



Navigating Leadership: A Narrative Inquiry into the People Management Skills of Chief Mariners

Nordy D. Siason, Jr.¹, Jomel B. Guintivano¹, G. L. John C. Haro¹, Edmer D. Bernardo^{1,*}, Armando S. Katalbas¹

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received 03 Sep 2025;
in revised form 21 Sep 2025;
accepted 13 Oct 2025.

Keywords:

Maritime leadership, Chief Mariners, Shipboard management, People management at sea, Seafaring narratives, Maritime education and training (MET), Leadership development in maritime contexts

© SEECMAR | All rights reserved

This narrative inquiry examined the people management skills of Chief Mariners aboard ships. Drawing on in-depth interviews with five Chief Mariners and other maritime professionals, the study explored how these leaders manage challenging situations, build a positive work environment, and motivate their crew for optimal performance within the unique constraints of a shipboard setting. The research highlights key skills, including effective communication, empowerment, conflict resolution, and decision-making under pressure. It also addresses the unique challenges of shipboard leadership, such as isolation, limited resources, and crew fatigue, and how Chief Mariners adapt their leadership styles to overcome them. Ultimately, this study offers valuable insights into the essential people management skills required for effective maritime leadership, providing lessons that can be applied to leadership in other dynamic environments. It also serves as a basis for developing curricula in related fields.

1. Introduction.

In an era of fast-paced dynamics, the maritime industry plays a critical role in the world. The necessities for global trade, the essentials of passenger transport, the mandate for national defense and more hold such industry among the crucial agencies to sustain its functions. It is equally important to note that the maritime industry is heavily dependent on the leadership and management skills of Chief Mariners. To emphasize, chief mariners play a crucial role in ensuring the proper management of crisis, emergency, and disaster situations at sea as there were a number of accidents that may be said to have had the “lack of leadership” as a contributory causative factor (MCA, 2014). The maritime industry succeeds through the competencies of Chief Mariners who bear the immense responsibility not just of navigating vast oceans, but also of safeguarding their crews and ensuring the smooth operation of their vessels. Chief

Mariners, often referred to as Masters, hold a pivotal position in the maritime industry, responsible for many aspects including the safety and well-being of crew, cargo, and the vessel itself. Jover (2019) mentions that as leaders they must have the capabilities to understand, influence, motivate, and direct their subordinates. As they set away from their homes and set to work aboard the ship for months up to a year, it is necessary for them to build a positive and healthy environment for all.

As a buzzword that is cast around a lot across industries, the concepts relative to leadership are critical for mariners as they make an effort to turn the potentially abstract concepts into very real traits and actions that not only help them succeed, but also keep themselves and their crew safe at sea. As the complexity of the maritime environment is constant, the leadership, communication, and decision-making skills of chief mariners are vital for ensuring smooth operations and navigation. Beyond technical expertise and nautical knowledge, effective leadership, communication, and people management skills are essential for Chief Mariners to navigate the complexities of their roles. Consequently, the maritime industry is in need of a deeper understanding of the people management skills required by Chief Mariners to effectively lead and manage diverse teams

¹Iloilo State University of Fisheries Science and Technology. Phillippines.

*Corresponding author: Edmer D. Bernardo. E-mail Address: ed-bernardo13@gmail.com.

in a dynamic and high-stakes environment.

Organizational success comes through people, and the most powerful influence on people is their direct manager. If managers, such as that of Chief Mariners, make use of critical skills and the environment is properly shaped, then the organization possesses powerful tools in order to achieve extraordinary results (Baldwin et al., 2008).

Theotokas, Lagoudis, and Kotsiopoulos (2014) underlined ship masters of ocean-going ships as team leaders and decision makers in charge of managing usually diverse teams that have to confront unexpected situations that might risk the life safety of crewmembers and the loss of the asset. They further underscored that despite the critical role of these personnel, research on the Masters' leading role is rather limited. Lack of relevant research becomes even more noticeable if one takes into account that the ocean-going ship as a productive unit and working environment is paralleled with the "total institution", i.e., an isolated, enclosed social system that controls aspects of its members' lives.

