Women merchant mariners: empowering West African women

Azirh Nicholine Tifuh
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WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY
Malmö, Sweden

WOMEN MERCHANT MARINERS:
EMPOWERING WEST AFRICAN WOMEN TO GO TO SEA

By
AZIRH NICHOLINE TIFUH
Ghana

A dissertation submitted to the World Maritime University in partial
Fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
In
MARITIME AFFAIRS
(MARITIME SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADMINISTRATION)

2014

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Declaration

I certify that all the material in this dissertation that is not my own work has been identified, and that no material is included for which a degree has previously been conferred on me.

The content of this dissertation reflect my own personal views, and are not necessarily endorsed by the University.

Signature: ........................................

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Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to all the distinguished individuals who helped me in completing this study. Though they are too many to mention, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation and humble recognition to a few who offered immeasurable support towards the preparation of this work. My first and foremost appreciation goes to God for bringing me this far. I know He will take me farther. I also thank my parents: Mr. Jonas Forteh and Mami Esther Angwi, for their parental guidance. Moreover, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BIZ) and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) for funding my studies at the World Maritime University (WMU).

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Momoko Kitada, my supervisor and advisor for her tremendous support, guidance and patience. If I have another opportunity to study under her for a higher degree, I will not hesitate. Moreover, I wish to thank Leonard Akoko, for his encouragement throughout my study period. I will forever be indebted to Captain Yogender Singh who advised me to conduct this research. Not forgetting my best friend at WMU, Esther Beveridge for her emotional support.

I dedicate this dissertation to all the young women seafarers from the Regional Maritime University (RMU) in Ghana. My sincere appreciation goes to all the women seafarers who provided useful information for this study. I will like to thank Lyndell Lundahl (Student service officer, WMU), Sue Jackson (Registrar, WMU) and Jones Addai-Marfo (Registrar, RMU) for providing information for the study. Moreover, my special thanks to the MSEA students and to all of the WMU student body for their diverse involvement in the successful completion of my research. I must also acknowledge the support and cooperation I had from all the staff of the WMU especially the librarians; Chris Hoebeke and Anna Volkova. Furthermore, I thank the authors and editors of the books, magazines and journals cited in this study.
Abstract

Title of Dissertation: **Women Merchant Mariners: Empowering West African Women to Go to Sea**

Degree: **MSc**

History and literature regarding women seafarers suggests that women represent about 2% of the world’s maritime workforce, with an insignificant number coming from Africa as a continent. As a result, the main aim of this research is to identify women seafarers’ challenges with respect to employment on-board ships and how to provide sufficient solutions to empower more women in West Africa to go to sea. A qualitative assessment was made through in-depth interviews with 10 women seafarers, 4 MET (Maritime Education and Training) institutions and 2 shipping companies.

Women seafarers were interviewed to identify the challenges they face in the male dominated world of seafaring and the reasons why they have chosen a seafaring career. Moreover, the training practices of MET institutions particularly, the RMU (Regional Maritime University) in Ghana with respect to the training of female students for seafaring were examined. This is because the research suggests that to enable more women in West Africa to go to sea, it must start by granting access for more female students to the seafaring courses at the RMU which is currently the only internationally recognised maritime institution in West and Central Africa that offers training for both male and female students in the seafaring careers.

The results were collated and analysed qualitatively. The findings revealed that the most significant challenge faced by West African women seafarers is the problem of recruitment and retention on-board ships due to the lack of national shipping companies and national gender equality legislations. Moreover, the percentage of female students enrolled in seafaring programmes at the RMU is insignificant and there is insufficient support to encourage more female students to take up these programmes.

The concluding chapter makes some suggestions as to how more women from West Africa can be empowered to choose seafaring careers as well as a suggestion for further research.

**Keywords:** Women Seafarers, Challenges, Training, Recruitment, Encouragement,
Table of Contents

Declaration ii
Acknowledgement iii
Abstract iv
Table of content v
List of Tables viii
List of Figures viii
List of Abbreviations ix

1 Introduction 1
1.1. Women Standing at the Helm 1
1.2. Shortage of Officers 3
1.3. Statement of the Problem 4
1.4. Objectives of the Study 5
1.5. Scope of the Study 5
1.6. Structure of the Study 6
1.7. Methodology 7
1.8. Limitations of the Study 10

2 Women Seafarer’s Experiences and Challenges 11
2.1. Introduction 11
2.2. Why a Seafaring Career? 11
   2.2.1. Family and Community Background 12
   2.2.2. Family Support and High Earning 12
2.3. Experiences and Challenges of Women Seafarers 12
   2.3.1. Access to Maritime Education and Training 13
   2.3.2. Access to Ships 14
   2.3.3. Acceptance On-board 14
   2.3.4. Recruitment and Promotion 15
   2.3.5. Sexual Harassment 16
   2.3.6. Menstruation and Maternity Leave 17
   2.3.8. Social Relationships 18
2.4. Summary 19
3 Women Seafarers – Their Stories
3.2. Background Information 20
3.3. Reasons for Choosing a Seafaring Career 24
3.4. Views on a Seafaring Career 25
3.5. Challenges Faced by Women Seafarers 27
3.6. Ways to Overcome Women Seafarers’ Challenges 33
3.7. Motivating other Women into the Seafaring Career 34
3.8. Measures/Policies to Empower West African Women to Go to Sea 36
3.9. Summary 37

4 Training Practices of Maritime Education and Training (MET) Institutions
4.1. Introduction 38
4.2. The RMU - Serving the Central and West African Regions 39
4.3. The SAMTRA – Best Practice from South Africa 43
4.4. What makes a Difference? Examining the Examples of SAMTRA and RMU 47
4.5. The WMU - Capacity Building around the World 49
4.6. Summary 53

5 Roles of Maritime Education and Training (MET) Institutions – How can they support women seafarers in West Africa?
5.1. Introduction 54
5.2. Data Analysis and Discussion 54
  5.2.1. The Case of the RMU 55
  5.2.2. Promotion of Women - The Case of WMU 62
5.3. Summary 65

6 Employment Practices and Prospects of Women Seafarers
6.1. Introduction 66
6.2. Negative Views and Practices 66
6.3. Positive Views and Practices 68
6.4. Examples of Recruiting Women Seafarers 69
6.5. Policies with Respect to employment of women On-board 70
6.6. Employment of West African Women 71
6.7. Summary 72
7 Conclusions and Recommendations
7.1. Women Seafarers in West Africa 73
7.2. MET Institutions – Opening Doors to Women 75
7.3. Shipping Companies (Employers) - Removing Prejudice for Women 76
7.4. Suggestion for Further Research 76
7.5. Recommendations 76

References 80

Appendices
Appendix 1 International Organizational Initiatives to Promote Women Seafarers 86
Appendix 2 The IMO Regional Women Support Network 91
Appendix 3 Research Access Letter 96
Appendix 4 Research Informed Consent Form 97
Appendix 5 Interview Guide 98
Appendix 6 Interview Quotes: Women Seafarers 101
Appendix 7 Interview Quotes: The Regional Maritime University (RMU) 103
Appendix 8 Interview Quotes: The World Maritime University (WMU) 104
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Background information on women seafarers’ respondents</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Social class of women seafarers’ respondents</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Age group of women seafarers’ respondents</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Gender distribution of Marine Engineering students</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>between 2003 and 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Gender distribution of Nautical Science students</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>between 2003 and 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Female students by African regions between 1987 and 2014</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>List of MET institutions interviewed</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>First African Female ship captain</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Social class of women seafarers respondents</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Age group of women seafarers’ respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Map showing the locations of the RMU, SAMTRA and WMU</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Cadets at the Regional Maritime University On parade</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Gender distributions of Marine Engineering students</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>between 2003-2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Gender distribution of Nautical Science students</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>between 2003-2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Pictures showing the logo and the building of SAMTRA</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>SAMTRA’s Cadets Training Administrative Service</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>South African’s All-Women Crew Ship</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>West African cadet on SAMSAs dedicated Training ship</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Pictures showing the WMU logo and building</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Female students’ representation at WMU between 1983-2014</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Female students by African regions between 1987 and 2014</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIMCO</td>
<td>Baltic and International Maritime Council</td>
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<td>CMI</td>
<td>Caribbean Maritime Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>COC</td>
<td>Certificate of Competency</td>
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<td>DCOMM</td>
<td>Department of Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETF</td>
<td>European Transport Worker's Federation</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>IMEC</td>
<td>International Maritime Employers’ Council</td>
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<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Maritime Organisation</td>
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<td>IMU</td>
<td>Indian Maritime University</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITF</td>
<td>International Transport Worker Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISF</td>
<td>International Shipping Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IWMS</td>
<td>Integration of women in the maritime sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>MET</td>
<td>Maritime Education and Training Institution</td>
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<td>MUS</td>
<td>Maritime University of Szczecin</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>RMU</td>
<td>Regional Maritime University</td>
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<td>SAMSA</td>
<td>South African Maritime Safety Authority</td>
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<td>SAMTRA</td>
<td>South African Maritime Training Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIRC</td>
<td>Seafarers International Research Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Secretariat of the Pacific Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRI</td>
<td>Seafarers’ Rights International Centre</td>
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<td>STCW</td>
<td>Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for seafarers</td>
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<td>WISTA</td>
<td>Women in Shipping and Trade Association</td>
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<td>WMU</td>
<td>World Maritime University</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Women Standing at the Helm

The sea has been regarded as a male domain for centuries. Some of the women who went to sea before the twentieth century sailed as the wives or mistresses of captains; others were smuggled on-board by seamen or officers (Cordingly, 2002). However, there has been an increasing trend of women seafarers on merchant ships indicating the entrance of more women to a traditionally male dominated profession. Starting from the twentieth century, more women have been employed on merchant ships, generally on cruise/passenger ships. However, these women do not generally work in the marine department of vessels where navigation or engineering operations take place but work mostly in the service sectors such as hotel and catering sections (Kitada, 2010). Research conducted by Wu (2005) revealed that women on cruise ships are underrepresented in ship-operational sections (deck, engine and radio departments) compared to the service sectors. Moreover, according to the Seafarers’ Rights International Centre for advancing the legal protection of Seafarers (SRI), about 1.5 million seafarers daily work on a worldwide fleet of over 100,000 ships that transport over 90% of world trade (SRI, 2013). Women seafarers represent a very small percentage of this figure. Furthermore, current statistics of the International Transport Workers Federation indicate that women make up only an estimated 2% of the world’s maritime workforce (ITF,n.d). In this figure, 94% of women are employed on passenger ships (with 68% on ferries and 26% on cruise ships) and 6% are employed on cargo vessels. 51.2% of women on cruise ships come from OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, 23.6% from Eastern Europe, 9.8% from Latin America and Africa, 13.7% from the Far East, and 1.7% from south Asia and the Middle East (Belcher et al., 2003).
 Despite these diverse estimates and figures, the presence of women seafarers remains largely invisible, as there have not been any regular surveys conducted to monitor women’s participation in shipping. Moreover, the above figures suggest that there are very few women seafarers in Africa, particularly in West Africa. Among the very few women in West Africa who rose to high ranks in the seafaring hierarchy is Captain Beatrice Vormawah (Figure 1), who became the first African female ship captain taking full command as master and sailing Ghana’s ships on international voyages (Capper's, 1996). As the first African female captain, Vormawah went through a lot of challenges during her cadetship including lack of facilities for women on-board. She had to work very hard in order to prove that she could do it. However, the barriers have now been broken for women to go to sea (IMO, n.d.).

Figure 1: First African Female Ship Captain
Source: Capper’s, 1996
1.2. Shortage of Officers

The Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) and the International Shipping Federation (ISF) manpower study provide a comprehensive evaluation of the worldwide demand and supply of merchant seafarers. The first study was carried out in 1990 and has been updated every five years. The latest study (the 2010 update) estimated the global supply of officers to be 624,000 and the global demand for officers to be 637,000, representing a shortage of 13,000 (2%) officers in 2010 and predicted an intensified shortage of officers by 2020. Moreover, the study indicated supply difficulties for current and future senior management level officers, particularly engineers in the Far East and Indian Sub-Continent, which are the main suppliers of seafarers. Further studies by the BIMCO/ISF emphasized a predicted shortage of 27,000 officers worldwide by the year 2015, while a current study anticipates a shortage of up to 83,900 even sooner (BIMCO & ISF, 2010). Furthermore, the European Commission (EC) predicted an estimated shortfall of 63,000 officer by 2015 in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries as compared to the shortfall of 45,000 in 2010 (EC, 2011).

When compared to the exceptional increase in orders for new build ships, which has been the situation since the 2004 boom in the shipping market, the shortage will only be aggravated. These increasingly sophisticated new ships must be manned by competent seafarers who are expected to operate them in a safe, secure and environmentally sound manner once they are delivered (IMO, ILO, BIMCO, & ISF, 2008). Due to these market forces and the associated shortage of ship officers, women seafarers have recently been attracting more attention than ever before to serve as a solution to the shortage of officers to operate the world’s fleet (Popescu & Varsami, 2010). Moreover, most shipping companies are encouraged to recruit more women due to this shortage of male seafarers (Sohyun, 2010). This is because the training of female cadets is considered an important approach to increase the number of qualified officers available to the shipping
industry and thus contributes towards resolving the present shortage of qualified seafarers. Furthermore, international bodies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) have developed initiatives to integrate women into the maritime sector and training opportunities to match women’s needs and requirements (Dragomir & Bătrînca, 2012). These international initiatives and the IMO’s regional support networks for maritime women are discussed in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively. The IMO’s regional support networks for maritime women are doing much to empower women in the maritime industry. These networks have provided a practical vehicle for local issues to be addressed by the regional groups (IMO, 2012a).

However, in spite of the IMO’s holistic approach of the Strategy on the Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector (IWMS), there has not been a programme developed which addresses both the need to build capacity and the requirement to raise the self-confidence of women seafarers who go to sea (IMO, 2012a). Specifically, there has not been any significant initiative to promote women seafarers from West Africa apart from the regional seminar for women maritime managers from West and Central Africa, which took place in November 2013. The seminar was conducted in French with 26 participants from Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia. Demand for this course has continued to grow over the past three years; however, there is insufficient funding to meet the demand (IMO, 2014b).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The main motivation for this research is that most women face discrimination in getting into seafaring jobs. For example, in some countries, Maritime Education and Training (MET) institutions are not allowed to recruit women for nautical courses. Women tend to enroll in engineering rather than navigational courses. Even once trained, they may have to face prejudice from ship owners who do not want to employ women (ITF, n.d). Taking myself as an example, it was my wish and desire to go to sea. After I graduated
from the Regional Maritime University (RMU) of Ghana in 2010 with a Bachelor degree in nautical science, I sent several applications to various shipping companies and my applications were all turned down with the reason that they do not have enough facilities onboard ships for women. This study seeks to identify women seafarers’ challenges with respect to employment onboard ships and ways to provide sufficient solutions for more women in West Africa to go to sea.

1.4. Objectives of the Study
The objectives of this research are to identify the challenges that West African women seafarers face with respect to recruitment on-board ships and further to find ways of overcoming these challenges so as to empower more women in West Africa to choose a seafaring career.

Irrespective of the recent economic trend drawing more attention to women seafarers, there is very little research about West African women’s experience of seafaring, which is why this study is important to create awareness and contribute new knowledge to this area of research. Moreover, the study would sensitize West African women to seafaring careers, reduce their negative perceptions, and encourage them to choose careers at sea, providing a solution to the workforce problem of the shipping industry. Furthermore, the study would provide information that will encourage shipping companies to employ more women in West Africa and MET institutions to offer scholarships for women, thereby creating more job opportunities for West African Women. In addition, the study would serve as a source of reference to others who might be interested in conducting research on the same topic or related topics.

