as a human being. Safety is of utmost importance on-board ships, that is the number one priority of everybody.

In the shipping industry, the practice of employing a ship with a culturally diverse crew is nothing new. However, merging crews can simply result in possible misunderstandings or communication difficulties.

Digging deeper into the maritime industry, questions have been raised, regarding the conditions does the presence of multicultural crews influence the safety of the shipping industry? With modern shipping being open to multicultural and multilingual crew members, a lot of the recent human errors and accidents are caused by communication lapses. Many believe that miscommunication only exists between different nationalities. However, there are crew members of the same nationality but were raised in different origins or with different principles and still have misunderstandings amongst each other. While facing extended lengths of time on board, it might be difficult to deal with the diversity of people whose ethnicity involves distinctions in language, culture, and religion in addition to ethnic imbalances in terms of race (Daniels, 2017).

Lack of multicultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding has reared its head in the shipping industry. It's been a factor in seafarer retention, at times for accidents and environmental damage, and can affect seafarer safety and well-being on board. An inability to foster cultural competence affects the shipping industry's bottom line.

Multiculturalism is a prominent characteristic of today's maritime crews and significantly influences the languages spoken on board. Approximately 70-80% of the world's merchant fleet consists of multicultural crews. This diversity, combined with the potential absence of a common language, has raised concerns about the competence of ship crews. Additionally, globalization has led to considerable changes in ownership structures, as shipping companies expand internationally. Ideally, this situation should facilitate better training for professional crews across all ranks and nationalities. However, the question remains: do more diverse crews contribute to a richer culture of varying skill levels and qualifications? This is especially important to consider in light of technological advancements that have reduced crew sizes from around 40-50 members to just 20-25, even on larger vessels (Montallana et al., 2024).

The researcher is a marine engineer, and a maritime instructor at a state university, and would like to provide guidelines for reducing the impact of diverse cultures that could affect the safety onboard ship. Thus, the maritime industry could apply the recommended approach derived from the results of this study will train seafarers and future ones to be better, imposing an effective approach to seafarer onboard safety. Furthermore, the maritime industry will be able to assess cultural diversity and its impact on safety onboard to adhere to the current problems involving maritime accidents. For the researcher, the study will uncover critical areas in seafaring that many researchers could not explore.

The study adds to our understanding that safety promotes a unique but vital workplace for the maritime industry. Because the workplace creates many of the conditions that promote or reinforce unsafe conditions.

The goal of the study was to encourage seafarers to take extra steps on safety onboard ships and examine how to deal with cultural diversity, misunderstanding, or communication difficulties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is anchored on three theoretical perspectives: Cultural Relativism by Franz Boas (1911), the Sociocultural Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1978), and the Ecological Systems Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner (2005).

Cultural Relativism posits that cultural practices, beliefs, and values must be understood within their historical and environmental contexts rather than judged using external or universal standards (Boas, 1911). This perspective rejects biological determinism and emphasizes that cultural differences arise from learned behaviors rather than innate traits. Supporting this, Eriksen (2020) emphasized that cultural norms develop from unique social and historical conditions, and no single culture holds a universal standard for truth or morality. Hahn (2023) further noted that while cultural relativism promotes non-ethnocentric understanding, it may also overlook



cultural conflicts and power imbalances. In the maritime context, this theory explains how seafarers interpret communication, behavior, and safety practices differently based on cultural backgrounds.

The Sociocultural Theory explains that learning and cognitive development occur through social interaction within cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Lantolf et al. (2020) emphasized that knowledge is constructed through interaction and cultural mediation, particularly when individuals engage with more knowledgeable others. Scott and Palincsar (2013) further explained that participation in socially organized activities enhances learning and cognitive development. In maritime environments, this theory highlights the importance of teamwork, communication, and shared understanding among multicultural crew members.

Ecological Systems Theory suggests that human development is influenced by interconnected environmental systems ranging from immediate surroundings to broader societal contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Rosa and Tudge (2018) expanded this framework through the bioecological model, emphasizing the dynamic interaction of process, person, context, and time. In maritime operations, this theory explains how onboard environments, organizational structures, and global industry conditions influence seafarers' behavior, communication, and safety practices.

Multicultural Crews and Maritime Safety

The globalization of the maritime industry has significantly increased the prevalence of multinational crews. Inegol and Yildirim (2024) noted that the demand for skilled seafarers has led shipping companies to recruit internationally, resulting in culturally diverse crews. While this addresses labor shortages, it also introduces risks related to cultural conflict and miscommunication.

Human error remains a major contributor to maritime accidents. Research shows that communication failures, fatigue, and lack of cultural awareness are key contributing factors (Grech et al., 2019). Similarly, Oldenburg et al. (2019) emphasized that cultural diversity and communication barriers significantly affect cooperation, safety performance, and overall wellbeing among seafarers. Ragab (2024) further highlighted that multicultural crews face communication challenges that may lead to operational inefficiencies and increased safety risks.

Daniels (2017) emphasized that effective communication is essential in maritime professions, particularly in multicultural environments. However, communication barriers extend beyond language differences to include variations in cultural norms and interaction styles. These differences may result in misunderstandings that affect teamwork and safety.

Cultural Diversity, Conflict, and Communication

Cultural diversity significantly influences interpersonal relationships and conflict management onboard ships. Stahl et al. (2019) found that cultural diversity affects communication styles, conflict resolution, and team performance in complex work environments. These differences require a deeper understanding of cultural sensitivity and adaptability.

Halid (2021) identified language barriers as a major challenge for seafarers, often leading to misunderstandings and inefficiencies. Heslop et al. (2024) discussed how linguistic and cultural nuances, such as localized communication styles, may strengthen group identity but also create barriers in multicultural settings. Suresh and Krithika (2023) emphasized that strong interpersonal communication skills are essential for fostering mutual respect and professionalism among crew members.

Tavacıoğlu et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of non-technical skills such as teamwork, leadership, and communication in promoting collaboration and trust. Similarly, Bjørn and Ngwenyama (2009) emphasized that shared understanding and open dialogue are critical for effective teamwork in culturally diverse environments.

Organizational Culture, Safety, and Management



Organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping safety behavior in maritime operations. Geller (1994) explained that safety culture is influenced by interactions among individuals, behavior, and the environment. Cooper (2000) further noted that safety culture consists of psychological, behavioral, and situational components that influence workplace safety outcomes.

Platenkamp (2021) introduced the concept of Safety-II, which focuses on understanding successful practices rather than solely analyzing failures. This approach encourages open communication, trust, and psychological safety, which are essential in multicultural crews.

Progoulaki and Theotokas (2010) emphasized that managing cultural diversity is a core competency in maritime human resource management. Carol-Dekker (2018) further highlighted the importance of soft skills and cultural awareness in improving leadership and crew integration. Terjesen et al. (2016) added that diversity and inclusion contribute to innovation, organizational performance, and effective teamwork.

Seafarers' Experiences, Well-being, and Workplace Challenges

Seafarers face multiple challenges related to cultural diversity, isolation, and demanding working conditions. Sampson and Ellis (2021) highlighted that seafarers experience significant stress due to workload, isolation, and multicultural environments. Similarly, McVeigh et al. (2019) and Pallotta et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of resilience, mental health support, and strong interpersonal relationships in managing stress at sea.

Turgo (2023) explained how Filipino seafarers create a sense of "home" onboard ships despite cultural diversity and isolation. Acejo (2021) highlighted communication challenges and cultural biases that affect teamwork and relationships. Turgo (2024) further emphasized the role of hierarchy in shaping onboard interactions and communication.

Buscema et al. (2024) identified environmental and social stressors, including interpersonal conflict and language barriers, that affect seafarers' wellbeing. Kulasegaram (2024) emphasized the importance of soft skills training in improving safety and teamwork.

Cruz (2024) revealed that racial discrimination significantly affects Filipino seafarers' wellbeing and contributes to workplace conflict and safety risks. Österman and Boström (2022) and the International Labour Organization (2022) reported that bullying and harassment remain prevalent issues in the maritime industry, negatively affecting both individual wellbeing and organizational performance.

Training, Development, and Support Systems

Training and development programs play a vital role in addressing multicultural challenges in maritime settings. Eler (2016) emphasized the importance of mentorship in supporting seafarers' professional growth and adaptation. Hetherington et al. (2006) highlighted the role of Maritime Resource Management (MRM) in improving communication, teamwork, and decision-making in high-risk environments.

These initiatives, combined with cultural awareness training and soft skills development, contribute to creating a safer and more inclusive working environment for seafarers.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study utilized the transcendental phenomenology as an approved to explore the lived experiences of the informants onboard international vessels of diverse culture. Transcendental phenomenology (TP) is a perfect fit for this study because it prioritizes understanding experiences exactly as Filipino seafarers encounter them onboard multicultural vessels. Through an "epoché" technique, this approach encourages the researcher to set aside his cultural assumptions. This method allows the true essence of the informants' experiences and how they perceive and make sense of diverse cultures to emerge naturally. Transcendental phenomenology is also designed to explore the "what" rather than the "why." This research is about



understanding the nature of these experiences, not necessarily the reasons behind them. Since this study is qualitative, focusing on in-depth exploration rather than numbers, transcendental phenomenology aligns perfectly as it allows the researcher to gather detailed descriptions through interviews or open-ended questions (Husserl, 1999). In short, transcendental phenomenology provides the ideal framework to delve into the subjective world of Filipino seafarers as they navigate the complexities of cultural encounters at sea.

Research Environment

The Cebu Reliable and Excellent Seafarers Training Center (CREST) served as the venue for this study. CREST's practicum site, conveniently located within the CTU Carmen Campus in Cebu, Philippines, was chosen due to its proximity to the target research population. This on-site practicum facility allows direct access to maritime students undergoing relevant training programs CREST offers. The accessibility of this specific location streamlines the recruitment process and simplifies data collection for the researcher (See Appendix E for the Location Map).

Research Informants

This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. In purposive sampling, researchers strategically select participants based on their judgment about who will provide the most valuable information for the research question. This approach is beneficial when the target population is well-defined, as in this case. Since the study aimed to understand the experiences of seafarers, recruiting participants directly from CREST's practicum site, a training center for maritime professions, ensured a relevant and knowledgeable sample.

The research participants, or informants, were explicitly chosen seafarers undergoing training at the CREST practicum site within CTU Carmen, Cebu. The selection criteria included a minimum of five years of sea service aboard international seagoing vessels. This additional filter ensured the participants possessed in-depth experience relevant to the research topic. By focusing on seasoned seafarers, the study aimed to gather rich and nuanced perspectives from individuals who have accumulated extensive knowledge and potentially encountered various situations at sea.

Research Instrument

To gain a rich understanding of experiences of the seafarers, the researcher will use a semi-structured interview guide rigorously validated by experts and experienced maritime professionals. This meticulous validation ensures the interview guide's effectiveness in capturing relevant and insightful data. The guide will serve as a roadmap for the interviews, fostering consistency while allowing flexibility to explore unforeseen but valuable information.

The first part of the interview guide delves into the participants' lived experiences at sea. The second part shifts the focus toward coping mechanisms. Here, the researcher might ask how the participants manage stress, build resilience, and maintain wellbeing while working in a demanding environment. By employing this two-pronged approach, the validated interview guide aims to capture both the realities of maritime life and the strategies seafarers use to navigate them.

Data Collection

To gather data for my research on seafarers' experiences, I conducted a one-on-one interview with participants recruited from the Cebu Reliable and Excellent Seafarers Training Center (CREST). First, I will need to secure permission from CREST management. I drafted a letter outlining my research goals and get their approval for an informed consent form that explains the study and participant rights. Next, I collaborated with CREST to identify potential participants who are seafarers undergoing training and have at least five years of experience at sea. Once identified, I contacted them individually to explain the research in more detail and answer any questions they might have. I also obtained their signed informed consent before proceeding.



Scheduling the interviews involved finding mutually agreeable times and locations. The interview were done in person at CREST. During the interviews, I used a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions designed to delve into their lived experiences at sea. I recorded the interviews for transcription and later analysis with their permission. Data security is a priority, so I stored and anonymized the interview recordings and transcripts securely. This process involved password-protected storage systems and use codes for participants during data analysis. Regularly backing up the data ensured its safety and integrity. Lastly, I maintained ethical considerations throughout the entire process. This means prioritizing participant confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent at all stages of data collection..

Data Analysis

Once the one-on-one interviews were completed, I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data. This method enabled me to deeply explore and understand the informants' narratives, capturing the essence of their experiences and the unique challenges they faced at sea. First, I familiarized myself with the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts. This initial step was crucial for holistically understanding the informants' thoughts, emotions, and perspectives. Throughout this stage, I kept a detailed journal to document my initial impressions and critical observations.

Next, I systematically generated initial codes by identifying and labeling features of the data relevant to the research questions. These codes captured significant elements, such as impactful statements that resonated with themes of life at sea. Each code was carefully documented, referencing the transcript page and line numbers for easy tracking.

I searched for themes in the following stage by organizing the codes into broader patterns. This process involved categorizing the codes based on shared meanings and recurring ideas, like assembling a puzzle to reveal an overarching picture of the informants' shared experiences. Themes were refined through a continuous review to ensure they were comprehensive and meaningful.

Once themes were identified, I reviewed and refined them to ensure coherence and clarity. Themes that did not hold up against the complete data set were modified, split, or combined as necessary. The goal was to create distinct thematic clusters that effectively encapsulated the informants' narratives.

I named and described each with well-defined themes, ensuring they accurately reflected the data. These descriptions highlighted the significance of each theme and explained how they connected to the research questions and theoretical frameworks. To maintain transparency and strengthen the analysis, I sought input from an expert in the field and presented the findings to my thesis adviser for evaluation.

Finally, to enhance the accuracy and validity of the findings, I conducted member checking. I summarized the key themes with the informants' consent and invited their feedback. This process allowed the informants to reflect on the findings and provide any insights or corrections, ensuring the results authentically represented their experiences.

