

EXPECTATIONS OF THE WORKING ENVIROMENT – ENCOUNTER CIVILIZATION ON THE OCEAN LINER

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Abstract

The world of ocean liners is full of secrets for many people, but, of course, it is a very special working environment by all means. During our examination we have undertaken to map the expectations and motivations of the employees coming from several continents together with some similarities and differences. Based on our results the similarities lying in the background of motivation can enhance cooperation and more intense encounters to a great extent even in spite of the intensive mental and physical burdens.

Key words: cohabitation, working environment, connecting cultures, mental load, motivation

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Introduction

The world of cruise-ships is a rather peculiar, however, this is an attractive job opportunities for many people these days. The favourable financial options (which are provided herein for the workers) are mostly known among young people who are well informed in a labour market perspective. At the same time the work environment, which significantly differs from the usual, can be a serious challenge for them. Hard work, long workhours, tight living space, very little private sector are very limited opportunities for relaxation, as well as care for personal relationships with people in the home. The people of different nationalities are from different cultures, so they have different experience, value systems, traditions and religions too. In order to work effectively it is necessary to create a well-oiled team. Many of them have been living this lifestyle for long years in spite of that they have already had a financial security. Therefore it can be assumed that there may be other sources of commitment to a specific job as the financial benefits.

Theoretical background

Analysis of the factors determining the commitment of the organization has already been one of focuses in researches of organizational psychology for a long time. (O'Reilly – Chatman, 1986; Meyer – Allen, 1991; Wasti, 2005) The content of the commitment, the formation of this facilitative factors and consequences of commitment are tested very extensively. (Mathieu – Zajac, 1990; Meyer – Stanley – Herscovitch – Topolnytsky, 2002). A number of earlier studies also found correlation between the degree of commitment towards the organization and the magnitude of the efforts that go beyond job requirements on (Cohen, 2007; Hogg & Terry, 2001; Wasti, 2003). As well as to insist on the organization. (Silverthorne, 2004).

Examining the quit jobs of employees in Hungary it turned out that - understandably - the results show a strong correlation between leaving the profession time and professional esteem, and the attrition of time and finances satisfaction rate. (Cseh Papp - Hajós, 2014)

Results of Greenberg and Baron (2003) show clearly, that the quality of organizational commitment is one of the most important indicator in employee's behaviour in the future. Thus, in this light, it can be made a highly accurate estimates the employee's working attitudes and performance of work. McKinnon et al (2003) the people-oriented, and fair to the workers considered it important driving behaviour, while according to Hult (2005) the quality integration into the workplace and individual satisfaction toward relations between staff are decisive in the formation of engagement.

Forgas (1994) examining the correlation between the commitment and team cohesion concluded that besides the relationship of these factors the personal engagement influences the performance of the group too. Following Aronson and Mills (1981) results, however, we conclude that the commitment constitute an important element of mental effort, which is part of the group's members. Forgas (1994) describes this context that we feel more commitment and respect especially for those groups for which we have serious sacrifice, and where it was difficult to get into. Based on these relationships, therefore, manifesting greater cohesion within the crew, and simultaneously a suspected deeper organizational engagement even can be a natural consequence of serious challenges at work.

In the last two decades significant number of international research is based on the model of Meyer and Allen (1991): there are three markedly separate psychological condition in the background of the commitment. The first, which was named an emotional commitment, is based on the personal identity of the organization's goals, values system. It is important for the individual to carry out value-creating work that is worth rewarding. (Mowday et al., 1979)The following, the so-called source of continuity commitment which is occurring in connection with leaving the organization costs. However, the extent of the expected costs withhold the employee to quit. These costs may be both financial and social nature, so chances of alternative labour market opportunities as well as the role of social relations is balance in this aspect are weight in this aspect. The third is called the normative commitment of domestic scientific literature - is built around the person will remain permanently in the body bond because of their sense of duty while the person is unable to identify with regard to all the relevant characteristics of workplace. It is important to note, however, that the three components do not describe the various types of engagement but the engagement organizational components i.e. they are displayed simultaneously in the working attitudes. By the determination of hierarchical relationship between the three components it can be seen the psychological motives which form the background of loyalty to the organization and what form they can contribute to success and performance of the person in the long run.

