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Managing Cultural Diversity in Cruise Ship Crews Serving a Single Origin Customer Segment

Lisa-Marie Gebauer

Master in Hospitality and Tourism Management

Supervisor:

Dr. Nelson Campos Ramalho, Associate Professor, ISCTE Business School, Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour

October, 2020

Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

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Abstract

The internationalisation of workforce and the consequential multicultural work settings have been an ongoing trend in both business and research. In the special case of cruise ship crews, challenges arising from cultural diversity are leveraged by the specific requirements this confined and regulated setting implies, especially if the cruise operator serves a single-origin customer segment. Extant knowledge in this regard is scarce although the issue is critical for this large-scale tourism industry.

This study is set to fill this research gap by qualitatively exploring Human Resource (HR) perceptions and practices while facing the challenge of intercultural management on cruise ships serving a single origin customer. For such purpose, the study targeted one single cruise ship operator, Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH, collecting primary data from key-decision makers entrusted with managing workforce diversity.

In-depth interviews conducted with 13 privileged interlocutors, subjected to content analysis, show that on-board cultural diversity is acknowledged as a central issue in managing cruise ships crews and that managers adopt a complex approach to managing this diversity by incorporating bundled HR practices aligned with a balanced view of competing values. The bundle of eight best practices comprises clearly structured hierarchies and strictly regulated framework conditions, transparent communication, comprehensive employee training, promoting personal and social well-being amongst crew members, giving employees a voice in front of the top-level management, adjusting conventional structures and procedures to specific cultural requirements, offering room for crew cultural self-expression in formal ways that reach beyond the ingroup, and promoting intercultural relationship-building.

Key words: Cruise Tourism, Cruise Chip Crews, Diversity Management, Human Resource Management, German Market, Best Practices

JEL Code: M14; M12; Z10; Z31

Resumo

A internacionalização da força de trabalho tem sido uma tendência, com as consequentes configurações de trabalho multiculturais a ganhar presença tanto nos negócios quanto na pesquisa. No caso especial das tripulações de navios de cruzeiro, os desafios decorrentes da diversidade cultural são potencializados pelos requisitos específicos que esse ambiente restrito e regulamentado implica, especialmente se a operadora de cruzeiros se dirige a um segmento de clientes de origem única. O conhecimento existente é escasso, embora a questão seja crítica para esta indústria de turismo de grande escala.

Este estudo foi criado para preencher essa lacuna de pesquisa, explorando qualitativamente as perceções e práticas de RH para enfrentar esse desafio. Para tal, o estudo teve como alvo um único operador de navio de cruzeiro, Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH, recolhendo dados primários de decisores importantes encarregues de gerir essa diversidade.

Entrevistas em profundidade realizadas com 13 interlocutores privilegiados, e submetidas a análise de conteúdo, mostram que a diversidade cultural a bordo é reconhecida como uma questão central na gestão das tripulações de navios de cruzeiro, que os gestores adotam uma abordagem complexa para gerir a diversidade, incorporando uma configuração de práticas de RH alinhadas com uma visão equilibrada de valores concorrentes. O conjunto de oito boas práticas compreende hierarquias claramente estruturadas e condições de enquadramento estritamente regulamentadas, comunicação transparente, formação abrangente da tripulação, promoção do bem-estar pessoal e social entre os membros da tripulação, dar voz aos colaboradores face à gestão de topo, ajustar estruturas e procedimentos convencionais a requisitos culturais específicos, oferecer espaço formal para a autoexpressão cultural da tripulação que vai além do endogrupo e promover a construção de relacionamentos interculturais.

Palavras-chave: Turismo de Cruzeiro, Tripulação de Navio de Cruzeiro, Gestão da Diversidade, Gestão de Recursos Humanos, Mercado Alemão, Boas Práticas

Código JEL: M14; M12; Z10; Z31

Index

Index of Figures

Index of Tables

1.   Introduction

The sector of cruise tourism has developed to be of immense importance for tourism globally, experiencing rapid growth over the past two decades, only recently exposed to stagnation due to COVID-19.

Before this, a shift away from the conventional hotel holiday towards a type of vacation that combines relaxation and recreation with an adventurous voyage perspective, could be observed (Hung, Wang, Guiletta & Liu, 2019). As a result, more and more travellers worldwide chose a holiday at sea over traditional hotel stays, since it not only allows for taking time off on board of the vessel, but also for exploring multiple destinations without the inconvenience of having to switch accommodations.

According to the "2020 State of the Cruise Industry Outlook" by the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), issued before the outbreak of COVID-19, cruise passenger numbers worldwide were expected to rise from 28.5 million in 2018 to 32 million in 2020. The global economic impact of the cruise industry in 2018 was measured with 1,177,000 jobs in the sector, resulting in 50.24 billion USD in wages and salaries and 150 billion USD total output worldwide (CLIA, 2019). In addition, more and more cruise ships were being built and were planned to be introduced to the market in 2020. This results in a total of 278 cruise ships expected to operate on global seas for 2020, including 19 novel cruise ships celebrating their debut (CLIA, 2019). In matters of volume, the countries with the highest originating passenger quantities are the USA, followed by China and Germany. Although Germany might seem like a comparably small market, cruises are extremely popular amongst German vacationers. Passenger numbers were continually growing, resulting in a total of 2.26 million German cruise passengers in 2018 (CLIA Deutschland, 2019). Due to the impact that COVID-19 had on the cruise industry, no new data was published for the business year 2019 yet.

As stated by CLIA (2019), the growing cruise market provoked an increasing number of jobs in a sector, which attracts service professionals from all over the world. An international workforce is one attribute which fundamentally characterises cruise ships, and which requires specifically tailored management strategies. Globalisation brought about numerous opportunities for businesses around the world, but it also caused challenges to arise, especially due to diverse cultures present in the same work environment. Cultural values tend to make up most of the attitudes and behaviours of people, and diversity in this

regard can be beneficial in many ways but can also be a source of conflicts and misunderstandings (Kluckhohn, 1951, as cited in Testa, 2007). Especially in an enclosed environment like a cruise ship, where the employees are more confined and bound to a strict set of rules, and also forced to be in touch with the same people during working hours and free time, culture is a major determinant of employee cooperation (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015).

In comparison to Human Resource Management (HRM) in the conventional hospitality industry, the management of cruise ship crews is differential and has to draw attention to a number of additional complex problems. Crew members need specific trainings, for example, safety trainings, and documents, such as the Seaman's book, in order for them to be legally allowed to work on board. These processes are mostly standardised, but with regards to dealing with multicultural settings arising from the internationalisation of cruise ship crews, standardisation of processes is unlikely, if not even impossible. This stresses the importance of elaborate HRM policies which have attracted research interest. Generally, the crews are made up of a broad range of nationalities from the Philippines over India all the way to Romania (Papathanassis, 2017), often plateauing at around 50 different countries. As a result of this internationality, challenges arise that have been formerly unknown to single origin crews, for instance, language barriers (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011). In order to be able to offer a high-quality service, not only the communication between crew members has to run smoothly, but also the communication between crew member and passenger cannot be impeded. Consequently, it is part of the mission of managers on board of the vessels to adjust and apply management strategies in a way that, on the one hand, eliminates cultural misconceptions and, on the other hand, promotes smooth cooperation on behalf of the crew members, for them to be able to offer the best customer experience possible. If management fails to adopt suitable operational measures to align the highly diverse crews to work for the same purpose, the result will be a service failure (Chiou, Chao & Hsieh, 2020; Radic, 2018).

The challenges that arise from crew cultural diversity on board of cruise ships are particularly relevant in the crew-customer interaction if the offer is mainly addressed to a single origin customer segment. Such is the case of the German cruise company Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH that mainly serves the German market. This company faces the aforementioned challenges, especially on their ocean vessels, with international crews ranging from 300 to 500 members depending on ship size. Passengers on board of the five cruise ships of Phoenix Reisen are almost solely from German speaking countries, which

makes the on-board language directed at the passengers German, a language that is foreign to the majority of crew members. Hence, managers on board of the Phoenix Reisen vessels have to plan and implement their practices according to an international crew successfully serving a German-speaking customer segment with motivation, while also respecting and coordinating the substantially different cultures amongst the crew members.