1.5. Scope of the Study
Women can work on-board ships in different sections including as cooks, stewardesses, cleaners and hotel staff on passenger ships. However, this study focuses on getting more women in West Africa to take up positions in the operational sections of merchant
(cargo and passenger) ships such as cadets, officers/engineers and captains. Additionally, the study focuses on merchant ships and does not include military ships. It deals with ships sailing international voyages of more than 500 gross tonnage and does not include offshore or supply vessels. The reason for selecting these types of vessels is because the STCW (International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers) Convention requires a minimum of just twelve months of sea time on these types of ships to be qualified to take the third officer Certificate of Competency (COC) unlimited examination (IMO, 2010). However, it is a major challenge for most West African female deck cadets to gain employment on such ships in order to do their on-board training.

1.6. Structure of the Study
This study is organised into seven chapters. Chapter one presents the problem statement, the objectives, scope, structure and the methodology of the study. Chapter two considers the relevant literature on women seafarers by looking at some of the reasons why women choose a seafaring career and women seafarers’ experiences and challenges. Chapter three presents the analysis and discussions of women seafarers’ issues and the reasons why women choose seafaring careers. Chapter four examines the training practices of the RMU in Ghana, the South Africa Maritime Training Academy (SAMTRA) and the World Maritime University (WMU) in Sweden based on the relevant literature. Chapter five deals with data analysis and discussion of the RMU with respect to the training of women seafarers. Moreover, the training practices of the WMU with respect to West African female students are discussed. Chapter six examines the views and practices of employers (shipping companies) regarding the employment of women on-board ships.
Chapter seven as the final chapter concludes the findings gathered during the research. Moreover, it provides possible suggestions as to how more women from West Africa can be empowered to go to sea as well as suggestions for further research.

1.7. Methodology
This study employs the qualitative method of research, utilizing an in-depth interview approach in gathering data. The qualitative method of research is used because it allows the researcher to create rich, in-depth data (Oakley, 1981). Additionally, the population of women seafarers is very small, thus ruling out any possibility of a statistical analysis. Furthermore, quantitative research methods highlight the measurement and analysis of fundamental relationships between variables rather than the exploration of meaning and experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Quantitative research, therefore, is not particularly applicable to this study because the themes cannot be explored convincingly with quantitative methods.

In addition, in-depth interviews are considered appropriate for the research because they allow researchers to seek deeper information and knowledge on personal matters (Oakley, 1981). Moreover, they permit researchers to elicit people’s own accounts, meanings and interpretations as the interviewer is more passive in the role of a listener and the informant is more active as a speaker (Johnson, 2001). Moreover, according to Burgess (1982), in-depth interviews provide the chance for the researcher to search deeply, to disclose new clues to secure accurate, inclusive and vivid accounts that are based on personal experience and to open up new dimensions of a problem. Due to the nature of this research, qualitative methods, especially the in-depth face-to-face interview, could really count in feminist terms and generate useful knowledge (Maynard, 1994). Hence, it has become the paradigmatic ‘feminist method’ (Kelly, 1990). This research, therefore, uses in-depth interviews as a primary method.
**Area of Study**

Three study areas are selected for the research: Women seafarers, MET institutions and shipping companies. For MET institutions, the Regional Maritime University (RMU) in Ghana and the World Maritime University (WMU) in Sweden are selected. This is because the RMU is currently the only internationally recognised Maritime Training institution in West and Central Africa that trains both male and female students for seafaring careers, and therefore, supports the training of West African women seafarers. Additionally, the WMU is a postgraduate maritime university, established by the IMO to enhance the objectives of the IMO and its member states around the world (WMU, n.d.). As such, West African female students at WMU form part of a global network, and when they graduate, they go back to their various maritime administrations in West Africa. Hence, they will support West African women seafarers. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the following areas:

- Reasons why women choose seafaring careers.
- Factors acting as barriers for women to pursue seafaring careers.
- Policies or measures to encourage women to go to sea in West Africa.
- Training practices of the RMU with respect to the training of West African women for seafaring careers.
- Training practices of the World Maritime University with respect to female student’s enrollment, particularly West African female students.
- Views and practices of shipping companies in recruiting women for seafaring.

The study suggests that results from these areas will provide sufficient solutions to enable more women in West Africa to go to sea.

**Population and Sample Size**

The target population of the study is comprised of personnel from shipping companies, RMU, WMU and women seafarers, particularly from West Africa. Four sets of interviews were to be conducted with 30 interviewees from four study areas as follow: One set with 8 top managers of shipping and crewing companies; One set with 20
women seafarers; One set with the registrar of WMU; One set with the registrar of RMU. In all, 30 respondents were sampled for the study using an exploratory research method. Moreover, the sample of 30 was chosen because it will give an accurate basis of generation of information over the whole population.

Methods of Data Collection
The primary method employed in data collection for this project was in-depth audio-taped interviews. In addition, other methods such as telephone interviews and e-mail interviews were used as alternatives when necessary. Furthermore, my personal experience as a woman seafarer was used as a contributing source of data. The secondary sources of information were obtained predominantly from books, articles, journals and internet.

Pre-Testing of Instrument
In order to assess the clarity of the questions and to identify problems of ambiguity in the questions to be asked, a pilot interview was conducted with my WMU colleagues. In addition, a focus group consisting of some core student seafarers was formed to discuss the interviews. The answers and suggestions provided by the pre-testing helped to restructure some of the major questions asked during the interview.

Data Analysis
The data gathered during the interviews was analysed qualitatively. The data were transcribed and grouped under the subheadings in which the interview questions were designed and analysed based on the study areas. For this purpose, the transcribed data was grouped into three distinct parts (women seafarers, MET institutions and shipping companies) corresponding to the study areas and analysed after coding manually using the organising principle for qualitative coding as described by Babbie (2001). A total of 16 interviews (10 with women seafarers, 4 with MET institutions and 2 with shipping companies) were conducted and analysed out of a targeted number of 30 due to difficulties and time constraints. In analysing and discussing the findings gathered, the
study gave priority to the words of the interviewees in an effort to allow issues important to them to appear and to be fully reflected.

1.8. Limitations of the Study
The study could not reach out to women seafarers from all West African countries because of unavailability of these women together with the reason that there are very few women seafarers in West Africa. However, the information gathered from the few women seafarers in West African was sufficient for this study to come to meaningful conclusions and recommendations. Moreover, due to time constraints, the study could not interview any shipping company officials from West Africa, as only two Turkish shipping companies were interviewed and they do not trade in African waters.
Chapter 2

Women Seafarer’s Experiences and Challenges

2.1. Introduction

Gender equality is receiving more attention today as the twenty-year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration is approaching in 2015. The challenges of gaining human progress, respect and recognition of human rights remain today. Examples of problems relating to gender equality can also be found in the maritime sector. In a specific area like the maritime sector, equal opportunity has always been an issue due to the differences that occur among enrolments per gender at maritime institutions (Magamo & Eler, 2012). Over the years, women have often been under the mistaken impression that the maritime business is unsuitable for them. Men were, for ages, the ones involved in and controlling the maritime professions and thus, there has been limited access for women to this area (Dragomir & Surugiu, 2013). Furthermore, there may be some cultural resistance to women working outside the home; nevertheless, one of the main oppositions to the employment of women at sea seems to centre on the absence of adequate separate facilities for women on-board and severe physical requirements (Popescu & Varsami, 2010). Indeed, few women seafarers have been hired onboard ships, and those who have made it to the top have tended to endure considerable challenges and discrimination from male colleagues as well as from shipping companies during the recruitment processes. This chapter focuses on the accounts of why women choose seafaring careers, their experiences and challenges.

2.2. Why a Seafaring Career?

The following section looks at the reasons why women choose careers at sea despite the challenges often associated with seafaring occupations.
2.2.1. Family and Community Background
Most women who choose careers at sea come from seafaring backgrounds. According to a study conducted by Zhao (1998) on women seafarers in Germany and the UK, most women who choose a career at sea come from a community or family with a strong seafaring background. Additionally, according to Belcher et al. (2003), a majority of the women seafarers come from areas of strong seafaring tradition including Philippines, Sweden, Germany and the UK. Women seafarers from such countries refer to the sea as being a part of their life and local culture.

2.2.2. Family Support and High Earning
One of the main reasons why women choose careers at sea is for the attractive salary because, as a principle, there is no pay gaps between women and men at sea. Moreover, women from developing countries including India and the Philippines are motivated to go to sea for the opportunity to save more money in “hard currency”. Furthermore, high inflation and poor job opportunities as well as the financial needs of the family have led more women in developing countries to choose careers at sea. In contrast, women from developed countries including Sweden and Germany seem not to be motivated by finance. Although they are generally employed in higher ranks on-board the ship, some received wages that were lower than what they would expect to earn in shore-based jobs. For these women, the main attraction of the seafaring job is the opportunity to see and visit other places (Belcher et al., 2003). Additionally, some women choose careers at sea because they are motivated when they see other seafaring women in uniform and want to become like them. Other women find seafaring fascinating and their passion about the sea brought them to work as seafarers (Sohyun, 2010).

2.3. Experiences and Challenges of Women Seafarers
It is essential to look at the experiences of women who are already established in seafaring careers and identify some common issues. Women seafarer’s explanations highlighted a number of difficulties that they faced in their pursuit of a career at sea. The
following section looks at their experiences and challenges during their quest for a career at sea.

2.3.1. Access to Maritime Education and Training

One of the major constraints for educated females is the fact that in most developing countries a girl child is often refused access even to a basic education. As a result, only a few women are qualified to enrol in secondary and technical colleges in order to be able to make it into the higher levels like the maritime universities (Aggrey, 2000).

Until the late 1970s, some women seafarer’s problems started with difficulties gaining places in maritime colleges. This view is supported by the ITF (2012) who reported that in some countries in the past, maritime education and training institutions did not allow the recruitment of women to seafaring courses. For instance, on the sub-continent of India with 31 marine training institutions and a huge supply of labour, it was not permitted by central government legislation to recruit women into nautical courses. During those days, women tended to enrol in engineering courses instead of navigational courses (ITF, 2003). Furthermore, of the seventeen maritime training institutions surveyed in the study conducted by the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC), only four had an equal opportunity policy for the admission of women. Moreover, only 10 percent of the 6,518 students who were being trained to work at sea were females and only 3 percent were engineers. The rest of the female students tended to enrol in nautical courses instead of engineering courses. This was because most college staff believed that marine engineering was not a suitable subject for women due to the hot and dirty engine room working conditions. The engine room was also found to be a place where a woman can easily be abused sexually (Belcher et al., 2003).

In addition, some institutions obliged women students to do extra study modules, mainly to prepare them for shore-based jobs. However, these mandatory subjects for women were very expensive and cost twice as much as the normal maritime training fee. This showed another form of discrimination against women by maritime education and
training (MET) institutions (ITF, 2003). Conversely, according to Belcher et al. (2003), such barriers are less likely to be reported by women who had started their maritime careers more recently as access for women into MET institutions seems to be encouraged in countries such as Germany, Ghana and Singapore. Moreover, the situation in India has improved today, as more women are encouraged through scholarships to enrol in seafaring courses at the Indian Maritime University (IMU) (IMU, n.d.).

2.3.2. Access to Ships
Even after graduating from a maritime university, most women encountered difficulties in finding ships to sail on in order to complete their training as cadets (ITF, 2012). This is as a result of the unwillingness of most shipping companies to train or employ women cadets. Regardless of the best efforts of MET institutions, some women graduates are forced to defer their seafaring careers and remain in a shore-based job (Belcher et al., 2003). For example, the researcher herself faced similar challenges in finding a ship to sail on in order to complete her sea training after acquiring four months of training on board a training vessel as a cadet. As a result of such difficulties in finding a ship, she had to abandon the seafaring career which was her passion that led her to the World Maritime University to pursue her master’s studies.

2.3.3. Acceptance On-board
Additionally, once on board whether as cadets or qualified officers, some women face the problem of rejection from their male colleagues who find it difficult to accept them on-board. This prejudgment tended to be overtly expressed and occasionally in an intimidating fashion or less obviously through a belief that women could not perform the tasks of a seafarer and thus required a protective almost fatherly attitude, which also hampered women’s ability to do their jobs (Thomas, 2004). As a result, most women experienced the need to show their competence by working much harder and performing much better than their male counterparts in order to be accepted and be seen as able to do their jobs (Aggrey, 2000). Women are always being tested and this makes them to
work under greater pressure. As a result of these realities, many women are discouraged and some are forced to stop pursuing seafaring careers (ITF, 2013).

It is not common for women to be on merchant ships as an operational crew. Therefore, when an outsider comes on board, he/she may be ‘surprised’ to find a woman there. In one instance, when a pilot boarded a ship and saw the female captain, he asked her when it was going to be lunch time, thinking she was a cook. One of the crew members had to intervene and tell the pilot that she was the captain of the ship (Yanchunas, 2011). This illustrates how difficult it is for women not only to be accepted on-board by their male colleagues but also by shore-side personnel.

In addition, most men find it difficult to take orders from women in senior positions on board. Such problems are addressed by women dealing with shore-side personnel such as stevedores, pilots and custom officials. For example, a female captain was almost found in a situation of not having a pilot to take her ship out of Hong Kong. The local pilot wanted to disembark when he realized that he was on a ship with a female captain (Belcher et al., 2003). Another possible reason why women are not accepted by their male colleagues is the insecurity of male counterparts feeling that the women will take their jobs away from them. One female chief officer was told by the ship’s captain, “I do not want you on-board, you are here to take away my job” (Zhao, 1998 cited in Aggrey, 2000).

2.3.4. Recruitment and Promotion

When it comes to recruitment or securing jobs at sea, women in Africa, experience particularly, significant barriers. Even when women possess the necessary qualifications, they still find it difficult to secure gainful employment on vessels. Hence, recruitment on-board a ship is a bigger stumbling block (barrier) for women than attraction. As one woman with many years of experience at sea stated in Turnbull (2013):
Employers hesitate to employ women, mainly due to a lack of education or access to relevant information and/or ‘negative’ past experience, all of which continue to reinforce their (long-held) perception that it is ‘indeed troublesome, un-economical and can be risky’ to employ women.

Once on-board, some women seafarers encountered the problem of gender discrimination in terms of promotion in their seafaring careers as compared to their male counterparts, even when qualified and due for promotion. For instance, some of these women had the experience of applying to companies who rejected their applications on the grounds of their gender, or who applied an unofficial upper limit on the level to which women could be promoted (Thomas, 2004). As a result of such discrimination, some women ended up leaving the seafaring career and searching for a shore-based job where they could be promoted more easily despite their ambition of getting to the top rank in the seafaring career (Belcher et al., 2003). The interface between recruitment and retention is, therefore, the critical interface in the career cycle for most women in merchant shipping (Turnbull, 2013).

2.3.5. Sexual Harassment

In addition to the problems of professional acceptance, many women face the problem of sexual harassment from their male colleagues (ITF, 2012). Furthermore, Thomas (2004) found that the sexual harassment reported by the women seafarers took many forms including sexual comments in the guise of ‘humour’, persistent sexual invitations and unwanted physical contact. In the cruise sector, where there are high profile and visibly enforced policies on sexual harassment, sexual harassment should be less likely. However, according to Thomas, Bloor, & Little (2013), most women working on cruise ships experience sexual harassment or unwanted sexual attention from at least some fellow crew members despite the policies in place. Although this research does not consider the cruise sector as its primary focus, it is worth noting that women in the cruise sector were equally found to be vulnerable in terms of sexual harassment.
For many women working in the cargo sector, such policies and protections frequently did not appear to be in place. Women working on these ships have taken a number of steps to deal with such sexual harassment and advances. These include locking their cabins at night, attempting to de-feminise their appearance and avoiding social situations on-board. Where women did attempt to report these problems to the company, they were not always successful (Thomas, 2004). According to Zhao (1999), German and British women are sexually abused mostly by male officers from their own nationality.