During the nine comprehensive research and summarizing the responses of more than 2,700 people Dunham Grube and Castaneda (1994) examined that "participatory management" and feedback on the workhow they affect affective, normative and continuous type of employee engagement. According to the survey the adequate feedback on performanceand involving employees in the decision-making process are much more powerful in influencing emotional engagement than the other two components commitment, certainly a positive context.

Our study - taking into account the results of previous researches- is based on the assumption that beyond the material possibilities there are other sources of motivation and working

conditions – despite an increased load – which attract the employee regardless of which continent they are coming to the ship.

Objectives were to answer the following questions:

- How do the employees evaluate their own working environment?
- How are they committed to the firm?
- How do evaluate the employees from various countries the experiences of the coexistence and collaboration?
- Are there any characteristic differences in their work-related attitudes?

Materials and Methods

It was chosen a questionnaire developed for this group of workers specifically, and a standardized measurement tool used successfully in an international environment. Both of them were sent in English to the test persons - given the fact that this language is the most commonly used "working language" in the working environment. Our own questionnaire contained both open and closed questions. During the analysis of the quantitative data was performed using the SPSS 22 statistical software. Univariate and multivariate analyses were used both in the processing of results. Data collection took place between August 2014 and February 2015 in online fillable forms due to varying geographical location of respondents.

The first part – 54 questions of questionnaire – examined the respondents' personal characteristics and experiences in seven major topics:

1. Demographic, socio-cultural (gender, education, age, place of residence) + Questions on the framework for work (working hours, vacation time and contract)
2. The material characteristics of the work environment (health, comfort, equipment ...)
3. Experiences of payment and benefits
4. Perception of the organization and the collegial relationships (rules, international environment)
5. Experience toward the direct manager (management style, expectations ...)
6. Assessment of their own development opportunities
7. Stress and job satisfaction

In the second part of the questionnaire package there was a questionnaire by Allen and Mayer (1991) about the organizational commitment. The respondents had to declare the strength and nature of their loyalty-related attitude to the organization with a Likert scale in the 18-item line issue.

Results

The test sample: 101 employees of oceanic and river cruise ships. They worked either geographically distant from each other, moreover their workplaces were in constant motion. All of them were the employees of the same company at the time of data collection. The respondents were 71 men and 30 women, which scale is usually typical among those who work for this type of cruise ships. They are aged between 21 and 60, and – as you can see in the next diagram - almost 60% of them belong to both sexes and ages 30 to 40 years. So, it means that they have already had at least 5-10 years of work experience, but cannot be classified among older workers.

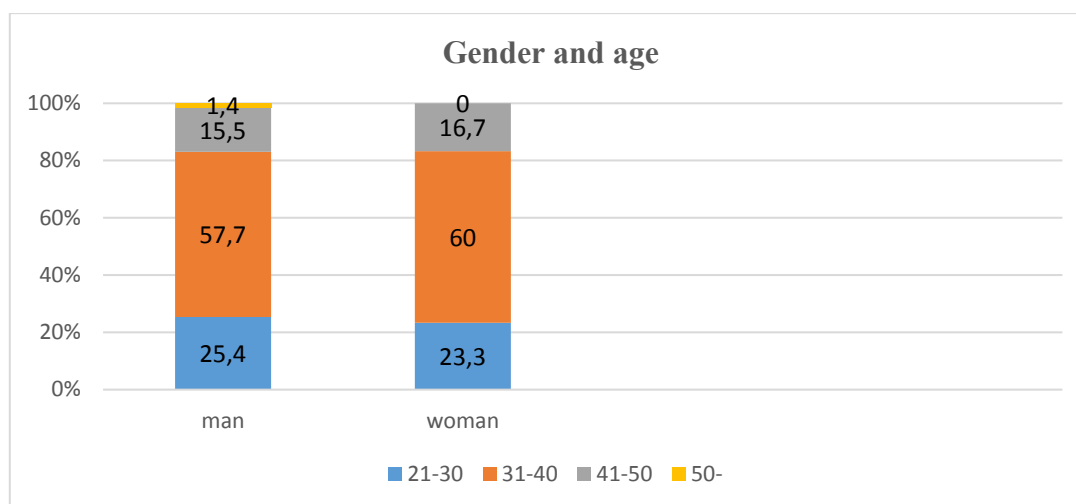


Figure 1: Age distribution of workers

The questionnaires were filled out mostly residents of the Asian continent (56.7%), the second largest group was from Europe (18.8%), and the other were South Americans (12.87%) North Americans (5.89%) and Africans (2.87%). The majority of responses were received from 25 countries belongs to Asian countries, their share represents more than half of the sample.