Bearing in mind the importance of the cruise sector for the tourism industry and especially for the German market, this research project contributes to closing the knowledge gap regarding HRM of cruise ship crews with respect to cultural dimensions and differences. At the same time, this research seeks to explore current challenges and strategies that decision makers face while dealing with a diverse crew, on the one hand, and a single origin customer segment, on the other hand. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that this research has taken place before the outbreak of COVID-19, which is why the results are only representative of the circumstances in the cruise industry as they were up until March 2020 and are expected to be once operations are able to resume to normal standards.

The motivation behind researching the diverse workforce on board of cruise ships lies in the topic being of recent concern and at the same time exhibiting a lack of research conducted accordingly. The lack of research on this topic can be explained, for once, by the restricted nature of a cruise ship, that makes it difficult for researchers to enter the research environment and, for another, by cruise travel being a comparably new industry. Certainly, cruise tourism has gained the attention of tourism specialised researchers all over the world, but existing investigation on the topic so far mainly focuses on the customer experience and leaves the area of HRM underexplored.

Thus, this aspect serves as a starting point for the matter of this research, which lies in the leading question: How do managers on board of cruise ships that serve a single origin customer manage the variety of cultures of an international workforce? Alongside with the crew-customer focus, the concern lies in exploring how managers succeed in conveying the feeling of "one crew, one team", given the high degree of diversity and cultural backgrounds across departments. This paper unfolds by setting a base for research through reviewing previous literature, then by introducing the method employed for data collection and analysis, followed by stating findings and ending by discussing the results obtained. To go more into detail, the research will analyse the cultural composition of the crew, as well as uncover management measures to respect and maintain individual cultures, along with measures to

adapt to and approach the German culture. Finally, the objective of this research is to obtain a set of best practices that advise HRM policy makers in the cruise industry how to effectively deal with cultural diversity in the workspace.

2.   Literature Review

Although the field of HRM on cruise ships is clearly under-researched, there exists a fair amount of previously conducted research which can be used to set the base for the matter of this thesis. A review of literature on cruise tourism will provide an overview about the industry, after which the focus will be set on HRM in the industry with respect to cultural issues.

2.1.   Cruise Tourism

Cruise tourism is a crucial part of the global tourism industry that benefits from rapid growth. Especially popular in the USA and Europe, the industry is now likewise expanding in China (Hung, Wang, Guiletta & Liu, 2019). According to Hung et al. (2019), the concept of a leisure experience which allows travellers to see different destinations in the course of one trip, which might not be easily accessible through traditional travel, while comfortably staying in one accommodation, attracts an increasing number of potential customers. Consequently, the product that has been stigmatised by being demanded solely by elder customer segments, is gaining importance for younger customer segments as well (Hung, Wang, Guiletta & Liu, 2019), also as cruises become increasingly affordable.

Worldwide there are three large cruise companies that fundamentally shape the market. All Miami based, Carnival Cooperation, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line and Norwegian Cruise Lines "operate over half of the cruise ships and carry approximately 80 per cent of passengers worldwide" (Papathanassis, 2017, p. 111), specifically following the trend of so-called "mega-liners" that cruise with over 6,000 passengers. With the rise of increasingly larger ships, on-board facilities and recreation are taken to a higher level (Papathanassis, 2017; Weeden, Lester & Thyne, 2011). The vessels can be compared to small villages comprising facilities for sports, health, wellness, festivities, shopping and more.

Nevertheless, the emphasis of a cruise lies more on its destinations and the passengers desire to explore than on on-board facilities and activities (Papathanassis 2017; Whyte, 2017), which is why destination-based investments in port facilities are constantly needed. With larger ships entering the ports, the destinations have to deal with rising problematics such as over-capacity and sustainability issues, facing a trade-off between profits through incoming passengers and the protection of the local environment.

According to Whyte (2017), the decisive factors of the customer regarding booking a cruise lie in travel motives as well as destination attributes. The most important motive is the passengers' desire to explore new destinations, followed by the motives of relaxation and escape from everyday life. Nevertheless, while designing appealing itineraries for their customers, cruise companies have to respect a large variety of circumstances and stakeholders. It is not just about choosing an exciting mix of remote beautiful places and thrilling cities as destinations, as "behind every organised cruise, there is a value chain comprising ports/destinations, transport companies, destination management companies and ship-chandlers/F&B suppliers" (Papathanassis, 2017, p. 104). As a result, bureaucracy and formalities in itinerary planning are exceptionally high.

Another challenge cruise operators are facing, is serving diverse customer segments with differing needs and preferences. Some prefer to cruise with so called "mega-liners", while others enjoy the intimacy of smaller vessels (Weeden, Lester & Thyne, 2011). Therefore, the cruise companies often hold a portfolio of ships of different sizes and with different classifications, as e.g. expedition ships. The goal is to offer a personalised service aiming at a mass market, in order to appeal to a diverse customer segment (Chin, 2008).

2.2.   Relevant Human Resource Management Concepts

In order to offer a better understanding of HR strategies and their effect on businesses, this section will examine relevant frameworks.

Firstly, a study by Macduffie (1995) has found HR strategies to affect the enterprise as a number of strategies grouped into a so-called "HR bundle", rather than individually. In fact, the latter might result in having no or even negative effects on the organisation and its employees (Pfeffer, 1998). Introducing HR bundles to the workspace, however, allows for an enhancement of economic performance arising from being able to fully utilise human capital (Gould-Williams, 2003; Macduffie, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998; Stavropol & Brewster, 2005). In his work, Pfeffer (1998) developed seven practices that can and should fundamentally characterise HR bundles and that are all highly interdependent. First, offering Employment Security has been stated to foster trust, cooperation, productivity and a long-term orientation on behalf of the employees. Second, the Selective Hiring of New Personnel is introduced to ensure employing a suitable and skilled staff, through, for example, examining the candidate's culture, skills and attitudes, through setting up multiple rounds in the application

process, and through clearly communicating the company's values. Third, Self-Managed Teams and Decentralisation of Decision Making are said to foster job satisfaction and effectiveness, as well as to encourage the employee's motivation and problem-solving abilities. Fourth, a Comparatively High Compensation Contingent aids the attraction of skilled employees, while promoting existing employee's effort who are feeling fairly treated. Fifth, Extensive Training proves to be crucial for any organisation, as the organisation substantially relies on skill and motivation levels of their employees, which, if stimulated effectively, can result in a competitive advantage for the company. Following, Reduced Status Distinctions and Barriers promote a feeling of equality and of value to the enterprise, which, in turn, increases employee commitment to the company's goals. Lastly, Extensive Sharing of Financial and Performance Information results in the employees feeling trusted and being sufficiently informed in order to assist in boosting economic performance on behalf of the company. Also, according to Gould-Williams (2003), the positive effect of HR bundles on economic performance can partly be explained through their impact on the employees' perception of trust with regards to the workspace, as this is also a determinant of job satisfaction. In order for HR managers to sustainably foster productivity, as well as product quality, it is crucial for them to understand the interdependencies inside of HR bundles, also with regards to organisational structures, and to build adequate strategies accordingly (Brewster & Stavropol, 2005; Pfeffer, 1998).

Further research relates organisational effectiveness to a Competing Values Framework generating four models characterizing organisational approaches based on three fundamental dimensions (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). According to Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), these dimensions comprise the *organisational focus* ranging from internal to external, the *organisational structure* being flexible or stable, and lastly *organisational means and ends.* Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1983), as well as Yu & Wu (2009) in their review, describe the four models as following. The Human Relations Model can be classified as internally focused and flexible, with an emphasis on employee wellbeing and cooperation, whereas the Open System Model can be classified as flexible but externally focused, placing emphasis on temporariness and growth. Subsequently, the Rational Goal Model is externally focused but controlled, emphasizing a long-term orientation together with economic performance and transactions. Lastly, the Internal Process Model can also be classified as controlled, but internally focused with an emphasis on a strictly regulated and stable working environment. Especially the dimension of a flexible or controlled organisational structure is stated to be

controversial, since both directions feature crucial elements with regards to organisational effectiveness, which is why managers need to pay particular attention to this matter (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1982).