Ethical Considerations

This study prioritized ethical research principles throughout the research process, ensuring the wellbeing and rights of the participating seafarers. The principles adhered to were grounded in the following core concepts:

Beneficence

The principle of beneficence emphasizes maximizing the potential benefits of the research for the participants and the broader maritime community. The findings of this study aimed to equip future seafarers with knowledge about diverse cultural experiences onboard international vessels, promoting smoother intercultural interactions and potentially enhancing safety practices. Additionally, the research findings informed maritime institutions and regulatory bodies, such as MARINA and OWWA, on strategies to support seafarers working in multicultural environments.



Non-maleficence

The principle of non-maleficence underlined the importance of minimizing potential harm to participants. The study strictly adhered to informed consent procedures to ensure participant safety and wellbeing. Participants were thoroughly informed about the research objectives, data collection methods, and their right to withdraw at any study stage. Furthermore, the anonymity and confidentiality of participant data were maintained throughout the research process. Interview recordings and transcripts were securely stored using password-protected systems and anonymized with participant codes.

Autonomy

The principle of autonomy respected the participants' right to make informed decisions regarding their involvement in the research. Participants were approached individually and allowed to ask questions and clarify any doubts before signing the informed consent form. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and seafarers retained the right to withdraw at any point without facing any repercussions.

Justice

The principle of justice ensured fairness in the selection of participants and the distribution of research benefits. The study employed purposive sampling to recruit seafarers with relevant experiences, ensuring the collected data accurately reflected the target population's experiences. The research findings were disseminated through academic publications and presentations to benefit the participants and the broader maritime community.

Trustworthiness of Research

Ensuring the integrity of this study was essential to guarantee that the findings were credible and reliable. This section addressed the four criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings could be applied to similar contexts. Detailed descriptions of the research context, participants' backgrounds, and the interview process were provided. These descriptions enabled readers to assess the applicability of the findings to their contexts. The thick description, which provided rich contextual details and participant quotes, offered a nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences. This detailed approach allowed readers to make informed judgments about the transferability of the findings.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of the findings over time and with different researchers. A detailed audit trail was maintained, documenting all research decisions, data collection procedures, and analysis steps. This documentation enabled other researchers to replicate the study and evaluate its dependability. The researcher also maintained a reflexive journal, reflecting on personal biases and assumptions throughout the research process. This practice fostered transparency and helped account for potential researcher bias in interpreting the findings.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the research findings and the minimization of researcher bias. Experts in qualitative research and maritime studies reviewed the interview guide and emerging themes, providing an external check on the researcher's interpretations. This feedback helped minimize bias. An explicit coding schema was developed to document how interview data were coded and categorized. This documentation promoted transparency and allowed other researchers to assess the confirmability of the findings.



Reflexivity and Bracketing

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of this qualitative inquiry, I employed strategies that enhanced the integrity of the research process. Reflexivity and bracketing were central in addressing potential researcher bias and maintaining a participant-centered perspective.

Reflexivity

In this study, I prioritized reflexivity throughout the research process, acknowledging that my cultural background and experiences influenced how I interpreted the data. By maintaining a dedicated reflexive journal, I continuously examined my biases and reflected on how they might have emerged during data collection and interpretation. This ongoing self-reflection enabled me to identify and mitigate potential biases, fostering a more objective and participant-centered approach to understanding seafarers' experiences with diverse cultures onboard international vessels.

Bracketing

To minimize the influence of my cultural assumptions and ensure the findings accurately represented the lived experiences of Filipino seafarers, I employed bracketing. This process involved consciously setting aside preconceived notions and personal perspectives during the research process. Through bracketing, I aimed to approach each participant's narrative with openness and neutrality, allowing their authentic voices and unique cultural encounters to shape the study's outcomes.

FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

Presentation of Data

The transcendental phenomenological study provided insights into Filipino seafarers' complex experiences aboard culturally diverse international vessels. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis method, the research captured 150 significant statements from the participants' narratives, carefully examined to distill core themes. For the positive experiences, three emergent themes emerged, composed of eight sub-themes. These themes highlighted the seafarers' adaptability, the camaraderie forged across cultural boundaries, and the development of global perspectives. Specifically, seafarers described the enriching cultural exchanges they experienced, such as sharing meals and learning languages, which enhanced their appreciation of diversity and created a strong sense of unity among the crew. These experiences underscored seafarers' personal and professional growth while navigating culturally varied environments.

On the other hand, the analysis of negative experiences revealed three emergent themes supported by nine sub-themes. These themes included communication barriers, feelings of isolation, and cultural misunderstandings or discrimination. Participants detailed scenarios where language differences led to misinterpretations, adversely affecting teamwork and safety. They also shared how cultural norms, such as varying attitudes toward hierarchy and authority, sometimes caused tension and discomfort among crew members. The narratives emphasized the emotional and psychological toll of being far from family and the impact of working in a culturally unfamiliar setting. Despite these challenges, the informants displayed remarkable resilience, constantly adapting to unpredictable and often strenuous circumstances.

Addressing these challenges, the study identified five emergent themes comprising 15 sub-themes related to the seafarers' coping mechanisms. Participants employed strategies such as fostering strong support networks among colleagues, engaging in leisure activities, and practicing mindfulness to manage stress and maintain wellbeing. Seafarers emphasized the importance of building relationships and seeking solidarity with peers to create a home-like environment aboard the vessel. Additionally, they highlighted the value of cultural sensitivity training and self-education as ways to enhance mutual understanding and promote harmony. These coping mechanisms helped the seafarers navigate daily difficulties and underscored their resilience and ability to thrive



in a demanding, multicultural environment. The succeeding sections present the arching themes and the corresponding emergent themes supported by the informants' narratives.

I. Experiences of the Informants on the Diverse Culture When Onboard International Vessel

A. Positive Experiences

1. Personal Growth and Cultural Appreciation
2. Positive Work Environment and Teamwork
3. Professional Development and Recognition

B. Negative Experiences

1. Frustrations with Cultural Misunderstandings
2. Challenging Work Environment and Conflict
3. Barriers to Professional Growth and Recognition

II. Coping with the Challenges Encountered on the Diverse Culture When Onboard International Vessel

1. Navigating Interpersonal Relationships
2. Teamwork and Collaboration
3. Commitment to Responsibility and Effective Communication in the Workplace
4. Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity
5. Support Systems and Resources

The above-mentioned emergent themes highlight the complexities of life aboard multicultural vessels, capturing both the rewarding and challenging aspects of seafaring. The narratives emphasize the seafarers' personal and professional growth, obstacles, and resilience in navigating diverse cultural environments.

III. Experiences of the Informants on the Diverse Culture When Onboard International Vessel

A. Positive Experiences

The positive experiences shared by individuals offered valuable insights into the aspects of their environments that contributed to personal and professional growth. In this section, we explored the themes that emerged from these experiences, highlighting how interactions with diverse cultures, supportive work environments, and opportunities for professional development fostered a sense of achievement, belonging, and mutual respect. These experiences reflected the strength of collaboration and understanding and revealed the impact of a nurturing and inclusive atmosphere on individuals' wellbeing and career satisfaction. As we delve into the narratives, we examine how cultural appreciation, teamwork, and recognition contributed to a fulfilling and enriching journey.

1. Personal Growth and Cultural Appreciation. This theme emphasizes the integral aspects of working in a multicultural environment, where exposure to diverse cultures fosters individual development and a deeper understanding of global perspectives. The following narratives highlight how interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds enhance personal growth and promotes mutual respect, collaboration, and a broader appreciation for diverse traditions and values.

During my one-on-one interview with Informant 1, he said:

Siguro most memorable experienced katong nakauban kog mga Japanese kay ang ilang kinaiyahan lahi kaayo sa atoa, ah, disiplinado kaayo sila maayo kaayo motrabaho and then very respectful maayo kaayo makig uban sa atoa unya motodlo pud sila sa mga trabaho nga wala pa nimo nahibaw an ug andam sila modawat kung sayop ba sila o kinahanglan ba sila todloan meaning open minded silang pagkataw unya kana bitawng naa silay mahatag na



impact dakong impact sa imong kinabuhi nga naay mausab nga naa kay makat onan sad nila (IDI 1-2 SS2). (My most memorable experience was working with the Japanese crew. Their character is so different from ours. They are highly disciplined, excellent workers, and very respectful. They are great at collaborating with us and are willing to teach us tasks we might still need to learn. They are also open to accepting their mistakes and willing to learn if they need guidance, which shows their open-minded nature. They have a way of leaving a significant impact on your life, bringing about change, and imparting valuable lessons that you can learn from them).

Informant 1 further narrated:

So akola lang sir sa ako mga nakauban daghan naman kog mga nakauban Korean, Indonesian, Indian, siguro ang makat onan gid nimo mga makuha nimo na mga idea kay kung unsaon pag kanang word na makisama unsaon nimo pagpakisama sa mga tao tudluan nimo kung kanang maimprove imong social life ba the way ka mo handle Ug tao the way ka mo interact ug tao meaning imong social life nimo mas molambo pa makakat on ka lahi lahi na diversity lahi lahi na mga tao sa lain lain na mga lugar makakat on ka unsay dili pwedi buhaton ug unsay gusto nila ug unsaon sila pag handle isip usa ka roommate sa barko (IDI 1-3 SS3). (For me, sir, with all the people I've worked with, I've already been with many different nationalities. Koreans, Indonesians, Indians. I believe what you can learn from them are ideas on how to get along, that word "makisama" (to get along well), how you can relate to people and how you can improve your social life. It's about how you handle people and interact with them, which means your social life will grow. You'll learn about different diversities and different people from various places. You'll learn what's acceptable and what they prefer, and how to handle them as a roommate on the ship).

Informant 3 also shared his thought when he said:

That would be when other nationalities celebrating their let's just say for example independence day or national day that would actually open my eyes of how they embrace also their culture knowing as Filipino were also very oriented when it comes to culture knowing other nationalities also embrace the way we embrace our culture it makes me proud knowing that this celebrated like a big grand event so like just for example every other nationalities they have their independence day and a comparing it to ours it's a different level (IDI 3-2 SS32).

Informant 6 eagerly narrated his experiences, as he said:

Ganahan ko sa mga tradisyon sama sa pagbahin bahin sa pagkaon ug pag selebrar uban sa lain laing kultura pananglitan nagustuhan nako ang filipino nga tradisyon sa pagselebrar sa pasko pinaagi sa noche buena ug nakat on ko gikan sa mga Hapon nga kasinatian nga ang kalmado ug organisado nga pamaagi sa trabaho epektibo kaayo (IDI 6-4 SS79). (I enjoy traditions such as sharing food and celebrating with different cultures. For instance, I appreciate the Filipino tradition of celebrating Christmas through Noche Buena. I have also learned from the Japanese experience that a calm and organized approach to work is efficient).

Moreover, Informant 4 narrated his experiences and observations as follows:

So nagkalain lain nga kultura pasabot sir mga culture nato kung sa mostly sa akola mga anindot nga ako todloan basi sa ako experienced so when I was here in the philippines I was in inter island before when I graduated in a maritime school so ato hunahuna saona abi nato ang sa gawas nindot but mostly kanang mga seafares karon kung dugay na sa gawas mas nindot gyud diay ang pilipinas kaysa ilang kuan atoa man gong basihan saona gumikan pud sa atoaang pagka ignorante nga pagka foreigner nindot sa ilaha so mostly nindot man sa ilaha nindot man pud sa atoa so the level types of living ang gitawag bitaw natong cost of living so kung taas sila of cost of living kita mobo ug cost of living kung asa ka dapita nadestino kung unsa ka nga



nationality ang maanindot nga nakahibalo ko dili diay ta pobre nga nasud sila dato sila naay uban nga country mingon ka nga dato sila pero in the government type ra pud mostly ilang residential area pareha rasad sa atoa mao rapud nay akong nakita kung unsay different nationality sila pag abot sa ilaha kami feel man pud namo paborito man pud nila ang Filipino (IDI 4-2 SS47). (So, the different cultures refer to how our cultures vary. In my experience, when I was teaching, I noticed some good things. While in the Philippines, I worked inter-island after graduating from maritime school. Back then, we thought that working abroad would be better. But for most seafarers who have been abroad for a long time, the Philippines is better in some ways. Our ignorance influenced our previous assumptions, thinking that being a foreigner meant a better life. So, while things may be good abroad, they are also good here. We talk about different levels and types of living, what we call the "cost of living." In other countries, they have a high cost of living, while ours is lower. It depends on where you are assigned and what nationality you encounter. One good thing I learned is that we are not poor; they may be wealthy, but some countries that we think are rich only have a well-developed government sector. In terms of residential areas, theirs are often similar to ours. That's what I've observed when it comes to different nationalities. We also feel appreciated when we are with them because Filipinos are often favored).

Informant 7 expressed his thoughts on working with Arab colleagues, particularly during Ramadan, stating:

Sa mga Arabs, sa kanang kuan sa ilang ramadan ganahan ko aning mga tao nila kay sila dili sila mowork ug maayo dili lang kay pasagdan nila kami pud mga ratings at the same time ig human sa ilang ramadan mag party sad murag naganahan sad ko natymingan ba onboard (IDI 7-4 SS94). (Like the Arabs, especially during Ramadan, they work less during this time, keeping our ratings from behind. After Ramadan, they also celebrate with a party, which I enjoy. The timing always feels perfect when I'm onboard).

Likewise, Informant 9 eagerly shared his thoughts, as he said:

Sa akua sir nilambo gyud akoang personal growth nga nagkuyog kung laing lahi mahibaw an sad nimo ang ilang culture unsa always jud na sila magparemind nimo na always safety sa amoang trabaho safety first gyud ta naa mi gitawag every solod namos trabaho mag toolbox meeting gyud mi i discuss namo ang mga accidente nga angay i pa remind daan usa mi magtrabaho malikayan gyud ang mga aksidente (IDI 9-3 SS123). (My personal growth has developed through interacting with people from different cultures. They always remind us about the importance of safety in our work; safety comes first. Before we start our shifts, we have a toolbox meeting where we discuss any accidents and remind each other of the necessary precautions. This proactive approach helps us avoid accidents and ensures a safer working environment).

As revealed in the narratives of the informants, personal growth and cultural appreciation are deeply intertwined in a multicultural environment, where exposure to diverse traditions and perspectives fosters individual and collective development. By embracing and respecting cultural differences, we enhance our growth and contribute to building more harmonious and productive relationships in the workplace.