More than 90% of them have been working on board continuously for 6-7 months, and nearly the same number said they spend an average of 1-2 months at home between two employment contracts - will ship flying again, and continue to work. Also, 90% of respondents said they worked an average of 9-11 hours per day, only two of them worked longer hours, and fewer hours were said just by 7 people. 97 wrote that there is no free day for the duration of the employment contract, working days following each other, regardless of whether they is just a weekend or holidays in the period. 73 people, nearly three-quarters of them have still worked for only one shipping company so far - so, the majority of them is loyal to a given organization.

The sentence "The three reasons why I wanted to work on the ship" was completed quite similarly by most of them: money (94 people), travel (83 people), meeting new people (29 persons), adventure (20 persons), studying languages(14), seeing the world (12 persons), new experiences (10 persons), career (5 people) and their synonyms.

The sentence "Three of my best skills that are needed for this work" was completed: most of them (28-28 people) mentioned a positive attitude / mindset and the perseverance and hard work capability. This was followed by personal characteristics – expected human resource characteristics – such as friendliness (26 persons), patience (15 persons), power (14 persons), smart (14 people), open-minded (9 people) and flexible (8 people). Knowledge of English is absolutely important matter, and 13 could communicate in several foreign languages.

Questions about the organization and colleagues

In significant proportion of the theoretical models analysing the motivations of employees there is a consideration, according to which the workplace is also used to meet social demands. So, work motivation, satisfaction, and a longer-term commitment towards the organization are strongly influenced by the extent of the realization.

"To what extent are proud of the employer as a brand name?" More than 90% of respondents identified "proud" or "very proud" answers. This clearly shows that belonging to the organization, the employees' position has gained prestige value, and represents an important value for them.

"Are you satisfied with the company's standards and rules?" Beside the permanent employees load and despite the strict regulations required by the hierarchical organizational culture more than 90% of them replied that they are "satisfied" or "mostly satisfied". It means they can usually identify with the organization's rules and standards, which - presumably - is also an important element of their commitment toward to the organization.

Similarly, they are very satisfied with their social relationships at work. "Do you get along with your co-workers?" Nearly 95% of them replied that yes, or with most of their colleagues do. Given the fact that the citizens from more than 20 countries often work within a team, on board a ship locked together even months, so it can be called the high level of a multi-cultural co-operation. The strong cooperative skills, which otherwise generally characterized, are also proved by the answers monitoring their work conflicts. Only 9 people nominated specifically for a member of their staff, 43 people had conflict with the quests, and 18 people had problem both of groups. However, the frequency of the conflicts with guests can be also considered as phenomenon which strengths the team cohesion. Those situations where staff members alike resent one of the guests can help them to find a common denominator, and can increase the "comradeship" feelings formation, especially given that one of the cornerstones of the corporate culture of "guest is always right" slogan.

