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Türk Vardiya Zabitlerinin Kruvaziyer Gemilerde Çalışmasını Önleyen Zorluklar ve Çözüm Önerileri

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ABSTRACT:

The cruise industry has experienced remarkable growth over the past two decades as can be seen from increasing numbers of passengers and cruise ships. Investments in the industry can show that continuous growth is expected for the future. It can be considered that the growing industry would create more employment opportunities for officers. On the other hand, although the number of Turkish officers has been increasing in recent years, it can be observed that Turkish officers almost never work on cruise ships. Aim of this study is to investigate the difficulties that prevent Turkish officers from working on cruise ships and to propose solutions to overcome these difficulties. In the study, literature and legal regulations were examined and a survey was conducted to obtain data on the employment procedures of companies. As a result of the study, various factors were identified in the fields of education, language and manning, which made it difficult for Turkish officers to work on cruise ships at national and international levels. Suggestions were made at the level of individuals, educational institutions, and governments to overcome these difficulties.

KEYWORDS: Cruise ships, Cruise industry, Maritime management, Maritime employment, Watchkeeping Officers

ÖZ:

Kruvaziyer gemi sektörü, artan gemi ve yolcu sayılarından da görülebileceği üzere özellikle son yirmi yılda dikkate değer bir büyüme göstermiştir. Sektördeki yatırımlar da gelecekte büyümenin devam edeceğinin beklendiğini gösterebilir. Gelişen sektörün zabitler için daha fazla istihdam fırsatı yaratacağı düşünülmektedir. Öte yandan, son yıllarda Türk zabitlerin sayısının artmakta olduğu görülse de zabitlerin kruvaziyer gemilerde neredeyse hiç çalışmadığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk zabitlerin kruvaziyer gemilerinde çalışmasını engelleyen zorlukları

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araştırmak ve bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için çözümler önermektir. Çalışmada öncelikle ilgili literatür ve konu ile ilgili mevzuat incelenmiş ve şirketlerin istihdam prosedürlerine ilişkin verilerin elde edilmesi için bir anket uygulanmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda hem ulusal hem uluslararası seviyede olmak üzere eğitim, dil ve gemilerin personel ile donatılması gibi alanlarda Türk zabıtların kruvaziyer gemilerde çalışmasını zorlaştıran çeşitli faktörler tespit edilmiştir. Bu zorlukların aşılması için bireyler, eğitim kurumları ve devler kurumları düzeyinde önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: Kruvaziyer gemiler, kruvaziyer sektörü, Deniz işletmeciliği, Denizcilik istihdamı, Vardiya zabıtları

“Difficulties Preventing Turkish Officers from Working on Cruise Ships and Suggestions for Solution”

INTRODUCTION:

Demand for cruise tourism has increased steadily especially in recent years. Accordingly, significant growth has been experienced in the cruise industry by means of numbers of passengers, destinations, and cruise ships. It is also estimated that the industry would keep the increasing trend in near future. Depending on the increase in the number of cruise ships, it can be considered that the demand for officers on cruise ships would increase. Because of the nature of cruise ships, officers working onboard are required to have more skills than officers working onboard cargo ships, particularly in emergency operations. On the other hand, although Turkey is one of the countries that provide the most officers to the global maritime industry, it can be observed that there are almost no Turkish officers working onboard cruise ships comparing the total number of Turkish officers. The aim of this study is to investigate the difficulties that prevent Turkish officers from working on cruise ships and to propose solutions to overcome these difficulties.

The study was started by reviewing the literature on directly and indirectly related subjects as shown in Figure 1. Research subjects were determined as the cruise industry, cruise ships, seafarers, employment of seafarers and maritime education and training. For this purpose, the literature review was started by examining M.Sc. and Ph.D. thesis in the Turkish national database. It is followed by research on academic studies published in Turkey. Then, academic studies in international databases were researched. The reviewing of literature was followed by an examination of international organizations, associations and both national and international legislation on seafarers and maritime education and training. To achieve reasonable and beneficial conclusions a survey targeting cruise lines was conducted to obtain data on employment processes, internal training programs and requirements from officers. Also, online research was made on official websites, career and internal training pages of cruise lines to obtain assistive information.