2. Positive Work Environment and Teamwork. A positive work environment and effective teamwork are essential for success in any multicultural setting, where collaboration and mutual respect among individuals from diverse backgrounds create a harmonious atmosphere. In such environments, fostering inclusivity, trust, and understanding leads to better performance, as team members support and learn from one another. As we explore these narratives, we will see how cultural diversity strengthens professional relationships and contributes to a more productive and equitable workplace.

When I asked the informants during the one-on-one interviews, Informant 2 gladly shared his experiences by saying:



The most rewarding is your ability to adapt in any kind of people you're working with because you will expect you will encounter the same when you will be back on board so you have now the ability to middle and adjust so you can work hand in hand in dealing with this crew regardless of race, nationality, character, religion (IDI 2-1 SS16).

Informant 2 further narrated that:

On board it is most important the results of every activity task responsibilities the most important thing is the respect giving you a quality results because a vessel is based on results quality wise as of now vessels are committed to be a right ship which the ,most important role is with the crew so in my part as the master if the crew has a negative response it would be a worst nightmare to everyone so if the crew positive response why because of respect it is the important thing on board respect (IDI 2-2 SS17).

Meanwhile, Informant 4 revealed some thoughts, when he said:

Sa mixed crew sir ang positive sa akoo mas maayo manang mix crew kay wala silay favoritism discrimination is part of the job but the most happened on onboard of the vessel is kana bitawng gitawag nila sa atoa ug barangay barangay mahitabo gyud na siya sa full crew pero pag mix crew wala gyud na siya so kung unsay based on the job part of the job the master is the overall command ug unsay kuan ni master mao gyud na siya wala nang hong hong sa mix crew so mao nay kalahian sa mix crew ug sa full crew so mao raman nay kuan nako sir sa pagpanarbaho nga mahimong positibo so kung gusto man gali mosakay sa mix crew dili lang ta mahadlok think postive lang ta kitang mga filipino angayan man pud ta molahi lahi (IDI 4-5 SS50). (The positive aspect for me in a mixed crew, sir, is that it's better to work with a mixed crew because there's no favoritism. Discrimination is part of the job, but what often happens onboard vessels is "barangay-barangay" (small group politics), which usually occurs in a whole crew. In a mixed crew, that doesn't happen. Everything is based on the job, and the master has the overall command; whatever the master decides, that's what goes. There's no whispering or side discussions in a mixed crew. That's the main difference between a mixed crew and a whole crew. So, that's what makes working positive. If anyone is interested in joining a mixed crew, there's no need to be afraid; stay positive. We Filipinos are capable of adapting to different situations).

Informant 9 said that:

Dako kaayo na siya nga tabang nga naa kay makauban laing lahi sa barko usa gyud ni ang good harmony ang pakikisama ra gyud sa isig ka crew nindot sad ni sila makasama sa ubang mga kuyug sa barko kay bali patas rana sila sa trato sa mga crew walay taas bali topong ra gyud mi tanan as in pamilya rami tanan (IDI 9-5 SS125). (It is a great help to have diverse companions on the ship; having good harmony and camaraderie among the crew is essential, and it's enjoyable to be with other crew members because everyone is treated equally, and we are all like family).

The narratives underscore the significance of fostering a positive work environment and teamwork in a multicultural setting. By embracing diversity, mutual respect, and a focus on shared goals, crew members can create an atmosphere of collaboration and harmony, ultimately enhancing both personal growth and the team's collective success. These experiences highlight the vital role of adaptability, respect, and open communication in building a workplace where all individuals can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

3. Professional Development and Recognition. Highlighting the significance of continuous growth and acknowledgment in a multicultural setting, the following narratives illustrate how professional development and recognition are cultivated through dedication, openness to feedback, and mutual support among colleagues.



Informant 8 expressed his thoughts about the recognition he received, he said:

Ang akoang na obtain nga positive experienced memorable to siya nga nakadawat kog award, as cabin steward they are meaning competition both supervisor so dapat iyang mga tao mga maayo pud makakuha ug compliment sa mga pasahero mao nang ang memorable nako didto nakakuha ko ug award and themn once nga mao lagi na mostly ang mga nanghandle ron ug mga dagko position ron didto mga indian once nakakuha nakag sympathy nila dont lose chance na mausab bitaw kay naa may uban bitaw modako ang ulo ba but for me i am always open for improvement eventhoug naa nakoy knowledge nga an acquire so positivity gihapon na siya nga batasan sa indian once o praise na sila nimo dako nanag points sa imo so imo lang nang e embrace once maganahan na nimo they will save you whatever complains sa imong area basta maayo lang pud ka nila (IDI 8-2 SS107). (The positive experience I obtained, which was memorable, was when I received an award as a cabin steward. There was competition between supervisors, so it was important for their team members to perform well and receive compliments from the passengers. That was memorable for me because I won an award. Additionally, most of those currently holding high positions are Indians, and once you gain their sympathy, don't miss the chance because it rarely comes again. Some people might let it get to their heads, but I remain open to improvement, even if I have already acquired knowledge. It's a positive trait among Indians that once you praise them, it earns you significant points. It would help if you embraced that, and once they like you, they will support you with any complaints in your area, as long as you treat them well).

Informant 5 emphasized the importance of diligence and responsibility, stating:

Usa ni ka aspeto naa man gyoy ubang lahi kung tan aw nila galisod kas imong trabaho they will teach you the correct procedures mao na ilang gikuan sa imoha nga ma positibo ka ba kinahanglan ang imong responsibility sa imong position imo gyong gampanan kanang imong trabaho gimahal gyud nimo ba they want to be diligent in your position on board mao manay pangetaon gud sa company para ma promote (IDI 5-5 SS65). (This is one aspect when they see you struggling with your work, they will teach you the correct procedures. They want you to be optimistic about it. Taking responsibility for your position and genuinely caring about your work is essential. They expect you to be diligent in your role onboard because that's what the company looks for to promote you.)

Informant 8 shared his experiences with Filipino colleagues, stating:

Sa part sa mga filipino actually akoang judgenment sa mga filipino kana bitawng kanang always drag you down katong sa other company pako sa AIDA ang mga Filipino didto they are trying to curse you something para mag improve ka in ana ka harsh sila ba dayon ang didto sa norwegian very diverse gyud kaayo sila but sa filipino naa rapud koy ma appreciate nga supervisor gi train gyud ko niya para dili ko ma left behind sa uban kay tan aw nila maayo man ko mo perform (IDI 8-4 SS109). (In my experience with Filipinos, they tend to have a habit of dragging you down. When I was in my previous company, AIDA, the Filipinos there harshly criticized me and pushed me to improve; that's how tough they were. In Norwegian, the environment was very diverse. Still, among the Filipinos, I did appreciate one supervisor who genuinely trained me so I wouldn't be left behind because they saw that I performed well).

Informant 8 reflected on his experiences during work inspections, noting:

Ang akoang na experienced sa work ra gihapon sir noh kung mag inspection sila kung naa silay something I correct sa akoo I think it in a positive way nga tana w nako nga okay na sa ako pero sa ilang judgement dili so naay uban once I correct sila ang tendency ana ma offend ka if you are willing to improve yourself thats the best way i correct kag tao para at least ma improve paka dili ko masakitan ana sometimes kining mga tawhana murag taas pa kaayo ug confident moana ko sir maybe you can go to my section ang check me because you are just passing by



check my work (IDI 8-3 SS108). (My experience at work has taught me that when they conduct inspections, I take it positively if they correct something about my work. It might be already okay, but in their judgment, it's not. Some people might get offended when corrected, but if you are willing to improve yourself, being corrected is the best way to grow. I don't get hurt by it. Sometimes, these individuals seem overly confident, so I tell them, "Sir, maybe you can come to my section and check my work because you are just passing by. Please take a closer look").

The narratives shared highlight the importance of professional development and recognition in creating a supportive and growth-oriented work environment. By embracing feedback, valuing diverse perspectives, and maintaining an open attitude toward improvement, individuals can advance in their careers and foster stronger relationships with colleagues from various cultural backgrounds. These experiences emphasize that recognition, whether through awards or constructive feedback, is crucial in motivating individuals and enhancing team dynamics in a multicultural setting.

B. Negative Experiences

The negative experiences shared by individuals shed light on the challenges and obstacles that hindered their personal and professional growth. In this section, we explored the themes that emerged from these experiences, focusing on the frustrations caused by cultural misunderstandings, difficult work environments, and barriers to professional advancement. These experiences not only reflected the struggles of navigating biases, communication barriers, and workplace conflicts but also highlighted the impact of inequities and lack of support on individuals' well-being and career development. As we examined the narratives, we gained a deeper understanding of the factors that contributed to these negative experiences and the ways in which they influenced personal and professional trajectories.

1. Frustrations with Cultural Misunderstandings. The theme reflects Filipino seamen's challenges when working with diverse crews aboard international vessels. Cultural differences, including variations in work practices, social norms, and communication styles, often lead to misunderstandings and frustrations. These challenges are further compounded by language barriers and differing cultural expectations, making it difficult for crew members to interact and cooperate effectively. The following narratives from the informants will shed light on their frustrations due to cultural misunderstandings, illustrating how these issues impacted their work experience and interpersonal relationships.

Informant 1 described his challenges adapting to cultural differences and work systems on board, as he said:

Diba sir ah kini nga pangutana na experienced ni nako during my wiper wiper experienced before kay kani laging bag o paka sa barko wala paka kahibaw unsay mga kultura nila didto unsay mga ilang sistema sa panarbaho the way sila mo approach sa imoha unya kani laging bag o paka dili paka kahibaw makisama sa ilaha diridiritso lang ka wala pa kaayo kay makat onan kaayo kato pong mga kauban nimo usually ako ratings ang uban ang mga engineer or opisyal other nationality na murag mgka misunderstand tungod sa kultura ba kay naay dili nila gusto nga trabaho kana nga kinaiyahan dili nila gusto tapos ikaw wala ka kahibaw mao nay usually problema ang kultura sa barko un aware ka ba sa nahitabo nga dili nila gusto for example lang manghimulsa ka dili nila gusto nga nanghimulsa ka mga in ana dili nila gusto mga common nga problema sir ba pero katong nahitabo lang kuan ng mao to man ka makaingon na masuko kay morespeto man sad sila pero kanang ma badlong lang ka ba mao na dili sila gusto ana dili man sad sila magdomot nga dili lang sila ganahan dili lang sad sila ganahan i approach lang ka nila dapat mao nato ma approach ka nila nga dili sila ganahan dapat ma aware lang ka ug imo kinahanglan nga mao nato dili nila gusto nga buhaton (IDI 1-7 SS7). (Isn't it true, sir, that this question is based on my experience as a wiper? When you're new on the ship, you don't know their cultures, work systems, or how they approach you. As a newcomer, you don't have much experience getting along with them. You dive straight into it without fully understanding how to interact with them. Usually, my fellow ratings were other engineers or officials from different nationalities, and sometimes misunderstandings arose due to cultural differences. There were things they didn't like to do or certain behaviors they



frowned upon, but you might not know them yet. This cultural gap is often a common problem on the ship. For example, if you make a move they disapprove of, they might not appreciate it. While they can get upset, they also respect you. It's just that they might not like it when you are reprimanded or called out for something they disapprove of. They won't hold a grudge; it's just that they prefer not to do certain things. Therefore, you must be aware of what they don't like and adjust your actions accordingly. It's important to recognize their boundaries and respect their preferences).

Informant 1 highlighted how cultural differences regarding drinking practices can affect group dynamics, noting:

Example siguro ah siguro sa uban nationality sir dili lang moistorya unsa nga nationality sir naay uban nga mga workaholic kaayo mga kusug kaayo moinom usually kana usa sa number one kusug kaayo moinom sa barko usually ang alcohol gilimit mana sa barko naa gyoy uban gyud moinom gyud dili malikayan pro gi minimum lang gihapon pero naa poy uban gtao dili gyud moinom dili nimo mapogos ba dili gyud nimo mapogos nga moadto ug party party mao na ang uban molayo nalang molahi nalang sa group para dili ma pressure nga naa didto mag inom sila moadto ka didto sa usa ka lugar nga nag inom sila dili man pwdi na moadto ka didto unya dili ka moinom murag usa sa problema na ma example aning cultural differences sir kay naa may uban cultura hilig kaayo moinom gihimo nilag culture ang pag inom apil sa ilang culture ang moinom naa say ubang tao ubang culture dili gyud moinom religious belief nila nga dili gyud moinom mao to murag ma conflict lang dili maingon mga mag away murag malahi lang sa group ba maseparate lang siya sa group pero okay raman gihapon himoan raman gihapon solution (IDI 1-8 SS8). (Perhaps, sir, some nationalities don't communicate about their preferences. Others are very much workaholics, and some drink a lot. Usually, drinking is one of the top activities on the ship. While alcohol is limited on board, some people do drink; it's unavoidable, but it's kept to a minimum. However, others don't drink, and you can't force them to join parties. This is why some individuals prefer to distance themselves from the group to avoid the pressure of drinking. They would rather go to another place where people are drinking because it's hard to be in a situation where you're surrounded by others who are drinking when you don't want to. This is one of the examples of cultural differences, sir because there are some cultures where drinking is a significant part of socializing; it's included in their cultural practices. On the other hand, there are people from other cultures who don't drink at all due to their religious beliefs. This can lead to some conflicts, but it's not like people will argue. They end up separating from the group. However, everything is still fine, and solutions can be found).

Informant 2 shared that discussions about principles, ideologies, and politics often lead to disagreements on the ship, emphasizing:

Principles, prinsipyo mostly diha mo mag ka as much as possible you have to avoid talking about ideas ideology politics principles in life baroganan because each everyone has perspective so you cannot change so mao manay makalalis sa barko tungod sa prinsipyo labi na mag istorya regarding sa culture beliefs principles in life diha na sila magka lalisay (IDI 2-9 SS24). (Principles, mostly, that's where disagreements tend to arise. As much as possible, you must avoid discussing ideas, ideologies, politics, and life principles because everyone has their perspectives that you cannot change. That often causes arguments on the ship, especially when discussing culture, beliefs, and life principles, where disagreements start).