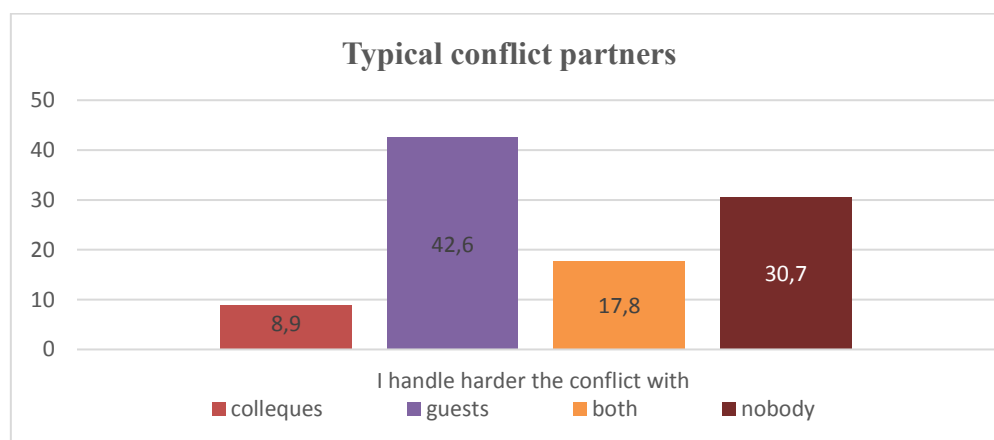


Figure 2: Typical conflict partners during the work

We also analysed the experience of co-workers' cohabitation by gender. "Do you get along with your co-workers?" More than 60% women and 45% of men answered a clear "yes", however 30% of women, nearly 50% of men said that they get along well with most of their colleagues.

So, the majority of staff working on ships can work (and live) together pretty easily, the differences do not cause problems, the teamwork is strong. Based on our results, it is also assumed that the adaptation to multicultural environments is less serious test of strength for the ladies. Presumably it is also important background factor that language barriers do not interfere with the co-operation. More than 50% did not experience language difficulties for workers from other countries, while 45% said they did it but in case only a few colleagues. Thus, we can draw the conclusion that despite the fact that English language is not the mother tongue of the majority of workers, moreover their accents, expressiveness and grammatical skills are also not

perfect, they do not consider it is difficult phenomenon in the communication. Presumably they are accepting and tolerant of the language differences.

This cultural openness is reinforced by the answers of the next question. "Do you spend your free time with people from other countries?" Nearly 30% stated that they do, 60%, that "sometimes," and only two people wrote that it is not. The openness and acceptance towards others can be seen in relation to the freely chosen pastime. It is considered a positive result even if this habit formation obviously affects a limited number of people from the same country, although, hundreds of people are employed in the ocean liner.

The following diagram illustrates the differences between the inhabitants of the continents. It is clearly visible, that people from the Asian continent choose their own nation as free time partner, however, Europeans are the most open toward other nation's workers. If we consider the distribution of respondents among the various continents - it can be stated that accordingly, not only the number of compatriots on board is the only mediator factor in that, who spends his free time with whom, even if it will undoubtedly affect it as well.

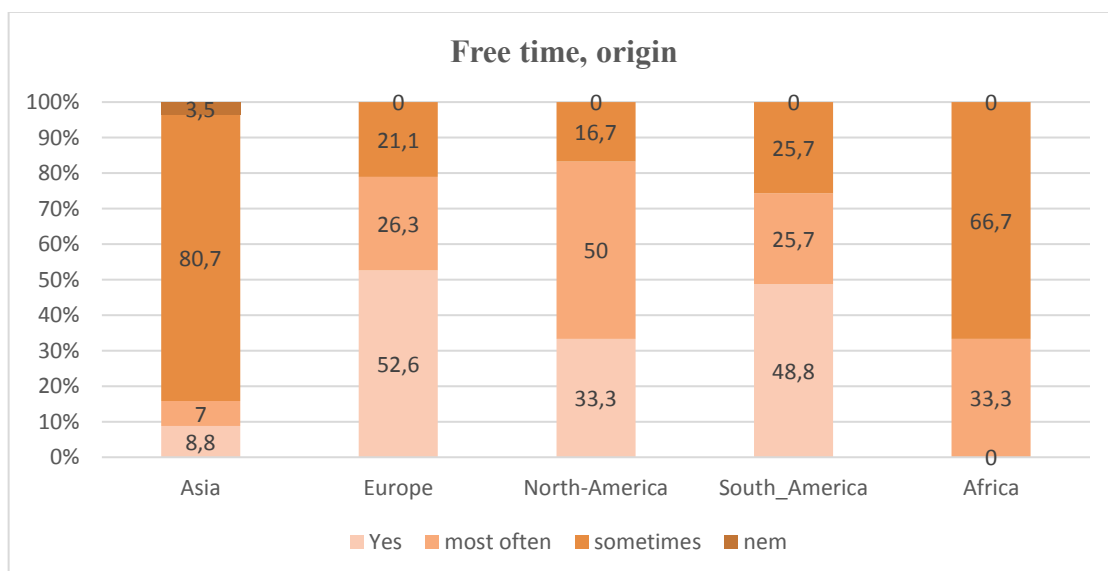


Figure 3: Frequency of choice free time partners from other countries

The work on multicultural environment is enjoyed by significant proportion of workers on its own terms. "Do you enjoy working in an international environment?" More than 95% answered "yes" or "most often", so they really enjoy spending their everyday life in work environment like this.