When it comes to the employees' trust and commitment towards the organisational entity they are incorporated in, the concept of the Psychological Contract, introduced by Denise Rousseau (1989), explains how the employee perceives this relationship. Consequently, Rousseau (1989) describes the Psychological Contract as the employee's belief in obligatory reciprocity between him and the organisation that results in him committing to the company, which comprises approving the company's values and structures, complying with investing time and effort, and lastly thriving to stay with the organisation. The employee's judgement of an existing contract and its binding character mainly depends on the timely length of relationship, as well as the explicitness of promises made, however, Psychological Contracts solely exist on the side of employees and do not emerge on the side of organisations (Rousseau, 1989). These HR concepts will be used in the course of this research to analyse the HR strategies found.

2.2.1. Human Resource Management in the Tourism Industry

HRM has established itself to be a crucial part of every businesses' daily operations. In service industries and more specifically in the tourism and hospitality industry, HRM importance is of even greater dimension. Al-Refaie (2015), for example, examined the influence of HRM on hotel performance and found strong positive impacts. He found direct positive relations between HRM and service quality, as well as employee satisfaction. Service quality can be improved by focusing on and enhancing five key attributes, which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. In order to assure employee satisfaction, it is important for HRM to regard the employees as an asset and not a liability. Al-Refaie (2015) suggests HR Managers to provide employee training, loyalty and reward systems and to promote teamwork, which results both in an improved service quality and employee satisfaction. These two outcomes furthermore foster customer satisfaction, together with customer and employee loyalty, all of which are crucial for a touristic enterprise to be persistently competitive and to overcome the prevailing pressure of turnover in the industry.

The key to sustaining a company's competitive advantage are its employees and HRM should acknowledge this. According to Livitchi, Hacina and Baran (2015), a company's

employees need to be "qualified, committed and well-motivated" in order for the enterprise to thrive. However, jobs in the sector are generally seasonal, labour intensive and repetitive, involving long working-hours and comparably low wages (Barron et al., 2007), which is why job dissatisfaction and a high turnover rate can arise as consequences. In order to keep motivation levels high, continuous training is necessary, more specifically with respect to future needs of competence levels, since innovation is crucial in any type of business (Livitchi, Hacina & Baran, 2015). If companies manage to combine effective employee training with adequate responses to required changes, they will be able to compete successfully in the market. HR departments therefore work towards increased task efficiency and high levels of motivation among employees. Professional skills need to be continuously improved in order for the employees to successfully handle critical situations, while top management should never neglect voicing recognition to their staff for the handling of those cases (Livitchi, Hacina & Baran, 2015).

2.2.2. Human Resource Management in Cruise Tourism

Professional circumstances on board of a cruise ship are one of a kind, which makes working on a vessel a unique experience. Crews are highly international and life at sea brings specific challenges with it that employees of a shoreside hotel would not have to face (Gibson, 2008). Furthermore, the hierarchical pyramid on board is steep and day-to-day operations are based on a complex set of verbal and non-verbal rules and regulations, all effecting communication, behaviour and interpersonal relationships (Antonsen, 2009; Bardelle & Lashley, 2015). With regards to the internationality of teams, particular patterns concerning the allocation of nationalities on positions can be discovered. Weaver (2005) discovered that in the international cruise industry lower positions are often occupied by Eastern Europeans, South Americans or South East Asians, while higher positions are mostly carried out by US Americans or Australians. Furthermore, working on board of a vessel is still a male domain with four to five men to one woman (Chin, 2008). The majority of higher positions become part of a cruise vessel through direct recruitment, whereas the remaining 74% are being recruited through crewing agents often based in their home country (Chin, 2008). Although, other crew members are often regarded as family, there exists some degree of separation between higher and lower levels in the hierarchy (Gibson, 2008).

According to Gibson (2006), cruise vessels can be seen as Centres of Production, since there exists a great range of job departments on board, like bakers, butchers and carpenters, which diminishes the need to outsource labour. Cruise ships are often compared to resorts on the water, but because of their extraordinary on-board facilities, their organisational scope, their sensitivity to weather conditions, their unique self-contained community and their contract systems, they are not as similar to resorts as might be suspected (Gibson, 2008).

A challenge not only for the traditional hospitality industry, but also for the cruise sector is employee turnover. Employee contracts are special in a sense that work and vacation time is mostly planned in blocks of multiple months, which results in a fluctuation of crew members and therefore in a constantly changing ship with different constellations of workforce (Brownell, 2008; Gibson, 2008). However, the magnitude of staff turnover is not only impacted by contractual aspects, but also by prevalent issues like homesickness (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015) that arise due to the enforced distance to crew members' homes and the need of adaptation to an unfamiliar and enclosed working and living environment like the ship-space. According to Bardelle and Lashley (2015), homesickness primarily affects the crew members' psychological state, evoking feelings of depression and loneliness and as a result, homesick crew members might think about resigning from the ship-space and lose focus on work tasks. These challenges exclusive to the ship-space stress the importance of tailored and sensitive HRM practices, in order to reduce turnover and to keep the service standard continuously high (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003). Literature on the topic suggests HR managers to focus on the one hand, on thoughtful recruitment of crew members, as in selection and verification of safety training, and on the other hand, on the retention of existing crew members through giving them prospects for possible promotion and keeping them motivated and healthy (Österman, Praetorius & Hult, 2017; Pfeffer, 1998). In order to retain competent employees and to likewise offer a persistently high quality service, Hu, Zhao and Carter (2003) suggest the development of an elaborate training system aiming at generating beneficial future prospects for crew members, whereas Bardelle and Lashley (2015) recommend for managers to constantly strive to ameliorate cooperation and social relations aiming at enlivening crew members' mental states. In fact, aspects like job satisfaction and commitment of the crew, are, on the one hand, determined by factors such as the chance of discovering the world, but on the other hand, by the supervisor's traits such as respect, fairness, flexibility and by a favourable social surrounding in general (Larsen,

Marnburg & Øgaard, 2012). It is essential for management on board to comprehend these drivers of job satisfaction and to constantly strive to reform and improve the working environment, so that a positive effect on service quality and consequently economic performance of the cruise company can be detected (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003).

In a service environment like the cruise ship, customer experience and perceived service quality are mainly determined by the interaction between employee and customer (Chiou, Chao & Hsieh, 2020; Chua, Lee, Goh & Han, 2015; Radic, 2018). According to Chua et al. (2015), the quality of the crew-customer-interaction is directly linked to the customer's perception of value, which is why the managers on board need to work together with crew members towards perfecting communication, helpfulness, reliability and trust in the interaction, so that a positive impact on satisfaction of the passenger and in turn loyalty to the company can be reached. Moreover, it is necessary for managers to communicate behavioural principles, such as courtesy and personalisation, to the crew as part of the service delivery and at the same time apply these principles when interacting with the crew (Radic, 2018). Nevertheless, service failures are inevitable (Chiou, Chao & Hsieh, 2020; Radic, 2018) and the decisive aspect in that matter lies in crew members achieving timely service recovery, which again affects the passenger's perception of service quality and further the passenger's satisfaction and loyalty (Chiou, Chao & Hsieh, 2020). With the aid of professional appraisals, managers are able to evaluate the crew member's effort and achievement in serving the customer and in case of failure, the according reasons, reaching from incompetency to lack of motivation, are required to be determined (Chua, Lee, Goh & Han, 2015).

