



Case study 1st Draft – the narrative part

1. Title

Leadership to overcome second generation gender bias for women

2. Executive Summary

This is a case of prejudice due to cultural reasons. Within this case there are three people starred: The 4th mate, the 1st mate and the captain. It shows how the 1st officer's well-intentioned approach to protecting the 4th officer actually harms her.



3. The narration

The scenery

This is a good example of overprotective behavior of senior officers onboard who actually harm the women officers while trying to help them.

Our narrator is Nur. She remembers when she was onboard a chemical tanker, back in 2015 as a 4th mate.

There were approximately 30 crew onboard where Nur was the only woman. It was mid-June and the ship was sailing from Ukraine to Turkey. The incident took place in day time and was witnessed by several crew who were present there at the time.

The weather was cloudy and windy but warm. The sea was slightly turbulent and other ships were sometimes seen around.



3.1. Introducing the people involved

The 4th Mate.

Nur is the 4th mate on board this ship. She is a quiet, hardworking and clever girl who is always ready to do what she is told to do. She is inexperienced but very eager to learn everything as far as the jobs on board are concerned. She learns foreign languages and tries to get as many soft skills as possible to be an efficient officer.

Nur remembers and describes an incident that happened when she was onboard a chemical tanker, back in 2015. She had been on board for 2 years at the time the incident took place. She knew what kind of dangers were posed by the life on board and what kind of challenges she was likely to face. She was aware of the fact that she had to work more than the men to be accepted as equal.

Women seafarers constitute only 1.28% of the global seafaring workforce. This figure is increasing fast. Approximately 25 000 women are serving as seafarers now, which means an increase of 45.8% as compared to 2015. The scarce number of women seafarers causes some problems. Most men seafarers haven't had the chance to work with women seafarers yet, so they don't have any idea about their competence and performance. That's why they have some misconceptions, which is very normal. The incident mentioned in this case study is the result of these misconceptions.

The 1st Mate

He was around 50- 55 years old, married with 2 daughters, a very fatherly, kind and thoughtful man. He always tried to help the people onboard as much as he could. He took Nur as one of her daughters, so behaved her as if she had been his daughter. He couldn't accept her as one of the staff onboard but as a graceful girl who needs to be protected and cared for.

The 1st Mate is second in command aboard the vessel and must be capable of assuming full command should the Captain become incapacitated. The Captain relies heavily on the 1st Mate to supervise and coordinate day-to-day activities of all members of the deck department, and to participate fully in those activities. They supervise the members of the deck department including 2nd and 3rd Mates, able-seafarers, and ordinary seaman or deckhands. On most vessels, the Chief Mate is second in command after the Captain. Some vessels, usually cruise ships or large passenger vessels, have 1st Mate/Officers.



The Captain

The captain was 45-50 years old, experienced, fatherly and helpful, who has been onboard for about 20 years until that day. He was a Turkish captain who loved his job a lot. He tried to resolve conflicts among ship crew by peaceful means, tried not to hurt employees, and knew how important it was to motivate them. He has strong interpersonal skills and mediation and negotiation abilities. He was well aware of that the responsibilities of his position included communicating courteously with many different people in various situations.

The Captain is in charge of the ship. It is his/her duty to manage the vessel in such a manner as to ensure the safety and well-being of guests and crew, and to conduct ship's affairs in accordance with established policies and direction from the Operations Manager. The company relies on the Captain to set a high standard of personal and professional conduct, and to maintain shipboard morale and respect for the company's purpose and mission.

The rest of the crew

Although the crew were mostly Turkish, some came from foreign countries like Philippines, China. They didn't speak English very well but they could understand it, so they didn't have communication problems. They were generally good-tempered and friendly.

3.2. The challenge

The incident took place on board a chemical ship where Nur, the 4th mate, was the only woman there. She was engaged in work which was considered inappropriate for women by the 1st mate who wanted her to do "a more suitable job for a woman". Nur objected this by saying that she was able to do everything that a man could do and continued insisting on doing the job; however, the 1st mate waved his hand in a deprecating gesture and sent her away.

They took the discussion to the captain who decided in favour of Nur, which means he said she should finish the work she was supposed to. Nur was happy to go back to her work but also surprised and



confused by the reaction of the 1st mate who had been very friendly and helpful for her since she started working there. After the decision of the captain, she asked the 1st mate the reason why he behaved in this way and even more surprised and confused to learn his excuse. He had objected because he wanted to protect her and didn't want her to suffer from the burden of such hard work. 1st mate had actually acted in good faith and wanted to protect her, but had unwittingly harmed her.

3.3. The dilemma

Such a behaviour could have created a negative image about women. Those who did not know the truth about the matter might think that the women avoided hard work and that the men who worked with them had to do the women's work in addition to their own work. Such an act could harm women in four different ways.

However, this situation revealed that men had a lack of knowledge and experience about working with women in male-dominated workplaces. It is often discussed that if a person works in a job dominated by the opposite gender, gender-related challenges are likely to arise. For example, women tend to experience difficulties in male-dominated occupations, because they must cope with the bias set for them because of their gender. It may be less difficult to eliminate bias the women directly face, but additional action must be taken to cope with the so-called second-generation gender bias, which means, unlike intentional and obvious (first-generation) gender bias, invisible customs and practices in an organization look neutral but appear to hold women back and prevent them from reaching their full potential. On the other hand, rising to top positions is hard for women in male-dominated sectors, because of not only the bias in question, but also the glass ceiling that is always there for them. To overcome these hardships women develop some strategies which may change from culture to culture or from woman to woman. However, there is not predetermined or mutually-accepted ways to cope with these kind of hardships.

3.4. The resolution

This was an unexpected situation for both Nur and 1st mate. 1st mate had acted in good faith and wanted to protect Nur because he had two daughters of the same age and saw Nur as his daughter. However, Nur had a completely different point of view, namely a professional point of view, and she wanted to do whatever she was expected to do.



This was, perhaps, the result of a different perspective stemming from the generation gap between them. However, both of them understood each other and the problem was solved at the end.

It is seen once again that the human factor is always important in order for things to run smoothly and properly. In addition, it always helps to empathize and see things from other people's perspectives. Guiding people and persuading them to work in line with the needs is a very important art which requires strong leadership skills.

Comprehension questions

1. Who are the key people in this case? What is the background of the people involved? What are their personal features? What are their reactions to the case and why do they react in this way?
2. Which events took place during this case?
3. Describe the problem from the perspective of primary people involved and compare what they expected and what they found.