Informant 3 explained that misunderstandings can arise when Indonesian colleagues observe Ramadan and pray in the afternoon without informing others, adding:

I guess one would, for example, when Indonesians have their Ramadan time of the year, Indonesians tend to have their prayer in the afternoon, and they don't advise us that they are going to do their prayer, and all of a sudden, other nationalities misunderstanding or that they



just missing or no one to work but the end it is just only acceptable as long as they just informed the managements their culture I guess it's just about communication (IDI 3-7 SS37).

According to Informant 9, cultural differences can often cause confusion, as actions that may appear as anger to one person could be viewed as normal by another, highlighting the importance of adapting and understanding diverse cultural perspectives, he said:

Dako kaayo ang epekto nga lain lain na usahay dili na siya masabtan or nagtoo ka nasuko na siya pero para niya normal lang pero para sa imoha mura nang nasuko pero wala ka kahibaw dili ka maka judge sa usa ka kultura nga tan aw nimo nasuko siya so para niya its normal lang pero mao nay gitawag nga lahi lahi gyud ang culture nag need nimo i adapt imo gyud siya sabton pag mayo (IDI 9-9 SS129). (The impact is significant because sometimes it becomes difficult to understand; you might think someone is angry, but for them, it's just normal. However, it seems they are upset for you, yet you don't realize that you cannot judge a culture based on your perception of anger. For them, it's just a normal reaction. This illustrates that cultures are different, and you need to adapt and truly understand them).

The experiences shared by the informants underscore the complexities and challenges of navigating cultural differences in a multicultural environment, particularly aboard ships where diverse nationalities work together. As highlighted, misunderstandings often arise from unfamiliarity with colleagues' cultural practices, such as work habits, religious observances, and social norms. These differences can lead to conflicts but can be mitigated through open communication, cultural awareness, and mutual respect. Understanding and adapting to these cultural nuances is essential for fostering a harmonious and productive work environment. Ultimately, while challenges are inevitable, solutions can be found through dialogue and a willingness to learn from one another's perspectives.

2. Challenging Work Environment and Conflict. In a challenging work environment, conflicts often arise from interpersonal dynamics, cultural differences, and issues of power and favoritism. Participants in the study highlighted various sources of tension, from opportunistic behavior and misunderstandings to clashes of pride between individuals of different nationalities. These conflicts can disrupt harmony within teams, affecting both morale and productivity. For instance, when workers feel taken advantage of or when supervisors exhibit favoritism, feelings of isolation and frustration emerge, particularly among those who perceive their efforts as undervalued. Cultural diversity also plays a significant role, as differing values and approaches to work can lead to disagreements, making teamwork more challenging. Despite these issues, many participants noted that with time and experience, they learn to adapt and understand differing perspectives, acknowledging that resolution often requires patience, compromise, and adherence to collective goals

Informant 2 discusses the challenge of dealing with difficult attitudes in the workplace and the difficulty of changing people's perspectives. As he explained:

There is only one problem that challenges all, likely the attitude, because sometimes you cannot change the attitude. One of our shortcomings in how to deal with these people is to change their perspective (IDI 2-6 SS21).

Furthermore, Informant 2 describes how opportunistic behavior, or taking advantage of others, often leads to misunderstandings and disrupts workplace harmony. He stated:

Only one thing taking advantage to each other opportunist people kung sa tagalog na kanang magulam that starts with misunderstanding kana bitawng gitawag natong gulangan that's the number one thing nga diha magsugod ang mis understanding so maguba ang harmony kay naa may buluyagon maro kaayo sa tanan what will happen ah hayahaya niya ah ngeta siya sayon na trabaho nya kami naa diri that is the example (IDI 2-7 SS22). (The main issue is when people start taking advantage of each other, those opportunistic individuals. In Tagalog, it's what we call "pang-gugulang." That's where misunderstandings begin, disrupting harmony



because there's always someone being crafty and sneaky. They get the easy tasks, while the rest are stuck with the hard work. That's a perfect example of how things go wrong).

Informant 4 explains how cultural differences and pride between a vessel's master and the chief engineer can lead to conflict, affecting the entire crew. He shared:

Mostly nahitabo ni siya sir is when the master of the vessel is different nationality naay mga time nga naay trabaho for example the master is european or dutch and the the chief engineer kay filipino naa man pud tay pride ug dili magkasinabot apektado tanan crew department kay mahog manang mag nilabanay kay ug dili magkasinabot si chief engineer nag command sa makina ang mahitabo ana sir ug dili magkasinabot naay time c master mangayo sa makina dili tagaan mao rasad nay na experienced nako but mostly sa pagkakaran sir tagsa nalang kaayo na mahitabo karon mahitabo na siya human error nalang pud (IDI 4-7 SS52). (This mostly happens when the vessel's master is of a different nationality. For example, if the master is European or Dutch and the chief engineer is Filipino, sometimes there is a clash of pride, and if they don't get along, the entire crew department is affected. It ends up causing divisions because if the chief engineer, who is in charge of the engine room, doesn't get along with the master, there are times when the master requests something from the engine room, and the chief engineer refuses to comply. That's what I've experienced. However, such incidents are rare nowadays, and if they do happen, they are usually due to human error).

Informant 4 reflects on the challenges of working in a multicultural environment, particularly the difficulty of following rules and systems from different nationalities on the ship. He explained:

Sa akoo sir taga makina taga makina man ko I am in the fitter position sa barko daghan kaayog mga lisod na trabaho mga technical sa amoa rapud pero ang mga lain nga cultura sir mga lain nga nationality ang gusto nila ilaha rapud ang masunod kana liosod kaayo na nga sistema nila so ang mahitabo ug gusto pud nimo ang imoha mag away gyud mo pero ang mga puti ang mga different nationalities diha lang ka believe pag ingon nga part of the job lang diha ra gyud mo kutob pagkahuman wala rana sa ilaha kitang mga filipino kahibaw naman ka nga hangtod gyud inig pauli dili gyud na mahimong maayo pa so sa palibot sa panaglahi sa mga cultura so kung ikaw naa kay mga rules nga mga rules nila nga gipakuan unya dili nimo gusto so wala tay mabuhay kay naa man tas barko so mao nang gitawag tag teamwork mosonod gyud ta ug unsay ilang pamaagi ug rules sa pinaka una sa pag pa implement palang nila lisod gyud siya sundon usa na siya sa pinakalisod atubangon pero for the meantime makuha raman nimo masabtan ra nimo sa dugay na makig uban nimo nila at least makarealize ra ghaon ka kung unsa gyud ang tama unsa gyud ang mali (IDI 4-9 SS54). (In my case, sir, I work in the engine room as a fitter, handling many complex technical tasks. However, other cultures and nationalities want their ways followed, creating a challenging environment. It can lead to conflicts if you want to assert your own methods. For the Europeans and other nationalities, they often see it as just part of the job and move on after an issue is resolved. But we Filipinos know that things don't permanently settle down when we return home; they linger in our minds. When different cultures surround you, if you encounter rules you disagree with, there's not much you can do since you're on the ship. This is where teamwork comes into play. We have to follow their methods and rules, which can be challenging. But over time, you can understand and adapt to them. Eventually, you'll realize what is truly right and what is wrong).

Informant 8 shares his experience of facing disciplinary actions at work due to favoritism and feeling isolated on the ship. He recounted:

Kanang sometimes matagan kag disciplinary action karon kay tungod naay something nga naay favoritism karon nga gamay lang kaayo na commit nimo nga mistake unya gi big deal ani nga supervisor dili gyud na nimo maiwasan sa barko pero ikaw ako hardworking kaayo ko ba dili ko gusto nga fade akoang work sa sa iyaha mangeta gyud ug paagi nga i drag down pud ka katong naa koy nakaaway nga supervisor na feel isolated gyud ko kay tungod akoy always



talk of the town naka ana ko pasaway nalang ba gyud ko everytime nga naay meeting i mention ang akoang sayop unya ang iyang instruction pud gihatag sa amoa sayop pud (IDI 8-8 SS113). (Sometimes, you might receive disciplinary action due to favoritism, especially for a small mistake that gets blown out of proportion by a supervisor. This is something you can't really avoid on a ship. I consider myself a hardworking person, and I don't want my work to fade into the background. However, it can feel like they're trying to drag you down. When I had a conflict with a supervisor, I felt isolated because I became the talk of the town. I felt like a troublemaker because every time there was a meeting, my mistakes were mentioned, even though the instructions given to us by that supervisor were also incorrect).

The challenging work environment aboard the ship is deeply influenced by interpersonal conflicts, cultural differences, and issues of favoritism, which can significantly impact team dynamics and individual morale. The participants' testimonies reveal their struggles, from dealing with misunderstandings and power imbalances to navigating conflicting cultural norms and expectations. While these challenges can be frustrating and isolating, they also offer personal growth and learning opportunities. Over time, many workers have realized the importance of patience, adaptability, and teamwork in overcoming these obstacles. By understanding and respecting diverse perspectives, they gradually develop a sense of what is truly right and wrong and how to collaborate effectively despite the differences. Resolving these conflicts requires a balanced approach, where mutual respect and shared goals become the foundation for smoother interactions and a more harmonious work environment.

3. Barriers to Professional Growth and Recognition. The theme of barriers to professional growth and recognition emerged from narratives describing challenges encountered in the maritime profession. These accounts illustrate the struggles faced by seafarers, such as bullying, favoritism, isolation, communication difficulties, and cultural misunderstandings, all of which can impede their career advancement and recognition. The following narratives provide a deeper understanding of these barriers and how they manifest in professional environments.

Informant 4 recounts experiencing bullying and feeling inadequate when first embarking on international voyages. The narrative emphasizes the challenge of adapting to new cultural norms and the pressure to learn quickly to avoid judgment. He said:

Katong pagsugod nakog sakay sa international mahitabo gyud na siya kana bitawng naa ka sa bullying stage syempre pag una nimong sabak dili paka familiar labi nag gikan kag inter island naa gyud na siya sa bullying stage nga naay mga part sa barko nahitabo nga dili ka kahibalo but kung interesado gyud ka sir na makahibalo makuha raman nimo sir pero moagi gyud ka aning magkalahi nga cultura but ang ubang lahi mangutana man sad nimo sa kauban nimong filipino asa ka gikan imong background so naay time nga makadungog ka imo nalang itago kay tungod man behind kaayo ka sa ilaha gipangbuhat pero usually mahitabo raman ni siya unang unang sakay ra gyud (IDI 4-8 SS53). (When I first started sailing internationally, going through a bullying stage was expected. Of course, when you're new onboard, especially if you've just come from inter-island trips, there's a stage where you might face bullying because you still need to become familiar with the tasks on the vessel. But if you're interested in learning, you can catch up. You do have to go through the experience of dealing with different cultures. Sometimes, other nationalities ask Filipino colleagues about your background and where you came from. Sometimes, you might overhear things that make you want to keep quiet, mainly because you feel behind in their actions. But usually, this only happens during your first few trips onboard).

Informant 8 describes being subjected to favoritism, where minor mistakes are exaggerated, leading to harsh disciplinary action. The narrative highlights conflict with superiors and the resulting feelings of isolation and anxiety about being targeted. He narrated:



Kanang sometimes matagan kag disciplinary action karon kay tungod naay something nga naay favoritism karon nga gamay lang kaayo na commit nimo nga mistake unya gi big deal ani nga supervisor dili gyud na nimo maiwasan sa barko pero ikaw ako hardworking kaayo ko ba dili ko gusto nga fade akoang work sa sa iyaha mangeta gyud ug paagi nga i drag down pud ka katong naa koy nakaaway nga supervisor na feel isolated gyud ko kay tungod akoy always talk of the town naka ana ko pasaway nalang ba gyud ko everytime nga naay meeting i-mention ang akoang sayop unya ang iyang instruction pud gihatag sa amoa sayop pud (IDI 8-8 SS113). Sometimes, you might receive disciplinary action due to favoritism, especially for a small mistake that gets blown out of proportion by a supervisor. This is something you can't really avoid on a ship. I consider myself a hardworking person, and I don't want my work to fade into the background. However, it can feel like they're trying to drag you down. When I had a conflict with a supervisor, I felt isolated because I became the talk of the town. I felt like a troublemaker because every time there was a meeting, my mistakes were mentioned, even though the instructions given to us by that supervisor were also incorrect).

Informant 9 shares feelings of isolation and self-doubt after being criticized for minor mistakes. The narrative underlines the psychological impact of constant criticism, leading to a desire for solitude and withdrawal:

Kanang I look down ka sa ubang lahi kana sang naa kay gamay kaayo nga sayop yawyawan naka nila maka feel sad ka ug kuan makahinoktok ka makahunahuna ka ug unsay imong nabuhat gusto nalang ka mag inusara (IDI 9-8 SS128). (It can be disheartening when you feel looked down upon by others, especially for minor mistakes. It makes you reflect on your actions and question your worth in the group. This kind of treatment can lead to feelings of isolation and make you want to withdraw from others. It's essential to remember that everyone makes mistakes, and it's crucial to foster an environment where support and understanding prevail instead of criticism).

Informant 8 discusses needing to be more recognized by long-established colleagues who display arrogance. The narrative points to the importance of communication in avoiding conflicts, especially amid cultural and language barriers:

Attitude na arrogant mostly kanang mga tao nga naka establish na sa company tan aw nila dugay na superior na kaayo ug dating unya ako bagohan lang I under estimate ko ba naa gyud koy na encounter ana indonesian siya unya bag o lang ko nisampa sometimes bitaw kanang communication wala pud magkahiusa tungod siguro busy ang communication ra gyud ana ang the best para at least walay conflict nga mahitabo (IDI 8-6 SS111). (Arrogance is often seen in people who have been established in the company for a long time; they tend to act superior, especially towards newcomers like me, leading to underestimation. I encountered an Indonesian colleague when I first joined, and sometimes communication wasn't aligned, probably because everyone was busy. Communication is the best way to ensure that no conflicts arise).