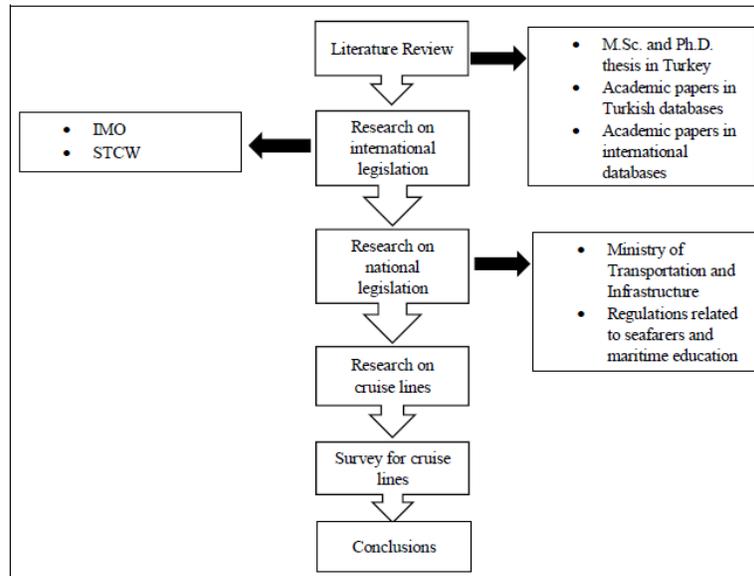


Figure 1. Research Methodology of Study

As a result of reviewing literature in predefined subjects, the research particularly covering these subjects could not be found. Researches in the cruise industry have been conducted mostly in the fields of tourism and economics and discussed the topics of cruise destinations, economic impact, port efficiency and passenger behaviors. Although there are several studies mentioning the crew of cruise ships, there are only a few studies discussing marine operations and officers of cruise ships. Zhao (2002) mostly studied on the crew in hotel departments and did not mention officers in detail. He researched living and working conditions; gender, nationality and ethnicity distribution; labor process and their satisfaction using statistical data and interviews. Wiscombe (2011) studied current staff shortage and future scenarios and solutions: Current employment challenges and driving forces. Mileski et. al. (2014) studied on cruise ship incidents and regulations related to safety. Incidents were categorized in the study based on their types and main causes were examined while statistical data was stated. Veronneau (2011) studied marine operations of cruise ships, significantly on crewing policies, training policies, international framework regulations, onboard departments and safety. Vukonic et. al. (2016) studied on organizational structure, management of emergency situations, training and communication on cruise ships through the crowd management aspect.

1. Overview of Cruise Industry

The cruise industry has continued to be one of the brightest segments of the maritime sector with strong expansion, high investments, and the increase in demand in recent years. The number of passengers travelled are one of the main indicators of this development. According to Cruise Lines International Association [CLIA] (2020), the number of cruise passengers has experienced 68,5% increase in the last ten years and reached 30 million in 2019 while it was 17,8 million in 2009. Passengers are mainly originated from North America with a percentage of 50% and are followed by European passengers with a percentage of 25%. To meet increasing demand, cruise ship fleet has also grown in recent years. The number of cruise ships reached nearly 450 by 2020 while it was approximately 250 in 2000. Also, current order-book of cruise ships indicates that increasing trend would continue in near-future. According to Cruise Industry News (2020), the launching of 125 cruise ships is fixed until 2027. When destinations are examined, the Caribbean is the leading region that was visited by 34,4% of total passengers in 2018. The Caribbean is followed by the Mediterranean with a percentage of 17,3% of total passengers were hosted (Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association [FCCA], 2020). It is reported by FCCA that the total economic impact of the cruise industry was 134 billion USD in 2018.