HR managers also have to bear in mind that working on a cruise ship is physically exhausting with employees working long hours while standing and also carrying heavy, constantly under the impact of ships movement, every day of the week on a multiple months contract and without the option to escape from the environment (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Bolt & Lashley, 2015; Brownell, 2008; Larsen, Marnburg & Øgaard, 2012). Moreover, crew members have to be responsive and approachable for the customers whenever they are in the passenger area, which can be wearing in the end of a long contract. Even when they are off duty, they can be commanded back to duty, as cruise ship are operating a round-the-clock service setting (Bolt & Lashley, 2015). Additionally, the majority of crew members lives in shared cabins with sometimes up to three other crew members, they share common spaces,

retreat areas and bathrooms, which diminishes privacy to a minimum (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Bolt & Lashley, 2015). Nevertheless, cruise ship employees see multiple positive arguments for working on a vessel, which comprise the possibility to travel, the prestige of being able to work on a luxurious vessel, the interpersonal relationships with other crew members, economic rewards and saving money on food and accommodation, as well as the acquisition of new skills and competences (Bolt & Lashley, 2015; Gibson, 2008; Sehkaran & Sevcikova, 2011). Dennett (2018, p. 231) introduces the creation of a Ship-Based Identity among the crew members, based on five themes: "Ship-space, the system of the ship, and time were themes considered unique to the cruise ship industry, primarily acting as a binding mechanism, promoting a shared experience of belonging, and attachment. These themes were thought to provide the conditions to develop a ship-based identity. The two final themes, relationships and occupation, were the mediators in the context-specific factors with how the participants made sense of themselves and others". A substantial determinant of a Ship-Based Identity lies in crew members having to adjust to the strict demands of working on board with regards to physical, as well as social aspects, which, in most cases, leads to an identification with the ship-space (Dennett, 2018). According to Dennett (2018, p. 236), this identification goes as far as crew members developing a distinct emotional attachment to their occupation on board and losing this occupation would result in "losing a sense of self". Relationships on board are pivotal for the crew members' feeling of belonging and support and are often related to as family (Bolt & Lashley, 2015; Dennett, 2018; Sehkaran & Sevcikova, 2011). This terminology is often strategically used by the cruise companies as well, in order to foster a feeling of community and psychological safety among crew members.

2.3. Human Resource Management in a Multicultural Context

The highly advanced globalisation and ongoing internationalisation of business forces enterprises all around the world to adapt to these new circumstances. Departments like marketing and logistics have to fundamentally review their strategies, but most specifically HRM is majorly influenced by the challenges arising through the global marketplace. International workforces result in a variety of cultures amongst employees, all of which are defined through differing attributes regarding attitudes, beliefs, actions, symbols and artefacts (Kluckhohn, 1951, as cited in Testa, 2007). Hofstede (1980, p. 43) defines culture as "the collective mental programming of the people in an environment. Culture is not a characteristic of individuals; it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the

same education and life experiences". Kluckhohn (1951, as cited in Testa, 2007) furthermore suggests the culture's core to be made up of tradition and underlying values.

The members of diverse workforces are in need of accurately designed management strategies that guide them towards a common goal, although present values might be entirely different (Kulkarni, Gupta & Ramamoorthy, 2013; Eroğlu, 2014). Consequently, HR managers need to be able to understand cultures and their differences so that they can plan and implement their management strategies around them. According to Kulkarni, Gupta and Ramamoorthy (2013, p. 18), "management practices are culture-specific", which implies that international HRM needs to be complementing present cultural values in the workforce for the business to thrive.

2.3.1. Hofstede Cultural Dimensions

In order to identify cultural differences and dimensions, previous literature suggests considering the 6-D Model of National Culture by Geert Hofstede. The model started out as a four-factor model comprising Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance as the dimensions for possible cultural classifications (Hofstede, 1980). Later Hofstede added the characteristics Long Term Orientation (1993) and Indulgence (2010), which made it the six-dimensional model it is today. The scores that the nations obtain in the respective categories not only describe their cultural traits, but also allow for a comparison between countries.

In more detail, the dimensions can be classified as follows (Hofstede Insights): Power Distance addresses the degree of acceptance of unequally distributed power amongst the society. Individualism however can be contrasted to Collectivism and describes the presence of ties between individuals and the extent of individuals taking care only about themselves or also caring about others. Masculinity stands in opposition to Femininity and is characterised through characteristic traits that are classified to be masculine (toughness, competitiveness, heroism) or feminine (tenderness, cooperation, modesty). Moving to the concept of Uncertainty Avoidance, it can be classified as the degree of comfort that is felt while facing ambiguity. The fifth dimension Long Term Orientation refers to the extent to which members of a society respect tradition and show long term commitment. Lastly, the newest dimension Indulgence defines the scope to which a society allows itself to have fun and enjoy life in opposition to regulations and social norms. With the help of these six cultural dimensions,

HR managers are able to classify cultural traits of their employees, in order to understand them better, as well as plan and implement their managerial strategies around them.

2.3.2. Leadership of Multicultural Teams

The internationalisation of workforces around the world can be observed in close to all economic sectors. This emergence of so-called multicultural teams calls for effective diversity management and leadership, which in turn might entail a competitive advantage for the enterprise (Testa 2007; Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011).

Members of multicultural teams comprise an unbalanced mixture of different and similar attributes regarding origin, culture, language, education and religion (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011). Thus, it is crucial for managers of diverse workforces to understand these attributes within their team, in order to bring team performance to its peak and foster a congruent team identity (Hofstede, 2001; Testa, 2007). Hofstede (1991, as cited in Testa, 2009) stresses the importance of respecting the employee's culture in day-to-day business, as it shapes the individual's mindset and consequently the perception of the workplace. Going deeper, culture therefore determines the employee's attitudes towards favourable or less favourable management as well as leadership practices, and fundamentally affects the relationship between leader and subordinate (Hofstede, 2001; Testa, 2007). According to Shane, Venkatamaran and MacMillan (1995), an employee's culture determines, for example, the preference of an authoritative or participative leadership style, depending on the employee being from a country with high or low power distance.

Managing a diverse workforce is a complex responsibility that leaders are facing, with numerous challenges that need to be overcome. According to Testa (2007, p. 469), "the greatest challenge in dealing with a multicultural workforce is managing in a way that effectively motivates and inspires those with different work-related values and beliefs". Furthermore, he introduces the principle of Reverse Cronyism as a challenge faced in multicultural teams. It refers to managers acting upon the possibility of being accused of favouritism towards employees of the same culture and therefore actively discriminating the team members that are most similar (Testa, 2007). The occurrence and perception of Reverse Cronyism in work environments might lead to poor employee performances, as it results in an increase of pressure and stress within the team. Further, communication is a substantial part of leadership and since a variety of cultures comes with a variety of languages, language

barriers belong to the most prominent challenges faced while working with diverse teams (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011). In order to thrive as a leader of multicultural teams, managers need to understand these challenges and act upon them.

In fact, efficient leadership relies fundamentally on the leader as an individual, encompassing personal attributes, beliefs and competencies (Testa, 2007; Butler, Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2014; Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011). Lisak and Erez (2015, p. 4) identified three characteristics that foster the successful leadership of multicultural teams: "Cultural Intelligence, which is defined as an individual's capability to deal effectively in culturally diverse settings, Global Identity, which conveys a sense of belongingness to the global work context and openness to cultural diversity, which is the degree of receptivity to perceived dissimilarity". Leaders holding these characteristic traits are likely to be seen as role models by their team and therefore contribute to consolidating one global team made up of multiple diverse members (Lisak & Erez, 2015). According to Butler, Kwantes and Boglarsky (2014), additional competencies supporting effective leadership comprise Emotional Intelligence, as well as Self-Awareness on the part of the supervisor. Leaders that exhibit Emotional Intelligence and Self-Awareness have shown to be empathic, self-controlled, able to comprehend emotions and to reach their team members in an inspiring, motivating and challenging way, especially relative to the cultural context variables Uncertainty Avoidance, Performance Orientation and In-Group Collectivism (Butler, Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2014).

One tool that is prominent throughout literature discussing effective leadership of multicultural teams is communication (Testa, 2007; Lisak & Erez, 2015; Butler, Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2014; Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011). Successful and transparent communication between leader and team members enhances a feeling of trust, as well as the emergence of mutual values amid the diverse team (Lisak & Erez, 2015). Nevertheless, there cannot be one universal style of communication while dealing with a multicultural workforce, as stated by Testa (2007). Leaders need to adapt their communication styles respective to the different team members. If communication is compromised by the presence of language barriers, emphasis should be put on non-verbal communication paired with patience (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011).

Furthermore, Dawson, Neal and Madera (2011) introduce the effectiveness of Diversity Training when dealing with diverse workforces. Diversity Training directed at each and every team member aims to foster empathy towards and knowledge about different

cultures and to mitigate stereotypes. One approach of Diversity Training suggested is Perspective-Taking, as it enhances empathy through mentally conceiving another team members' attitudes and beliefs (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011).

In conclusion, it is crucial for leaders of multicultural teams to employ a proactive instead of a reactive approach when dealing with increasing diversity and, most importantly, to realise that the value of employing a diverse workforce lies in the presence of a variety of cultures (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011; Testa, 2007).