Informant 8 reflects on communication and cultural barriers when working with colleagues who lack basic job skills. The narrative conveys the frustration of dealing with misunderstandings and inefficiencies caused by language challenges:

When it comes sa nationality mo mention ko kaning Chinese kay didto sa NCL naka encounter naman ko naka train ko chinese nga fesh pajud ba fresh on board kaning mga chinese man gud ba mag pa feeling anga anga pero naa gud silay mga idea halos ikaw nalang motrabaho sa tanan ba pa victim kaayo pero at least ako gi try ako sila gikuan nga why you are here nga dapat nakabalo gyud ka ug unsay trabaho sa housekeeping you even didn't know the pillow case nga simple ra kaayo mismo sa imong panimalay naa na siya so ang pag explain pa gyud nimo dili pagyud kasabot imo nang gihatag tanan murag ma ughan nakag laway pero ikaw ra gihapon ang makuan mao nang communication barriers gyud most especially sa mga countries nga dili kaayo hanas sa english gyud (IDI 8-9 SS114). (Regarding nationality, I want to mention



the Chinese because, during my time at NCL, I encountered and trained with some fresh-on-board Chinese colleagues. They often act aloof, but they have ideas. However, it feels like you end up doing all the work while they play the victim. I tried to engage them by asking why they were there and emphasized that they should know their responsibilities in housekeeping. They needed to learn didn't something as simple as handling a pillowcase, which should be common knowledge at home. When you explain things to them, they still struggle to understand, which can be frustrating. It often feels like you're talking once you're hoarse, but the communication barriers persist, especially with people from countries that need to be more proficient in English).

These narratives underscore the multifaceted barriers to professional growth and recognition faced by seafarers. From bullying and favoritism to feelings of isolation and communication challenges, these accounts reveal the psychological and social hurdles that can impede career advancement. The experiences shared highlight the need for more inclusive, supportive, and well-communicated work environments where cultural differences are respected and misunderstandings are minimized. Addressing these barriers is crucial to fostering a more equitable and efficient professional atmosphere, enabling all crew members to thrive and gain the recognition they deserve.

IV. Coping with the Challenges Encountered on the Diverse Culture When Onboard International Vessel

Coping with the challenges has always been an essential part of personal and professional development. In this section, we examined how individuals navigated the obstacles they faced in their respective environments. The challenges encountered ranged from managing interpersonal relationships and fostering effective teamwork to handling stress in high-pressure situations. Cultural awareness and sensitivity also played a significant role in overcoming barriers, as did the support systems and resources available to them. By reflecting on these experiences, we gained a deeper understanding of how individuals successfully managed adversity, utilizing various strategies to foster resilience and maintain productivity. The following narratives provide insight into the methods used to cope with these challenges and the impact they had on both personal growth and professional achievement.

1. Navigating Interpersonal Relationships. In a ship's unique and high-pressure environment, crew members must skillfully navigate interpersonal relationships by fostering mutual respect, maintaining open communication, and building connections characterized by professionalism and approachability. This theme highlights the importance of balancing friendliness with respect, addressing misunderstandings effectively, and cultivating a supportive atmosphere that enhances collaboration and trust among diverse team members.

Informant 1 shares his perspective on handling the high-stress environment aboard the ship, emphasizing the importance of patience and respect in overcoming pressure from both the work and interpersonal dynamics. He explained:

Kani siya na pangutana sir usa ra gyoy answer ani niya kay sa barko motrabaho ta didto we work under pressure stress kaayo sa barko sa lagtod na pagkaistorya stressful kaayo dili ra ikaw nastress nastress imong kauban nastress imong superioir mao nang ang pinaka the best ani nga approach kay patience pasensya lang gyud sa tanang sitwasyon dapat mo pasemsya lang gyud ka kay sa barko ikaw na pressure ka sa imong trabaho unya ang imong superior sad mas na pressure sa trabaho dapat pasensya lang gyud permi sa tanang buhatonon ug respeto kay kita nagkalahi lahi na lugar naa tay problema sa barko naa tay problema sa panimalay ug yuta dapat lang gyud sa tanang buhaton nimo didto ug asa kaman mag trabaho sa engine ba o sa deck sa catering pasensya lang gyud kay mao nay pinaka secret sa barko pasensya ug respeto (IDI 1-11 SS11). (This question has only one answer because we work under pressure on the ship. It's stressful on the ship, to put it simply. Not only are you stressed, but your colleagues and superiors are also stressed. The best approach in this situation is patience. Patience is essential in every situation. On the ship, you feel pressured by your work, and your superiors are even more pressured. That's why patience is the key in everything you do. We come from different places, and we all have our own problems, whether on the ship or back



home. Whether you work in the engine room, on deck, or in catering, patience and respect are necessary in everything you do. These two, patience and respect, are the secrets to working on the ship).

Additionally, Informant 1 reflects on the importance of maintaining a balance between friendliness and respect in the workplace, particularly aboard the ship, where natural bonding with superiors and co-workers is necessary but should always be tempered with respect for boundaries. He described:

Routines and practices sir sa ako lang sa experince nako be friendly lang gyud dapat hingamigo lang ka pero dili gud ta kaingon amigohon nato kay superior naa lang moy gitawag na bonding sir ba natural bond dili sad ingon nga barkada lang mo dapat naa gihapoy gap kay mas superior man to nimo kay dili man sad pwdi na barkada lang mo didto sa barko naa man gyud nay leader meaning being polite and friendly pero dili too much dapat naa gihapon kay barrier dapat naay respeto sood tika nga amigo pero girespeto tika as a superior nako as co-workers nako naa man gyoy uban nga instances nga akong nakuan sood na kaayo mo na amigo murag nawala na ang respeto sir ba dapat amigo mo bootan kaayo ka njiya with respect gihapon dapat dili naka molapas ani nga boundaries dili naka mo joke ug nelow the belt nga joke dapat respeto being friendly with respect (IDI 1-12 SS12). (In my experience, it's important just to be friendly when it comes to routines and practices. You should make friends but can't treat everyone like your buddy, especially your superiors. There's something called natural bonding. It doesn't mean you act like best friends; there should still be a gap because they are your superiors. You can't just treat them like your peers on the ship; there has to be a leader. So, being polite and friendly is key, but only a little. You should still maintain a barrier and show respect. You can be close friends with them, but you should always respect them as your superior or co-worker. There are instances when you get too close, and the respect seems to disappear. Remember to stay within the boundaries—don't joke about things below the belt. It's about being friendly while still maintaining respect).

Informant 3 shares his approach as a manager in handling misunderstandings, emphasizing the importance of listening to both parties and addressing cultural and language differences to foster better communication. He explained:

As their manager, I usually call both parties and listen to both sides of the situation where those misunderstandings started and let them understand, as well. They have different cultures, which doesn't mean a person is meant to hurt someone, but both should understand their cultural differences and language barriers. I guess it's just about communication (IDI 3-11 SS41).

Informant 5 discusses his method of overcoming misunderstandings aboard the ship, highlighting the importance of humility, respect, and understanding in resolving conflicts, especially in a high-pressure work environment. He shared:

So atong buhaton ani sir para ma overcome nako ang misunderstanding sa barko magpakumbaba gyud ko permi sir in ana man gud kung motobag ka mosamot siya ug kasuko tan aw nimo nga sakto ka siya moy sayop sa pagka ngan na official nimo siya imo siya I respeto okay imo nalang siya sabton bisag sakit sa imong boot kahibaw niya tas pilipino mahadlok ta mawangtangan ug trabaho kay pwdi man ta balihon nila pwdi man ta tirahon sa reporting mao ra gyud mao ragyud ni akoang pag overcome sa misunderstanding sa barko (IDI 5-11 SS71). (To overcome misunderstandings on board, I always make it a point to remain humble. If you respond defensively, it makes them angrier, even if you know you're right and they're wrong in their position as your official. You must respect and try to understand them, even if it hurts your pride. Filipinos are often afraid of losing their jobs because they can easily replace us or criticize us in their reports. This is how I indeed overcame misunderstandings on the ship).



Informant 7 shares his approach to building rapport with others onboard, emphasizing the importance of being friendly, approachable, and respectful while maintaining a balance between friendliness and professionalism. He explained:

Akoang paagi kay be friendly lang gyd ka nila sa lain lain lahi ako smiling man ko nga person motagad sad gyud ko mo approach ka nila with greetings kay sila sad mismo ganahan mana sila I approach kay dili mana sila strikto pud imo ra gyud na silang e SRRR imo gyud silang himoon nga friend ba (IDI 7-12 SS102). (My approach is to be friendly with everyone, regardless of their background. I'm naturally a smiling person and make it a point to greet them. They appreciate it when I approach them; they're not strict, and treating them as friends helps build rapport. Addressing them respectfully as 'Sir' is important while fostering that friendly connection).

Navigating interpersonal relationships aboard a ship requires patience, respect, and understanding. As crew members work in high-pressure environments, remaining calm, empathetic, and professional is critical to building trust and maintaining positive interactions. Through friendly yet respectful communication, acknowledging cultural differences, and addressing misunderstandings with humility, individuals can foster an atmosphere where collaboration and mutual support thrive. Ultimately, these efforts contribute to a cohesive and effective team, ensuring a productive and harmonious work environment for everyone on board.

2. Teamwork and Collaboration. Effective teamwork and collaboration are essential for ensuring productivity and harmony on board a ship, especially given the diverse cultural backgrounds of crew members. This theme emphasizes the significance of mutual understanding, shared goals, and collective efforts to foster a cohesive work environment. By working together efficiently, crew members can enhance cultural understanding, build strong relationships, and create a supportive atmosphere that benefits everyone on board.

Informant 1 emphasizes the significance of teamwork aboard the ship, describing how it fosters unity, strengthens bonds among crew members, and leads to faster, more efficient work outcomes. He shared:

Teamwork sa barko sir importante kaayo siya it plays an important role kay ngano sa barko gud not necessarily nga mo trabaho ka ikaw ra usa either naa kay kauban or wala kay kauban I supervised ka sa supervisor nimo teamwork importante kaayo nis tanan kay didto magkahiusa mo mo grow mo as a group nga naay gitawag nga bond ba ang bonding ninyo ba mas mo expand pa ang inyong bonding sa barko mas magkasinabtanay pamo sa usag usa mas makaila ka niya mas makaila ka sa lain nimong kauban ug paspas sad mahuman ang trabaho basta naay teamwork a good teamwork paspas mahuman ang trabaho nindot ang outcome sa trabaho tapos magkasinabtanay pamo mas lalom pa imong masabtan sa kinabuhi sa usa ka tao sa naglahilahi nga nationality (IDI 1-14 SS14). (Teamwork on the ship is very important; it plays a crucial role. This is because, on the ship, you work with others; you might have a teammate or be supervised by your supervisor. Teamwork is essential because it brings people together, helps them grow as a group and creates a bond among the crew. The stronger your bond on the ship, the better you understand each other, and the more you get to know your fellow crew members. Good teamwork not only speeds up the work but also ensures a better outcome. It helps you understand the life experiences of people from different nationalities more deeply).

Informant 3 discusses the essence of teamwork, highlighting that true collaboration can only occur when each crew member understands one another and works toward a shared goal. He explained:

Teamwork does work, but you cannot call a team to work together if there is no team in the first place. So, from the beginning, every crew member should understand each other to work in harmony. They have one goal, and one is a different idea from the others, which is why we call a team. (IDI 3-14 SS44).



Informant 5 emphasizes the importance of teamwork aboard the ship, stressing that working together as a cohesive team, rather than individually, allows for faster task completion and better opportunities for rest. He shared:

Importante kaayo sa barko teamwork gyud motrabaho ta ipakita nato sa lain nga kultura nga kauban nato nga kitang mga pilipino motrabaho ta isip usa ka team dili kay individual dali raman kaayo kung motrabaho ta usa ka team kaysa one by one mas dali mahuman imo trabaho mas dali sad ka makapahuway (IDI 5-14 SS74). (Teamwork is essential on the ship. We must show our colleagues from different cultures that Filipinos work as a team, not as individuals. It's much easier to accomplish tasks when we work together as a team rather than one by one. This way, you can finish your work faster and have more time to rest).

Informant 6 highlights the vital role of teamwork in fostering unity, explaining that collaboration and team-building activities help bridge cultural differences and promote mutual respect among crew members. He shared:

Teamwork ang dunay dakong papel kay naghatag kini og pagkahiusa kanamo. Sa dihang magtinabangay ang tanan makita nga ang kultural nga panaglahi kay dili na babag, ang team building activities ug close collaboration nagpalig on sa relasyon ug naghatag og respeto sa lain laing kultura (IDI 6-14 SS89). (Teamwork plays a significant role because it brings us together. When everyone collaborates, cultural differences become less of a barrier. Team-building activities and close collaboration strengthen relationships and foster respect for different cultures).

Informant 9 emphasizes the importance of teamwork on the ship, noting that the diversity of cultures among crew members significantly influences the overall team dynamics. He expressed:

Dako kaayo nag tabang nga papel ang usa kanang teamwork labi nag naa ka sa barko kay lahi lahi man mog kultura dako kaayo nag impact sa usa ka kultura or teamwork (IDI 9-14 SS134). (Teamwork is vital, especially on a ship, because everyone comes from different cultures. This diversity has a significant impact on the culture of teamwork).

Teamwork and collaboration are vital for a ship's success and smooth operation, where crew members from diverse cultural backgrounds come together to achieve common goals. The crew fosters stronger relationships and greater cultural appreciation through effective communication, mutual understanding, and shared efforts. As the importance of teamwork is emphasized, it becomes clear that working together speeds up tasks, improves outcomes, and builds respect and unity among individuals from different nationalities. Ultimately, a cohesive team creates a supportive and efficient work environment that enhances productivity and personal connections.

3. Commitment to Responsibility and Effective Communication in the Workplace. In the maritime industry, a strong sense of responsibility and effective communication are essential in fostering a productive and safe work environment. Seafarers navigate challenging conditions that require diligence, integrity, and collaboration. Their commitment to fulfilling duties, regardless of supervision, ensures operational efficiency, while open communication helps prevent misunderstandings and mitigate workplace risks. The following accounts illustrate how seafarers uphold these values through their work ethic, patience, and colleague support, ultimately contributing to a cohesive and safety-conscious environment onboard.