2.3.6. Menstruation and Maternity Leave

Irrespective of the fact that the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 (Title 2, regulation 2.4) obliges flag states to the convention to ensure that all seafarers working on their ships are granted shore leave as well as paid annual leave under appropriate conditions regardless of nationality, race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion or social origin, dealing with menstruation is still difficult on modern ships (ILO, 2012). In the context that ships operate with smaller crews, working continuously for 24 hours in and out of ports, shore leave opportunity is shortened and, in many cases, does not exist. In this regard, women may find it difficult to get access to the shore in order to purchase sanitary pads. This is particularly true with most cargo ships where there are no specific facilities to purchase or dispose of sanitary materials. This issue can cause great anxiety, humiliation and friction among women and men on-board; however, it is often overlooked by shore-side personnel and male seafarers (Thomas, 2004).

On the other hand, women working on-board cruise ships are unlikely to face such menstrual challenges due to a larger number of women seafarers together with women on-board as tourists and passengers. The presence of such comparatively larger numbers of women together with relatively regular calls in ports and the opportunity to go ashore have made the issue of access to sanitary materials and the disposal of sanitary pads less of a problem on-board cruise ships (Belcher et al., 2003).
In the shipping industry in general, women working ashore have access to benefits such as maternity leave and childcare, which are strictly adhered to. However, for women working on-board ships, this privilege is rare. Its inclusion in company contracts is often the prerogative of the respective company. Thus, the lack of attention to these needs is an issue when it comes to childbearing (Aggrey, 2000). Women seafarers tend to anticipate that pregnancy will result in an unpaid leave period with no guarantee of re-employment after child-birth. In addition, maternity benefits in the maritime sector depend on the flag state and company policy. For instance, German women working on German flagged ships are entitled to full maternity benefits along with German social security policy (Belcher et al., 2003).

2.3.8. Social Relationships
Most women working on cargo ships often sail alone in a male to female ratio of about 24:1. As a minority group in a male dominated environment, social and work related issues are inevitably raised. Social contacts with the outside world are limited on-board cargo ships and without socialisation, a seafaring life can be very boring. In this context, seafarers to a large extent, resort to using humour as a way of dealing with boredom. Such humour often focuses on women and can be highly sexualised, sexist and derogatory. Women on-board ships not only have to deal with such jokes, they may be expected to go along with and pretend to be amused by such humour, which would not be tolerated in shore-based work settings. Even worse, they can easily become the objects of jokes. The effect of such humour can be compounded by the tendency for women to become targets of gossip. This can affect the behaviour of women on-board and can cause them social discomfort and considerable restlessness (Thomas, Bloor, & Little, 2013).

These jokes, remarks, comments and smears on women and their reputations, influence many women to feel the need to modify their behaviour on-board. For instance, women who work on cargo ships where they are often alone, spend much time in their cabins
doing solitary activities, avoiding talking to other people on-board in order to evade gossip (Thomas, 2004). Furthermore, according to Kitada (2013), most women seafarers learned by themselves and invented various identity management strategies categorised as negotiators, constructors, maintainers and reproducers, in order to fit into the male-oriented culture on-board. Women working on cruise ships also tend to limit their interaction with male colleagues to avoid gossip. However, the consequences of withdrawing are less severe than on cargo ships since the relatively larger number of women on-board means that women can remove themselves from the male domain without completely isolating themselves (Belcher et al., 2003).

2.4. Summary
This chapter looked at some of the reasons why women choose seafaring careers, and the experiences and challenges of women seafarers. Some women in developed countries choose careers at sea because they belong to seafaring families or communities, while others prefer seafaring because of the opportunity to visit different countries. However, most women in developing countries choose seafaring careers mainly because of high earnings to support their families financially. In addition, women seafarers face many challenges including difficulty gaining access to ships, rejection from their male colleagues on-board, sexual harassment, and menstrual and maternity leave problems. These issues appear to be more apparent and significant on cargo ships than cruise vessels, in terms of the number of women on a vessel, which affects the design of on-board facilities and people’s behaviour.
Chapter 3

Women Seafarers – Their Stories

3.1. Introduction
This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the primary data gathered on women seafarers as one of the research areas. It focuses mainly on the key interview questions in accordance with the objectives of the study such as the reasons for choosing seafaring careers, women seafarers’ challenges, ways to overcome these challenges, and views on seafaring careers and policies to empower West African Women to go to sea.

3.2. Background Information
Background information on the women seafarers interviewed for this study is summarised in Table 1. This information was gathered in view of the fact that the opinions and choices made by individuals are often in some way influenced by their level of exposure to and knowledge of the subject matter as well as their social and professional backgrounds, age, and level of education. As such, these factors have a bearing on the study. It must be noted, however, that this section is of diminutive importance and only explains the basis of the data and does not in any way influence the data gathered and presented and, thus, may not be solely relied on in drawing meaningful conclusions.
Table 1: Background Information on Women Seafarers’ Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>Number of Years at Sea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Cadet</td>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>4th Officer</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>13 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Cadet</td>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>4th Engineer</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Other Parts of Africa</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Cadet</td>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Study by Azirh, 2014

**Family and Home Life**

As indicated in Table 1, the majority of the women that were interviewed for this research are single or divorced, with no children. This explains the reason why, generally, some women are indifferent when it comes to seafaring because they see it to be a threat to their families and home life.
**Social Class of Women Seafarers’ Respondents**

This research considers ‘social class’ as an important factor as Karl Marx states that class membership implies a set of shared views regarding how society should be organised politically, culturally, socially and legally (Cohen, 1978). In this context, social class means a group of women seafarers with similar levels of wealth, occupying similar positions on-board. The term, ‘Upper class’ refers to Captains/Chief Engineers, ‘Middle class’ refers to Officers/Engineers and ‘Lower class’ refers to Cadets/Trainees.

**Table 2: Social Class of Women Seafarers’ Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Upper Class</th>
<th>Middle Class</th>
<th>Lower Class</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Study by Azirh, 2014

**Figure 2: Social Class of Women Seafarers’ Respondents**

Source: Field Study by Azirh, 2014
Table 2 and Figure 2 indicate that all of the women seafarers from Asia and Europe who participated in this study fall into the upper class income level as most of them are currently captaining a ship or have captained a ship before. On the other hand, the majority of the women seafarers from West Africa fall between the lower and middle class income groups as most of them are cadets or officers. This confirms that West African women are conditional to pursuing seafaring careers as most women seafarers in West Africa are cadets with very few as officers or captains. Moreover, their working experience at sea confirms this observation, as a majority have worked at sea for less than 2 years. Hence, seafaring is a new employment area for most West African women.

**Age Group of Women Seafarers’ Respondents**

Table 3 and Figure 3 show the rate of distribution of the age groups of the women seafarers who were interviewed for this research and do not represent the current overall women seafarers’ age profile. It indicates the ages of respondents that are currently seafarers and those who have had experience at sea. The majority of respondents (40%) are between 20 and 30 years of age; 30% are between 31 and 50 years and the remaining 30% are between 51 and 58 years of age. This gives an average age of 37 for the women seafarers who participated in this research.

**Table 3: Age Group of Women Seafarers Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 to 30 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 50 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 58 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Study by Azirh, 2014
3.3. Reasons for Choosing a Seafaring Career

In order to encourage more women in West Africa to take up seafaring careers, it is important to look at some of the reasons why women choose careers at sea. As a result, women seafarers who participated in this study were asked why they chose careers at sea. Based on the responses, most women go to sea because they want a more challenging job and also to prove to their male counterparts that they are equally up to the task. Furthermore, seafaring jobs bring out strength and boldness in women making them more strong and courageous as compared to other women who work on land. As stated by two women seafarers:

During my time, I was told women couldn’t do it, so I was determined and wanted to prove them wrong.

I want a more challenging work and I also want to be different and stronger than other women who work on land.
Additionally, in accordance with the reviewed literature in the previous Chapter, some women choose seafaring as a career because they want to travel and explore new places as one female captain stated: “I chose this career for love of adventure and travel”. Other women choose seafaring jobs because they are inspired when they see other women seafarers. One Ghanaian female fourth officer said: “I was inspired as a child when I saw a female captain at the Tema port”. Moreover, in countries such as India and Cameroon where there were no women seafarers initially, but the women seafarers from these countries chose to go to sea in order to become the first so as to open the way for others. As stated by two female seafarers from these countries respectively:

When I started, females were not going to sea in India, so I felt as being the first female at my company and I should pioneer something for other women to follow. This career is something that has given me some identity than any other career.

I chose a seafaring career because I want to become the first female Cameroonian captain as there has yet to be one.

3.4. Views on a Seafaring Career
The women seafarers who were interviewed were asked to give their opinions on whether seafaring jobs are actually good jobs for women to take based on their experience. This question was asked in order to ascertain whether it is worth encouraging more West African women to take seafaring jobs. The general response was that working at sea was a rewarding and empowering experience. One female captain stated:

I think it is a great place for a woman to go. It is so exciting to be at sea. You see new countries; you get to go and be out there on the oceans and see the sun rise, sunset, the stars, the constellations. It is very rewarding, there is a lot of power being at sea, you have the ability to have the
courage to drive the ship which is part of the transportation industry and that transportation is what makes commerce work and that is what brings all the goods and services. In fact it is a great industry, so it is great to be part of that. Women should want jobs in the maritime industry.

In addition, some women went as far as stating the qualities that women seafarers possess as a female officer from Ghana stated: “They are courageous and very self-sacrificing and when given the right support and encouragement, they will succeed with flying colours and do their nations proud”. Apart from the women seafarers who have a positive view on seafaring, non-seafaring women who work ashore, see seafaring as a positive place and think that women should take advantage of the profession. As the President of WISTA Ghana stated:

I think that it is one area that women are not really there. I think that it is a good area and women should take advantage of that profession. Actually, going to sea is not easy for a woman and when a woman takes up that challenge, she learns a lot and she herself is filled with confidence and grows up with a broader knowledge because seafaring jobs will take her out into other areas such as coastal, international and even at the port and she tends to learn a lot. Moreover, apart from benefiting in terms of the economy, that is the salary to take care of your family, seafaring is one area that involves a lot of foreign exchange for any country and I think that women should be part of such a thing.

However, other women see seafaring as a very short term job that frequently shifts to a shore-based career after reaching the captain’s rank. As one female captain said:

Actually, seafaring is a very short term career. Most women and men do it for about 15yrs to 20yrs and then shift to shore side. Also at a point you feel stagnant. For example, am sailing as a master, I don’t see any step
further, if am not planning to shift then I will find myself stagnant at this level or at this rank but if I go ashore, I can go further. It is actually a short term because when you become a master you have reach the ultimate level on-board the ship now you have to shift to keep on moving.

3.5. Challenges Faced by Women Seafarers

Seafaring is indeed opening a new employment and career opportunity for women. This section discusses the challenges for women seafarers and examines what are the common experiences among them.

Challenges with Recruitment On-board

It was noted in the literature reviewed that most shipping companies today are opening their doors to women due to the international organisations’ initiatives to encourage more women to go to sea. In order to find out if this is the case in West Africa, women seafarers from West Africa were asked how accessible it was for them to get a ship. However, the responses were disappointing as most of these women went through tough times finding a ship to sail on as cadets. Some of them had to go as far as paying shipping agencies to find them ships to begin their careers at sea as cadets. Besides, some of the West African women attended several interviews and performed better than male candidates but were dropped from the list of selected applicants, solely because of their gender. Some shipping companies went as far as telling them that they do not take women on-board their ships because there are no facilities for women on-board. Three female cadets from West Africa said:

It was very difficult for me; I had paid money at different agencies to get one for my cadetship training.

Yes, right now I have gone to sea for four months about a year ago I’m still here all because I am a woman, the shipping companies don’t want to take me because they don’t have facilities for women and other things.
I had six months sea time and I need six more months to complete my cadetship training. I have gone to several interviews and perform very well; in fact, I was among the best candidates that were selected. Only for the man in charge to call me and told me that he is sorry, he cannot take me because the company does not employ women on-board their ships.

However, women from other parts of the world like the U.K. and India do not face these difficulties in gaining access to ships because their government have put in place gender equality legislation. As stated by two female captains from the U.K. and India respectively:

At my time in the U.K, there was this national equality Legislation that says employers have to employ women to take the same role as the men. So, I was given the opportunity to be employed to take one of those roles. It was this national legislation that allows me to be taken on the ship.

Actually it was not difficult for me because of the national legislation that encourages Indian flagged ships to employ women on-board, but of course there were some doubt as in whether I will perform well as the first female to be employed by my company.

**Challenges On-board**

Even after going through difficulties just to get a ship, most women face diverse challenges whilst on-board. Most women seafarers who participated in this study went through similar challenges on-board as noted in the reviewed literature in the previous Chapter. These challenges include racism and isolation which are common problems for both men and women seafarers. However, women tended to face more challenges than their male colleagues, some of which compromised their training. A female fourth officer from Sierra Leone noted:
There are always challenges especially for women. Women got different types of challenges than men and as a woman you should be prepared to face so many challenges. It was very challenging for me on one of the first ships I was on, the captains view women on a ship as some kind of bad luck so, I was not allowed on the bridge, or to be seen anywhere around him, was not allowed to do anything. This restricted my training. I ended up spending more yes as a cadet because I couldn’t learn anything to qualify me as an officer. Moreover, the gender issue which is a very big problem for us women. It was not easy at all.

**Sexual Harassment**

A majority of the women interviewed for this research mentioned sexual harassment as the major problem they have encountered on-board. Furthermore, sexual harassment is becoming inevitable due to the fewer number of women on-board as compared to their male counterparts. Some women seafarers have become so familiar with sexual harassment that they now refer to it as “the usual thing”. They reported different strategies used to deal with the harassment including avoiding, befriending the wives of and reporting their harassers. Three women from Ghana stated:

Yes, the usual thing sexual harassment. I tried to avoid the guys who tried to harass me by not being with them in a confine place alone and stop dressing in a sexy way not to expose any part of my body.

I would say it was sexual harassment, though it was subtle moves. I brushed it off and sometimes what I did was to befriend their wives if I knew them, thereby keeping them at bay for fear that I may talk.

Harassment and racism, With harassment I reported when I could not take it any longer but with the racism I just endured till the end
Promotion and Salary Discrimination

Today it is very easy for women to move up the ranks in a seafaring career as compared to the past where women were hugely discriminated against in terms of promotion and salary. The attitude today largely depends on competence and confidence, whether the candidate is a man or a woman. This is particularly so with shipping companies in Europe. As all the women seafarers from Europe interviewed for this research said that it was not difficult for them to gain promotions as they were up to the task and had not experienced any discrimination in terms of salary. As noted by two women from this region:

It was not that easy and it was not that difficult. All you need to do is to just focus on doing your job well and they will promote you as far as you are due for promotion and competent. I have been able to be promoted based on my performance.

Even though there was some level of scepticism in the beginning but when they realised I was up to the challenge I was given my due.

However, most women in West Africa and Asia still face a lot of discrimination when it comes to promotion often because their male colleagues do not want to receive orders from a woman. Three women from Ghana, India and South Korea, respectively described their difficulties:

Promotion was difficult for me, as most of the men are not happy when a woman gives them command on the ship, there’s always that fear that she will soon start commanding me and give us orders if she is promoted.

It was difficult for them to promote me. It entails a lot of hard work and determination. At one stage I had wanted to change and do something else then I said to myself, I must become a captain first.
Promotion was not difficult for me. At least I was lucky because I heard from my female colleague; she faced lot of difficulties getting promotion because the shipping company did not want her to progress from the third to second officer.

**Relationships with Male Colleagues**

The majority of the women seafarers said that they had cordial and respectful relationship with their male colleagues. One female officer said her male colleagues came to like the idea of women on board as she explained:

There are advantages to be a woman on-board. I think we women have to look for those advantages, we bring in different perspectives to the ship that men like because it is more balanced. I can say that the men get use to me and they like having women on-board and as we get more women, it became easier for other women to join.

However, there were few cases where women had difficulties with their male colleagues due to cultural and religious differences. As one woman said:

Generally, it was ok. Just that some had religious and cultural issues on having a woman on board. Some did not want to use the same washing machine and drier that I use, because I am a woman.