2.4. Cultural Issues respective to Human Resource Management in Cruise Tourism

As stated before, the workforces on cruise ships are international and therefore require specific management measures. Since crew and passengers prominently have diverse cultural backgrounds, explicit rules and regulations are necessary for an efficient ship-space organisation (Dennett, 2018).

Interpersonal relationships between crew members and especially between leader and subordinates on board of cruise ships are fundamentally impacted by the cultural dimensions and traits belonging to their respective origins (Testa, 2009; Bolt & Lashley, 2015). These relationships are a crucial component of the work environment, as they ensure employee and customer satisfaction, which is why managers are constantly striving to improve them. Consequently, they ought to exhibit consciousness and respect when it comes to the diverse cultural traits of their employees through, for instance, organising cultural events (Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003).

Working with employees of diverse cultural backgrounds has proven to impose difficulties or even the feeling of threat on some crew members, since attitudes, language, religious and political beliefs, as well as eating habits are fundamentally different (Bolt & Lashley, 2015; Secvikova & Sehkaran, 2011). Especially the food aspect, as a basic human need, is prone to be a source of dissatisfaction on the part of crew members. Therefore, managers are advised to offer various food options with respect to cultural diversity and to let crew members voice their input on menu composition (Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003). Although English is primarily the spoken language on board, different language levels and accents can impede effective communication (Bolt & Lashley, 2015). Even racism and discrimination

have been reported to be observed by few (Bolt & Lashley, 2015). Most crew members, however, view the internationality favourably and suggest that on board organisations might be of interest for shore-based enterprises as well (Gibson, 2008). Crew members positively acknowledged the opportunity to understand and learn about foreign cultures, encompassing learning a new language, trying foreign food and forming cross-cultural friendships (Bolt & Lashley, 2015). A variety of attitudes and beliefs comes with a variety of mindsets and ideas, which is clearly beneficial for the working environment. Diverse crew members predominantly interact respectfully and sensitively with one another and see working with employees from diverse cultural backgrounds as a benefit and opportunity (Bolt & Lashley, 2015).

Based on Hofstede's (2010) conclusions about cultural dimensions and their differences, it is evident that cultural characteristics have a large impact on the workforce of an enterprise and its HRM. Related to this, Testa (2009) examines the issue of "automatic categorisation" on cruise ships which can be observed in the automatic closeness of leader and subordinate with the same cultural origin and therefore the same language, similar values and beliefs. As a result, the relationship between leader and employee is positively affected by having the same cultural background, whereas different cultural backgrounds have a negative impact on this relationship. According to Bolt and Lashley (2015), some crew members voiced the concern that crew members of the same nationality as their supervisor would stand a higher chance of being promoted. This is an issue which has to be overcome especially on cruise ships, as the crew persists of members with multiple different cultural backgrounds working for a common goal.

Consequently, it is crucial for managers to be aware of the first impression they are making and to clearly communicate strategies, goals and work-related values with their employees, while "both organisational and national cultures must be looked at simultaneously to truly leverage cultural diversity" (Testa, 2009, p. 84).

Connecting the dots, the research gap arising accordingly comprises the question, how managers succeed in leveraging cultural diversity through respecting organisational and national cultures.

3.   Method

3.1.   Research Approach

The underlying research can be classified as an exploratory case study employing a qualitative data strategy (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stebbins, 2011). The aim of this study is to shed light on the management of cultural diversity in cruise ship crews serving a single origin customer segment. Literature review showed that there is no substantial amount of research on cruise ship crews available, which is why there is room for exploration and consequently a qualitative methodical approach. Only little knowledge exists about this field of study and the exploratory approach allows for questions of *how* and *why* being answered while taking the contextual influence of the research environment into account (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Further support of an exploratory approach consists in the expectation that this study will reveal a complex construct of outcomes, rather than a single composition of results (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The employment of qualitative data in the form of in-depth interviews enables the research to capture subjective and individual experiences of the participants (Graebner, Martin & Roundy, 2012). With relation to the matter of this study, the managers on board of cruise ships under Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH are asked to share their individual practices and experiences relative to the topic of how they manage cultural diversity in their department. Since the departments on board are substantially different, semi-structured interviews have been chosen to collect the data. This is based on the fact that semi-structured interviews, on the one hand, exhibit a fair amount of structure which facilitates the collection of useful data and the data analysis afterwards, and on the other hand, leaves enough flexibility to react to differences amongst departments (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). The data obtained through the interviews has to undergo a qualitative content analysis which will be supported by the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA.

3.2.   Empirical Object

As this is an exploratory case study directed at the company Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH and how an international crew is managed there, the cruise operator and its managers are the focus of analysis when it comes to the matter of this thesis. The company has been chosen as the foundation of this research because it is perfectly characterised by employing an international crew, on the one hand, and serving a single origin customer segment, on the

other hand. Furthermore, the researcher has working experience at Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH and was therefore able to conduct direct and participative observation. In the following, an overview over the company itself and its mission, as well as the participants involved in data collection will be given.

3.2.1. Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH

3.2.1.1 Company Overview

The German tour operator and cruise operator Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH was founded in 1973 by CEO Johannes Zurnieden, who still occupies this position today. Phoenix Reisen engages around 100 employees in their headquarters in Bonn and another 180 as direct representatives of the company on their cruise vessels all over the world. Furthermore, the company operates solely in the German-speaking market, comprising Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Luxemburg. Nevertheless, the vast majority of passengers is German. In 2018, the sales revenue accounted for over 360 million EUR.

In the beginning, Phoenix Reisen focused on flight travel to Prague, Budapest, Istanbul and later Mallorca, Gran Canaria, Santo Domingo, Mexico and the USA. Only in 1988, the first cruise ship TS Maxim Gorki has been acquired as a long-term charter. Up until today, multiple cruise ships joined, and some left the company, which leaves Phoenix Reisen with a fleet of five ocean vessels and around 50 river cruise ships. The five ocean cruise liners MV Amadea, MV Artania, MV Albatros, MV Deutschland and MV Amera go on cruises around the world in wintertime and primarily stay in Europe during summertime, reaching destinations like Norway, the Baltic Sea, Greenland or the Mediterranean. The river cruise ships however, operate on German rivers, like the Rhine or Danube, but also on international rivers like the Nile or Amazon River, and in destinations like China, Myanmar or India. In addition to the cruise sector, Phoenix Reisen furthermore established itself as a specialist for Orient travel. For the scope of this thesis, the focus lies solely on the ocean cruise vessels.

According to the company's information, the competitive advantage of Phoenix Reisen lies in a good price-performance ratio, and a compassionate and familiar atmosphere that characterises the customer service, as well as the interactions inside the workforce. Consequently, the company employs smaller ships in comparison to the industry with

maximum passenger counts between 550 and 1200 guests, in order to sustain the feeling of familiarity, to avoid anonymity and to guarantee a personalised customer service. (Retrieved from https://www.phoenixreisen.com/ueber-uns.html)

3.2.1.2   On board Organisation and Hierarchies

The cruise vessels operated by Phoenix Reisen are characterised by their high crew to passenger ratio, which goes up to 1:2, as in one crew member on every two passengers. The MV Amera, for example, which is the ship where most of the interviews have been conducted, can hold 835 passengers together with 420 – 440 crew members.

On board organisation and hierarchies are a complex structure of multiple stakeholders involved, not only on board but also ashore. There are three main departments on board: The Nautical Department, the Hotel Department and the Touristic Department – each associated with a different shoreside corporation.

The Nautical Department underlies the shipping company BSM, which is in charge of everything related to navigation and maintenance of the ship itself, as in Deck and Engine. Consequently, staff members of the Nautical Department are employed at BSM. The head of all departments, but the Nautical Department in particular, is the Captain. He is followed by the Staff Captain, the Chief Engineer, the Safety Officer and further on by all Bridge Officers, Cadets, Engineers, Electricians, Plumbers and more (see Fig. 1). At the end of the research time frame, the Deck and Engine Department accounted for 107 crew members.