This paper probes into the lived experiences of Chief Mariners, exploring their unique challenges and successes in managing diverse crews and fostering a positive working environment onboard. By employing a Narrative Inquiry as a methodology, this study examined the personal stories and experiences of Chief Mariners, aiming to uncover valuable insights into their people management skills to ensure the safe and efficient operation of vessels. This research sought to address this gap in understanding the unique challenges and experiences faced by these leaders. In gaining a deeper understanding of their people management practices and the challenges they face, the implications for the development of a tailored master's program in Marine Management may be drawn.

1.1. Background and Context of the Study.

The maritime industry stands as a linchpin in the global economy, facilitating the movement of goods and connecting nations. Chief mariners, as leaders in this domain, play a pivotal role not only in navigating vessels through challenging waters but also in managing diverse teams effectively. While technical competencies have long been emphasized in maritime education, the need for robust people management skills in chief mariners is increasingly recognized. As maritime operations become more complex and globalized, understanding the intricacies of leadership in this context is imperative.

This research sought to explore the nuanced dimensions of leadership through a narrative inquiry lens, recognizing that the experiences and stories of chief mariners provide valuable insights into their people management skills. Traditional leadership paradigms often fall short in capturing the dynamic and context-dependent nature of leadership in the maritime sector. By employing a narrative approach, the study aimed to uncover the lived experiences of chief mariners, shedding light on their leadership styles, decision-making processes, and strategies for managing diverse teams in the ever-evolving maritime landscape.

The maritime industry's unique challenges, including long voyages, cultural diversity among crew members, and adher-

ence to stringent safety protocols, necessitate a leadership approach that goes beyond technical proficiency. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on leadership in specialized domains, offering practical insights that can inform leadership development programs and educational curricula for chief mariners.

1.2. Research and Focus Questions.

This study focused on the narratives of chief mariners regarding their experiences, including the challenges and other aspects as they hold relatively higher positions in their organizational structure. Deemed as top-level managers in their setting, their people management skills were analyzed through their narratives.

This also aimed to determine the practices of chief mariners in handling conflicts involving human relations and other ship-board related issues and problems. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences and stories of Chief Mariners in relation to their people management skills?
2. What are the key leadership, communication, and decision-making challenges faced by Chief Mariners in the maritime industry?
3. What implications can be drawn from the findings towards the development of a master's program for Marine Management?

2. Methodology.

As a qualitative methodology, narrative inquiry is the study of experience understood narratively. It is a way of thinking about, and studying, experience. Narrative inquirers think narratively about experience throughout inquiry (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Guided by this methodology, it is understood that commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place create a conceptual framework within which different kinds of field texts and different analyses can be used. As stories embody knowledge accumulated and experience gained over time, narrative inquiry is one way of making sense of that knowledge and experience (Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

In this study, the stories of five chief mariners were the main source of data. Semi-structured interviews with Chief Mariners were employed to gather in-depth insights into their lived experiences and perspectives on people management. Through this, the shaping of new theoretical understandings of people's experiences were fostered.

2.1. Participants.

The participants of this qualitative research consisted of chief mariners who are working in various shipping companies. The inclusion criteria for five (5) purposely selected participants included their holding of a chief mariner rank or its equivalent. These participants willingly shared their experiences as being top-level officers. Most of the questions led to their sharing of people management issues and concerns which are unique in their mode and setting of work.

2.2. Procedures of the Study.

After crafting the research framework, the researchers started to seek permission from chief mariners, either recommended or personally known. A written communication was sent through email or any accessible platform to gain consent for the relative purposes of the study. This cohort of marine professionals are in the master mariner ranks with licenses issued by the legitimate agencies. They have been in the position for more than three years, with on-going shipboard practice. This allowed for a productive and efficient gathering of relevant, rich, and thick responses to analyze for the people management skills employed. A semi-structured interview guide was utilized to direct the sharing of the respondents' personal stories. After the interviews, the responses were encoded for analysis. Themes were identified after identifying common features from the responses.