**Being a Female Boss**

When it comes to giving precise orders on-board the ship whether as a man or woman, a lot has to do with self-confidence and an understanding/knowledge of the work. Additionally, it has to do with good leadership skills and mutual respect. The majority of women officers and captains who participated in this research have no problem with giving orders on-board. As noted by two female captains and one officer, respectively:
I never had any difficulties, as long as you are a leader and you are vested with knowledge and know how to get people to be part of your team and respect people as well. I never had any problems with crew members when it comes to my orders.

Not really, once I wanted the work done I gave the necessary order. I think a lot has to do with self-confidence and also having understanding/knowledge of work, so as to give the right orders.

No, it was not difficult for me to give orders. If the captain orders something I do. Also I give orders to my junior and they do. So, the ship has the hierarchy, so we follow the senior orders. They obeyed my orders

Nevertheless, there were some few cases where a female captain was faced with the problem of getting her crew to obey her orders. She had to remind them that she was the captain, and that her orders had to be obeyed, especially in high risk situations. As she stated:

Male crews sometimes don’t agree with your ideas. Sometimes I let them go with their own ideas and make the mistake. But if there is too much risks involve then I have to let them know that this thing has to be done this way. Initially, when I joined the ship as a captain, when the junior crews were working, I have to prove myself; ok I am a captain you have to follow by orders.

Due to these problems on-board, some women seafarers in countries with closed registration policies prefer to remain on their national flagged ships because they guarantee some sort of security compared to ships with multi-national crews flying flags of convenience (FOC). As stated by a female captain from India:
As a woman, security is something because of that I don’t think of changing companies. I sail only on Indian government companies because security is better with Indian companies than other companies where you have different crew from different nationalities with different culture.

3.6. Ways to Overcome Women Seafarers’ Challenges

Since this research seeks ways to encourage more women in West Africa to take up seafaring jobs, it is important to find out, from women seafarers themselves, how these problems could be overcome. Most of the women interviewed noted that the problems could only be overcome if the number of women, taking part in the actual running of the ship increased so as to balance the gender gap on-board. In order to achieve this, more female students must be admitted into nautical and engineering courses at MET institutions. As two women stated:

It has to be a very long term plan by introducing more women on-board especially on cargo ships not only as stewardesses. This is because if there are only 2 females out of 25 men, then there is a problem. At least balancing the number will help to solve the problems.

It goes back to access, every country is different, and every shipping agency is different. They have to provide women access, space available, sea training to be able to go to sea and do the job right. Women need to be trained because you cannot just work on the ship without being trained and right now women don’t have the opportunity to gain access to the ship so we need that first. Moreover, women need support from legislation, I got support from legislation.

Furthermore, the flag States should adopt legislations on gender equality and should monitor and interact frequently with woman on-board their ship each time the ship
comes to the port. There is also a voice that IMO could further encourage the flag States with this, as one respondent described:

Port and flag state must encourage more shipping companies and vessel owners to employ more females. I personally think IMO must tighten their laws to protect the female seafarer’s image. And the port and flag states must be more concern about every single female on board their ships each time the ship comes to port. They should have a way of interacting with them frequently and not wait for reports from victims before doing something about it.

3.7. Motivating Other Women into the Seafaring Career

Due to the fact that there are very few women in the seafaring careers (about 2%), it is very important that these few women take it as a responsibility to encourage and motivate other women through mentorship. Women already on-board can encourage those still at home by showing them, through their own example, that they can do it. The women seafarers from West Africa who participated in this research were asked if they have been able to motivate other West African women to choose seafaring careers. The responses were not encouraging as most of them said they have not been able to encourage any women into seafaring careers. Most of them are discouraged from doing so because there are no national shipping lines in West Africa to take up these women and train them, coupled with the difficulties they went through in getting a ship. As stated by one female captain from Ghana:

I cannot point to any one person I have personally been able to draft into the industry even though I have spoken on platforms given the opportunity to encourage them to go to sea. I feel a bit guilty convincing them to go to sea considering the difficulty in getting training berths for their cadetship. It will have been easy if our national line was still around.
However, in countries with national shipping lines and other initiatives to encourage more women to take up seafaring jobs such as the U.K., India and South Korea, the women seafarers recognised how important it is for women to have mentors. As such, they have been able to mentor a number of women in seafaring jobs, as three of these women stated:

Yes, I have been in for more than 12 years. So I mentor a number of women. It is important for women to have mentors. I mentor both men and women.

My cousin has also joined because I motivated her. She was motivated seeing me working at sea. And the best part is longer vacations. I used to stay at home for 4 to 5 months. And you know high salary too.

I have motivated so many ladies. I am a lecturer. I talk to many of my female students. Also, I have my episode when I was at sea and I show it to them.

In addition, in order to get more women in West Africa into seafaring careers, it is important to know the ways in which this can be done. As a result, the women seafarers who were interviewed were asked how other women could be encouraged to take up seafaring careers. Some of them reiterated that it is important for women seafarers to talk to younger women to educate them about seafaring and that it is not just for men. This could be done through the media or through conducting research on women seafarers. As one noted:

We are very few in the industry and I think we have to talk to many women to join. This can be done by using the media, through research just as you are doing to create the awareness about few women in the industry.
Additionally, there will be more women in seafaring if training is made easily accessible to female cadets because this is currently the major challenge. Once a woman becomes an officer and is confident enough she can deal with the other issues such as sexual harassment and male chauvinism. Moreover, some women seafarers said that more women will be encouraged to take up seafaring jobs when legislation is in place to protect them. As stated by one female officer from Ghana:

More women can be encouraged by putting the right legislations in place to protect the females from any type of abuse and harassment and when the seafaring career is not seen as one for prostitutes.

3.8. Measures/Policies to Empower West African Women to Go to Sea

The West African Women seafarers who took part in this study were asked if there were any policies or measures in place to empower women in West Africa to go to sea as it is being done in other regions such as South Africa and India. The general response was that there are no policies or measures in place to encourage women to take up seafaring. The lack of policies to empower women in West Africa into the seafaring careers is also recognised by the President of WISTA Ghana, as she stated:

When you look at South Africa, the Government and Transnet is encouraging more women to go to sea but in West Africa you don’t see that. I’m very happy that you want to do this project because WISTA can do just that much because WISTA is for maritime and there are a lot of women organisations but WISTA is for maritime so, we need to be pushing that agenda. Now we have WISTA in Nigeria, we need to start WISTA in Cameroon.
3.9. Summary

This chapter has analysed and discussed the findings on women seafarers. Some women choose seafaring jobs because they want a challenge and also to prove to their male counterparts that they are equally up to the task. It is still difficult for some women, particularly women in West Africa, to be recruited on-board the ships due to the lack of national shipping companies. Moreover, there are no support systems in West Africa to empower women in this region to go to sea. Furthermore, women go through a lot of challenges on-board the ship compared to their male colleagues including sexual harassment, which is becoming inevitable due to the small number of women on-board. The challenges that women face on-board can be overcome by recruiting more women so as to balance the gender gap on-board ships. Additionally, women seafarers should mentor other women and ships should be made available to female cadets so as to enable more women to go to sea. The next chapter examines the training practices of women seafarers in West Africa.
Chapter 4

Training Practices of Maritime Education and Training (MET) Institutions

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapters looked into various aspects of women at sea and identified problems for women to pursue their seafaring careers. Among those common problems, maritime education and training (MET) appeared to be of importance in terms of the first entry point for women to this career. In the case of West Africa, it seems to be even more significant how MET plays the role of increasing the number of women in the maritime sector. This chapter examines the training practices of MET institutions with respect to the training of women seafarers. Among many MET institutions, this study chose three sample institutions: the Regional Maritime University (RMU) in Ghana, the South Africa Maritime Training Academy (SAMTRA) and the World Maritime University (WMU) in Sweden. The selection of SAMTRA in this chapter is because of SAMTRA’s significant initiatives in encouraging South African women seafarers as well as to compare it with the RMU in Ghana since both are African MET institutions.
4.2. The RMU - Serving the Central and West African regions

Figure 5: Cadets at the Regional Maritime University On parade
Source: RMU Website (www.rmu.edu.gh)
The RMU in Ghana is a sub-regional tertiary institution that exists to enhance the development of the maritime transport sector and the fishing industry in member states through the education of students, training of marine personnel, research and consultancy and promotion of maritime co-operation. The RMU occupies the premises of the old Ghana Nautical College, established in 1958 to train ratings for the demised national shipping line of Ghana (Black Star Line). In 1982, the Government of Ghana promulgated the Regional Maritime Law 1982. This was followed by the signing of the instrument of transfer, handing over the College to the then Ministerial Conference of West and Central African States on Maritime Transport (MINCONMAR), now known as Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA), which negotiated for its regionalisation. The College was re-named the Regional Maritime Academy (R.M.A.) in 1983 with the following countries as founding members: Republic of Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone (RMU, 2010).

Through its evolution, the institution has seen many years of training seafarers for the West African Sub-region and beyond. However, the ratio of male to female trainees throughout the period has been nowhere close to a balance even with the thorough marketing of the institution (Ankoma-Sey, 2014). The RMU currently has on offer six first-degree courses and one diploma course as well as one Master of Arts program jointly run by the RMU and the university of Ghana. Out of these, the Bachelor in Nautical Studies and Bachelor in Marine Engineering are two courses that prepare students purely for careers in seafaring. Below are detailed statistics that depict the gender distribution of students who were enrolled in Marine Engineering and Nautical Science courses from 2003 to 2013. Admission for 2014 is on-going and as a result is not included in this statistic.
Table 4: Gender Distribution of Marine Engineering Science Students between 2003 and 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RMU Registry, 2014.

Figure 6: Gender Distribution of Marine Engineering Science Students between 2003 and 2013

Source: RMU Registry, 2014 (Modified).

Table 4 and Figure 6 indicate that over a period of 10 years (2003 to 2013), the RMU has graduated a total of 485 students in the Marine Engineering department, 13 (or 2.7%) of which are female graduates and 472 of which are male graduates.
Table 5: Gender Distribution of Nautical Science Students between 2003 and 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
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<th>2005</th>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RMU Registry, 2014.

Figure 7: Gender Distribution of Nautical Science Students between 2003 and 2013
Source: RMU Registry, 2014 (Modified).

Table 5 and Figure 7 indicate that over a period of 10 years (2003 to 2013), the RMU has graduated a total of 393 students in the Nautical Science department, 11 (or 2.8%) of which are female graduates and 382 of which are male graduates.

Despite the above figures, many of the women trained by the institution have had very successful careers and today occupy prominent positions in the world’s maritime industry. This was aided by the existence of Ghana’s national shipping line (Black Star Line) as a few female seafarers were trained to be officers for the Black Star Line in the
early years of the Ghana Nautical College (Ankoma-Sey, 2014). These women rose to high ranks in the seafaring hierarchy and include Captain Beatrice Vormawah, who became the first African female ship captain taking full command as master and sailing Ghana’s ships on international voyages; Captain Hannah Aggrey; Captain Georgina Hanson - Nortey and Captain Catherine Haizel (Aggrey, 2000). However, after the collapse of the Black Star Line, most of the few females who graduated from the university with a first degree either in Marine Engineering Science or in Nautical Science ended up securing shore-based jobs due to difficulties in gaining access to ships. For instance, the researcher herself was a graduate from the RMU in 2010 with a first degree in Nautical Science but due to difficulties in getting a ship to continue with her sea career, she ended up pursuing her Master’s programme at WMU.

4.3. The SAMTRA – Best Practice from South Africa

![SAMTRA Logo and Building](www.samtra.co.za)

*Figure 8: Pictures Showing the Logo and the Building of SAMTRA*

Source: SAMTRA Website ([www.samtra.co.za](http://www.samtra.co.za))

SAMTRA is a maritime training academy situated in Simons Town, South Africa, which focuses predominantly on the provision of simulator based training. SAMTRA aims to
provide relevant training to the African maritime industry as a cost effective solution to Northern Hemisphere alternatives, based on a premise of quality skills development training to world class standards. SAMTRA’s product offering consists of simulation training courses in refrigeration engineering, marine engineering and deck officer training. Non-simulator courses are also offered to include computer based training for both seafarers and shore staff. Moreover, SAMTRA manages Cadet Training Programs for various companies as an extension to its core business, which handles the entire process of a cadets training program, from recruitment to qualification as officer of the watch (SAMTRA, n.d.)

In addition to simulator-based training, SAMTRA provides Cadet training administration services to a number of companies in the maritime industry who require assistance in the management of cadet and rating training programmes as indicated in Figure 9 below. These services are attractive to companies who have no presence/representation in the country that wish to employ South African cadets. These administrative services include career marketing, recruitment and short-listing of cadets and where required, selection to company instructions; pre-sea induction programmes and statutory compliance regimes including safety training; documentation including record books, travel documents and training records; accreditation of Accelerated Cadet training programme with the South African Maritime Safety Authority; arrangements to join/leave vessels and sea time planning; financial administration, monthly reports to clients and preparation of cadets for qualification on completion of required training. The administration services of each cadet cease on an individual basis when the cadet has graduated with the certificate of competency (SAMTRA, n.d.).

SAMTRA is working hand in hand with the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) to develop South Africa’s maritime economy by increasing the number of training berths for cadets in order to improve the current shortage of both sea and shore based human resources required to support the industry. The intention is to recruit more
youths from nautical colleges who have completed their first year of theoretical studies (for Officer of the Watch level) to induct them with pre-sea safety courses prior to them joining the vessels of the companies that are participating in the project in order to obtain their required sea time. As part of this initiative, SAMSA has acquired a training ship known as SA Agulhas that trains cadets both male and female with more priority being given to female cadets. This training ship can accommodate over 60 cadets for training for the duration of 4 months, after which they are sent on-board the vessels of the companies that are participating in the project. These cadets will either follow a SAMSA accredited accelerated training cadetship, utilising the SAMSA on-board training record book or the accelerated training programmes for specific companies that will have to be accredited with SAMSA. Either route shall result in a South African qualification as Officer of the Watch in full compliance with STCW requirements. Once qualified, these cadets are free to join a shipping company of their choice. Most times, they are employed with the companies in which they served their sea time (SAMSA, n.d.).
As part of SAMSAs initiatives to encourage South African women seafarers, a pilot project aimed at demystifying shipping for women was conducted in 2010, where SAMSAs successfully put together an all-woman crew ship to sail from three ports in South Africa (Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban) as shown in Figure 10. Furthermore, all of the shore staff, pilot, tug masters, engineers and vessel service crew attending to the ship were women on every watch (Manaadiar, 2010). In addition, SAMSAs is planning to have an all-female African crew ship sail around the continent of Africa. The 90-day round-Africa voyage will have a mix of 20 to 28 experienced women
seafarers, cadets and full time female training officers, as well as berths for interested passengers from education and the maritime sectors (SAMSA, 2013).

Figure 10: South African All-Women Crew Ship
Source: Spilman, 2010.

4.4. What Makes a Difference? Examining the Examples of SAMTRA and RMU
As a result of SAMTRA’s cadet administrative services and dedicated training ship programme, South Africa has produced a number of seafarers both men and women as well as encouraging more women to pursue seafaring careers. For instance, on the four month maiden voyage of the SAMSA dedicated training ship (SA Agulhas), there were 62 cadets on-board of which 20 were female (SAMSA, n.d.). Moreover, out of the 62
cadets on-board the SAMSA dedicated training ship, 12 were from West African countries (Ghana, Gambia, Ivory Coast and Cameroon) with only 2 female cadets, including the author (Figure 11).