Informant 5 discusses his strong sense of responsibility on the ship, stressing his commitment to work diligently, regardless of whether officials are present. He shared:

I will do my responsibility as best I as i can motrabaho ra gyud ko sir bisag walay motan-aw dihang official naay gabantay diha motrabaho ra gyud ko dili pareha anang uban nga bantayan ang official ug walay official relax pero naa gali official busy kaayo sa tanan dili ko in ana ang ako ra gyud trabahoon nako ang responsibilidad nga akong gidawat sa barko nga akong gitrabahoon (IDI 5-12 SS72). (I will do my responsibility to the best of my ability. I will work, sir, even if no officials are watching. When there is an official present, I will still work



diligently. It's not like others who only work when officials are around; they relax when there are none. But when an official is present, I am busy with everything. I don't operate that way. I will focus solely on the responsibilities I have accepted onboard the ship where I work).

Informant 6 highlights the importance of patience and open communication in preventing misunderstandings, emphasizing his efforts to clarify any unclear matters and ask questions for better mutual understanding:

Akong giplano ang pasensya ug open communication aron malikayan ang dili pagsinabtanay. Gipaningkamot mako nga klarohon ang mga dili masabtan ug mangutana ko aron mas magkasinabot mi (IDI 6-11 SS86). (I plan to exercise patience and open communication to avoid misunderstandings. I clarify anything unclear and ask questions to foster a better understanding).

Informant 10 emphasizes the importance of clear communication and understanding in the workplace, particularly in high-risk environments like the ship, where ensuring full comprehension of tasks before proceeding is crucial for safety and success.

Akoang ginabuhat like for example akoang kauban dili ko kasabot niya dili ko molakaw kung dili ko kasabot gyud balik balikon gyud nako bahala unsa toy imong gusto mao ni e for example nako or ipatodlo kay mas delikado kung molakaw man gud ka diritso unya wala ka kasabot ang trabaho sa barko everyday risky gyud it can always leads to accident man jud much better imo jud siyang balik balikon para masabtan gyud nimo para ang key man gyud ang communication Ninyo (IDI 10-11 SS146). (What I do, for example, is if I need help understanding my colleagues, I will only proceed if I grasp entirely what they want. I ask them to clarify, no matter how many times it takes. It's much more dangerous to move forward without understanding because the work on the ship is risky every day and can lead to accidents. It's much better to repeat and clarify until I fully understand, as communication is the key).

The experiences of the informants underscore the vital role of responsibility and effective communication in ensuring a well-functioning and safe maritime workplace. Their commitment to performing duties with integrity, fostering open dialogue, and supporting colleagues highlights the collaborative nature of seafaring. By prioritizing diligence and clear communication, they contribute to a work environment that promotes efficiency, teamwork, and safety, reinforcing the importance of these values in maritime operations.

4. Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity. Cultural awareness and sensitivity are crucial for fostering understanding and preventing conflicts in a multicultural work environment like a ship. This theme highlights the importance of recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of crew members, promoting inclusivity through training, and encouraging open communication. By enhancing cultural sensitivity, crew members can navigate cultural differences more effectively, leading to stronger relationships and a more harmonious work environment.

Informant 1 highlights the importance of GSF and BBS training in their company, which help crew members understand cultural differences and manage diverse behaviors on the ship. He said:

Sa akong na company sir naa mi duha ka training ipakuha ana basta bag o paka pero bisag old crew naka pa trainingon gihapon ka kanang gitawag nila GSF ug BBS sorry sir nakalimot ko tibook meaning sa GSF and BBS Behavioral Base Safety Training ang gsf training sir adto na i describe ug unsa nay mga kinaiyahan nila sa matag lahi lahi na nationality indian indonesian korean japanese russian kana tanan nakauban na nako didto sa training iistorya gid didto ug unsa y dili nila ganahan unsay mga tradition nila didto nga dili nimo dapat buhaton sa bbs sad adto didto mogawas ang imong pagka tudloan ka didto unsaon pag pasensyoso sa mga kinaiyahan didto sa barko tudloan ka nila unsaon pag cope sa mga problem sa diverse cultural differences sa pag overcome ana nga mga problema na ma encounter gid nimoo sa barko katong duha ka training ma gyud toy nagtabang nako nga ma overcome ang cultural differences sa barko (IDI 1-15 SS15). (In my company, two types of training are required when



you're new, but even as an old crew member, you still undergo this training. They are called GSF and BBS. I'm sorry, I forgot the meaning of GSF, but BBS stands for Behavioral Based Safety Training. During the GSF training, they explained the different behaviors of various nationalities like Indians, Indonesians, Koreans, Japanese, and Russians, all of whom I've worked with before. The training discusses what they like and don't like and their traditions that you should be mindful of. The BBS training focuses on teaching you how to be patient with people's behaviors on the ship and how to handle diverse cultural differences. They guide you on coping with the problems you may encounter on the ship. Those two training programs were crucial in helping me overcome cultural differences on board).

Informant 5 talked about personal safety and social responsibility are emphasized on the ship, with weekly safety meetings focusing on cultural differences. Crew members, including Filipinos and Russians, learn about each other's customs, improving mutual understanding. He said:

Personal safety and social responsibility we have that in our ship every Sunday we have a safety meaning I saysay ni nila namo e training mi ana nila sa barko ila man gyud ning trabaho nga I training ta about sa ibang culture kay ang atoang mga kauban lahi man ang kultura pananglitan kanang mga russians gi meeting mi ana nga mao ni ang mga differences sa mga russians sa ilang kultura ug unsay dili gusto ug gusto nila importante ana at least during your onboard time aware naka ug unsa na sila naa nakay knowledge so mao na sa kadugayon nga nag uban ang russian ug pilipino mag sinabtanay ra gyud sir kay kahibaw naman mi sa ilang kuan dili na sila masuko sa amoa normal rana sa ilaha ang pamalikas (IDI 5-15 SS75). (Personal safety and social responsibility are emphasized on our ship. Every Sunday, we have a safety meeting where we are trained about different cultures. Since our colleagues come from diverse backgrounds, like the Russians, we discuss the differences in their culture and what they like and dislike. It's essential to be aware of this during your time onboard so that you know about them. Over time, as Filipinos and Russians work together, we learn to understand each other better because we know how they are; they don't get angry with us. Using strong language is normal for them).

Informant 6 shared that he learned basic words from my colleagues' languages and joined in their activities on the ship to better understand and appreciate their culture. He said:

Nakat-on ko og pipila ka basic nga mga pulong gikan sa mga lingwahe sa akong mga kauban apil ko sa ilang mga activities nga ilang gibuhat sa barko aron mas maila ug mas ma appreciate ang ilang kultura (IDI 6-12 SS87). (I learned some introductory words from the languages of my colleagues and participated in the activities they organized on the ship to understand and appreciate their culture better).

Informant 6 mentioned that the company offers regular cultural sensitivity training, including CBT workshops on communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork. The ship has unlimited internet, and these sessions provide practical strategies and resources for understanding different cultures. He narrated:

Ang among kompanya nag provide ug regular nga cultural sensitivity training sama sa example CBT sa barko completo ang among CBT mga trainings nga naglakip ug workshops naa sad mi amenities sa barko bahin sa communication styles conflict resolution ug teamwork, Kani amoang barko unlimited internet pud mi completo ang akong barko nga ginaugan kini nga mga sesyon nanghatag ug awareness ug practical strategies aron malikayan ang mga isyu. Dunay usab mga online resources ug reading materials aron mas masabtan ang mga lain laing kultura (IDI 6-15 SS90). (Our company provides regular cultural sensitivity training, including CBT (Computer-Based Training) on the ship. Our CBT includes workshops and amenities related to communication styles, conflict resolution, and teamwork. My ship has unlimited internet; these sessions provide awareness and practical strategies to avoid issues. There are also online resources and reading materials to help people understand different cultures better).



Informant 9 mentioned that the company offered "seagull" training with a questionnaire to help communicate and understand different cultures, which was especially useful due to the many Koreans on board. He said:

Kana gitawag nilag seagull gitagaan mi nila ug questionnaire para mag answer mi didto sa ilang mga kultura adto rasad ka magbasi sa tanang pagkuan pag communicate sa ilang mga different culture dako kaayo na ug tabang sa amoa sir nga gitagaan mi ana nga training kay daghan mig mga koreano nga kuyug mabasa namo ilang mga kultura didto ma aware mi (IDI 9-15 SS135). (They call it a seagull; they provided us with a questionnaire to answer regarding their cultures. This helps us understand how to communicate with their different cultures. This training has been very helpful for us, sir, especially since we are often with many Koreans. We can read about their cultures there and become more aware).

Cultural awareness and sensitivity are essential in fostering understanding and preventing conflicts in a multicultural work environment like a ship. Crew members come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and recognizing and respecting these differences is critical to promoting inclusivity and cooperation. Various training programs, such as GSF (Global Safety Framework) and BBS (Behavioral Based Safety), equip crew members with knowledge about cultural behaviors and preferences, helping them navigate cultural differences more effectively. Crew members also learn about each other's cultural practices and values, improving communication and reducing misunderstandings. Engaging in cultural sensitivity training, understanding different communication styles, and participating in cultural activities strengthen relationships and contribute to a more harmonious work environment. By promoting awareness and offering practical strategies for handling cultural diversity, crew members can create a supportive and respectful atmosphere, ensuring smoother cooperation onboard despite cultural challenges.

5. Support Systems and Resources. A robust support system is vital for crew members to thrive in the challenging and diverse environment aboard a ship. This theme emphasizes the importance of guidance from experienced colleagues, the role of human resources in addressing concerns, and the availability of resources that facilitate effective communication and problem-solving. By providing access to mentorship, support networks, and clear channels for assistance, crew members are better equipped to navigate the complexities of their roles and maintain wellbeing in a high-pressure setting.

Informant 9 describes the importance of seeking support and remaining open-minded, particularly when receiving valuable advice from colleagues on the ship. He shared:

Ako nangayo rako ug supporta sa akoang mga kauban ako maminaw sa ilang mga tambag na maayo always lang gyud ko open minded basta naa lang gyud sa barko naa man gyoy uban nimong kauban nga motambag dapat maminaw ra gyud ka sa ilang tambag nga maayo nga para sad nimo (IDI 9-13 SS133). (I always seek support from my colleagues and listen to their excellent advice. I remain open-minded, especially on the ship, where colleagues always offer guidance. It would help if you listened to their valuable suggestions meant to help you).

Informant 3 highlights the crucial role of the HR manager in providing support, especially when dealing with crew members on board. He explained:

Seeking support apart from my senior manager the one that really helps through with it is our HR manager because on board we have an hr manager they are actually working he/she is not one sided but HR manager actually working for the crew HR manager is the closest person if we really need a support dealing with other crew members (IDI 3-13 SS43).

Informant 6 emphasizes the value of seeking advice from more experienced crew members and senior officers for better understanding and guidance. He shared:

Mangutana ko sa mga mas experienciadong crew unsa ilang mga tambag ilahang mga kasinatian makatabang kaayo sa among pag istoryahanay ug pagsinabtanay. Kung kinahanglan makig istorya ko sa management nga mga senior officers aron makuha ang ilang



panlantaw ug magiyahan ko (IDI 6-13 SS88). (I ask the more experienced crew for their advice; their experiences greatly help our discussions and understanding. I talk to the management's senior officers if needed to gain their insights and guidance).

Informant 8 discusses the importance of seeking support from superiors when dealing with stubborn colleagues, in hopes of finding effective solutions. He explained:

I seek support sa akoang mga superior pag once kaning mga kauban nako nga gahi na kaayo ba kumbaga ningdokot na gyud ba para at least sila nay mokoan ug solution na gyud ba (IDI 8-13 SS118). (I seek support from my superiors when I have colleagues who are very stubborn and difficult to deal with. By doing this, I hope to find solutions together with them).

Informant 10 emphasizes the importance of seeking guidance from more experienced senior crew members when faced with challenges or misunderstandings. He shared:

Ang imong kuan supportar always man gyud sa barko naa man gyud moy senior na crew mas karaan mas experienciado naa kay dili masabtan ayaw gyud kaulaw ug dool pangayo ug tambag unsay angay nimo buhaton unsay bo ot ipasabot kay kana sila mas nakabalo sila naay mga ubang crew taas na ug experienced simple nga kuan lang makasabot na dayon sila ug unsay boot ipasabot so much better gyud modool ka nila (IDI 10-13 SS148). (Your support on the ship is always essential, and there are senior crew members who are older and more experienced. If you need help understanding something, feel free to approach them and ask for advice on what you should do or what something means. They are often more knowledgeable, and other crew members with more experience can easily understand your message. So it's better to seek them out).

A robust support system is crucial for crew members to thrive in the challenging and diverse environment aboard a ship. This theme emphasizes the importance of seeking guidance from experienced colleagues, the role of Human Resources (HR) in addressing concerns, and the availability of resources that promote effective communication and problem-solving. Crew members actively seek support from each other, often relying on experienced colleagues and senior officers for advice and insights. Human resources, particularly the HR manager, play a key role in offering assistance, acting as a neutral party to mediate issues and support the crew. Access to mentorship and open communication channels, such as seeking guidance from superiors or senior crew members, enhances problem-solving and helps crew members navigate difficult situations. With the proper support, crew members are better equipped to manage the complexities of their roles, maintain wellbeing, and contribute to a positive and harmonious onboard environment.

Analysis of Data

In this study, I utilized Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis method to explore the rich qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. This approach offers a systematic and flexible framework for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within the data. It is particularly well-suited for capturing the depth and complexity of participants' experiences while allowing the researcher to remain actively engaged with the analytical process.

The analysis began with thoroughly familiarizing the data, involving repeated reading of the interview transcripts to immerse myself fully in the participants' narratives. This initial stage was crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of the context and nuances of the participants' experiences. During this phase, I noted significant details and emerging ideas that would guide the subsequent coding process.