Figure 1. Nautical Department

20
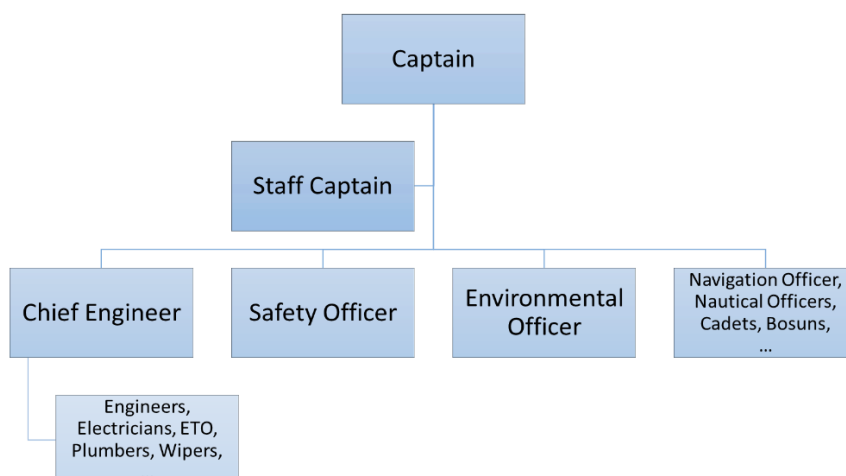
The second and biggest department is the Hotel Department which underlies the cruise ship service provider Sea Chefs, in charge of hotel, restaurant and crew management. At the end of the research period, this department was made up of 288 crew members. The Hotel Department is being led by the Hotel Manager and then fans out to the Food and Beverage Management, Galley Management, Housekeeping Management, Inventory Controlling, Administration and Shop & Spa, each of which departments followed by the respective employees, as can be seen in Figure 2. To specify, the Hotel Department encompasses everything that has to do with the hotel aspect itself on board of the vessel, which comprises restaurants and bars, catering, housekeeping, provision, administration and direct customer service.

Figure 2. Hotel Department
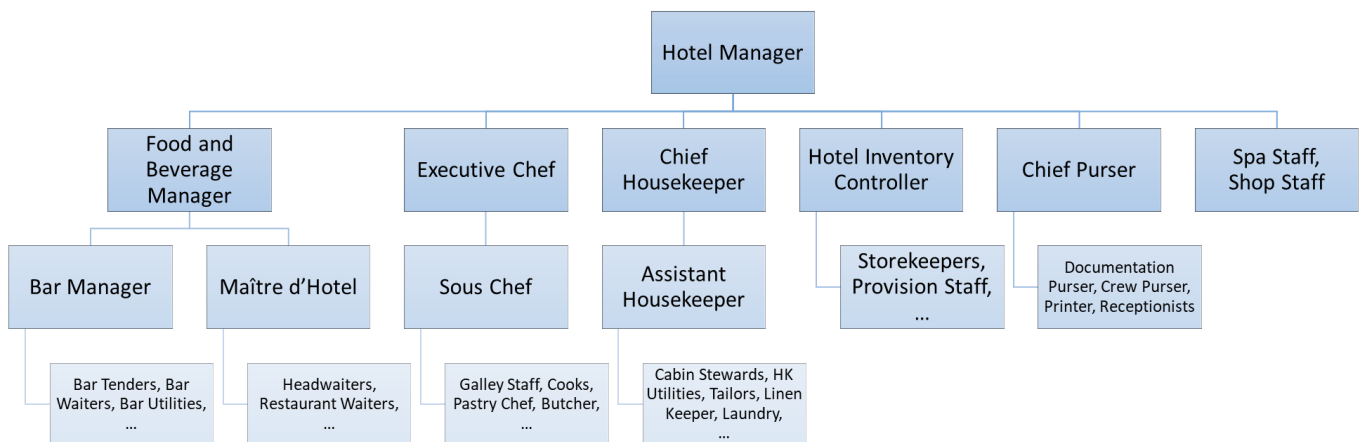
The third and last department that can be found on board of the Phoenix Reisen vessels is the Touristic Department. This department, also known as Phoenix-Team, directly underlies the cruise operator Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH with the Cruise Director at its head. The Phoenix-Team is often referred to as being the hosts on board, as they are the ones continually approachable for the guests and spending most of the day in the passenger area. They speak German in order to best possibly cater to the passengers needs and occupy

frequently visited service spots like the information desk, excursions office or future cruises desk. Consequently, the Phoenix-Team is working towards clarifying doubts the guests might have, solving problems and ensuring satisfactory service quality and vacation experience. They further employ positions like Entertainment Management, VIP Service or Bedbooking, as can be seen in Figure 3. Together with the crew members designated to Entertainment on board, like the Showensemble and Band, they account for the department classification Cruise Staff. On MV Amera, at the point of time when the data collection was finalised, Cruise Staff accounted for 28 crew members.

Figure 3. Touristic Department
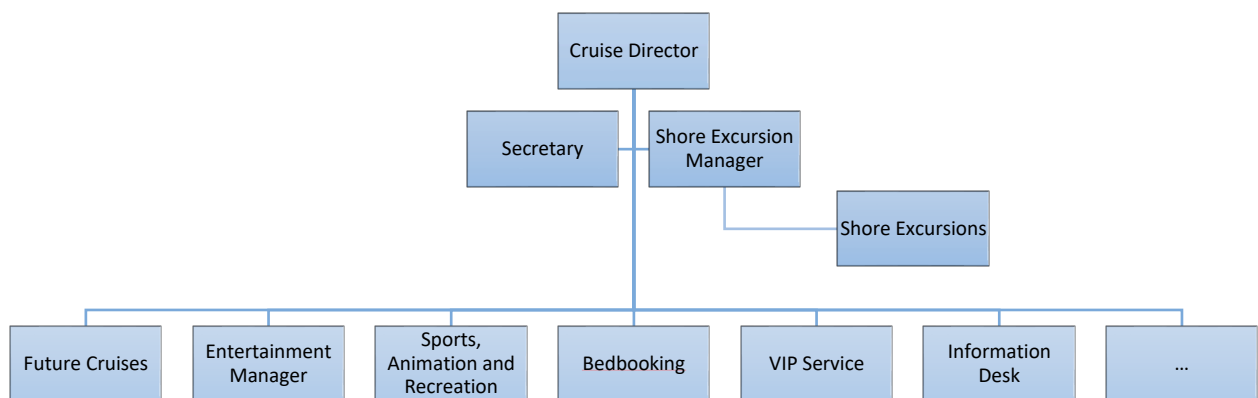
To sum up, the three departments mentioned above are closely working together in order to ensure a safely operating ocean vessel in a touristic context and to create a memorable vacation experience for their passengers. The interconnectedness on board of the ships is one of a kind, which is why all the departments must work closely together to reach a common goal. As a result, hierarchies are strict and steep and the managers, as in heads of departments, hold a high degree of responsibility for their teams, as every crew member is essential for a cruise ship to operate successfully.

3.2.2. Participants

The participants for the interviews were chosen based on their position occupied on board. With regards to the research question of how managers deal with a culturally diverse workforce, the goal was to have one representative participant from each significant

22

department on board of the cruise ship. The ship-space is highly restricted and difficult to access, which required participants to be approached personally on board in an everyday work context by the researcher who was taking part in this context as a co-worker. As a result, all the leading officers, as in the heads of departments in different levels of hierarchy on board were asked to be interviewed on a voluntary basis. Twelve out of 13 approached prospective interviewees agreed to be interviewed, the one disagreeing being the Spa Manager. Excluding the Spa Manager from the sample does not impose a disadvantage to the success of this study, since the Spa Department is comparably small and does not belong to the key processes on board. A department that was excluded by the author of this thesis is the Medical Department, as it consisted of 2-4 exclusively German employees. In addition to the twelve interviews with heads of departments, one interview has been conducted with the ship's German teacher, as it seemed relevant to the matter of this study. In total, the sample consists of 13 individuals working as head of department or German teacher on board of the Phoenix Reisen ocean vessels. Table 1 exemplifies the interviewees together with their professional and social attributes.