The leadership of the direct boss and top managers is an emphasized role in the vast majority of labour organizations, because the employees work under their authorities. In order to examine this topic we made specific questions to explore the experience of management. As shown in the graph, 67.3% of them - a significant proportion - evaluate "excellent" or "good" their direct boss' management style, and below 6% is the proportion of those who are specifically dissatisfied. The performance appraisal is giving by direct boss, so 87.1% opined "objective and fair", or "most often", and only 3% said a categorical 'no' to this question.

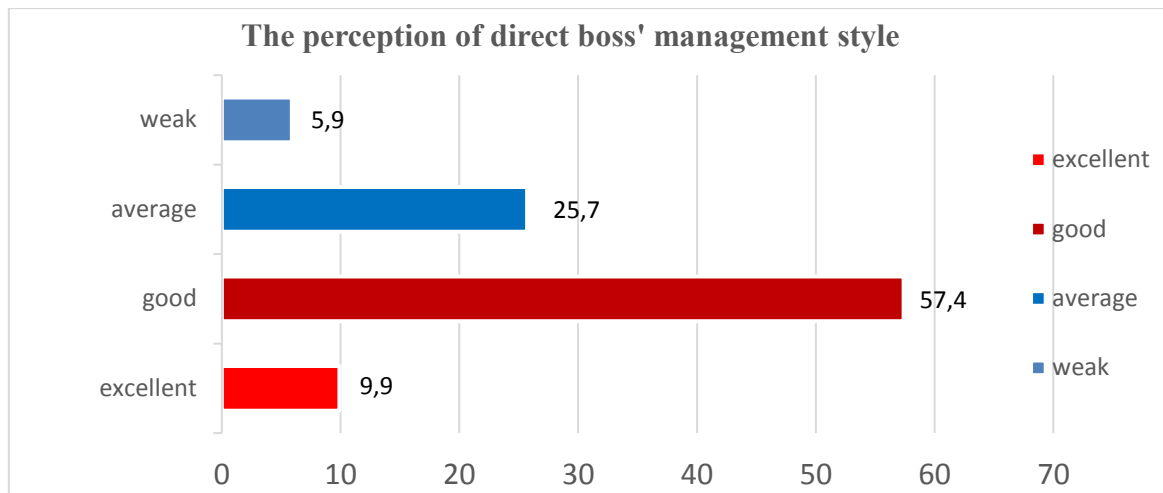


Figure 4: The direct boss' management style

Data were collected on, whether

- they have received adequate preparation when they joined team working on the boat,
- whether they received a concrete help to integrate into the organization,
- their proposals are accepted and to what extent in their everyday work, and
- how typical is that their leaders support their professional development?

The results, shown in the following graph cumulatively:

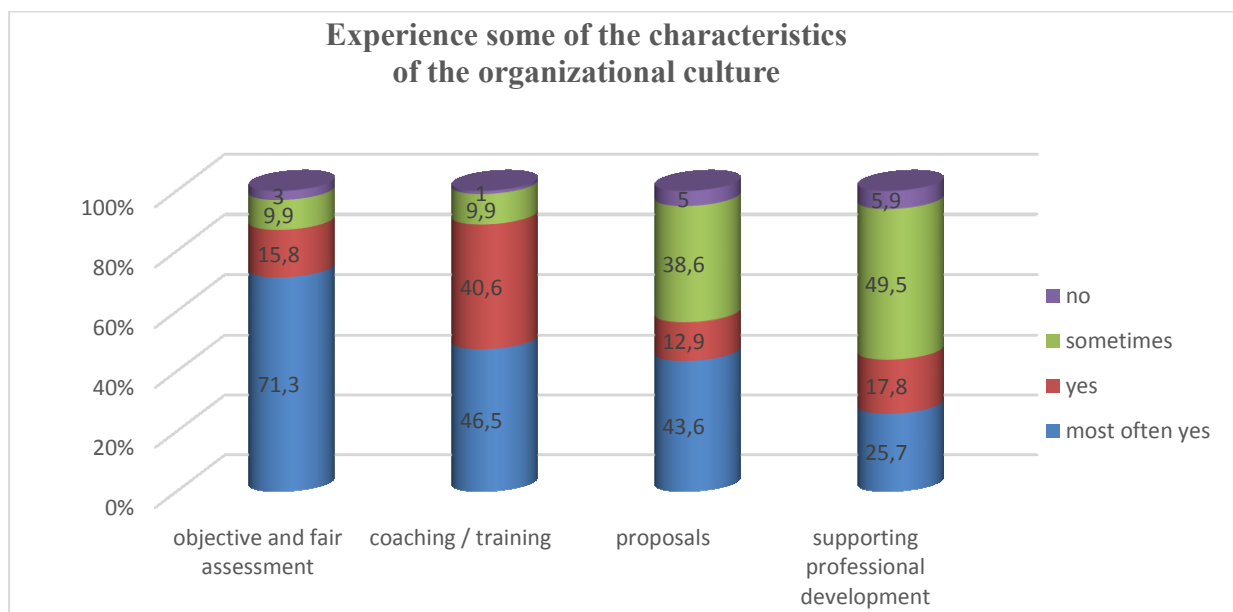


Figure 5: Some characteristics of the organizational culture

It is essential information that according to more than 85% of respondents the assessments that were given by their managers are mostly objective. This data is particularly important, because work-related feedback can act as natural incentives. Particularly in such organizational culture, which is mainly task-oriented, and where the employees have been working hard, not regretting personal resources for months on the board.

It may be determined according to the data in the second column of the chart that the organizational integration of employees, the cognition of work tasks, organizational rules and expectations are not only theoretical significance.

In addition to the last-mentioned two factors, however, there are very "talkative" data on the organizational culture and the nature of driving behaviour that only 5-6% of the proportion of respondents who believe that their proposals related to their work and professional development for managers do not value.

Analysis of the peculiarities of the material environment

Given the characteristics of the workplace, experienced workers also contribute to the material environment of comfort, satisfaction, engagement and the organization for so judging this special issue groups were set up. Analysis of the peculiarities of the material environment Given the characteristics of the workplace, experienced workers also contribute to the material environment of comfort, satisfaction, engagement and the organization for so judging this special issue groups were set up. As the characteristics of the material environment experienced in the workplace also contribute to employee's comfort feeling and satisfaction, as well as engagement for the organization, therefore we have compiled a special group of questions for judgement of them.

98 persons think, that their employer creates safe or very safe environment for them to work, three of us feel about it, it is not very safe, but no one has replied that it is not at all safe. 93 people claimed to have a healthy work environment, or is very healthy, 6 people that are not very healthy, and only one person qualified so that is not at all healthy. With regard to the comfort experienced in the workplace the reviews were very positive: 91 persons said that they work in a comfortable or very comfortable conditions on the boat, 10 people that are not very comfortable, but no one did indicate that it is not at all comfortable. 18 people said to be satisfied, 69 people that are mostly satisfied, 11 people are more or less satisfied and 3 people are dissatisfied with housing and care. Despite the fact that employees' lodging places are fairly scarce, they have to share the cabin with another worker (born in other countries), the majority of respondents are more satisfied with these conditions.

As the above figures show a very positive evaluation, we must not forget that the assessment of the work environment can significantly affect the environment, whence they came. Who left behind poor housing conditions, when they embarked, obviously, that person will be more accepting. And this factor is not examined in our study.

Summarizing the responses to the questions above, we can conclude that all issues at an almost 90% were satisfied with what they experience tangible environment of the ship. Based on our data we can conclude that the crew has a high degree of adaptability because they are able to accepting, tolerant judgment on the environmental conditions besides significantly different conditions which are very far from an „average” work environment or living space.