2. Comparison of Maritime Education and Training in Turkey with Global Standards

As the maritime industry is one of the industries that require most international interactions, it was required to establish an internationally recognized organization to set regulations. International Maritime Organization [IMO],

which was founded in 1959, sets the minimum standards in the maritime industry regarding the safety of life, the safety of the marine environment, training and certification of seafarers by issuing codes and conventions by acceptance of member states. The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) is one of the main international conventions of IMO concerning seafarers. STCW defines the departments and ranks onboard which are shown in Figure 2, competencies and levels of seafarers, functions and minimum standards of maritime training and certification for different ranks and levels. Along with the other regulations of IMO, executive and jurisdiction organ of STCW is national authorities of member states.

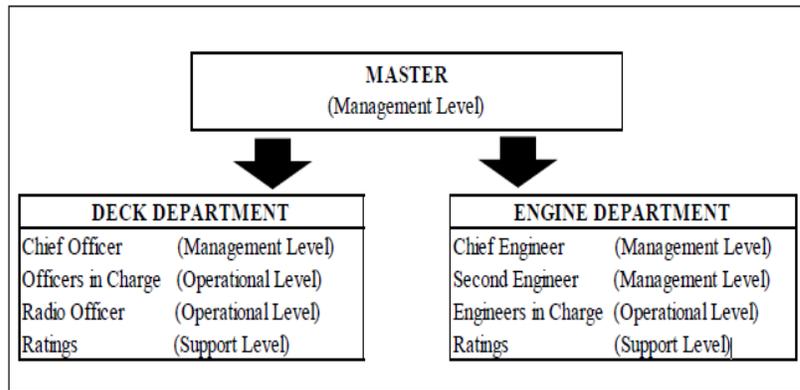


Figure 2. Levels and Ranks of Seafarers Defined in STCW (Source: IMO, 2010)

When related directives of national authority in Turkey are examined, it is seen that certification and training standards are in compliance with STCW. Besides, there are several additional training and certification subjects for Turkish seafarers in national directives (Turkish Republic Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2018). Since the implementation of STCW is executed by national authorities, maritime training institutions in Turkey can provide maritime training after approval of programs, curriculums, and technical facilities by the authority.

Maritime training in Turkey is provided by faculties, vocational schools of higher educations, high schools and training courses. By 2020, there are a total of 96 maritime training institutions in Turkey (Turkish Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2020). 11 of these are faculties, 10 are vocational schools for higher education, 42 are high schools and 33 are training courses. As shown in Table 1, graduates of the faculties who have a 4-year program have the right to take the oceangoing watchkeeping officer examination organized by the national administration. Graduates of faculties also have a Bachelor of Science in maritime transportation and management. Vocational schools have a two-year maritime program and a certificate of competence that graduates can have is a watchkeeping officer degree. For the students who will be trained at faculties and vocational schools, one-year English preparatory education before the program is required by the national administration.

A remarkable increase has been experienced in the number of maritime faculties especially after 2008. While there were only 4 faculties until 2008; as of 2019, 12 faculties provide maritime training. When the curriculums of maritime training institutions are examined, it is seen that institutions are in compliance with national directives and the latest version of the STCW Convention after the 2010 amendments. While only 5 of these 12 faculties provide English as the main training language, all vocational schools, high schools and private courses' training language are Turkish. There is no requirement for training language in STCW; however, as Koca (2016) stated, the maritime industry is an international industry and foreign language knowledge of officers is a key employment factor.

Table 1. Training Periods and Provided Certificates of Maritime Training Institutions in Turkey (Source: Turkish Republic Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2018)

Training Institution	Period of Training	Certificate that graduates can have
Faculties	4 years after 1 year English preparatory program	Oceangoing Watchkeeping Officer
Vocational Schools for Higher Educations	2 years	Watchkeeping Officer
High Schools	4 years	Restricted Watchkeeping Officer
Maritime Courses	2 years	Watchkeeping Officer and Restricted Watchkeeping Officer

Based on the increasing number of faculties, the number of students who start training at Maritime Transportation and Management programs that graduate deck department officers has been increasing. While 202 students started training in 1996, the number of them has been continuously over 600 in recent years. (Çelik, 2014) (Higher Educational Council, 2019) Depending upon this, the number of both engine and deck department officers have also been increased. The number of active officers considerably increased from 29.310 to 47.310 in 2018 (Çelik, 2014). According to Yılmaz (2018), 42, 6% of Turkish seafarers work on general cargo ships. It is followed by tankers with 24,1% and dry bulk carriers with 9,4%. In the sample of the survey, there is not a Turkish seafarer working on a cruise ship. In a study of Nas (2017), bulk carriers, tankers and container ships were defined as 3 ship types on which Turkish officers work.