![Figure 11: West African Cadets on SAMSA’s Dedicated Training Ship (S.A Agulhas)](image)

Source: SAMSAAGULHAS, 2013

The RMU, on the other hand, has no initiatives in place to assist male or female students gain access to ships. Ever since the demise of the Ghana national shipping line (Black Star Line), it has not been easy to gain access to ships. It is unfortunate to say that the
two female cadets, including the author, that were involved in SAMSA’s on-board training initiative for four months, have not been able to get a ship to finish the twelve months sea time required by the STCW 2010 convention in order to sit for the third officer unlimited Certificate of Competency (COC) examination. If the RMU can learn from SAMTRA and SAMSA, they may wish to consider operating a training ship through the governments of its member States as well as negotiating with shipping companies to train its cadets. This will help to encourage more students both male and female to apply for the Nautical and Engineering courses since this will serve as a guarantee for immediate on-board employment after graduation, increasing the number of seafarers (men and women) in West Africa.

4.5. The WMU - Capacity Building around the World

![WMU Logo and building](Figure 12)

**Figure 12: Pictures showing the WMU Logo and building**

Source: WMU website ([www.wmu.se](http://www.wmu.se))

The World Maritime University (WMU) in Malmö, Sweden is a postgraduate maritime university established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized agency of the United Nations. It was established in 1982 by the IMO Assembly Resolution with the aim to further enhance the objectives of the IMO and the IMO
member states around the world through maritime education, capacity building and research to ensure safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans. WMU is truly an organisation for the international maritime community (WMU, n.d.). As such, the WMU has produced 3,663 graduates from 165 countries around the world since its establishment by IMO in 1983. Moreover, the WMU currently has 429 female graduates in 78 countries. Figure 13 indicates the historical development of the number of female students at WMU. Female representation in the WMU student body was insignificant until the late 1990s when key initiatives to enrol a greater proportion of female students were implemented. The percentage of female students had exceeded 20% by the year 2000 and remains more or less constant at around 25%, despite annual fluctuations of the student intake. This was made possible by the active support of several fellowship donors including the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP), the Ocean Policy Research Foundation and the ITF Seafarers' Trust (IMO, 2014a). Additionally, WMU plan to increase the percentage of female students to 30% as part of its strategic vision for the next five years (WMU, 2013).
Female WMU graduates from African regions are shown in Table 6 and Figure 14 below.

**Table 6: Female students by African Regions Between 1987 and 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of female Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Africa</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WMU Registry, 2014 (Modified)
Table 6 and Figure 14 indicate a total number of 138 female graduates from Africa between the years 1987 and 2014. West Africa has the greatest number of female graduates with 72, representing approximately 52% of female students from Africa.

In addition, female students at WMU have achieved considerable success as the Chancellor's Medal for Academic Excellence, established in the year 2000, has been awarded to female students on three occasions, accounting for 21% of the recipients. Furthermore, the C P Srivastava Award for International Fellowship has been awarded to five female students, accounting for 36% of recipients. The first female President of the WMU Student Council was elected in the year 2000, followed by two more in 2003 and 2004. In addition, female students are represented at the doctoral level of studies at WMU, with six female doctoral candidates currently enrolled at the University. In 2011, a Doctorate degree was awarded to the first female candidate (IMO, 2014a). Specifically, West African female students at WMU have achieved significant success.
as the Pierre Léonard Prize for the Best Female Student and the C. P. Srivastava Award for International Fellowship were awarded to Jenette Tifuh Mujingni from Cameroon and to Philippa Amanda Miriam Armah from Ghana respectively in 2012 (Kjerfve, 2013). West African female students play an active and valued role at WMU and, once they have graduated, make a significant impact on the capacities of their national maritime administrations. There is an ongoing discrepancy between training and career opportunities for men and women in the shipping industry despite the increased level of participation of women in the maritime sector. One of the key policies of the university and IMO is encouraging a wider target audience to apply to WMU. This strategy needs to be reinforced by national administrations and other employers in West Africa who benefit from the skills and experience they derive by recruiting WMU female graduates (IMO, 2014a).

4.6. Summary
This chapter has examined the training practices of the RMU and the SAMTRA with respect to training of female cadets as well as WMU’s training practices regarding female students. The number of female students participating in seafaring programmes at RMU is insignificant. Furthermore, most of these female students find it very challenging to get employment on a ship. In order to facilitate the process of getting access to a ship, it is recommended that the RMU should learn from SAMTRA by acquiring a training ship for its students. In addition, the WMU plays a leading role in encouraging women to have access to higher education, and thus it would help to enhance women’s participation in developing countries. Indeed, female students from West Africa have achieved significant success at WMU. Improving the experiences of women on ships in various ways, starting at policy levels of MET institutions would assist with encouraging more women to work in the maritime field (Yanchunas, 2011).
Chapter 5

Roles of Maritime Education and Training (MET) Institutions – How can they support women seafarers in West Africa?

5.1. Introduction

Chapter Four relied solely on the available literature to discuss the practices and approaches of MET institutions in the training of women seafarers. This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the primary data gathered on the MET institutions with respect to the training of women for seafaring careers as one of the study areas for the research. This is because, getting more women into seafaring careers, it must start with MET institutions since they are the ones that train, educate and qualify women for seafaring jobs. In other words, the journey into a seafaring career begins at a MET institution.

5.2. Data Analysis and Discussion

Personnel from four institutions were interviewed as shown in Table 7. However, the discussions focus mainly on the Regional Maritime University (RMU) in Ghana and the World Maritime University (WMU) in Sweden. The Caribbean MET institution (CMI) and the Maritime University of Szczecin (MUS) were considered merely to draw comparisons with the RMU. The CMI is a regional MET institute located in Jamaica that trains students for seafaring within the Caribbean region (CMI, 2013), similar to the RMU in Ghana, which trains students within the West and Central Africa. The MUS is a MET institution in Poland that has a training ship and used to take RMU students through their on-board training programme.
Table 7: List of MET Institutions Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>RMU</td>
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<td>Registrar</td>
<td>WMU</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy executive director</td>
<td>Caribbean Maritime Institution (CMI)</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of ship construction and</td>
<td>Maritime University of Szczecin (MUS)</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<td>stability department</td>
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Source: Field Study by Azirh, 2014

5.2.1. The Case of the RMU

Admission for Female Students into the Nautical and Engineering Programmes

The journey into seafaring job begins at MET institutions where both male and female students are trained and educated in seafaring activities to qualify them to work on-board ships in key positions. When West African women wish to pursue seafaring jobs, they must begin by being granted access to the RMU, which is the only internationally recognised university in West and Central Africa offering nautical and engineering programmes. This is despite the fact that some institutions, especially those in Muslim countries (with the exception of Indonesia, Bangladesh, Turkey among others), still do not grant access for women into seafaring courses. As such, the registrar of the RMU was asked if the institution admits female students into its nautical and engineering departments. He answered affirmatively: “Yes, RMU is a co-educational institution and therefore admit females into its Nautical and Marine Engineering programmes”.

Irrespective of the difficulties in recruiting female graduates from the RMU on-board ships, the RMU is still open to granting access for female students to its seafaring programmes as compared to other MET institutions such as the Caribbean Maritime
Institutions (CMI) in Jamaica, which is strained in admitting female students into its seafaring programmes. As stated by the deputy executive director of the CMI:

Yes, I will say initially we don’t discriminate. The programs are open to both males and females. But owing to some recent developments in the shipping industry, virtually, the ship management companies, those who recruit the officers, they are now saying that they can no longer hire our female cadets because of certain reasons for instance; they say that they invest a lot of money training the female cadets. After which they become pregnant and leave to set up families and so on. They go for shore based jobs so, they think that they are investing in them and they are not getting the services after a while. So they are strained on employing more female cadets. That is the main challenge that is affecting us in that area of enrolment. We have to be telling our female aspirants that we can’t recruit them in to that program just now. We are encouraging them to do another program, may be a similar engineering program for those who are scientifically inclined to go in to this engineering program as well as they are other shore based programs for those who are interested in navigation to go instead in to these programs due to these recruitment difficulties we are facing for the recruitment of our female cadets.

Both male and female students in nautical or engineering programmes at the RMU study in the class room for four years and, after graduation, apply to shipping companies on their own to gain the 12 months ‘sea time’ requirement of the STCW convention before they can sit for the third officer’s Certificate of Competency (COC) examination. This is because the university does not have a training ship or a shipping company that can provide on-board training for its students. As a result, most students ended up looking for shore-based jobs instead of going to sea. However, other MET institutions interviewed for this research do have four year programmes as the RMU but do not
follow the same process. For instance, the Maritime University of Szczecin (MUS) in Poland has a training ship and has also made arrangements on-board merchant vessels to provide sea time training for its students. As such, the students go on-board these ships for three months in each year of study and by the end of the four years programme, they have completed the 12-month sea time requirement of the STCW convention to sit for the COC examination, as the Head of the ship construction and stability department of the MUS narrated:

In Poland we have for example our girls, they study for 4 years and during this period, they have to go for sea term practices for a year. Of course, it is not possible to be on board for a year so most of them spends 3 months on board in the ship during each year of study and then they have to complete if they want to be deck officers. They have to complete 12 months which is required by the STCW convention. We have a training ship but it is not possible to have all the practices only on board this one ship because this ship is prepared to serve the students in one term. So it is too small, most of them sail on board merchant ships which we have agreements with, during their practice.

**Female Students Enrolled in Seafaring Programmes**

The study intended to find out the current number of female students enrolled in the nautical and engineering programmes at the RMU, so as to encourage more females to apply for these courses. It found that the enrolment of female students was very small. That is, 4.3% in the nautical courses and 5% in the engineering courses, as the registrar of the RMU said:

The percentage of female students admitted into the programmes mentioned above is insignificant. In ratio terms it is about 1:23 for Nautical Science and 2:40 for Marine Engineering.
This is in accordance with the figures presented in the reviewed literature of about 2.8% and 2.7% of female graduates in the nautical and engineering programmes respectively for the period of ten years. This explains the reason why there are very few women seafarers in West Africa and in the world (about 2%) as a whole. It is problematic, because as long as the number of women taking these courses remains insignificant, the number of women seafarers in West Africa will continue to be insignificant as the journey of seafaring begins at a MET institution. It is therefore, important to increase the number of female students in sea going programmes at the RMU.

**Performance of Female Students**

Despite their number, female students at the RMU generally perform better than their male colleagues. The excellent performances of female students cut across all of the MET institutions that took part in this study. This is because female students taking these courses are aware of the challenges ahead of them in being recruited on-board so they have to study harder than their male colleagues in order not to miss any recruitment opportunities. Three staff members, each from the RMU, CMI and MUS stated:

In spite of their number, those admitted on the programmes performed better than their male counterparts (RMU staff).

Their performances are great because the top female cadets for the last 2 to 3 years perform better than their male counterparts. The top cadet was a female, they do very well as cadets and as good leaders, so they are able to work and perform better than the males (CMI, staff).

I think first of all, they are a little ambitious than boys because they have to compete and I think the most important thing for them is competition in terms of sea going practices. Because in my opinion, this is the main problem in the University, how to make sure each girl has opportunity to
make sea going practice in the time she has to do it. Not in the future like next year but now (MUS, staff).

**Strategies to Encourage More Women into the Seafaring Programmes at RMU**

Due to the insignificant number of female students taking seafaring programmes at the RMU, this study explores what strategies would be applicable for the RMU to improve the intake of women into the nautical and engineering programmes. As such, the registrar of the RMU was asked if the university is currently undertaking some programmes to attract women. The response was that the RMU has put some measures in place for this purpose, such as automatic admission for qualified female applicants and outreach programmes targeting female students at second cycle schools, as the registrar of the RMU stated:

> RMU as an institution is putting in place some measures to improve on female intake into these programmes: Automatic admission to all female applicants who qualify for the programme and outreach programmes to second cycle institutions to sensitize students particularly females students on the programmes.

Although these initiatives take place, they do not seem to be effective enough to motivate more women in West Africa to apply for nautical and engineering programmes. If the RMU accepts female students, they should consider beyond the admissions, and be responsible for all of their students’ completion of training, including mandatory on-board training of 12 months specified by the STCW convention. The RMU’s lack of effective strategies in this area can be supplemented by finding ships for its students as well as establishing closer relationships with ship management companies and ensuring that they take up both male and female students immediately after graduation. In the current situation, unfortunately, most women are aware of the difficulties in getting ships as cadets. Therefore, they prefer to take shore-based courses where they can easily
find jobs; otherwise, those who take up seagoing courses will end up not finding employment on-board upon the completion of their career investment. If there are ships available to accept cadets, especially females, then more women in West Africa would be motivated to apply for these programmes. The CMI in Jamaica is making more efforts as compared to the RMU to secure berths for its female students on-board ships as Jamaica does not own a national line, similar to the case in Ghana. However, they depend on external sources in training their cadets, as the deputy executive director of the CMI explained:

Carrying a counselling is one. The other thing too is that we are trying to find more ships because Jamaica does not own any ship. We don’t have a fleet so we have to depend on the external sources in training our cadets. Before we had a ship management company and they employed quite a few of our cadets including the females. Our female cadets perform well with the ship management company. However, the ship management company pulled out of Jamaica for a while because of some difficulties they had with the government of Jamaica and that really affected our placement of female cadets. The company is about to return to Jamaica and they are planning to take more of our female cadets and we are all hoping that it will materialise. We are trying to sign some memorandum; we work with our Ports for them to give us some support to place our female cadets on-board.

**External Supports to Female Students at RMU**

From the comparison with other MET institutions, it is apparent that RMU could offer more effective support to female students in its nautical and engineering programmes. The registrar of RMU was asked whether there were any external organisations that provide support to female students. The response was that the only supporting organisation, so far, is the Women in Shipping and Trade Association (WISTA) Ghana,
which has instituted awards for the best female graduating students in both the nautical and engineering programmes. The President of WISTA Ghana reaffirmed, stating that the aim of the award is to attract more women into sea-going courses. In addition to the award, WISTA Ghana is planning to go to secondary schools to sensitize young female students about the maritime industry. This will inspire and motivate many West African girls to consider seafaring as a career choice, as she stated:

I was doing a study at the RMU, and I realised that a lot of women from West Africa don’t go into the nautical courses. We WISTA Ghana, we are instituting an award. The award is for the Best Female Graduating Student in the Nautical and Engineering Courses. This award is to make sure that women are attracted in to these sea going courses and to create awareness in that area. This is what WISTA Ghana is planning to do. We already discussed this with the Rector and the Registrar of the RMU. All we have to do is to finalise it in the form of a letter and when the day of graduation comes, we do it. Moreover, we the WISTA Ghana, are trying to go to the various schools and explain, making them aware of the maritime industry itself. So, we will bring them on tours, they will visit the ports, they will go onto a vessel, learn and all those kind of things. If we are able to get a vessel that can move from Tema to Takoradi and with them on-board seeing the various aspects of shipping. I am very convinced that most of them will be motivated to pursue this career.

This example shows that it is not enough to encourage MET institutions to take more female students, but the advocacy of empowering women to seafaring must also focus on the younger generation to increase the awareness of the career option at sea. In the meantime, it is equally important to create role models of women leaders in shipping. While WISTA Ghana is serving this purpose, it is worth noting that the WMU produces
a number of women maritime professionals in higher education every year. WMU female alumni have a huge potential to be good role models in this context.

5.2.2. Promotion of Women - The Case of WMU

Unlike other MET institutions which aim to train seafarers, WMU has a different mission to serve the maritime industry, that is, to create future maritime leaders. Women are no exception. Hence, this section analyses and discusses WMU’s practices in granting admission for female students, admission requirements, percentage of female students taking masters’ programmes, their performance and the ways to bring in more women from West Africa.

Admission for Female Students
The WMU runs professional courses for maritime personnel, both men and women at a postgraduate level. Moreover, the WMU recognises the need to encourage more women in the maritime industry at large and as such, gives priority to its female applicants as long as they meet the basic qualifications and experience. All that WMU wants is more female applicants, as stated by the registrar of the WMU:

We expect the same standard of qualification and experience for all students whether they are men or women. But the donors give priority for giving fellowship awards to women. So what we need are more women applicants.