Features of the bonding to the organization

When asked "If you could go back in time, would you choose the ship again?", more than 85% said yes clearly, and nearly 10% are unsure, and only less than 5% said they would not. We asked in connection with the examination of identification with organizational objectives, "How are you motivated to help your group to reach goals". Mostly motivated or motivated 86 persons

on the basis of the answers, 14 people are more - less motivated, and only one respondent said not be motivated. 73 persons agreed to the statement "I feel that the company's problems are my problems" and 71 agreed to "Company means a lot to me personally" to some degree. "Are you pleased to work in the mornings?" The picture is an even more favourable, 95 people answered that question that, yes, or mostly so. Respondents have been working 9-11 hours a day without a day of rest for 6-7 months, so the result is quite remarkable. Examining the characteristics of the work, however, we can also conclude that work tasks require sticking to their duty not only because of the work schedule. When asked "To what extent do you feel the challenge to carry out work tasks?", and 22 people said to be "very challenging" work, 22 of them feel "most often", 34 indicated, that sometimes a little bit, so 2/3 of the respondents assessed, to sticking to their duty requires a serious concentration. Furthermore, it is interesting when asked "How often do you feel stressful a typical week?", nearly half of the respondents (53 people) said "sometimes", 33 said "often", 10 of them said very often, and just 4 people wrote this is not typical at all, while one person did not answer.

Comparing the distribution of the extent of work-related stress responses with characteristics of employee satisfaction and engage with the organization, we can establish that the "psychological contract" concluded by employees is satisfactory and beneficial. While they are aware of the increased stress and load, believe that they compensate (and here we think not only in material benefits) is appropriate for them in the long run.

Table 1: Components of commitment

	Min.	Max.	Average	Deviation
Affective commitment	1	7	4,84	1,2
Continuance commitment	2	7	4,48	0,75
Normative commitment	1	7	4,34	1,35

We thought it is worth to compare whether there is statistically significant difference between workers from the Asian continent and the others with respect to typical time of work and the nature of the commitment. However, contrary to expectations, the Chi-square statistical tests did not show any relationship between these dimensions.

While - as is also shown in the next graph - had some noticeable differences in perception of the nature of binding to the organisation and spent time in the organisation as an employee. The magnitude of the differences did not reach anywhere in the extent to which the method of mathematical statistics validate this hypothesis.

As a result, therefore, we can claim, that opinion of the of staff working on ships basically did not show differences as regards employee engagement and a number of aspects related to work environment considering the continents.

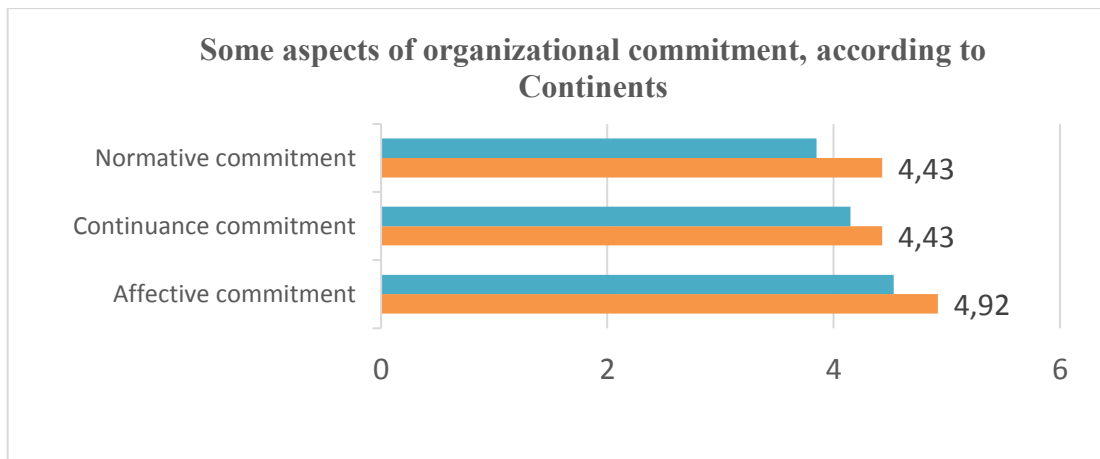


Figure 6: Organizational commitment, according to aspects of the continents

The number of years spent on the boat – which can be read in the following diagram – typically only 20-30% remains below the range of 5 years.

Considering the employees' contracts and the time spending on the board (on average six months), we can claim that large majority of the respondents had more than 10 times contracted however, at least every third Asians and Americans had also spent more than 10 years on ships in service.

The employees' work schedule does not allow free days beside 10-12 hour working day in the life of the contract. Furthermore, the possibility of personal space is very limited, they spend all their days in a closed world. Being under these repeating conditions is a clear demonstration of employee engagement.