3. Results and Discussion.

This paper investigated the people management skills of Chief Mariners through their narratives. Through an in-depth analysis of the narratives shared by the participants, the discussion revolves around four themes such as: (1) Leadership Styles and Crew Performance; (2) Communication Challenges, Conflict Management and Strategies; (3) Decision-Making, Gender Issues, and other Dilemmas; and (4) Implications for Training and Development.

3.1. Leadership Styles and Crew Performance.

Commonly, leadership styles would be categorized into the Authoritarian, the Democratic, and the laissez faire styles. Taking the dynamics of the industry, there would be no one-size-fits-all strategy to be claimed as effective.

It was notable that the participants highlighted the importance of communicating with people (the crew) as an essential component of one's leadership style. Alongside communication, other people skills were mentioned, which led to resolution of conflicts, mentorship, and teambuilding. This was accentuated in the narrative of Ace:

The most crucial people management skills for a Chief Mariner include effective communication, conflict resolution, team building, and mentorship. Clear communication ensures that the crew understands expectations and procedures.

Conflict resolution is vital for maintaining a harmonious working environment. Team building fosters collaboration and boosts morale. Mentorship helps in guiding and developing the crew's skills.

Rol also shared that dealing with people means observing so that effective management is ensured. He mentioned that:

The most important skill would be "using your senses well".

When it comes to management. You are incharge with the people, with what they will be working, and their welfare as well. Use your senses in such a way that you use your "sight"- when giving job orders you must see to it if the job is

safe, checking possible risks and alleviating the possible risks found for the safety of the crew. Use your hearing to listen - to what the crew wants to share, to what the crew suggests, for a proper communication onboard.

Meanwhile, Jed specified how he exemplified people skills as he would believe it as an essential thing:

People Skills- Handling your crew well. Keeping their morale while dealing with your personal issues. You can develop this by leadership training, and working closely with a good mentor. That's what I have learned to develop over time.

Ram's narrative also affirmed the effective qualities towards dealing with the crew. He further underlined the need of recognizing the efforts of performing personnel as feedback.

I think all people management skills are essential. First, we need to trust our colleagues so that they will trust themselves and us too. Good communication is also very important especially since some nationalities hardly speak English. We need to be patient in dealing with them so that we can motivate them to do their duties and responsibilities. ... After all, we are accountable for what will be the result of our work. We need to be positive during troubleshooting so that we can find solutions to every problem we encounter technically. And most importantly, be honest and give credit to whom it is due.

The identified challenges revolve around managing individuals with diverse personalities. The respondents also expressed the difficulty of handling the deck department, emphasizing the need to issue job orders while ensuring the well-being of the team members. They suggested a need for a delicate balance between task-oriented leadership and a people-centric approach to ensure the team's overall success and satisfaction, underscoring the multifaceted nature of leadership, involving both task delegation and interpersonal dynamics.

The findings share the same implication with Zwell (2000) who said that managers play an increasingly important role to help people improve themselves, work together to satisfy the needs of others and at the same time greatly improve organizational performance.

Emotional challenges, safety challenges, management challenges, physical challenges, and mental challenges were also identified in the maritime leadership role. Examples included being away from family, the potential for safety and environmental risks, managing diverse and experienced crews, dealing with physical and mental stress, and making split-second decisions.

3.2. Communication Challenges, Conflict Management & Strategies.

Just as communication skills are highlighted as among the vital people management skills required of a chief mariner, the challenges in communication have been narrated by the respondents. They also shared strategies that they employed in specific scenarios.

As a small organization onboard, the chief officers are faced with the responsibility to deal with multi-personality and multi-national crew. Matt affirmed this reality and pointed out how flexibility counts.:

Working in an environment where I lead a group of people of varied ages, cultural and regional background, you have to be flexible in handling people based on prevailing circumstances.

Likewise, Clint's experience also agreed with the challenges imposed by diversity and added the needed adjustment in terms of age difference, especially because he was younger with most of his crew.

On the other hand, Rol's perspective of diversity on board scored out the call for one's temperament:

We all have different personalities onboard. Sometimes two different personalities clash, that's the time I try to talk to these people and say that if they want a harmonious and peaceful contract, they sometimes need to adjust and control themselves.