Table 1. Interview Participants

No.	Occupation	Department	Employer	Nationality	Gender	Age
1	Captain	Head of all Departments	Phoenix Reisen / BSM	German	male	51
2	Staff Captain	Nautical Department	BSM	German	male	59
3	Cruise Director	Touristic Department	Phoenix Reisen	German	male	33
4	Hotel Manager	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	German	male	41
5	F&B Manager	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	Hungarian	male	39
6	Maître d'Hotel	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	German	male	32
7	Bar Manager	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	Ukrainian	male	39
8	Hotel Inventory Controller	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	Hungarian	male	42
9	Chief Housekeeper	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	German	female	47
10	Chief Purser	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	German	female	39
11	Executive Chef	Hotel Department	Sea Chefs	Swiss	male	52
12	Chief Engineer	Nautical Department	BSM	Bulgarian	male	53
13	German Teacher	n.a.	Sea Chefs	German	female	47

As can be observed in Table 1, most of the interviewed managers are part of the Hotel Department, which can be explained by its size. The Hotel Department is by far the biggest department on board, followed by the Nautical Department and the even smaller Touristic Department. All participants are between 32 and 59 years old, the majority of them is male and the most prominent nationality is German.

3.3. Data Collection

As stated in the previous paragraph, the main instrument for data collection was found in semi-structured in-depth interviews with the heads of departments on board of cruise vessels of Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH. Additionally, field research through the means of participative observation has been undertaken, in order to support and verify the data collected.

3.3.1. In-depth interviews

In order to most effectively access useful and relevant data to understand cultural diversity management on cruise ships under Phoenix Reisen, in-depth interviews are the most suitable method of qualitative data collection. Interviews as an instrument for data collection help the researcher to find out about the personal attitudes, practices and motivations of individuals and therefore to win a deep understanding of the individual and consequently the research matter (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). Since little is known about diversity management on cruise ships, in-depth interviews turn out to be most convenient in order to gain knowledge about the topic. Furthermore, interviewees tend to feel more comfortable talking openly, especially about sensitive topics, when in a one-on-one conversation, rather than in a group context (Gill et al., 2008). In comparison to quantitative data collection methods, it is evident that in-depth interviews also provide the researcher with a substantial amount of control regarding the validity of outcomes, merely through sitting face-to-face with the interviewee (Barriball & While, 1994).

To be more specific, the type of in-depth interview chosen for the matter of this thesis is a semi-structured interview. It was chosen due to its suitability for exploring the personal attitudes and perceptions of the interviewees (Barriball & While, 1994) with regards to a complex issue like cultural diversity. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow for retrieving comparable answers while potentially moving away from the interview script to clarify or to dig deeper into a specific topic touched by the respondent (Gill et al., 2008; Barriball & While, 1994). Consequently, the interviews were conducted following a uniform script (see Appendix A) that can be divided in six blocks: 1) The interviewees social attributes and their affiliation to the company (question 1), 2) the international relevance of the department in question (questions 2-3), 3) opportunities and challenges that an international crew brings about (questions 4-6), 4) cultural diversity present in the department

and how to deal with it (questions 7-9), 5) the connection to the D-A-CH customer segment (question 10), 6) the interviewees input on relationships, discrimination and language barriers (questions 11-13). The interview script has been composed this way, in order to incrementally introduce the interviewees to the research matter, starting by breaking the ice with personal questions, followed by raising awareness towards the internationality on board and ending with the questions directed at diversity management that are decisive to the aim of this research. Nevertheless, the order of questions in the script was merely used as a guideline, also allowing for new questions arising in the course of the interview being asked by the interviewer.

After receiving the appropriate authorisation to conduct the interviews from the company, the prospect interviewees also agreed to being part of this study. They were given access to the interview script, in order for them to be able to look into the subject upfront. In total, 13 interviews have been conducted over the course of five cruises between July 2019 and March 2020. The interviews were conducted inside the ship environment, predominantly in private offices of the heads of departments or in places that offered sufficient privacy for interviewees to speak openly without feeling unease, restricted by external influences or interrupted. In order to facilitate communication and expression and to minimise language barriers, the interviewees were given the choice to perform the interview either in English or in German, although most of them chose the German language. Furthermore, the interviews were recorded with the help of an audio recording program, after due authorisation and consent from the interviewee, using a mobile phone. Later they were transcribed and translated manually by the author of this thesis, at all times with the help of password protected media to protect anonymity. As regards the duration of interviews, the ships' working environment had to be respected, which is characterised by strict work schedules and does not allow for exceedingly long-lasting interruptions, such as the interviews conducted. As a result, the durations of interviews range between 06:21 minutes, being the shortest, and 36:53, being the longest, also depending on the intercultural relevance with regards to the respective department. For reasons of confidentiality, the names of the interviewees will not be disclosed in this thesis, as they will be named by their functions, which can be related to multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, exhaustive interview transcripts will not be provided in the scope of this thesis, in order to protect the individual identity of the interviewees, since the company is being explicitly identified.

3.3.2. Participant Observation

As stated beforehand, the author of this thesis was incorporated in the research environment as a participant observer, which allows for gaining a deeper understanding (Clark et al., 2009; Flick, 2009; Kawulich, 2005) of the ship-space and the management strategies voiced by the heads of departments. From experience, participant observation generates authentic results that effectively represent the research topic and environment (Kawulich, 2005), as it combines scientific and practical aspects (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). In this case, the researcher was part of the ship-space as a fulltime crew member in the touristic department, professionally cross-linked with all departments present on board. As a result, this type of research facilitated the access to the research environment (Kawulich, 2005), as in approaching the prospect interviewees, as well as experiencing the application of management practices first-hand, which works towards underlining the validity of the results obtained. Likewise, being close to the observed phenomena, the researcher is aware of the possible bias in subjectively interpreting data. For this reason, extra care was taken as explained in the data analysis section below.

3.3.3. Document Analysis

Including numbers in qualitative research can be a useful source of validation and completion with regards to the results obtained (Maxwell, 2010). In this case, the researcher, as part of the ship context, has been granted access to internal data on crew and passenger composition, as in the crew manifest in anonymised form, as well as the crew and passenger nationality breakdown. This data, in turn, was used to question the relevance of the research environment, since the fundamental premises lies in conducting research on an international crew serving a single origin customer segment. As a result, it is conducive to the generalizability of results, as it supports the qualitative data collected (Maxwell, 2010). Furthermore, insights on department compositions could be gained as an aid to understanding the complexity of the ship-space. For reasons of confidentiality, the data mentioned above will not be disclosed as part of this thesis.

3.4.   Data Analysis

In order to condense an extensive amount of non-numerical data into clearly laid out categorised information, a content analysis has to be performed (Neale, 2016; Stemler, 2010).

For the matter of this thesis, the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA has been used to support the process and its reliability, as it is time saving and less prone to errors (Basit, 2003; Neale, 2016). Nevertheless, the analysis itself is still in the hands of the researcher, since the software merely facilitates the data management (Burnard et al., 2008). Firstly, the interviews have been manually transcribed and translated by the author of this thesis and the software's own transcription feature, so that a basis for coding the data could be set. Developing a code system, is a useful measure in terms of data reduction and organisation, as it grants the researcher access to a deeper comprehension of elaborate data (Basit, 2003). With regards to the coding procedure, a mixed methods approach has been adopted, encompassing a priori coding, as in a deductive approach, together with emergent coding, as in an inductive approach (Burnard et al., 2008; Stemler, 2010). Consequently, a preselection of categories has been developed in an a priori approach by reviewing existing literature on the topic, as well as the interview script. Since literature on the research matter is scarce, these categories have been revised, adapted and completed in terms of emergent coding, through examining the actual data collected before and during the coding process (Burnard et al., 2008; Neale, 2016; Stemler, 2010). The coding procedure itself was performed by examining the transcripts line-by-line, while assigning relevant sections to the corresponding codes (Neale, 2016). Finally, all data was organised according to its relevance, into a structured multi-level tree of categories and codes, which in turn serves as the basis for generating analysable results.

In order to verify the reliability and consistency of codes obtained, an Intercoder Agreement test in terms of reproducibility has been performed (Stemler, 2010). According to Stemler (2010), an Intercoder Agreement measures if the data can be coded equally by different analysts, generating numerical relevance through Cohen's Kappa as a scale of accordance, where the value 1 equals perfect reliability and the value 0 equals no reliability while considering matches by chance. In this case, two coders independently examined and coded according to the classification tree, 10% of the entries randomly extracted, which correspond to 45 codes judged with a list of 76 possible categories. The Cohen's Kappa attained is 0.835 which is above Landis' and Koch's (1977) threshold for an almost perfect agreement, which suggests strong intercoder reliability (see Fig. 4). This, in turn, implies that both the categories in use, as well as the coding process were not biased by subjective interpretation.