Although Turkey is one of the countries that supply most officers in quantity to the global labor market for officers, according to Ellis and Sampson (2003) Turkish officers are mostly dependent on Turkish owned ships. In their research, it was found that 69,8% of Turkish officers are employed only on Turkish ships. Gönel (2013) examined the supply of seafarers and demand for seafarers in Turkey. According to Gönel, there is a surplus of officers in the deck department and the negative effects of this surplus will be experienced in the maritime industry of Turkey in near future. Koca (2016) also predicted that there would be excess supply in the employment of maritime faculty graduates in the future. Muslu (2018) stated that the maritime industry has the most globalized workforce; however, Turkish seafarers have difficulties in employment in the global seafarer labor market because of the lack of both language competency and crewing agencies working for providing new opportunities in the global seafarer market. Another problem for Turkish officers to be employed on foreign ships is the non-acceptance of certificates issued by the Turkish national administration by other administrations. Although maritime training is standardized globally by IMO by means of the STCW Convention, party states have the right to not accept certificates issued by other states and it makes difficult the employment of Turkish officers internationally. According to the report of European Maritime Safety Agency [EMSA] (2016), only 4874 Turkish officers hold a certificate accepted by EU member states.

In 1999, IMO decided that training especially on crowd management and crisis management is essential for personnel on passenger ships in addition to other mandatory competences. Under STCW, IMO set new mandatory pieces of training which are “Crowd Management” and “Crisis Management and Human Behavior” for personnel working onboard passenger ships involved in international voyages. Although new requirements are mandatory for personnel working onboard ships on only international voyages, national administrations have the authority to apply these requirements on domestic voyages. Relevant seafarers for crowd management training are defined as Personnel designated on muster lists to assist passengers in emergency situations and training consists of awareness of life-saving appliance and control plans, ability to assist passengers and mustering procedures. Relevant seafarers for crisis management and human behavior training are defined as masters, chief officers, chief engineers, second engineers and any person having responsibility for the safety of passengers in emergency situations. Training consists of human

behavior and responses, optimizing the use of resources, development of emergency plans, stress handling, leadership, and communication. In Turkey, both pieces of training are provided under one curriculum defined by national administration, and it is specified that 24 class hours are sufficient for curriculum. Despite the fact that the content and duration of the curriculum is sufficient to issue a certificate to seafarers in compliance with STCW, it can be considered that they do not provide adequate knowledge and for watchkeeping officers to be competent for working on cruise ships. According to Vukonic et. al. (2016), it is wrong to assume that attendance of crowd management control courses in maritime training institutions is enough to perform efficiently duties during emergency situations on cruise ships and officers must be additionally trained.

3. Onboard Organization of Cruise Ships

In the scope of IMO, there is no specified category for cruise ships, and they are classified in passenger ships. While a passenger ship can be defined as a ship carrying people who only want the transportation service from a point to another, the main purpose of passengers on a cruise ship is vacation onboard by visiting a series of ports.

During the operation onboard cruise ships, the general process works based on hierarchical structures such as cargo ships. However, due to the nature of cruise ships, different ranks and departments can be seen in the shipboard organization. Figure 3 outlines a general structure of cruise ships that can naturally differentiate due to ship size, number of passengers, company regulations, etc. In general, there are three main departments on cruise ships. While deck and engine departments can also be found on cargo ships, the hotel department is unique for cruise ships.

The hotel department, which cannot be found on cargo ships, is the biggest department on a cruise ship with regards to the number of personnel that can reach up to 1000 on some cruise ships. The hotel department has sub-departments such as entertainment, catering, or medical depending on the company procedures. The problem with personnel in the hotel department is that despite working onboard a ship, their profession is not seamanship actually.