Communication challenges are often highlighted by conflicts of different perspectives. These have been shared by the respondents. Clint shared an example of a conflict and how good communication paved the resolution of such:

One example was when there was a fight between two of my crew and as the leader of the Deck department; I was tasked to resolve the conflict. Good communication skills are vital to address the problem. By seeking first to understand each of the two sides, I can clearly see what the root of the problem is. Communication skill is very important especially if you want to convey your message clearly.

Ace's experience is another conflict scenario where a leader had to work for resolution:

... we encountered a conflict among crew members regarding duty assignments and workload distribution. Tensions were escalating, impacting team morale and potentially jeopardizing our operation. ... I initiated a transparent dialogue, allowing each crew member to express their concerns. ... I then facilitated a team meeting to collectively address the issues and collaboratively devise a fair and efficient duty rotation. ...

Ram also shared his conflict scenario and elucidated how the communication barrier had to be fixed:

... a newly hired chief engineer came on board and I needed to teach him about our system and routine in the engine room without embarrassing him. I talked to him patiently and explained how our system works until he got familiar. Positively he absorbs and the outcome indeed we have a good working relationship and work as a team in our department.

The effect of questioning the weight of an officer's decision was shared by Gec. He also mentioned his way of fostering relationships among his crew.

Some older and much experienced crew were attempting to override my decision during cargo operation. I was 21 years old and the guys were 47, with 20 years of sea service. I became firm with my command, kept my composure, didn't created (create) drama, (I) just focused on the operation, (and) control (controlled) my temper. ... I made sure to do my job by building a good relationship with him. I made sure that I found ways to gain his respect and friendship. And it worked. ...

Rol's experience of a mental health concern on board underscored how he had to facilitate the conflict:

I had one crew member who had suffered a mental problem onboard during the pandemic — he became out of control and got wild and tried to hold us hostage...tried all the possible ways to control him. I listened to his problem, we let him talk to his family, we just let him talk what he wants to release. ... the last is I already scolded him since the two things we did is not working. ... I got no choice but to use force by strangling him and sending him to the port for proper medication.

From the officers' experiences of communication barriers and conflict resolution, certain strategies have been enumerated. These have been tested through their experiences overtime. As for Clint he enumerated the following strategies:

Positive influence by exhibiting integrity (matters). By being a person who walks the talk, you will earn the respect of your subordinates. Another is appreciation and good Compliments giving honest compliments and appreciation to every crewmember makes them feel they are valued. And in return, will be more cooperative and enthusiastic on every job they do. Finally, trust and respect (for) your crew. Don't think negatively about your crewmates. They can feel if you are being sincere or just faking it. ...

Meanwhile, Ace's narrative complemented the previous perspective when he said:

Effectively communicating with diverse teams involves active listening and utilizing various communication channels. Fostering collaboration and inclusivity is achieved through team-building activities, celebrating diversity, and recognizing individual strengths. By reinforcing the importance of inclusivity and addressing biases, I've found teams thrive in a supportive, diverse work environment.

Jed's narrative mentioned assimilation as his strategy to foster communication lines:

... the strategy that I have used more is assimilation. ... I work in an environment where I handle people of different age groups and cultural background. The company being Norwegian, it goes without saying that I have to as well handle Norwegian crew under me. The environment still worked effectively since all of us can relate to each other having been working in the company since the beginning of our careers.

On the other hand, Matt implied the requirement for professionalism despite the diversity onboard:

Cultural differences will be set aside if each one understands company policy, rules of the operation and navigation. These are the common languages every culture will understand.

Moreover, Ram suggested creativity as a vehicle to strategize for effective communication. He specified demonstration as a means of effective communication:

Honestly, there is always a communication conflict especially dealing with different nationalities and most of them hardly speak and understand English. But there are so many ways to communicate, if needed, we use sign language. If I have some job order for them to do so I demonstrate how to do it. I am always there to supervise them, work with them, if necessary, to collaborate with them so that in the end we have harmony and a good working environment.