Female Students Enrolled in the Masters’ Programmes at the WMU
From its inception in 1983, the number of female students in the Masters’ programmes at the WMU was insignificant (about 4% to 5%). Over the years, the WMU has worked to increase the number of female students to 30%. However, this year, the figure has dropped to 25% as three women were withdrawn from fellowship due to governmental and family problems, as the registrar of WMU stated:
When I came to WMU, it was running for about 4 to 5%. We have worked to increase that and it has been running of about 30% of the student body. But this year, it looking at about 25% because, three ladies have just withdrawn from fellowships. One was pregnant, one has a family problem and the other one her government won’t let her come.

WMU donors are either part of the government or they are under the umbrella of the government. Most governments have gender equality or empowerment policies and have signed up to the UN Millennium goals. So, the problem is not with the donors, but with a lack of female applicants. As such, the WMU needs cooperation from employers to nominate women for fellowships programmes, as the registrar further stated:

The possible problem is women don’t go into the maritime industry at a lower level. We run a professional programme; it’s similar to an MBA. So, we can’t take a woman just because she is a woman who has never seen a boat. We need more cooperation from employers to nominate women to apply for donors to send them. Some employers are very enlightening and some employers are not. The university is here we only have half the picture. All our donors are either the part of the government or they are under the umbrella of the government and they are working to further help the government establish policies. Most governments do have gender equality policies or gender empowerment policies. Most of them have signed up to the UN Millennium goals. So, the problem is not with the donors, but with not receiving enough applications, they need more applications from women. Donors don’t fund private organizations because IMO is an association of government and so the donors funding is bilaterally government to government.
Performance of Female Students at the WMU

Female students generally perform better than their male colleagues at a lower level as seen from the above findings. So, in order to find out if this is the case at a higher level, the registrar of the WMU was asked to comment on the performances of female students in WMU. The response was that the university had never measured female versus male performance, but according to the awarding of the Chancellor’s medal for Academic Excellence, female students seem to be performing slightly better than males. This award has not been given to a West African female student so far; however, some West African female students have received other awards as noted in the literature review. The registrar of the WMU said:

We have not measured that. We have never done a male versus a female performance. But in 2000, we introduced the Chancellor medal that is given to the best performing student. That has been awarded so far, 14 times from 2001 to 2014. Out of the 14 awards winner, it has been given to 4 women out of 14. So, the females are slightly performing better than their men representation. Not massively, but slightly considering their number. Among these four women, two from China, one from France and the other one from Argentina so far. So, get working…..

Ways to Bring in More Women in West Africa into WMU

Due to the lesser number of female students in WMU, the registrar was asked what could be done to bring more women from West Africa to WMU. The response was that it is the responsibility of the female graduates from West Africa to go back and talk to their employers to nominate more women for fellowships. Unfortunately, some employers find it difficult to put women forward for fellowships because of gender-biased assumptions. So, the problem is not with the university or the donors, the problem is with the employers, as the registrar of the WMU narrated:
I talk to graduates who work for employers, please put women forward. There is an institutional difficulty in some places in putting women forward because in their minds women staffs prioritise their families and their home life. I have heard that most of them actually want to get married and have babies. But this is where the donors are very flexible (…) we have only about 45 students’ fellowships for donors. The others are paid for either personally that is up to them, or by their employers. That is where the employers prefer to pay for men but not in Indonesia. Indonesia pays for a lot of women. In Indonesia, the sending agencies are absolutely working with us.

5.3. Summary
This chapter has analysed and discussed the findings on the RMU in Ghana and the WMU in Sweden. The RMU is a co-educational institution and, therefore, admits females into seafaring programmes. However, the number of female students entering these courses is insignificant as compared to the male students. In spite of their number, little effort has been made to encourage more female students to apply for these courses. Furthermore, there is minimal external support to the few female students taking the seafaring courses. The RMU has no training ship or ship management company that can provide shipboard training for cadets. Most students face difficulties in getting ships after graduation. As a result, some end up getting shore-based jobs instead of going to sea. In addition, WMU has recognised the need to encourage more women in the maritime industry as a whole and as such, gives priority to the female applicants as long as they meet the basic qualifications and experience to take the programme. Moreover, WMU over the years has made efforts through its donors to increase the percentage of female students in its master’s programmes. However, some employers are reluctant to send women to WMU and do not nominate them for fellowships. To have more women, especially from West Africa enrolled at WMU, it is essential that the employers in West Africa nominate more women for fellowships.
Chapter 6

Employment Practices and Prospects of Women Seafarers

6.1. Introduction
Following discussion of women trained in MET institutions, this chapter examines the next step in women seafarers’ career path – recruitment. Any perceived, actual or potential workforce shortages will unavoidably lead employers to explore new sources of labour. These exact considerations led employers in leading ship-owning countries such as Greece and Germany to develop policies for recruiting women during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The initial random employment policies for women on-board cargo ships, mostly as cooks, stewardesses and radio officers, have shown that women are capable of being effective seafarers. This led to an organised approach to develop formal policies recognising that women could and should be considered for employment on the same platform as men. Besides, due to the shortage of male officers, employers will be encouraged to consider women as possible employees on-board ships (Belcher et al., 2003). This chapter, therefore, examines the views and practices of employers (shipping companies) regarding the employment of women on-board ships.

6.2. Negative Views and Practices
Gender stereotypes regarding appropriate work, tasks and workplaces are found to be held by some employers, based on ideas about natural differences between men and women (Shelton & John, 1996). Moreover, some employers view seafaring as simply too physically difficult and employment conditions too harsh for it to be a suitable career for women (Homans, 1987). However, some employers are of the view that women can work at sea but only aboard certain ships and only in positions that do not conflict with notions of femininity, thus women could work aboard cruise or passenger vessels in positions such as assistant cook, radio officer, steward, or in hotel and catering departments. In particular, the engine room, with its associated images of heat, dirt,
sweat and heavy physically demanding work tasks, is seen as the least suitable area for women’s employment (Thomas, 2004). It may not be a bad idea to protect women from physical danger; however, this can hamper women’s abilities to do their jobs and become competent especially now that the STCW 2010 puts so much emphasis on the recruitment of women at sea. For instance, some companies go as far as prohibiting women from particular and typically supervisory positions, such as a Captain and Chief Engineer (Belcher et al., 2003).

Negative attitudes to the employment of women also relate to perceptions of women’s role in the family and associated concerns regarding beliefs about the incompatibility of a sea career, marriage and motherhood (Kitada, 2009). The expectation that women seafarers are more likely than their male counterparts to leave the sea early, specifically once they’ve married and/or had children, is associated with a subsequent belief that women seafarers constitute a poor investment in terms of training and development (Thomas, 2004). However, this situation is becoming more common even with men as seafaring professions are no longer attractive to younger seafarers who tend to leave the sea early and look for shore-based jobs. The latest European commission (EC) study on seafarers’ age indicated that seafarers from OECD countries are older with an average age of 50 years (EC, 2011). Further concern about the employment of women seafarers is the view occasionally expressed by employers that the presence of women on ships could lead to sexual tensions and jealousy among male crew members, thus threatening effective working relationships (Thomas, 2004). Moreover, according to Capellan (2013), some employers are of the view that women are very prone to harassment or that sexual harassment can be inevitable when a man sees a woman at sea.

In addition, some shipping companies demand extra requirements from women applicants. For example, a Spanish woman was asked to pass an English examination before she would be employed, only to learn later that she was the only person on board her ship who could speak English (Zhao, 1998). Furthermore, others companies sent
catering forms to women who asked for application forms even when the letter stated a different job title, just because most women are hired as waitresses or utility personnel for luxury line operators (Tansey, 1999 cited in Aggrey, 2000).

6.3. Positive Views and Practices

Despite the negative attitudes of some shipping companies regarding the employment of women on-board ships, some companies especially those in Scandinavia and other developed countries see the presence of a woman on-board as beneficial and hence are willing to employ women (Aggrey, 2000). Furthermore, in contrast to concerns about women introducing sexual tensions, some companies are of the view that the presence of women on-board could actively improve the morale and atmosphere, promoting a more normal environment for the crew to live and work within. With many seafarers working tours of duty of four months or longer and often with few opportunities to go ashore, the more balanced environment of a mixed-sex ship could be of considerable significance. Additionally, some employers are of the view that women performed better in their jobs than their male counterparts. This is sometimes attributed to the difficulties and prejudices that women encountered during their training and careers which were felt to lead to women becoming more determined to succeed. As two employers commented in (Thomas, 2004):

They were good because [ . . . ] (a) there was always a target in front of them, they always wanted to beat the male side of things, and no, it’s a good target, and they all achieved it without doubt. The girls that have made it, I look at them and I talk to some of my friends who have worked with them, and the conclusion is that the girls who get up to that job are extremely determined, are very focused on what they do. You know whatever problems they encounter, they will not push them from the tracks. So if I was about to employ a Second Engineer or a Chief Engineer who was a woman and who has the knowledge of offshore work
and all that, I think I would choose her. If she’s come this far, then I know I’m going to get somebody who is very determined to do the job well who is not there to muck around, who would have the right attitudes.

Irrespective of the numerous campaigns conducted in the past decade by the IMO and the ILO, it is still difficult for some shipping companies to recruit women on-board their ships especially those from Muslim’s countries (including affluent Arab countries), due to cultural issues.

6.4. Examples of Recruiting Women Seafarers
Regardless of the negative opinions of some shipping companies toward employing women, companies who have actually employed women on their ships have stated that they have not had any problems with women on-board. The Managing Director of Kaptanoglu Ship Management Company in Turkey said that they have 3% women on-board their ships, including engineers, deck officers and cadets, some of whom have declined opportunities for advancement, as she stated:

Yes we recruit women. We have about 3% women. We have few female officers on-board; engineers and deck officers as well as cadets. And we have asked them to step up as captains and they don’t want that. The main reason being that they feel comfortable as officers and prefer that than taking the next step. They want to be in their comfort zone.

Such comfort zones are, however, not always preferred by women seafarers. There are a lot of women motivated to become Captains and Chief Engineers, and some have made it. The Managing Director of Kaptanoglu Ship Management Company further reported that they have only had a problem with one female cadet from Europe. Apart from this, they have never had any social problems because they are very strict, especially as regards harassment, as she narrated:
We have received report or problems with only one female cadet. She was from Europe. She came on-board and was looking at the Filipino ratings and asking them to help her and do things for her. She forgot that she was the lowest in rank and she was not ready to do things like chipping because she felt that she was from Europe and needed to be helped and that works against her. We have to get her off the ship. No social problems at all. We do not accept harassment. If we hear of such things we immediately take action.

It is important to note here that this was just a rare case and the majority of women seafarers are well accepted on board the ship as competent crew members once they are employed. Since some women find it difficult to get seafaring jobs, there should be policies with respect to the employment of women on board ships.

6.5. Policies with Respect to Employment of Women On-Board

Women-specific policies for employment can be controversial. Some shipping companies do not recognise the need to establish extra policies with respect to the protection of women on-board since they have not experienced any problems in this regard. Moreover, the essence of this argument is the principle that men and women should be treated equally. The Ship Agent and Supply coordinator of Zen shipping in Turkey stated:

Since we started employing women, we have not experienced any problems with that. So, we do not need to have any extra policy. As long as a woman is good and capable we employ them and treat them equally. Moreover, I don’t think that anyone should get any private support. I’m sorry, whether as a man or woman on-board our ships, you are treated equally.
The Managing Director of Kaptanoglu Ship Management Company further explained that it will become difficult for women on-board if there are extra policies to protect them. Nonetheless, there are policies in place to take care of women’s issues, as she explained:

We have no policies regarding the employment of women seafarers. We have experienced that it works the other way. If you push too much then you make it difficult for women on-board. If you just treat them as one of the guys with no preferred treatment that works best and you gain the respect. If you are a woman and you want to go on-board, then you have to find your own way about and be strong. It is also a cultural thing of course which I think is the biggest challenge. Everything is arranged by law as there are policies in place to take care of women issues like maternity leave.

This example shows that companies that have practices of recruiting women seafarers have policies in place to help women gain access to social support, including maternity leave. This factor is crucial as various literatures identified a lack of support at the policy level and, in some cases, the policies are not practised.

6.6. Employment of West African Women

Due to the time limit of this research, the shipping companies contacted for interviews do not trade in African waters or recruit their crew from Africa. As the Managing Director of Kaptanoglu Ship Management Company explained that as a matter of convenience, they only recruit crews from countries closer to their trading areas. She stated:

We don’t recruit from Africa. We recruit the Dutch, Filipino and the Russian because they are closer to our trading areas. It will not make sense if we recruit from where we are not trading because we have to
hear your language beside we avoid unnecessary cost that we have to fly the crew. Moreover, if we have to come to Africa, then we have to educate the people for the Dutch flag which is an extra cost.

Furthermore, some of the shipping companies support female students in MET institutions where they trade to take up seafaring courses by granting scholarships and employing a number of them on-board their ships. Two ship owners stated:

We have a scholarship programme. In turkey, we have a university that we are proud of and then we give full scholarship to ladies not only as a company but as a Turkish sector. So, we do encourage women to join the maritime sector

We go to the Seafarers schools and visit the cadet training officers and ask them to at least put 10% females.

These affirmative actions from the employer’s side seem to represent effective support to increase the number of women seafarers. If there is a need from the job markets, the MET institutions will be happy to open doors to women in nautical and engineering sciences to respond to the demand for women seafarers

6.7. Summary
This chapter has discussed the views and practices of shipping companies on the employment of women on-board ships. There are still some shipping companies with negative opinions when it comes to the employment of women on-board. This is mostly common with shipping companies that have never employed a female crew because shipping companies that have actually employed women have not had any problems with women on-board. Moreover, some shipping companies do not recognise the need to establish extra policies with respect to the protection of women on-board. This is particularly so with shipping companies that have not experienced any problems with the employment of women on-board.
Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

Literature regarding women seafarers suggests that women represent about 2% of the world’s maritime workforce, with an insignificant number coming from Africa. As a result, the main aim of this research was to identify women seafarers’ challenges with respect to employment on-board ships and ways to provide sufficient solutions to empower more women in West Africa to go to sea. This chapter gives the final conclusions on the findings gathered during the research. It concludes on findings regarding women seafarers, MET institutions and shipping companies with suggestions for future research.

7.1. Women Seafarers in West Africa

The findings regarding the reasons why women choose seafaring careers suggest that most women, particularly women in West Africa, go to sea because they want a more challenging job and also to prove to their male counterparts that they are equally up to the task. This is because in West Africa, seafaring jobs are often associated with masculine norms as physically challenging, and therefore, only for men. Moreover, some West African women seafarers choose to go to sea in order to become the first so as to open the way for others. Furthermore, most women seafarers and non-seafarers view seafaring as a good job as it is an area which strengthens the economies of most countries. Also, women seafarers possess good qualities that make others admire the profession.

In addition, it can be said that women seafarers’ challenges have been reduced due to the initiatives of international organisations to encourage more women to go to sea. Today, most MET institutions grant admission for female students into seagoing courses. Moreover, most shipping companies in Europe and Asia now employ women on-board their ships due to the presence of national gender equality legislation on national ships.
This legislation has created opportunities for women sailing on-board ships, as some prefer sailing on their national flagged ships rather than on FOC (Flag of Convenience) ships. This helps women to feel more secure on-board, due to the absence of multinational crew.

However, the situation in West Africa has a different picture. It is still very difficult for women to be recruited on-board ships due to the lack of national ships and gender equality legislation. All of the national shipping lines in West Africa that existed before and employed a number of women on-board, such as the Black Star Line of Ghana, have collapsed. Additionally, some of the few shipping companies that recruit in West Africa do not take women, mainly because of lack of facilities on-board for women. Hence, the most significant problem faced by West African women is the process of recruitment on-board ships. In addition, there are no effective initiatives or measures to empower women to go to sea in West Africa despite the fact that it is being practiced in other African regions such as South Africa.