Next, I systematically generated initial codes by examining the data line by line and identifying meaningful information units. These codes were then organized to capture critical features of the data relevant to the research questions. Throughout this coding phase, I remained reflexive, questioning my assumptions and ensuring that the codes accurately represented the participants' perspectives rather than imposing preconceived notions.



Once the initial coding was complete, I searched for themes. This step involved grouping related codes into potential themes and examining their relationships. I created thematic maps to visualize how these themes interlinked, refining them as necessary to ensure coherence and meaningfulness. During the review phase, I revisited the themes to confirm their relevance and robustness, considering whether they adequately captured the essence of the data set.

The themes were then defined and named, focusing on concisely and compellingly capturing each theme's essence. I wrote detailed descriptions for each theme, including the nuances and complexities that emerged from the participants' accounts. This stage also involved selecting vivid and representative excerpts from the data to illustrate each theme, ensuring that the participants' voices remained central to the analysis.

The final stage involved producing a comprehensive report that presented the themes in a coherent narrative contextualized within the existing literature and the theoretical frameworks guiding this study. The use of the method of Braun and Clarke (2006) allowed for a dynamic and reflective approach to thematic analysis, resulting in a nuanced understanding of the experiences of Filipino seafarers on international vessels.

The theories underpinning this research provided a critical lens for interpreting the findings. The Cultural Relativism theory of Boas (1911) emphasizes the importance of viewing the seafarers' experiences within their unique cultural contexts. The Socio-Cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) underscored the role of social interactions in shaping understanding, while the Ecological System theory of Bronfenbrenner (2005) illuminated how different environmental systems influenced the participants' experiences.

This systematic and reflexive approach to data analysis has yielded a set of themes that authentically represent the complex and multifaceted experiences of the participants, providing a foundation for meaningful and actionable insights grounded in verifiable data.

V. Experiences of the Informants on the Diverse Culture When Onboard International Vessel

A. Positive Experiences

1. **Personal Growth and Cultural Appreciation.** This theme highlights how exposure to diverse cultures fosters individual development and broadens global perspectives. Boas' Cultural Relativism emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural practices within their context rather than through an ethnocentric lens. This approach encourages individuals to appreciate cultural behaviors as meaningful within their unique cultural frameworks, promoting mutual respect and personal growth.

Socio-Cultural Theory underscores the role of social interactions in shaping cognitive and social development. Engaging with colleagues from different backgrounds allows individuals to improve their social and cultural skills, navigating diverse work ethics and communication styles. These intercultural exchanges are crucial to developing technical abilities and broader social competence.

This theme is also supported by the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1977), which emphasizes that individuals acquire behaviors, attitudes, and cultural norms through observation, imitation, and social interactions. When Filipino seafarers are exposed to diverse cultures onboard international vessels, they learn by observing and modeling culturally appropriate behaviors. Through vicarious learning and direct experiences, they develop a broader global perspective and refine their interpersonal skills, fostering personal growth in a multicultural environment.

This theme is also supported by Daniels (2017) when he said that multicultural crews have become a significant part of shipping. He emphasized that in many cases these crews are made up of many different cultures and nationalities. He explained further that being able to interact with others from different cultures and backgrounds is a high priority when working in this profession. He stressed that employees in this profession should have the skills to communicate in maritime English and follow safety regulations.



2. Positive Work Environment and Teamwork. This theme explores how a positive work environment and effective teamwork contribute to success in multicultural settings. Boas' (1911) Cultural Relativism emphasizes the importance of respecting cultural differences and adapting to diverse practices in the workplace. By appreciating these differences within their context, individuals can foster mutual respect, create a collaborative atmosphere, and improve team dynamics, promoting personal and collective growth.

Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory highlights how social interactions are integral to cognitive and social development. In multicultural teams, collaborating with colleagues from different backgrounds enhances communication skills, promotes understanding of various work ethics, and improves team cohesion. These intercultural exchanges enable individuals to navigate diverse perspectives, fostering teamwork and contributing to personal development in the workplace.

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Systems Theory provides a broader lens, explaining how different environmental systems, from immediate work settings to larger societal contexts, influence the dynamics of teamwork. These systems shape how individuals adapt to multicultural teams, communicate, and perform tasks, emphasizing the significance of a supportive environment in facilitating collaboration.

This theme is also supported by the Self-Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (1985), which highlights the role of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering a positive work environment and teamwork. When seafarers feel respected, valued, and connected with their colleagues in multicultural maritime settings, they develop a sense of belonging that enhances collaboration and overall job satisfaction. By acknowledging and adapting to cultural differences, individuals can strengthen team cohesion, improve communication, and contribute to a supportive and productive work environment.

This theme is supported by Progoulaki and Theotokas (2010), who emphasize the importance of managing culturally diverse maritime human resources as a core competency of shipping companies. They said extensive research has explored multinational crews' challenges in the shipping industry. These challenges primarily emerge at the managerial level, particularly in crew management strategies and company philosophies regarding multiculturalism. Practical human resource and cultural diversity management strategies are crucial to address these issues. By implementing these approaches, shipping companies can enhance the value of their workforce, foster collaboration, and create a more inclusive and efficient work environment.

3. Professional Development and Recognition. This theme emphasizes continuous growth and acknowledgment within multicultural environments, where professional development is cultivated through dedication, openness to feedback, and mutual support among colleagues. Boas' Cultural Relativism suggests that recognizing the value of different cultural practices and the importance of diverse approaches to work can enhance both personal and collective professional growth. Embracing this cultural diversity fosters an environment where learning and recognition are encouraged, motivating individuals to excel in their roles.

Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory stresses the role of social interactions in professional development. Constructive feedback and mentorship from colleagues, whether through praise or correction, facilitate skill development and the ability to adapt to various work environments. When individuals receive guidance from those with different cultural perspectives, they expand their abilities to work collaboratively, further enhancing their professional competence and fostering career advancement.

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Systems Theory explains how different environmental systems influence professional development and recognition. The immediate work environment, influenced by both organizational structures and societal expectations, plays a significant role in shaping individual career trajectories. Recognizing achievements within a diverse team setting fosters a sense of belonging. It encourages continuous improvement, reinforcing the interconnectedness of personal growth, cultural understanding, and environmental factors in a professional context.

This theme is supported by the Goal-Setting Theory of Locke and Latham (1990), which posits that clear, challenging, and attainable goals drive motivation, performance, and professional growth. In a multicultural maritime environment, seafarers who set career-oriented goals and embrace diverse work practices enhance



their competencies and adaptability. Recognition from peers and superiors further reinforces motivation, fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional excellence. By valuing different cultural perspectives, individuals contribute to a supportive environment where professional development is encouraged and rewarded.

This theme is supported by Terjesen et al. (2016), who highlight the challenge of attracting employees to the shipping industry while ensuring that workplaces are diverse and inclusive. Additionally, a significant challenge lies in educating those already in the industry about the benefits of diversity. Encouraging proactive engagement in diversity initiatives extends inclusivity across all business areas. Recognizing and prioritizing diversity fosters an environment where professional growth and recognition are actively promoted.

B. Negative Experiences

1. Frustrations with Cultural Misunderstandings. This theme reflects the challenges faced by Filipino seamen when working with diverse crews aboard international vessels. The difficulties arise from cultural differences, including variations in work practices, social norms, and communication styles, which often lead to misunderstandings and frustrations. Language barriers and differing cultural expectations further complicate interactions and cooperation, creating tension among crew members. Cultural Relativism of Boas (1911) highlights that understanding these cultural practices within their context, rather than through an ethnocentric lens, can reduce misunderstandings. The informants' experiences illustrate how cultural practices, such as differing work systems and social behaviors, lead to frustration when they are not fully understood or respected.

Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory stresses the importance of social interactions in cognitive and social development. In the context of the seamen's experiences, misunderstandings arise when individuals need help navigating their colleagues' diverse social norms and communication styles. These intercultural exchanges shape their understanding of workplace dynamics, emphasizing that the ability to adapt to various communication styles and cultural practices is vital for effective collaboration. The informants' frustrations often stem from the lack of clear communication and awareness of cultural boundaries, as seen in their accounts of misunderstandings around drinking practices, religious observances, and personal principles.

This theme is supported by the Attribution Theory of Heider (1958), which explains how individuals interpret and attribute causes to behaviors, often leading to misunderstandings in multicultural interactions. In the context of Filipino seafarers, cultural differences in work ethics, social norms, and communication styles may result in misattributions where actions are misperceived based on one's cultural framework. These attributional errors contribute to frustration and conflict, as crew members may assume harmful intent rather than recognizing cultural differences. Understanding how perceptions influence interactions can help mitigate tensions and improve cross-cultural cooperation.

Heslop et al. (2024) highlight that Filipino seafarers often experience communication challenges due to Filipinism, a blend of Filipino language and culture, in professional settings aboard international vessels. While this linguistic practice can foster camaraderie among Filipino crew members, it may lead to confusion and hinder effective communication with non-Filipino colleagues, especially in work-related contexts. To mitigate these challenges, seafarers employ strategies such as avoiding Filipinism in certain situations, paraphrasing, using body language, and improving English proficiency. These findings underscore the complexities arising from cultural and linguistic differences, which can lead to misunderstandings and frustrations among diverse crews.

Furthermore, Mejia (2021) found that Filipino seafarers often face challenges adapting to multicultural work environments, particularly regarding language barriers and cultural diversity. The study revealed that seafarers' confidence levels and interaction efficiency were negatively impacted by their lack of fluency in foreign languages and unfamiliarity with other cultural practices. These difficulties underscore the importance of cultural adaptation and the development of practical communication skills to mitigate misunderstandings and frustrations among diverse crew members.

Halid (2021) also notes that communication and language problems, including poor command of English, are commonly encountered among Filipino seafarers working in multicultural crews. These challenges can lead to



misunderstandings and frustrations, highlighting the need for improved language training and cultural sensitivity to enhance interpersonal relationships and cooperation on board.

2. Challenging Work Environment and Conflict. This theme underscores the complexities of navigating a challenging work environment where conflicts often arise from interpersonal dynamics, cultural differences, and power imbalances. The participants in the study highlighted various sources of tension, including opportunistic behavior, misunderstandings, and clashes of pride between individuals of different nationalities. Cultural Relativism of Boas (1911) suggests that cultural differences, including varying work practices and values, should be understood within their contexts to avoid judgment through an ethnocentric lens. The conflicts described, such as those stemming from cultural pride or misaligned expectations, reflect the difficulties in reconciling diverse perspectives without a shared understanding of the underlying cultural norms.

Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in shaping cognitive and social development. The conflicts described by the informants often emerge from the friction between individual identities and the collective environment aboard the ship. When workers fail to adjust to differing cultural attitudes or leadership styles, tension arises. Informant 2's experience with complex attitudes and the challenge of changing perspectives points to the importance of communication and social negotiation in resolving conflicts. Similarly, Informant 4's account of how cultural pride can affect relationships between the vessel's master and chief engineer aligns with Vygotsky's view that social dynamics shape behavior. It must be navigated carefully to maintain group harmony.

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems theory provides a broader lens to understand these interpersonal conflicts. As a confined and multicultural microcosm, the ship becomes a setting where various environmental systems interact. Informant 4's experience of following different nationalities' rules aboard the ship highlights the challenges of adapting to a new set of norms and authority structures. This finding reflects how broader environmental factors, such as leadership style and cultural diversity, shape individuals' behavior and their capacity to work together. The conflicts that arise due to favoritism, misunderstandings, and differing work practices are a product of these larger systems in motion, where the immediate environment (the ship) and broader societal contexts (national cultural norms) intersect.

This theme is supported by the Equity Theory of Adams (1965), which suggests that individuals assess fairness in workplace relationships based on perceived inputs and outcomes. In a multicultural maritime environment, seafarers may experience conflict when they perceive disparities in workload distribution, recognition, or treatment among crew members of different nationalities. Feelings of inequity can lead to tension, dissatisfaction, and reduced cooperation, exacerbating workplace challenges. Understanding these perceptions and fostering transparent, fair policies can help mitigate conflicts and create a more balanced and harmonious work environment.

This theme is supported by Inegöl and Yıldırım (2024) when they said that several factors contribute to conflicts arising from cultural differences among multinational crews on ships. Such conflicts include language barriers, differing cultural norms, and variations in work practices. These disparities often lead to misunderstandings and tensions among crew members, highlighting the need for effective conflict management strategies in multicultural maritime environments.

Similarly, Brett (2018) posits how cultural differences can lead to conflicts in the workplace, mainly when individuals from dignity, face, and honor cultures interact. These cultural variations influence conflict management styles, emotional expression, and the timing of third-party interventions, underscoring the complexity of navigating multicultural work environments.

3. Barriers to Professional Growth and Recognition. The theme of barriers to professional growth and recognition is illuminated through the challenges seafarers face in the maritime industry. Narratives highlight bullying, favoritism, isolation, communication difficulties, and cultural misunderstandings as significant obstacles that impede career advancement and recognition. These barriers represent broader issues within hierarchical and multicultural professional environments, as illustrated by the following accounts.



From the Cultural Relativism perspective of Boas (1911), the challenges faced by seafarers in adjusting to diverse cultural norms play a pivotal role in shaping their work experiences. Informant 4's account of navigating the "bullying stage" when starting international voyages reflects how cultural differences impact interpersonal dynamics. As newcomers are expected to adjust to unfamiliar tasks and cultural contexts, they often face judgment and exclusion from others. This experience demonstrates the role of cultural norms in shaping workplace behavior and illustrates how cultural misunderstanding can hinder professional development. Similarly, the experience of Informant 8 on favoritism reveals how hierarchical cultural expectations, often rooted in seniority, affect recognition and professional growth. The exaggeration of minor mistakes and their disproportionate consequences indicate a lack of equitable evaluation based on merit, influenced by cultural power structures aboard ships.