The participants indicated that dealing with people of different nationalities poses a significant challenge on their people management skills, specifically on communication. To cope with such challenges, they used various communication methods, such as sign language and practical demonstrations, as they have noted that ensuring a successful communication is essential in fostering collaboration. This finding agrees with Hargie, Dickson and Tourish (1999) as they argued that managers or leaders have to communicate effectively with their superiors, subordinates, peers, and even people outside the organization in order for them to ensure work efficiency. Being able to do so will give them confidence in carrying out their other roles.

Such a premium on communication affirms Fukui (2007) as it included communication as one of the important components necessary for crew resource management. Furthermore, the need for collaboration, as indicated by the respondents, agrees with Lipman (2014) as he asserted that despite the difficulty of nurturing collaboration, it is essential in ensuring leadership success.

Moreover, the chief mariners also stressed the importance of listening to the crew, ensuring no one is left behind, and fostering an environment of inclusion.

3.3. Decision-Making, Gender Issues, and Other Dilemmas.

As it would be expected in any organization, chief mariners face dilemmas that challenge their decision-making. Consequently, the issues on gender considering the nature of the job to be male dominated are inevitable.

Clint's experience highlighted how the notion of male domination in such an environment:

In terms of gender-specific challenges, I have experienced some instances wherein I have, under my management, members of the LGBTQ. I can attest that sometimes, discrimination of the members of LGBTQ is common in the profession dominated by males.

Likewise, Ace shared the issues relative to gender when he mentioned:

While maritime roles historically have been male-dominated, the industry is evolving. I've observed gender-specific challenges, including stereotypes and limited representation. To address these issues, I've advocated for diversity and inclusion, promoting equal opportunities for all crew members. Initiating mentorship programs and workshops on gender awareness has contributed to a more inclusive culture.

The experiences of Jed in his life as a chief mariner point to the biases in gender manifesting in the field:

In my experience, I did have experience where gender specific challenges came into play. In this company we have female Norwegian and female Filipino crew. I should say that bound by our culture sometimes, we have the inclination to put females in high regard. And this work environment that is "designed" for males, I should say, sometimes there are biases. We don't let the females handle the hard work when they should also have the company's goal of gender equality.

Ram's story pointed to the role of policy in terms of setting gender sensitive concerns and other barriers in the workplace. On the contrary, his observation of promotion as affected by biases was noted:

So far, gender-specific challenges are not an issue for our company. The company policy is committed to treating all employees equally regardless of nationality, race, religion and belief, marital status, social origin, gender, physical disability, age, or sexual orientation. However, concerning promotion, there is often discrimination between Asian and European employees (crew). If there is an open position most likely European crew will be promoted first.

In the aforementioned, the conflict resolution skills of the chief mariners have been exemplified as they shared. A manager's role of checking on the gravity of the conflict and taking an action accordingly is shared by Clint:

As the leader of the deck department, my role is to be the assessor of the conflict first before, if not resolved, the Master will handle it. So far, no conflict has gone beyond my control. Most of the time, the common reason is misunderstanding and disregard of gender differences among crewmates.

Ace also shared of how he has facilitated an inclusive organization, contributing to the resolution of conflicts:

Creating an environment where all team members feel valued has positively impacted morale and teamwork. Diverse perspectives have enriched decision-making processes, fostering innovation. By actively addressing gender-specific challenges, I believe we contribute to a more equitable and successful maritime industry overall.

Ram's people skills towards conflict resolution was showcased by setting a good example in work attitude and professional dealings:

... I consider this a challenge, and I continue working hard to my full capacity and capability without complaining, until the time comes that they will realize that we are more suitable and qualified for that position. In this action, I also motivate and inspire lower rank and ratings to do the same so the team is working harmoniously and the organization is intact.

Jed's experience points to the process of establishing the change needed when it comes to issues and other conflicts:

... It took a while for the entire crew to handle this gender confrontation at first, but overtime it was overcome nonetheless...

The narratives of the respondents illustrated instances where people management skills were employed to resolve conflicts or facilitate a smooth onboarding process for a new team member. Approaches involve patient explanation, positive reinforcement, and a focus on building good working relationships.