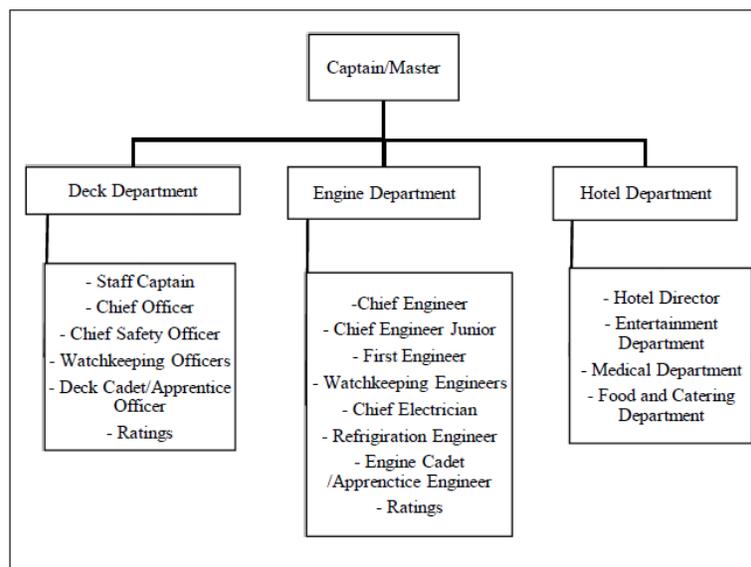


Figure 3. Organizational Structure on Cruise Ships (Source: Compiled by author from multiple sources)

Although there is no such rank on cargo ships, the staff captain is the head of the deck department and reports to the master. Also, while the master is the highest rank above all departments on cruise ships, the staff captain acts as a traditional master for marine operations of deck and engine departments. The staff captain does not have own navigational watch except maneuvering of the ship and works as a supervisor to ensure the safe operation of the deck department is maintained. The staff captain is followed by the chief officer in a hierarchical structure. A chief officer on cargo ships ordinarily has navigational watch 2 times in a 24-hour period and is responsible for handling and stowage of cargo, planned maintenance and organizing personnel management. However, the main duty of a chief

officer on cruise ships is to ensure that maintaining the overall safety of ships and to carry out safety training for crew and safety drills for crew and passengers. While the number of watchkeeping officers on cargo ships is generally 2 or 3, cruise ships can be manned with 6 watchkeeping officers on an average. Their main duty is to ensure safe navigation of ship their navigational watches. Apart from that, each officer may have other specific duties such as security of the ship, preparing navigation plans, documentation on the bridge, assisting the chief officer in safety-related works or maintenance and operation of radio communication equipment. (Veronneau, 2011; Vukonic et. al., 2016)

Responsibility of the engine department on cruise ships mostly similar to cargo ships but it is quite intense because of the size, a number of passengers and crew, complexity and frequent need for maneuvering. Maintenance and repairing of all mechanical and electronic equipment such as the main engine, auxiliary engine, generator and electronic/mechanical equipment in passenger spaces, cuisines and deck machinery on cruise ships are the responsibility of engine department. Due to the complex structure of cruise ships, there are also specialized engineers who are not required on cargo ships such as refrigeration engineers, air conditioning engineers or electrical engineers specialized in niche operations. The number of engineers in the engine department may be up to 60 depending on the size of the ship.

3.1. Manning of Cruise Ships

Due to the number of people onboard and the value of cruise ships, manning can be considered as one of the vital parts of cruise line management. In addition, in a negative situation that may happen to cruise lines, financial loss may be greater due to the public recognition of cruise lines and the bad advertisement that may occur. Mileski et. al. (2014) reported that 26% of cruise ship incidents are caused by direct human error by the crew while 60% of them are caused by lack of maintenance.