Applying Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory, these barriers also underscore how social interactions and the lack of supportive communication can limit opportunities for learning and growth. Informant 8's story of isolation and anxiety in the face of harsh disciplinary actions highlights the psychological impact of negative social feedback. Such treatment undermines confidence and perpetuates feelings of inadequacy, limiting the ability to engage in collaborative learning and development. Furthermore, Informant 9's account of isolation after minor mistakes emphasizes the importance of supportive feedback, which fosters a positive learning environment. Without this, seafarers may withdraw, hindering their professional growth and sense of belonging within the team.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Systems Theory, the more significant environmental factors, such as organizational structure, training, and communication, significantly impact career development. The challenges described by Informant 8 regarding communication barriers with colleagues from diverse backgrounds illustrate how systemic issues can hinder effective collaboration. Misunderstandings stemming from language and cultural differences create inefficiencies, as seen in Informant 8's frustration with colleagues who lacked basic job knowledge. These barriers reflect the broader systemic challenges seafarers working in multicultural and multinational teams face. Navigating these communication barriers is crucial for creating an inclusive, efficient work environment where all crew members can grow and be recognized.

This theme is supported by the Expectancy Theory by Vroom (1964), which posits that individuals are motivated when they believe their effort will lead to performance, and performance will result in desired outcomes such as recognition and career advancement. In the maritime industry, seafarers facing barriers like favoritism, bullying, and cultural misunderstandings may experience diminished motivation when they perceive that their efforts do not translate into fair opportunities for growth. This misalignment between effort, performance, and rewards can lead to disengagement and dissatisfaction. Addressing these structural and cultural barriers is essential to fostering an equitable and merit-based professional environment.

This study is supported by Österman and Boström (2022) when they said that workplace bullying and harassment are significant issues in the maritime industry, with reported prevalence rates ranging from 8% to 25% among all seafarers and over 50% among women. These negative behaviors create a hostile work environment, hindering career advancement and recognition.

Global Maritime Forum (2023) further highlights that seafarers face professional growth barriers due to isolation, demanding working conditions, and hierarchical structures, making them more susceptible to workplace bullying and discrimination.

Maritime Fairtrade (2021) emphasizes that favoritism and racial discrimination create an environment where certain nationalities face exclusion, limiting opportunities for career progression. These studies underscore the urgent need for effective policies and interventions to address workplace inequalities and foster a more inclusive maritime industry.

VI. Coping with the Challenges Encountered on the Diverse Culture When Onboard International Vessel

This arching theme describes the informants' strategies in coping the challenges encountered. There are five emergent themes belonging to this arching theme that encapsulate the informants' strategies in coping the challenges as a seaman onboard in international vessels.



1. Navigating Interpersonal Relationships. Aboard a ship, effective interpersonal relationships are built on mutual respect, open communication, and professionalism. Crew members must balance friendliness with respect, address misunderstandings with humility, and create a supportive environment that fosters collaboration and trust. In high-pressure maritime settings, patience and respect are essential in navigating the challenges of stress and diverse cultural backgrounds. These values align with Cultural Relativism, as they encourage crew members to understand and accept differing cultural practices and perspectives, ensuring smoother interactions in a multicultural environment.

Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning and development. By maintaining professionalism while forming personal connections, crew members create opportunities for mutual learning while respecting the hierarchical structure of the ship. This approach facilitates the exchange of knowledge and enhances collaboration.

Moreover, Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Systems Theory highlights how external systems, such as organizational culture and communication structures, impact interpersonal relationships. Handling misunderstandings with respect for cultural and language differences helps mitigate conflicts and fosters a more inclusive, effective team environment.

This theme is supported by the Interpersonal Relations Theory (Peplau, 1952), which emphasizes the importance of effective communication, mutual respect, and role clarity in building and maintaining positive relationships. In the maritime setting, crew members come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and navigating interpersonal relationships requires patience, adaptability, and professional boundaries. By fostering open communication and trust, seafarers can create a harmonious work environment, mitigating conflicts and enhancing teamwork despite cultural and situational challenges.

This study is supported by Suresh and Krithika (2023), who examined seafarers' efficacy in interpersonal communication and found practical communication skills are crucial for fostering mutual respect, open communication, and professionalism among crew members. Their research highlights that seafarers who develop strong interpersonal communication skills are better equipped to navigate the challenges of stress and diverse cultural backgrounds in high-pressure maritime settings. Similarly, Tavacioğlu et al. (2020) assessed the non-technical skills of bridge officers and emphasized the importance of interpersonal skills in promoting collaboration and trust among crew members. Their findings suggest that officers with well-developed interpersonal skills can effectively balance friendliness with respect and address misunderstandings with humility, contributing to a supportive environment aboard ships.

2. Teamwork and Collaboration. Effective teamwork and collaboration are crucial for ensuring smooth operations and fostering a harmonious work environment on board a ship. To build a cohesive and productive team, crew members must work together towards shared goals, respecting each other's cultural differences. By promoting mutual understanding and collective effort, crew members enhance work outcomes and interpersonal relationships, making the work environment more efficient and supportive. This concept aligns with Cultural Relativism, as it encourages understanding and respecting cultural differences to ensure that all crew members can work together harmoniously despite their diverse backgrounds.

From the perspective of Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory, teamwork becomes a tool for learning and development. As crew members collaborate, they share their skills and experiences, helping each other grow. Understanding and supporting one another is critical to creating a team where everyone contributes to the shared goal, facilitating individual and collective progress. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory also underscores the impact of broader environmental factors, such as the organizational structure and cultural diversity on board. Teamwork transcends individual tasks, with cultural differences influencing how collaboration occurs. By engaging in team-building activities and close collaboration, crew members create a work environment where diversity is embraced, ensuring everyone can work together effectively and with mutual respect.



This theme is supported by the Social Interdependence Theory (Deutsch, 1949), which posits that group members achieve better outcomes when they perceive their goals as interconnected and dependent on each other's contributions. Crew members must rely on teamwork and collaboration in the maritime setting to ensure safety, efficiency, and smooth operations. By fostering positive interdependence, where each member values and respects cultural differences, seafarers can enhance cooperation, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and create a more productive and supportive work environment.

This study is supported by the research of Bjørn and Ngwenyama (2009) when they said that team collaboration and found that building shared meaning and resolving misunderstandings are essential for effective teamwork, particularly in culturally diverse settings. Their findings suggest that promoting mutual understanding and collective effort enhances work outcomes and interpersonal relationships, leading to a more efficient and supportive work environment.

3. Commitment to Responsibility and Effective Communication in the Workplace. In the maritime industry, seafarers operate in dynamic, high-pressure environments where responsibility and communication are indispensable. Even without supervision, performing duties diligently reflects a strong internal work ethic rooted in personal accountability. Effective communication, on the other hand, is essential in minimizing misunderstandings, ensuring safety, and promoting cooperation among crew members. This theme highlights how seafarers demonstrate integrity, clarity, and mutual support to maintain a cohesive and safety-focused work environment onboard.

This theme aligns with Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1977), which emphasizes the role of self-regulation and observational learning in shaping behavior. Seafarers often internalize responsibility through modeled behavior and personal standards, performing tasks effectively without external oversight. Their proactive communication behaviors reflect self-efficacy and agency, showing that they believe in their capacity to contribute meaningfully to the team. In high-risk maritime settings, this self-driven responsibility is essential to ensuring operational safety and performance.

Moreover, the Theory of Communicative Action by Habermas (1984) supports the role of open, rational dialogue in creating mutual understanding in social systems. The seafarers' emphasis on clarification, active questioning, and feedback reflects their engagement in communicative action, where understanding is prioritized over coercion or mere compliance. This idea promotes a more democratic and respectful working environment, especially on culturally diverse ships.

This analysis is also reinforced by the Transactional Model of Communication of Barnlund (1917) which explains communication as a dynamic, continuous process of message exchange between individuals. The seafarers' emphasis on repeated clarification and patient communication to avoid errors or conflicts underlines the workplace interactions' reciprocal and adaptive nature. In settings where miscommunication can lead to accidents, the seafarers' insistence on mutual comprehension is both a safety mechanism and a relational strategy.

Samovar et al. (2010) also affirm that effective intercultural communication is critical in multicultural teams like those on international vessels. Their findings suggest that open communication, empathy, and patience foster understanding and trust among diverse crew members. Similarly, Hetherington et al. (2006) highlight that communication failures are a leading cause of maritime incidents, making responsibility and communication essential competencies in maritime professions.

4. Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity. In a multicultural work environment like a ship, cultural awareness and sensitivity are vital where crew members come from various cultural backgrounds. Recognizing and respecting these differences fosters understanding and cooperation and reduces conflict. The importance of training programs underscores the role of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, emphasizing learning through interaction and communication. These training programs help crew members understand cultural behaviors, preferences, and communication styles, creating an inclusive environment that promotes effective collaboration.



The crew's collective efforts to learn and appreciate diverse cultures also align with Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Systems Theory, highlighting how individual behaviors are shaped by the more extensive system, including cultural values and norms on board. Crew members navigate these cultural differences by participating in activities that promote cultural understanding, fostering stronger interpersonal relationships, and reducing potential stressors.

Furthermore, adopting these cultural sensitivity practices links to Cultural Relativism of Boas (1911) which encourages crew members to evaluate other cultures based on their norms rather than imposing their own beliefs. Through mutual respect and ongoing cultural education, the crew strengthens its ability to collaborate and work harmoniously in a diverse environment, ensuring a smooth and productive work atmosphere.

This theme is supported by the Cultural Dimensions Theory by Hofstede (1980), which explains how cultural values influence workplace behavior, communication, and collaboration. In the maritime setting, where crew members come from diverse cultural backgrounds, understanding differences in power distance, individualism versus collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance helps foster mutual respect and cooperation. By developing cultural awareness and sensitivity, seafarers can minimize conflicts, improve teamwork, and create a more inclusive and harmonious work environment.

This study is supported by Progoulaki and Theotokas (2010), who emphasize that cultural awareness and sensitivity are vital in multicultural work environments like ships, where crew members come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Recognizing and respecting these differences fosters understanding and cooperation, reducing conflict. Their research highlights the importance of training programs that help crew members understand cultural behaviors, preferences, and communication styles, creating an inclusive environment that promotes effective collaboration.

Verenikina (2010) also discusses sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) which emphasizes learning through interaction and communication. This theoretical framework underscores the role of training programs, such as the Global Safety Framework (GSF) and Behavioral Based Safety (BBS), in enhancing crew members' cultural awareness and sensitivity. By facilitating learning through social interaction, these programs contribute to a more inclusive and collaborative work environment aboard ships.

5. Support Systems and Resources. A robust support system is essential for crew members to thrive in the demanding and diverse environment aboard a ship. Crew members often face complex situations requiring experienced colleagues' guidance and effective communication channels. The presence of support networks, such as mentorship and human resources (HR), plays a significant role in helping crew members navigate these challenges. The Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner (2005) is relevant here, as it highlights the interconnectedness of individuals and their environments. Crew members rely on their immediate team and organizational resources to manage pressures and ensure a supportive work environment.

In line with Socio-Cultural Theory of Vygotsky (1978), seeking advice from more experienced colleagues and senior officers allows crew members to benefit from collective knowledge and problem-solving. This social learning dynamic helps individuals gain insights into handling difficult situations, improving overall performance. HR managers, acting as neutral parties, contribute by addressing interpersonal issues and maintaining harmony, ensuring crew members feel supported.

Additionally, Cultural Relativism of Boas (1911) is evident when crew members learn to adapt to diverse working styles and perspectives, furthering cooperation and understanding. By fostering an environment where mentorship, open communication, and problem-solving are prioritized, crew members are better equipped to handle the complexities of their roles, ultimately maintaining their wellbeing and contributing to a positive onboard culture.

This theme is supported by the Social Support Theory of Cobb (1976), which emphasizes the importance of emotional, informational, and instrumental support in helping individuals cope with challenges and stress. In the maritime setting, seafarers rely on support systems such as mentorship, peer assistance, and organizational resources to navigate the complexities of life at sea. Access to experienced colleagues, structured



communication channels, and HR support enhances wellbeing, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness, fostering a more resilient and collaborative workforce.

This study is supported by the work of Eler (2016), who emphasizes that mentoring programs are crucial in guiding individuals through complex environments, leading to tremendous success and professional development. In the maritime industry, mentorship is a vital support system, allowing experienced crew members to guide less experienced seafarers. Such programs foster a culture of continuous learning, improve decision-making, and help crew members adapt to the challenging and diverse conditions aboard a ship. Structured mentorship within human resources (HR) initiatives ensures seafarers receive the necessary support to navigate their careers effectively.

Additionally, the study by Hetherington et al. (2006) underscores the importance of effective communication channels and support networks in maritime operations. Their research highlights that ship safety and efficiency are directly influenced by crew members' ability to work cohesively, which is strengthened through structured support systems such as Maritime Resource Management (MRM) training. These programs equip crew members with essential communication strategies and teamwork skills, mitigating risks associated with high-pressure environments. By integrating mentorship and HR support, shipping companies can enhance their crew's wellbeing and professional growth, ultimately contributing to safer and more efficient maritime operations.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the lived experiences of Filipino seafarers working onboard international seagoing vessels with culturally diverse crews. Using a transcendental phenomenological approach, the research revealed that multicultural ship environments provide both opportunities and challenges for Filipino seafarers. Participants recognized the benefits of cultural diversity, such as learning new perspectives, developing adaptability, and strengthening teamwork through interaction with colleagues from different nationalities. At the same time, they also encountered difficulties related to language barriers, communication gaps, contrasting work attitudes, and misunderstandings rooted in cultural differences.

Despite these challenges, Filipino seafarers demonstrated resilience and professionalism through various coping strategies. These included practicing patience, showing respect for other cultures, improving communication skills, remaining adaptable, and prioritizing cooperation to maintain harmony onboard. Their experiences indicate that successful adjustment in multicultural maritime settings depends not only on technical competence but also on interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness.

The findings further suggest that cultural diversity, when properly managed, can become a strength rather than a barrier in maritime operations. Through appropriate training, inclusive leadership, and organizational support, multicultural crews can work effectively while promoting safety, wellbeing, and operational efficiency. Therefore, maritime institutions, shipping companies, and government agencies should continue strengthening programs related to intercultural communication, diversity management, and mental health support for seafarers.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on maritime workforce dynamics by giving voice to Filipino seafarers and highlighting the realities of working in globalized shipboard environments. It emphasizes that fostering mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration among culturally diverse crews is essential in building a safer, healthier, and more productive maritime industry.

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