Also, the stories of the respondents highlighted the power of decision-making in ensuring not only success but also organizational order. In relation to the previously identified theme on communication, the findings affirm Rees & Porter (2015) as they asserted that accuracy in decision-making depends, in particular, on effective communication. If the communication process is faulty, then everything else can be affected.

People management includes ethical obligations so as to meet the ends of employees and of the organization as whole. Mele (2014) asserted in his research that ethics are not only desirable for their contribution to management, but necessary for truly good management. Ethical failures are management problems, and ethical achievements are managerial achievements. Moral managers can foster cooperation and promote the moral motivation of employees beyond money and other extrinsic motives.

3.4. Implications for Training and Development.

Learning from experience, the respondents have shared what they would advise seafarers to reach the management level on board. Their narratives highlighted that practical execution of what theories contain remains the vital factor to be on the managerial level.

Jed shared how crucial it is to be a leader who exemplifies what is meant to lead people:

For aspiring officers in the maritime field, I would advise them to hone their skills through experience. Nothing beats the actual thing when you are in the field handling people than just listening to lectures in the classroom. Develop the sense of leadership with the welfare of your people in mind as well, not just the company you work for. When people see you to be on their side, everything else will follow.

Meanwhile, Ram argued that essential training starts at the grassroots — the maritime colleges or universities that initiate the formation of competent seafarers:

It starts with university/ maritime schools, they need to take it seriously. Global competition in the maritime industry is hard.

In the Philippines alone there are thousands of marine graduates every year. They need to be globally competitive when it comes to employment.

He likewise emphasized the value of training towards value-adding for skills, knowledge and attitude:

After being hired and when already onboard, be observant. Skills can be developed through experience. Be always willing to learn, and work with a heart. Love what you are doing. Do not work for money, just work hard at your best always... Aspiring mariners should possess the skills of being honest and patient. In proper time they will become chief mariners. They have to be positive, be accountable for their actions, and trust themselves...

The notions of Ace also pointed to significant skill sets that count in terms of developing one's management skills onboard:

For those aspiring to become a Chief Mariner, I recommend gaining diverse maritime experience, prioritizing continuous learning, and cultivating leadership skills. Exposure to various roles, staying informed about industry changes, and participating in relevant training contribute to a well-rounded skill set. Building a professional network offers valuable insights, while effective communication is crucial for leading a team. Embracing adaptability and focusing on safety are key components for success in this dynamic field. Aspiring Chief Mariners can build a strong foundation by combining these experiences and skills for a successful and impactful career in the maritime industry.

In addition, Matt highlighted the importance of non-stop desire for development in this field of work:

If you are a seafarer, you'll know this well: non stop training, upgrading, seminars. "Halos wala na kaming bakasyon kaka-training, kaka-seminar." (We almost deny ourselves of vacation for training and seminars.)

Moreover, Roll underlined the value of training coupled with a conscious mindset for being a leader by example:

My advice would be for them to be someone whom the crew would admire by showing good moral values and good leadership skills. It's not all about how many jobs you did for a day - and seeing that all your crew were all exhausted. But it's all about ending the day that you were able to accomplish a job and knowing that your crew were ok and satisfied as well.

Clint, aside from agreeing on the need for training, enumerated on values and attitudes that would translate to effective leadership:

You must develop a good character, self-confidence, initiative, leadership, teachability attitude, and to be willing to do more than you are paid for... you have to be proactive in every situation and learn every lesson from failures. As for the skills, you need to improve your communication skills, people skills, and goal-setting and planning skills.

The respondents highlighted a journey of professional development within the maritime industry. This reflects the importance of continuous learning and career advancement.

Staying updated with the latest developments in maritime affairs is crucial. Constable and Mc Cormick (1987) suggested that there seems to be a relationship between the level of education of managers and leaders and organizational success. In the same manner, Fisher and Gonzales (2013) recommended in their study that there is a growing importance of continued development of managers and leaders due to changes in the external environments in which organizations operate.