When it comes to women seafarers’ challenges on-board, most women are no longer faced with issues of promotion and salary discrimination as they are principally assessed based on their performance and competency. Apart from cultural and religious issues which hamper relationships between women seafarers and their male colleagues, most women who were interviewed in this research have a cordial relationship with their male counterparts. However, all the women seafarers who participated in this research have experienced sexual harassment at work. Women tend to be vulnerable in this context, mainly due to the unbalanced male-to-female ratio on board ships.

One suggestion to deal with such women seafarers’ challenges on-board would be to employ more women as seafarers and balance the male-to-female ratio. The majority of the women who were interviewed noted that the problems can only be overcome if the
numbers of women employed on-board, especially on cargo ships, increase so as to create a gender balance.

7.2. MET Institutions – Opening Doors to Women

The RMU is a co-educational institution which admits females into its Nautical and Marine Engineering programmes. However, the number of female students taking these courses is insignificant. Little effort has been made to encourage more female students to apply for these courses. Furthermore, there is minimal external support given to female students in seafaring courses. In addition, the RMU has no access to a training ship or a ship management company that can provide shipboard training opportunities for their students after graduation. Most of them go through a lot of difficulties getting ships as they have to apply individually, without any organisational support from the institution. As a result, most graduates, particularly female graduates, end up getting jobs on land, instead of going to sea.

In terms of encouraging West African women to seafaring, the role of WMU should not be underestimated. WMU female graduates can be good role models for younger generations in West Africa. WMU has recognised the need to encourage more women in the maritime industry as a whole and as such, gives priority to its female applicants as long as they have the same qualifications and experience. Furthermore, WMU has made efforts through its donors to increase the percentage of female students taking masters programmes. Specifically, between the period of 1987 and 2014, WMU has had 138 female graduates from Africa with the majority (52%) from West African. However, some employers are not keen to nominate women for fellowships to the WMU. In order to have more women, especially West African Women in WMU, employers from West Africa should consider nominating more women for fellowships since the donors give priority to women. Additionally, West African female graduates could play the role of encouraging more women to apply to WMU as well as asking the employers to nominate more women.
7.3. Shipping Companies (Employers) – Removing Prejudice for Women

Based on the information gathered on shipping companies, it can be said that most shipping companies still hesitate to employ women on-board. This is mostly common with shipping companies that have never employed a female crew, while shipping companies that have actually employed women have not reported any problems with women on-board their ships. As one of the best practices of shipping companies, some employers encourage MET institutions to train more women and then recruit them. Once the link between study and employment is established, it would give better prospects for women who wish to work on vessels. Moreover, the recruitment of women seafarers would not be possible without mutual interest and support from MET institutions, shipping companies and international organisations.

7.4. Suggestion for Further Research

Future research could build upon what emerged from this study in order to focus more carefully on national employment equity legislation of West African States, and employment policies and practices of shipping companies particularly those that trade in West African waters, regarding the employment of West African women.

7.5. Recommendations

To the RMU

Increasing the number of West African women going to sea must start with encouraging more female students to take up seafaring courses at the RMU. In order to achieve this, the RMU should carry out a campaign in the senior high schools of its member States to sensitise female students to seafaring programmes. Additionally, female students should be strengthened and encouraged to take interest in Mathematics and Science subjects at the senior high school level, which is a requirement for admitting students to seafaring programmes at the RMU. Moreover, scholarships should be instituted to assist female students who opt for any of these programmes. Furthermore, the RMU should reduce
fees for female students as the sea going courses are generally more expensive than the shore-based courses due to the training involved. The RMU should also establish an Alumni Office to monitor the development of female cadets who graduate from the university.

In addition, to help both male and female graduates gain access to ships, the RMU should consider acquiring a training ship through the governments of its member States as done by SAMTRA and SAMSA. Furthermore, it is suggested that the RMU should enter into negotiations with shipping companies to employ both male and female students immediately after graduation. The RMU should promote female students by educating shipping companies to the fact that women can do what any ordinary seafarer can.

It would be useful to establish a counselling department for female students or cadets in the seafaring courses at RMU on the topics of gender issues and concerns aboard ships. These female cadets need to be well informed of these issues and prepare their minds before they are finally immersed in a man's world. It is important that they understand the common issues among women seafarers, so that they will not take things too personally, but rather see the social, cultural and political issues of women at paid work. Additionally, the RMU should acquire a copy of the ILO- SIRC commissioned book on “Women Seafarers: Global Employment Policies and Practices” and make it available in the library and ensure the female cadets read the very comprehensive and interesting realities that women seafarers have or may experience on-board vessels.

**To West African Governments**

Since there are no national shipping lines in West Africa, it is important that the various States in West Africa, in their capacity as Flag States, negotiate with ships flying their flags to employ women on-board by way of tonnage tax reduction. This is particularly so with Liberia as one of the top ship registration countries under the FOC. Moreover, it
will be possible that they establish gender equality legislation as part of the best practices to encourage shipping companies to employ more women on-board. The governments of West Africa should also establish or strengthen their employment legislation to discourage harassment of all forms, particularly sexual harassment.

**To Women Seafarers in West Africa**

Women seafarers in West Africa should set priorities that reflect balanced life goals to be successful in both professional and personal lives. Furthermore, they should try to discover what it takes to be a woman in a man's world and succeed through education, knowledge, and experience. In addition, they should develop what are typically regarded as “male strengths or assets” to be accepted or promoted, while retaining their valuable female characteristics. Both assets should be used wisely and appropriately, bearing in mind that some strengths, which are typically very feminine, if utilized appropriately, could be assets amidst the “man’s world” of seafaring. Moreover, West African women seafarers should mentor other women into the profession.

**To Shipping Companies**

When recruiting people for seafaring jobs, shipping companies should not focus on gender but should appreciate the competence of a person or look at who is the best person for the job. Furthermore, they should consider the advantages and privileges of having women on-board and recruit more women as this will help to reduce the challenges of women seafarers on-board as well as providing a solution to the shortage of officers. In addition, they should deal with both male and female seafarers fairly. Issues including sexual harassment stretching from verbal sexualised comments to physical assault should be effectively addressed by companies to ensure the continued retention of existing women seafarers and the recruitment of women seafarers in the future.
To the WMU

The WMU should continue marketing efforts to balance the gender gap in the student body by negotiating with donors to sponsor more female students. Moreover, both governments and private employers especially those from West Africa should focus on the potential that women have and nominate them for fellowships or sponsor them at WMU. There is a saying that goes “when you educate a woman, you educate a nation”. These West African female students, when they graduate will go back and support more women in West Africa to go to sea through the IMO regional support network (Network for Professional Women in the Maritime and Port Sectors of West and Central Africa), hence increasing the number of West African women seafarers.
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http://althistory.wikia.com/wiki/File:Large_blank_world_map_with_oceans_in_blue.png

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Appendix 1

International Organizational Initiatives to Promote Women Seafarers

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

The IMO most essential development with respect to women started in 1988 through the work of its Integrated Technical Cooperation program, which has addressed the need to increase the employment of women from the developing nations in the maritime sector as well as to develop female human resources in developing countries through education, training and the transfer of knowledge. Based on the United Nation's (UN) policy to develop female human resources and to strengthen the role of women in 1988, the IMO approved a "Strategy on the Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector" (IWMS), a comprehensive policy to strengthen women's capacity in the maritime sector (IMO, 1988). In order to integrate women into the mainstream maritime sector and to promote the endorsement of gender considerations, IMO launched its Strategy for Women in Development (WID) in 1988 (IMO, 2012a).

In addition, the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation program has led to six regional support networks established for the purpose of capacity building for women in the maritime sector. The six regional support networks are: Pacific Women Association (PacWIMA); Network for Professional Women in the Maritime and Port Sectors of West and Central Africa; Arab International Women's Maritime Forum for MENA and Africa; Association of Women Managers in the maritime sector of Eastern and Southern Africa (WOMESA); Association for Women Managers in the Maritime Sector, Asia (WIMA-Asia); and Forum for Women Managers in the Maritime Sector, Latin America (IMO, 2014a). The six regional networks and other women associations promoting the integration of women in the maritime sector are described in appendix 2 below.

Furthermore, In response to the global demands in the seafaring labour market, IMO launched the "Go to Sea!" campaign in 2008, and focused on increasing the target audience of this campaign through the Regional Conference on the Development of a
Global Strategy for Women Seafarers, held in Busan, Republic of Korea in April 2013. One of the key outcomes of that event is a project for the preparation of a strategy for women seafarers, which will be implemented in 2014 by IMO in cooperation with WMU. The new strategy will be circulated through the regional support networks aforementioned. Moreover, the conference adopted a slogan: "Go to sea TOGETHER" in order to promote women seafaring (IMO, 2014a).

In addition, in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of IMO's capacity-building and gender program for women in the maritime sector, a video entitled "Women at the Helm" was produced by IMO's Public Information Services, in collaboration with the Technical Co-operation Division. The video was screened for the first time at the Regional Conference on the Development of a Global Strategy for Women Seafarers, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in April 2013 (IMO, 2013a). In addition to the implementation of Technical Cooperation activities, IMO promotes that both government and industry should provide men and women with equal access and opportunities for maritime training, jobs and employment. Additionally, there should be facilities on board ship, which are suitable for women, based on the 2006 General Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) resolution 2, concerning "the promotion of opportunities for women seafarers". Moreover, under the 2010 Manila Amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, resolution 14 concerns the "promotion of the participation of women in the maritime industry" (IMO, 2012a).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO)
The ILO has been committed to promoting the rights of all women and men at work and achieving equality between them since its foundation in 1919 (Turnbull, 2013). Specifically, the ILO study and activities on women seafarers focus on such issues as equal opportunity, maternity protection, sexual harassment, collective bargaining and equal payment for work of equal value. Moreover, the report of the 29th session of the
Joint Maritime Commission, 2001 of the ILO sectoral activities program, addressed gender problems in the maritime industry in connection with sexual harassment and accommodation issues for women seafarers. The survey of women seafarers in the major Europeans Union countries and additional information on female maritime labour force globally were represented at this session (Belcher et al., 2003).

In addition, the ILO has shown its strong concerned about gender issues in the maritime sector by commissioning the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) in 2003 to undertake a study on Women Seafarers -Global employment policies and practices. The study, based on extensive interviews with maritime regulators, ship owners, trade unions and women seafarers, illustrates the challenges encountered by women to gain employment and advancement on-board ships. Moreover, it examines regional differences in the employment of female seafarers and in the type of work they do and highlight the potential resource that women represent for the industry. This study was published by the ILO in a book format and distributed widely in the maritime community. Furthermore, as a way to promote gender sensitive policies in the maritime sector, the ILO uses the study as a resource document in all its maritime activities as well as working together with the IMO (DCOMM,2003). Additionally, the General Conference of the International Labour Organization, after adopting the Maritime Labour Convention in 2006, when ahead to adopt a Resolution concerning the promotion of opportunities for women seafarers (ILO, n.d.).

In addition, the ILO conventions and recommendations have established the international standards for the labour market of seafarers. One of the most important ILO maritime labour instruments is the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) that was adopted in 2006 and entered into force in 2013. In particular, the convention deal with seafarers ( men and women) issues such as conditions of employment, accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering; health protection, medical care, welfare and social security protection (ILO,2012).
The International Transport Workes’ Federation (ITF)
The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) is an international trade union federation of transport workers' unions. It is working to improve conditions for seafarers (both men and women seafarers) of all nationalities and to ensure adequate regulation of the shipping industry to protect the interests and rights of the Seafarers (ITF, n.d.). The need to address specific issues concerning women seafarers was recognised by the ITF in 1994. As a result, a woman committee was established in 1998 to advise the ITF’s executive Board on gender related matters including women seafarer’s issues. Moreover, in 1999 an anti-discriminatory policy was introduced for the purpose of addressing harassment and discrimination (Belcher et al., 2003). Furthermore, in an effort to address women seafarer’s issues such as pregnancy and maternity, the ITF has made agreements with owners of merchant vessels. All ITF-approved agreements for merchant vessels stipulate that pregnant seafarers must be repatriated at the cost of the company and must receive two months full pay in compensation. On Flag of convenience (FOC) vessels, maternity rights are governed by the legislation of the flag state which may not give any rights at all. However, minimum rights are guaranteed under ITF-approved agreements (ITF, 2012).

In addition, the ITF has developed a policy on bullying and harassments. The ITF policy establishes the following wording for inclusion in all ITF-approved collective agreements for Flag of convenience vessels:

Each seafarer shall be entitled to work, train and live in an environment free from harassment and bullying, whether sexually, racially or otherwise motivated, in accordance with ITF policy guidelines.

Furthermore, the policy states that similar provisions should also be adopted in bargaining agreements for national flag vessels (ITF, 2014). Moreover, bullying and harassment guidelines have been agreed by the European ship-owners and European Transport Workers' Federation unions (ETF, 2014). In addition, other areas where the
ITF has championed for women seafarers include the provision of sanitary items on board ships; providing access to confidential medical advice, the contraceptive and morning-after pill; consistent and improved approach to training (ITF, 2012). Additionally, the ITF together with the International Maritime Employers’ Council (IMEC) have formed an International Bargaining Forum (IBF) to bargain on seafarer’s employment issues (IMEC, 2013). This forum resulted in the development of a model agreement known as Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in which specific attention has been given to women seafarers for used on open-register ships (ITF/IMEC, 2012). Employers using this agreement are bound by article 24 on maternity, which states that:

24.1. In the event that a crewmember becomes pregnant during the period of employment:

a). the seafarer shall advise the master as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed;

b). the company will repatriate the seafarer as soon as reasonably possible but in no case later than the 26th week of pregnancy; and where the nature of the vessel’s operations could in the circumstances be hazardous – at the first port of call;

c). the seafarer shall be entitled to 100 days basic pay;

d). the seafarer shall be afforded priority in filling a suitable vacancy in the same or equivalent position within three years following the birth of a child should such a vacancy be available.

However, this agreement does not cover women working in the cruise ships as IMEC membership extends only to those employers in the cargo sector (ITF/IMEC, 2012).
Appendix 2

The IMO Regional Women Support Network

Recent studies on women in the maritime sector indicate a smaller number of women working in the maritime sector. This is particularly so with the number of women working on board ships as recent studies estimated the number of women seafarers to be about 2% of the total seafaring population (Belcher et al., 2003). As a result, women have started advocating themselves and with the help of the IMO technical cooperation program for the integration of women in the maritime sector, many international, regional and national women networks have been established for the purpose of integrating more women into the maritime sector. The following section looks at some of these networks and their outcomes.

Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA)

PacWIMA was established in February, 2005 with assistance from the Regional Maritime Program (RMP) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) as the principal regional interactive forum for Pacific women employed in the maritime sector to discuss and debate issues of concern to the region’s maritime industry as well as to promote solutions and opportunities to overcome challenges faced by women in the wider maritime sector. The main aims of the PacWIMA are to: promote overall development of the maritime sector in the Pacific, advocate gender equity in the Pacific maritime sector, promote education, training and career opportunities for Pacific women linked to the maritime sector, increase the recognition of social responsibilities relating to Pacific women in the maritime sector, promote cooperation, friendship and understanding through the exchange of knowledge and the dissemination of information and promote safe, secure and efficient shipping and cleaner oceans (SPC, n.d.).
Network for Professional Women in the Maritime and Port Sectors of West and Central Africa

This association was established in February 2007 with the aim to assist women employed at middle and senior management levels in ports of the west and central Africa sub-region to establish a formal and sustainable association for women managers in ports. Moreover, the association provides a permanent channel for the exchange of information relating to the effective implementation of international instruments within the context of their roles in their respective ports. Furthermore, it provides a springboard for developing regional training opportunities which match the needs and requirements of women, taking into account the socio-cultural elements which determine access to training and to career development. In the long-term, the knowledge gained by participants and the framework established through the association would strengthen the national maritime and port capacities of the countries and sub-region in question (IMO, 2007).