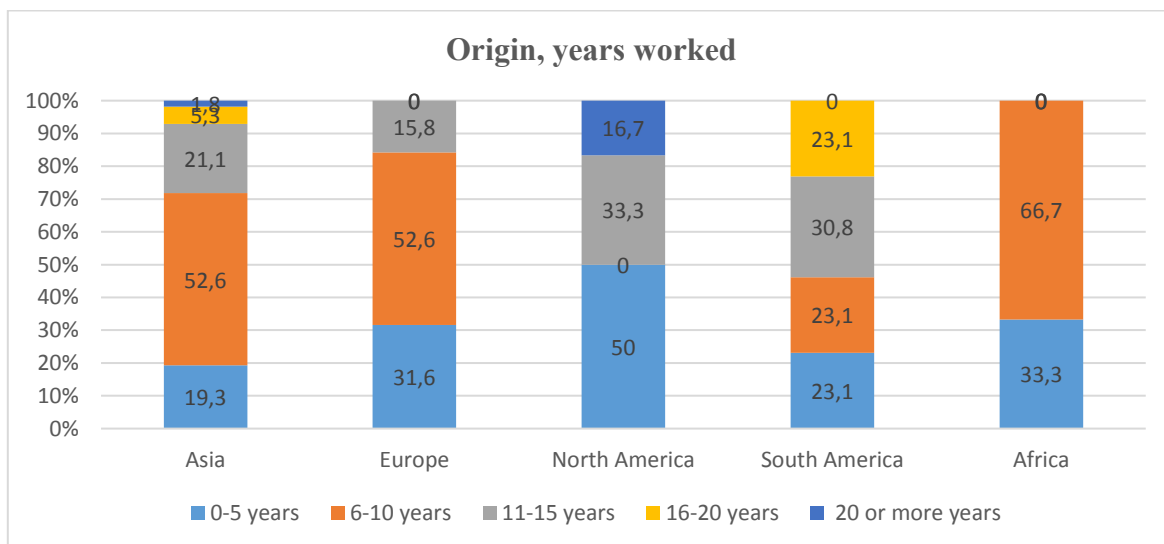


Figure 7: Number of years worked by the respondents on the ship for years, according to continents

Conclusions

Overall, we can establish: although employees come from a wide variety of countries, working in various positions with different education, they have different cultures, a substantial majority of them is satisfied, motivated, engaged, there is a fairly big harmony in evaluating of several factors. The respect for one another is a prerequisite in such organization which is with strict rules to be followed, locked up live and work, otherwise the cooperation is not realized and if a wide variety of cultural patterns are in conflict. According to our findings, in addition to the international differences and the increased workload a cohesive team formed because the common goals, common interests require teamwork and helping each other.

Compared to the previously conducted research in organizational commitment, we can conclude that in this study, we can confirm Dunham, Grube and Castaneda (1994) and McKinnon et al (2003) results, according to which leadership attitude towards employees, fair feedback on performance correlate with the nature of organizational commitment of employees. Similarly, it is proven test results of Hult (2005), who found links between the quality and integration of employees into the workplace a dominant organizational commitment.

While the results of examinations show a clear positive image of the cruise ships experienced working environment, in spite of a serious challenging work, which requires a lot of very personal and inter-cultural adaptation and most lasting 6-7 months' confinement together, we do not forget the limitations of this study, either. Filling in the questionnaire is primarily a personal network of connections using the Internet over and done on a voluntary basis, it may well be that workers who are experienced in working conditions on board ships are much less satisfied with their work and the stress experienced in coping much less effective, even heavily under-represented in the sample, having already did not want to fill out the questionnaires. Similarly distort the real differences between the various cultures arriving attitudes that some continents the number of respondents was relatively low, so it was not possible to create additional sub-groups in connection with a measured dimension, while the respective cultural backgrounds, we could already gather little information. Despite these limitations, we believe that tests not only provides a unique opportunity for a glimpse into a unique work environment, about which few people have any specific experience but draws attention to the fact that even with an appropriately supportive work environment, multiculturalism and the "confinement" due to the challenges it can provide a sufficient counterweight against the increased work-related stress.

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