The respondents rely on official memoranda and actively seek additional training to maintain relevance in the rapidly changing industry. Others stayed updated with the latest developments in maritime affairs through social media, online resources, industry publications, webinars, and virtual forums. These emphasize the importance of continuous learning and staying informed to ensure leadership skills remain relevant and effective in the rapidly changing maritime industry.

Other proactive measures for staying up-to-date include post-graduate studies, land-based courses for maritime instructors and assessors, part-time instructorship in a maritime school, and administration of a large Facebook group for seafarers.

4. Conclusions.

In conclusion, the narrative inquiry into the people management skills of Chief Mariners has illuminated several critical aspects of leadership within the maritime industry. The identified challenges underscore the intricate nature of leadership, emphasizing the delicate balance required between task-oriented and people-centric approaches. Challenges such as managing diverse personalities, emotional stress, safety concerns, and ethical dilemmas all contribute to the multifaceted role that Chief Mariners undertake.

In addressing the research questions, the study provided rich insights into the lived experiences and stories of Chief Mariners, revealing key challenges in leadership, communication, and decision-making. These findings, in turn, have profound implications for the development of a master's program such as in Maritime Management or in Maritime Affairs. Subsequently, the results of this exploration provide valuable inputs for curriculum development for the related discipline. The emphasis on continuous learning, communication skills, and ethical leadership highlights the areas that should be prioritized in such a program, ensuring that future maritime leaders are equipped to navigate the complex challenges of the industry effectively.

The holistic exploration of the multifaceted nature of leadership in maritime contexts contributes not only to academic knowledge but also to the practical development of leaders within the industry, fostering resilience, adaptability, and effectiveness in the face of diverse challenges at sea.

Acknowledgements.

The researchers would like to extend their gratitude to the participants for their time and effort in sharing their experiences

of transactional distance in flexible educational situations. The research received no external funding. Hence, the author declares no conflict of interest.

References.

- Baldwin, T.T., Bommer, W.H., & Ruben, R.S. (2008) *Developing Management Skills*. New York: McGraw Hill Irwin.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Huber, J. (2010). *Narrative inquiry*. In Elsevier eBooks (pp. 436–441). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-044894-7.01387-7>.
- Constable, J., & Mc Cormick, R. (1987). *The Making of British Managers*. London: British Institute of Management and Confederation of British Industry.
- Eriksson, K., & Hanson, H. (2016). Leadership styles and crew performance in the maritime industry. *Journal of Maritime Research*, 13(1), 1-16.
- Fisher, E., & González, Y. S. (2013). The ABC Manager-How to Manage People More Effectively in Today's challenging and demanding work Environments. *Engineering Management Research*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.5539/emr.v2n1p67>.
- Fukui, K. (2007). CRM training in the Aviation company. *Medsafe.net*. Retrieved January 23, 2024, from <http://www.medsafe.net/contents/special/5jas.html>.
- Hargie, O., Dickson, D., & Tourist, D. (1999) *Communication in Management*. Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Gower.
- Laarni, M., & Kotilainen, J. (2021). Ethical decision - making in maritime emergencies: The role of situational awareness and risk assessment. *Maritime Policy & Management*, 48(3), 424-443.
- Lipman, V. (2014) 6 Tips for Managing People Who Are Hard To Manage, *Forbes*. Available from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2014/06/09/6-tips-formanaging-people-who-are-hard-to-manage/#37108467345f> [2 June 2018].
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). (2014). *Leading for safety. A practical guide for leaders in the Maritime Industry*. Retrieved February 12, 2024, from <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads>.
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). (2014). *Maritime leadership and management*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maritime-leadership-and-management>.
- Mele, D. (2014) *Management ethics: Placing ethics at the core of good management*. Place of publication not identified: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pelzer, B., De Klerk, P., & Bakker, A. B. (2019). Intercultural communication challenges onboard ships: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 48(2), 155-173.
- Rees, W. D. & Porter, C. (2015) *Skills of management and leadership: Managing people in organisations*. London: New York, NY.
- Zwell, M. (2000). *Creating A Culture of Competence*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.