Arab International Women's Maritime Forum (AIWMF) for MENA and Africa

The AIWMF for MENA and Africa was launched at the Regional Conference on the Arab International Maritime Women in MENA and Africa held on 16-17 July 2007. The main objective of the forum is to function as a lobbying and advocating group for women's concerns at the national, regional and international levels. The forum aims to build on and deepen the IMO gender mainstreaming approach, especially when addressing such challenges as the achievement of women's full participation in leadership and decision-making in the maritime sector in most of the Arab countries (Marlog, 2014).

Association of Women Managers in the maritime sector of Eastern and Southern Africa (WOMESA)

WOMESA was founded in December 2007 in Mombasa, Kenya, in order to cater for the interests of female professionals from diverse backgrounds in the Maritime industry. Its main objectives are to advocate gender equity in the East and Southern Africa
Maritime Sector; Integrate women in the mainstream maritime activities; Promote women’s access to the maritime sector through education, training and career opportunities; Lobby for increasing the percentage of women at the senior management level within the maritime sector; Promote women’s access to quality employment in the maritime sector; Enhance the inclusion of women in the maritime sector through partnership collaboration with development partners and Promote co-operation, friendship and understanding through the exchange of knowledge and the dissemination of information. It covers twenty four (24) countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and has its Secretariat in Mombasa, Kenya (Karigithu, n.d.).

**Association for Women Managers in the Maritime Sector, Asia (WIMA-Asia)**

This association was launched during the regional workshop for women managers in the maritime sector held in Manila, the Philippines from 26 to 29 January 2010, attended by 51 participants from 17 countries in the Asia sub region. The Association main aim is to enhance the role of Women Managers in the Maritime Sector of Asia (IMO, 2011).

**Forum for Women Managers in the Maritime Sector, Latin America**

This forum was launched in Panama City, Panama, in March 2012. It was the main outcome of the regional conference on the Role of Women in Management Roles in the Maritime Sector, hosted by Panama and organized for IMO by the Central American Commission on Maritime Transport (COCATRAM). The objective is to provide a springboard for a training plan designed to address the knowledge-gap of the participating women managers. In light of the robust maritime framework which exists in Latin America, through the Operative Network for Regional Cooperation among Maritime Authorities of the Americas (ROCRAM) and the Operative Network of Regional Co-operation on Maritime Matters in Central America and the Dominican Republic (ROCRAM-CA) (IMO, 2013b).
The World Maritime University Women's Association (WMUWA)

This is a new association that has just been established in April 2014 by the female students of the World Maritime University (WMU) class of 2014. These female students which I happened to be one of them were motivated by the IMO regional support networks to form the WMU Women's Association (WMUWA). The objectives of the Association are among other things, to connect, educate and inspire women in the maritime industry and to promote the interests of female maritime professionals by the creation of an international network for women from the WMU, together with women involved in other internationally-recognized female associations in the maritime sector. Moreover, one of the main goals of the association is to facilitate the application of more women into WMU (chapter four gives a detailed account on the number of female students enrolment at the WMU). As a result, it is envisioned that one fellowship per year will be specifically designated for an appropriately-qualified female candidate who lacks other financial support to enable her enrolment. This student would be tasked with particular responsibility for actively supporting WMUWA during her period of studies.

Membership to the association is open to current WMU students as well as alumni. Moreover, the Association envisions networking between current students and alumni, mentorship of new graduates by successful alumni, the organization of workshops and seminars and the improvement of collective competence by focusing on education and knowledge. Given the diversity of WMU alumni who represent areas from every regional network, it is anticipated that the WMUWA will provide this key element of communication to link all the regions (IMO, 2014a).

In addition to the regional support networks, there are some active national chapters in Africa (Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia and Tanzania), and in Asia and the Pacific (Papua New Guinea and the Philippines) (IMO, 2014b).
Outcomes from Some Regional Women Support Networks

The outcomes from meetings held by the regional networks such as WIMA-Asia meeting, held in Manila, the Philippines in January 2010 was summarized under their resolution on "the Contribution of women in the maritime sector in enhancing the development and sustainability of the Asia region". Which among other things, urged the maritime industry to make sufficient provision to increase opportunities for sea-time and on-the-job training for female seafarers. Moreover, during this meeting the shipping industry was urged to address the requirement for separate facilities and accommodation for women seafarers, taking into account the need to maintain the personal security and safety of women seafarers in their working environment at sea, with the proposal that the design modifications be made mandatory within five years. Furthermore, for safety reasons, WIMA-Asia recommended that a minimum of two female seafarers should be employed on any given ship and the support system available to them should be strengthened (IMO, 2012b).

In addition, WOMESA held a meeting in December 2010 in Durban, South Africa. The outcome of this meeting was WOMESA resolution 2 (2010) entitled "the Facilitation of sea training for women cadets to strengthen the maritime sector for eastern and southern Africa" (IMO, 2012b).
Appendix 3

Research Access Letter

World Maritime University
PO BOX 500, S-201 24
Malmo, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)727845553
Email: s14034@wmu.se

Dear Sir/Madam:
I am writing to request your kind assistance with a research I am engaged in as part of my Masters’ Program in Maritime Affairs at the World Maritime University.

My dissertation examines the challenges with respect to employment of women on-board ships and how to provide sufficient solutions for the recruitment of more women in West Africa on-board ships.
As part of my data collection, I am carrying out a series of confidential and anonymous interviews with Women seafarers, Maritime Education and Training (MET) institutions, shipping and crewing companies. Since you fall in one of these categories, I feel you will be able to provide unique experiences and perspectives that are central to my research. I am therefore hoping you can spare some few minutes of your time to speak with me.

My data collection is scheduled for the period of May to July, 2014. Any appointment time you could grant me during this period would be greatly appreciated. Also, any suggestions you have as to other seafarers that might be able to assist with my research would be welcomed.
With your agreement, the interview will be recorded by a tape recorder in which I will use to listen to the things you have said and transcribe them into a written form. After which I will write a published dissertation and give a presentation at the end of the study. Whilst I may quote things that you have said in the dissertation, I will not identify you at any stage.

Thank you in advance for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ms Azirh Nicholine Tifuh
Appendix 4

Research Informed Consent Form

Can you kindly participate in my research on, WOMEN MERCHANT MARINERS: EMPOWERING WEST AFRICAN WOMEN TO GO TO SEA?

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

☐ Yes I want to be interviewed.

☐ NO I do not agree with being interviewed.

I consent to information collected during interview, as outlined in the accompany research access letter, being used for this study. I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence.

Date: __________________________

Name: _____________________________

Email: _____________________________

Thank you

Researcher: Nicholine Azirh
Appendix 5

Interview Guide

Women Merchant Mariners: Empowering West African Women to Go to Sea

1. Questions for Women Seafarers

A. Background Information
   ✓ Age / Nationality / Married or Single / Children?
   ✓ Deck, Engine or Radio / Rank / Social Class

B. Core Information
   1. How long did you work at sea?
   2. What types of ship did you serve on mostly?
   3. Why did you decide to pursue a career at sea?
   4. Was it difficult for you to get a ship to serve on?
   5. Is there any difficulty because you are a woman?
   6. On the other hand, were doors open to you for the same reason?
   7. What has the attitude been in a male dominated field as you move up the ranks?
   8. How was your relationship with your male colleagues?
   9. As a woman Officer/Captain, is it difficult giving orders?
   10. Is there any difference in salaries because of gender?
   11. Have you been able to motivate any women into the Seafaring career? If yes how did you do it?
   12. What are the major problems encountered as a woman on-board the ship? And how did you deal with these problems?
   13. To solve these problems, what areas do you think should be improved and developed for Women Seafarers?
   14. What is your view, about women in the Seafaring job?
   15. How can women be encouraged to undertake seafaring career?
   16. Are there any measures or policies to encourage women to go to sea in West Africa? If yes, what are they? (Note: Only for Women Seafarers from West Africa?)

2. Questions for Personnel in Shipping and Crewing Companies

A. Background Information
   ✓ Age / Nationality / Married or Single / Children?
   ✓ Company / position
B. Core Information
1. Do you employ women on-board your fleets?
2. If yes, at what rank? And why?
3. If no, why?
4. What are some of the challenges in employing women Seafarers on-board your ships?
5. Are there any policies in place with regards to employment of women seafarer’s on-board your fleets? If yes, what are they?
6. How do you deal with Women Seafarers challenges on-board?
7. Are there any forms of practices in your company to get more women on-board your ships? If yes what are they?
8. What kind of support do you think the Government can grant to shipping companies to employ women on-board their fleets
9. What can be done to get more West African Women on-board your ships?
10. Is there any specific information you give to women seafarers?
11. What are some of the things you do as a company to provide sufficient support for Women Seafarers on-board your vessels?


A. Background Information
✓ Age / Nationality / Married or Single / Children?
✓ Institution / position

B. Core Information

I. Regional Maritime University (RMU)

1. Do you grant admission for female students into Nautical and Engineering courses?
2. If this is not the case, why is it so?
3. If yes, what is the percentage of female students offering these courses?
4. What is their performance as compare to their male counterpart?
5. What would the institute do to encourage more women to take up these courses?
6. What can be done to improve the intake of women into the Nautical and Engineering departments?
7. What is the process normally followed by the students in order to undertake a career at sea?
8. Is there a support system like a seafaring body that could support the female student by granting them access to a ship?

II. World Maritime University (WMU)
1. Do you grant admission for female students in your Masters programmes?
2. If this is not the case, why is it so?
3. If yes, what is the percentage of female students offering these programmes?
4. Is shipboard experience a requirement for granting admission for students into WMU?
5. What is their performance as compare to their male counterpart?
6. What would the institute do to encourage more women to take up these programmes?
7. What can be done to improve the intake of women from West Africa into WMU?
8. Is there a support system or organisation that grants supports to female students at the University?
Appendix 6
Interview Quotes: Women Seafarers

A. Background Information
32yrs/ Ghanaian/ single/ no children
Deck Off/ 4th Officer/ Middle Income

B. Core Information
1. I have worked for about 13months
2. on container vessels
3. I was inspired as a child when I saw a female captain at the Tema port.
4. Very difficult, I had paid money at different agencies to get one for my cadetship training.
5. Lots of difficulties, I had to prove to the men that I can do what they are doing also. Some also think having a female on board poses lot problems and troubles.
6. At sea…None that I can readily remember, but on land as a female seafarer I am always nominated to join the guys /men when attending conferences and programmes.
7. Most of the men are not happy when a woman gives them command on the ship, there’s always that fear that she will soon start commanding me and give us orders.
8. Generally, it was ok. Just that some had religious and cultural issues on having a female on board. Some did not want to use the same washing machine and drier that I use, because I am a female.
9. Yes sometimes it is difficult. They will challenge your decisions also at times.
10. No. none at all
11. No.
12. Harassment and racism, With harassment I reported when I could not take it any longer but with the racism I just endured till the end.
13. Port and flag state must encourage more shipping companies and vessel owners to employ more females. I personally think IMO must tighten their laws to protect the female seafarer’s image and personality. And the port and flag states must be more concern about every single female on board their ships each time the ship comes to port. They should have a way of interacting with them frequently and not wait for reports from victims before doing something about it.
14. They are courageous and very self-sacrificing and when given the right support and encouragement, they will succeed with flying colours and do their nations proud.
15. More education and informing others that woman are also welcomed. Encourage the younger females and counsel them to put away the fears they have about the seafaring job. West African states can come together and have shipping companies to employ their
own people. If possible certain policies that favour the port state should also be encouraged e.g. Training of local content by shipping companies that trade with the port state. When the right legislatures are in place to protect the females from any type of abuse and harassment and when the seafaring career is not seen as one for prostitutes.

16. None that I know of.
Appendix 7

Interview Quotes: The Regional Maritime University (RMU)

Background Information
Age: 48
Institution: Regional Maritime University
Position: Registrar

Core Information
Q1. Yes, RMU is co-educational institution and therefore admit females into its Nautical and Marine Engineering programmers.
Q2. Not applicable in view of the answer provided in Q1 above.
Q3. The percentage of female students admitted into the programmes mentioned above is insignificant. In ratio terms it is about 1:23 for Nautical Science and 2:40 for Marine Engineering.
Q4. In spite of their number, those admitted on the programme performed well than their male counterparts.
Q5. Females are encouraged to apply.
Q6. RMU as institution is putting in place some measures to improve on female intake into these programmes:
   i. Automatic admission to all female applicants who qualify for the programme.
   ii. Outreach programmes to second cycle institutions to sensitize students particularly females students on the programmes.
Q7. .................................................................
Q8. There is, but it is very minimal. Women in Shipping and Trade Association (WISTA) have instituted awards for best graduating female students in Nautical Science and Marine Engineering.
Q9. Other measures to encourage female students are:
   i. Strengthen and encourage female students to take interest in Mathematics and Science subject at the Senior High School level so we will have more female student with science background qualifying.
   ii. Institute scholarship schemes will have to be instituted to assisted female students who opt for any of the programme.
   iii. The University can also relax the entry qualification to favour female applicants.
   iv. Government can also institute some incentives by way of tax reduction for institutions that may sponsor female students for these programmes.
Appendix 8

Interview Quotes: The World Maritime University (WMU)

Core Information

1. We expect the same standard of qualification and experience for all students whether they are men or women. But the donors give priority for giving fellowship awards to women. So what we need is more women applicants.

2. When I came to WMU, it was running for about 4 to 5%. We have worked to increase that and it has been running of about 30% of the student body. But this year, it looking at about 25% because three ladies have just withdrawn from fellowships. One was pregnant, one has a family problem and the other one her government won’t let her come. The university does everything possible but we need help from the sending agencies.

3. The possible problem is women don’t go into the maritime industry at a lower level. We run a professional programme; it’s similar to an MBA. So, we can’t take a woman just because she is a woman who has never seen a boat. We need more cooperation from employers to nominate women to apply for donors to send them. Some employers are very enlightening and some employers are not. The university is here we only have half the picture.

4. We have not measured that. We have never done a male versus a female performance. But in 2000, we introduced the Chancellor medal that is given to the best performing student. That has been awarded so far, 14 times from 2001 to 2014. Out of the 14 awards winner, it has been given to 4 women out of 14. So, the female are slightly performing better than their men representation. Not massively, but slightly as there are a significant statistic. Among these four women, two from china, one from France and the other one from Argentina so far. So, get working…..

5. I talked to students to ask them please put people forward. I talk to graduates who work for employers, please put women forward. There is an institutional difficulty in some places in putting women forward because in their minds women staffs prioritise their families and their home life. I have heard that most of them actually want to get married and have babies. But this is where the donors are very flexible as whether they will have a cut off age for men of 40 to 42. They are always flexible with women. So, it really a question of whether are women graduates going back mentoring women colleagues and trying to encourage them not only in the same institution. I hope you will go back and
encourage people in Ghana as a whole and in Cameroon as well where ever you have contacts. I see it as your responsibility because we can only do just half; we have only about 45 students’ fellowships for donors. The others are paid for either personally that is up to them, or by their employers. That is where the employers prefer to pay for men but not in Indonesia. Indonesia pay for a lot of women so. In Indonesia, the sending agencies are absolutely working with us.

6. They don’t have to have ships board experience, not at all. Absolutely not, they can work in the ministry of transport; there are a lot of different ways. We have no problems with women who have degrees in Sociology, business or anything like that. In the same way as we don’t have problems with men also. We actually do not require shipboard experience otherwise we will have training for both men and women. In Korea, there are women Seafarers, in Ghana there are women seafarers but you can pick out a few of them. All our donors are either the part of the government or they are under the umbrella of the government and they are working to further help the government establish policies. Most governments do have gender equality policies or gender empowerment policies. Most of them have signed up to the UN Millennium goals. So, the problems is not with the donors is with not receiving enough applications, they need more applications from women. Donors don’t fund private organizations because IMO is an association of government and so the donors funding is bilaterally government to government. But some donors are very rigid about how they interpret government; some donors are not flexible and think this is a publicly funded institution.