Even though IMO has standardized maritime education and training globally, due to similar communication traditions and ship handling styles, cruise companies tend to hire officers from the same nations as far as possible. Veronneau (2011) states that “in order to obviate problems resulting from poor hiring, a company typically works with a few specific nations to fill officer positions, establishing links with local hiring partners and more or less hiring only those nationals”. Chin (2008) states that seafarers from Global North hold higher positions on cruise ships and especially seafarers from North American and Western European countries are mostly employed in senior officer positions. Chin also noted that cruise officers are the highest-paid officers in the maritime industry. Wu (2005) remarks that more than 75% of senior officers and more than 60% of junior officers working on cruise ships are provided from countries of advanced economies. On the other hand, advanced economies provide only 15% of ratings and 85% of ratings on cruise ships are from Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Zhao (2002) also expressed that the senior officers are almost exclusively employed from Western Europe or North America or other developed countries while ratings and junior officers are, in contrast, recruited from Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and other developing countries. As the qualifications and skills required by the position to be worked increase, it can be said that the seafarers working in these positions are more preferred from advanced economies by cruise lines.

3.2. Importance of Training of Officers on Cruise Ships

Vukonic et. al. (2016) indicated that most of the cruise companies sustain their own onboard and onshore education and training courses. Some of these courses are refresher pieces of training on the qualifications defined in the STCW Convention. However, these courses include pieces of training that are not mandatory by IMO but to provide awareness and proper knowledge on the subjects arises from different natures of cruise ships. By this means, cruise companies aim to reduce human error effect in undesirable cases on board.

Because of the greater number of crew and passengers on cruise ships, the potential impact of emergency cases on cruise ships is also expected to be greater than cargo ships. Contrary of the crew on cargo ships, the majority of them on cruise ships are employed in the hotel department. Wu (2015) indicated that 85% on average the crew is employed in the hotel department and 15% on average of the crew is employed in deck and engine departments. Although the profession of the crew in the hotel department is not seamanship primarily, they have a role in muster list of ships and they must help passengers by way of directing, motivating and leading them to ensure safe operation. Because the

onboard training of crew in the hotel department is handled by officers in the deck department, it is not enough for officers to have proper knowledge they should also have skills to train and the crew.

Communication, which may refer to both verbal and non-verbal communication, also good leadership, good self-presentation and decisive attitude, maybe the most important part of managing emergency situations with clear cooperation among officers, crew members and passengers. Considering the fact that the passengers hosted on cruise ships will especially come from the countries that provide the highest number of passengers to the cruise industry and from the countries in the region that ship sails in, it can be said that having the languages of these countries would be distinctive for officers and can increase the efficiency in daily operations of the multinational crew. When career pages at official websites of various cruise companies are examined, it is apparent that additional languages other than English are required for officers to apply for positions in the deck department. According to Akduman et al. (2018), in addition to the communication of officers with each other, on cruise ships, it is important for them to communicate with passengers in a friendly, understanding, and positive manner when meeting their requests, especially about safety. They should be psychologically strong and empathetic in performing their risky and stressful duties. Developing these skills of all officers working on cruise ships and have interaction with passengers is one of the most important issues in the aviation industry. Vukonic et. al. (2016) states that mutual trust is a key element in interaction between passengers and officers, especially in emergency cases, mutual trust has to be based on communication.

According to report of Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transports [IMIT] (2012) on the accident of cruise ship Costa Concordia, handling of emergency evacuation procedures played a role in number of casualties. IMIT also stated that choosing a more widespread, known and international language as official working language onboard is fundamental for creating more effective communication among officers and between officers and passengers. Communication problems prevented effective interaction among officers and between officers and passengers resulting individual efforts apart from efficient and organized emergency management. According to IMIT, it may be the result of unequal training and background of officers and carrying out of officer recruitment by external crewing agencies.

4. Survey and Results

To conclude the study with beneficial results, a survey was prepared for cruise lines which are the principal decision-makers in the employment of watchkeeping officers on cruise ships. It is aimed to obtain data about the officer employment process of cruise lines with questions focusing on language requirements, internal training programs, internship, and manning policies. The survey was conducted between January 2019 and May 2019. As a result of reviewing literature related to the cruise industry, international associations of the cruise industry, and reports benefitted there were 55 active cruises lines. Hence, the size of the universal set is accepted as 55. At the end of the period, 16 of these cruise lines responded survey which was directly sent to crew departments of them in electronic media. 13 of these 16 are ocean cruise lines and 3 of them are river cruise lines. Data collected via survey was processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software. The following findings have been reached in consequence of the survey:

- 87,5% of the cruise companies in the sample use English as a common language onboard. It should be noted that English is a common language for all ocean cruises. Common language on river cruises may vary due to the origins of companies and passengers.
- 68,8% of the cruise companies in the sample require one additional language and 18,8% require two additional languages from officers. Spanish and Italian are the most preferred and required languages by cruise companies.
- 87,5% of the cruise companies in the sample have internal training programs for officers and it should be noted that all ocean cruise companies in the sample have internal training programs. Internal training programs of companies are mostly focused on safety and security-related subjects, language and watchkeeping. Also, 43,8% of companies that have internal training programs provide training on communication skills and human behavior for officers.
- 43,8% of the cruise companies in the sample have internship and scholarship agreements with maritime training institutions to provide cadet and officer positions of graduates. 68,8% of companies work with crewing agencies for the manning of their ships.

- 50% of the cruise companies in the sample employ cadets while they are still students in maritime training institutions and 50% of them only employ cadets after graduation. In addition, 68,8% of cruise lines employ watchkeeping officers as apprentices/trainee officers when they work on a cruise ship the first time. Also, 18,8% employ them as watchkeeping officer in charge of navigation and 12,5% employ them as a radio officer for their first time.

CONCLUSION:

The cruise industry has been growing in recent years and will continue to grow according to projections. The growing industry would create more employment opportunities for officers in the future. Also, it is observed that number of active Turkish officers has significantly increased lately, so it may result in an officer surplus and difficulty in employment for Turkish officers when considering that Turkish officers also have difficulty in finding jobs in foreign shipping companies. When it is considered that Turkish officers mostly work on general cargo, dry bulk, tanker and container ships, directing them to cruise ships would also help to overcome this potential surplus. However, the number of Turkish officers working on cruise ships is almost non-existent today. In this study, difficulties that prevent Turkish officers from working on cruise ships were identified and solutions were proposed to overcome these difficulties.

It was seen that language is one of the key elements for officers on cruise ships. Most cruise companies use English as a common language onboard and require additional languages from officers. Crew and passengers forming a multinational group of up to 3000 on some ships emphasize the importance of language. On the other side, in Turkey, few training institutions use English as the main training language. Increasing the use of English as a training language and providing lectures for other languages preferred by cruise companies can be considered beneficial for Turkish officers.

Maritime training in Turkey follows international standards defined by STCW. In addition to this training, officers working on cruise ships are required to have knowledge and skills on communication, public relations, handling of stress, understanding human behaviors, leadership and managing a crowd. It can be considered that additional elective social lectures in programs of maritime faculties focusing on these skills can facilitate the opportunities of Turkish officers to work on cruise ships.

Officer positions on cruise ships are mostly occupied by officers from North America and Western Europe. In the manning of ships, cruise companies tend to cooperate with crewing agencies and maritime training institutions through internship agreements. Lack of crewing agencies in Turkey is already one of the problems for Turkish officers to work in foreign shipping companies. Encouraging maritime training institutions to make internship agreements and establishing crewing agencies would help Turkish officers to work on cruise ships.

The other problem with this subject is that the seafarer certificates issued by Turkey are not accepted by other countries. For this reason, Turkish officers cannot work onboard ships of other countries. Other countries suggest various procedures to seafarers for recognizing the seafarer certificates given by Turkey. That's why the number of Turkish officers who had certificates recognized by EU member states is very low comparing the total number of active officers. Considering that cruise companies are mostly based on Europe and North America, proposals by governments to reach agreement on recognition of Turkish certificates by these countries would be beneficial for Turkish officers to work on both cruise ships and foreign shipping companies.

Since the maritime profession is of an international character, it would be beneficial to provide education in English for the maritime training institutions providing maritime training and education at all levels, as well as to teach an additional foreign language preferred by cruise companies, to add the necessary training for cruise ships to the curriculum, and to make cadet employment agreements with the cruise companies by the training institutions; and it is also considered that an attempt to have the certificates of Turkish seafarers recognized by all countries may increase the chance of Turkish seafarers to work on cruise ships.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare that for this article they have no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interests.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval is not required for this study.

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