Figure 4. Intercoder Agreement

		Value	Asympt. stand. error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. significance
Measure of agreement	Kappa	.835	.057	22.778	.000
N of valid cases		45			

a.   Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b.   Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

After ensuring the accuracy and reliability of codes, the results obtained were translated into a frequency table (see Appendix C) in order to examine the importance of codes based on their occurrence. This table later also served as a base for developing a coding dictionary (see Appendix B) that clearly states the signification of each code. Finally, the outcomes of the coding procedure were analysed and verified thematically through identifying themes, as well as complementary responses with regards to the categories developed (Burnard et al., 2008; Neale, 2016).

4. Results

In the following, the results of the underlying data collection and analysis of this research will be presented in order to answer the research question of *how cultural diversity is being managed in cruise ship crews with regards to serving a German customer segment*. As a result of the data analysis, five main sections were generated to categorise the different outcomes of the study relative to cultural aspects in the working environment of a cruise ship: Crew Internationalisation, Cultural Differences, Opportunities and Challenges of an International Crew, Management of International Crew and the Management of Crew-Customer-Relationships. Moreover, these five main sections are divided into further categories and subcategories.

4.1. Crew Internationalisation

The section of Crew Internationalisation seeks to find out how international the crew truly is, in order to be able to judge the suitability of the research environment to the matter of this study. The Nationality Breakdown, as part of the Crew Manifest, shows that, at the moment of data collection, the crew consisted of 29 different nationalities. Nevertheless, by far the most represented group were the Philippines with 261 out of 423 crew members. They were followed by 45 Indonesians, 38 Germans and 15 Bulgarians.

The heads of departments also showed their awareness towards the internationality of their teams during the interviews conducted (F=21, N=13). All managers, except one, on board stated that they have at least three different nationalities in their department, up until 25 different nationalities. The Cruise Director, head of Phoenix-Team, explained that there are only two nationalities in his department at the moment, which are the German-speaking nations Germany and Switzerland. Nevertheless, all other departments are highly international with an emphasis on Filipino and Indonesian origins, as the Hotel Manager states: "*You can say that in total, we have 300 employees in the Hotel Department and from that 202 are Filipinos, then we have 56 from Indonesia, and then Honduras, 8. The rest is made up of less than 8*". Relative to this, it has to be mentioned that the composition of crew members on board is constantly changing due to frequent contract rotations, which, as a result, leads to a continuous variation of nationalities present in each department.

Some of the interviewees proposed reasons for the high proportion of Asian crew members (F=7, N=3) featuring financial, structural, and cultural aspects. For the Filipino and Indonesian seafarers *"(...) it is a huge financial advantage (...) to get a job on a cruise ship in the first place"* (Hotel Manager) and the salaries obtained on board, *"(...) regarding the background of living expenses in their own country, are fantastic remunerations"* (Staff Captain). Generally seen, the interviewees mention the Philippines being a country in need of employment, which is characteristically known for their extensive number of overseas workers and for being a seafarer's nation, employing *"(...) hotel schools (...) that train around 2.5 thousand people every scholar year"* (Hotel Manager). With regards to cultural reasons, the managers voice aspects such as the Christian religion, or education, because *"private school education is in English, which is also the (...) board language"* (Hotel Manager), as well as characteristic traits like the Filipino's friendliness, as in a Filipino being *"(...) polite, because he was born and raised this way"* (Hotel Inventory Controller).

4.2. Cultural Differences

This section closely examines how internationalisation translates into cultural differences. Eleven out of 13 interviewees have observed cultural differences amongst crew members and depicted those in the course of the interview (F=54, N=11). Herewith most frequently mentioned were different work ethics of crew members (F=13, N=7) especially featuring diligence and punctuality. According to the F&B Manager, *"some nationalities are a bit more hard-working and the others not so hard-working"*, exemplary classifying the European and Filipino culture to postulate a more diligent working style than the Latin American culture. Especially punctuality is an aspect in work ethics that is being valued differently among cultures, as, for example, *"Germans are putting a lot of emphasis on punctuality and like to be five or ten minutes early"* (Maître d'Hotel) while other nationalities present on board do not think of it as being of great importance. As a subcategory of Work Ethics, the specific aspect of Reliance on Instructions has been emphasised by two interviewees (F=3, N=2), since particularly Filipino crew members tend to *"wait to get clear instructions"* (Staff Captain) and would not commence performing tasks autonomously. In contrast, a nautical officer from New Zealand is said to be *"(...) proactive and he sees and knows what he has to do in his position"* (Staff Captain). Illness during working hours is a further subcategory of interest concerning the research but has been solely pointed out by the Bar Manager (F=1, N=1), who states that when ill, he and his European colleagues *"continue*

to work, but some, if they have a headache, they immediately go to the doctor to try staying one day in [their] cabin".

Another dimension of importance for Cultural Differences are divergent Attitudes and Characteristics due to a crew member's culture (F=12, N=6). Those impact not only the interactions between crew and customer but also the interactions amongst crew members. Filipino crew members were stated to be extraordinarily "*(...) cordial and welcoming*" (F&B Manager), as well as outgoing, whereas "*(...) Indonesians are more conservative*" (Chief Housekeeper). These detections can be contrasted with Eastern European attributes that are said to be "*(...) just a little bit more distanced (...)*" (Chief Purser). Other culturally based differences in attitudes and characteristics comprise German crew members "*(...) working meticulously (...)*" (Maître d'Hotel), as well as nautical officers from New Zealand being more focused and reserved, whereas "*(...) the Spanish colleague tends to like to talk*" (Staff Captain).

Moreover, Cultural Differences tend to also be characterised by Habits and Traditions (F=10, N=6). These depict a great variety of differing attributes, which can clearly be observed in the cruise ship work context. The attributes mentioned by the interviewees comprise, for example, the musical sense of some cultures, as "*Asians are musically very talented*" (F&B Manager), and cultural holidays, like Eastern Europeans that "*(...) celebrated Christmas at Three Magi Holiday*" (Captain). The Hotel Manager also mentions *"(...) cultures like Indonesians, that are not used to sleep in beds (...)*", which is why some crew members initially slept on mattresses on the floor.

In the eyes of five of the interviewees, the food culture of a country has proven to be of importance for Cultural Differences as well (F=9, N=5), as Filipinos and Indonesians in comparison to Germans, for example, "(…) *have a completely different mentality when it comes to food*" (Executive Chef) and put emphasis on different types of foods and food habits. Asian crew members, for example, are used to "(…) *cooking everything with soy sauce (...)*" (F&B Manager) and rice should not be missing from any meal. Furthermore, table manners are different, as "*some use chopsticks, some use spoons and fork*" (Hotel Manager).

The next category characterizing Cultural Differences lies in Religion (F=8, N=5), which is an omnipresent concern for the managers. Some crew members *"(...) are very*

Christian" and "*(...) value a holy mass for the crew a lot and always go there*" (Maître d'Hotel). "*Most of the Indonesians are Muslims*" (Chief Housekeeper) which "*have to watch what they eat at specific times*" (Maître d'Hotel). Since the ship-space is based on a regulated working and living environment, this leads to the subcategory of religion imposing Culinary Restrictions (F=3, N=3), as can be seen, for example, with "*(...) Muslims that do not eat pork*" (Executive Chef).

The last and least frequent mentioned category of Cultural Differences can be found in Dress Codes (F=2, N=2) referring to culturally different crew members that "*(...) dress differently*" (Bar Manager) like Filipino crew members that "*(...) are not used to wearing closed shoes*" (Hotel Manager).

4.3. Opportunities and Challenges of an International Crew

In the interviews, the managers have been asked what opportunities and challenges they see in an international crew, which is why this section deals with both positive (Opportunities) and negative perceptions (Challenges) towards the matter. Overall, the Challenges of an International Crew prevail with a total of 46 codes (F=46, N=12), whereas the Opportunities of an International Crew have only been coded 26 times (F=26, N=12). The latter category will be expounded first.

According to the Captain, while working with an international crew, "*almost exclusively advantages can be found and big opportunities*". The category by far most frequently coded is the opportunity for Personal Growth, which has also been mentioned by all but two of the heads of departments interviewed (F=19, N=11). While working in an international context, the crew members *"(...) get to view beyond [their] own nose and experience different views and experience way more diversity than in a job ashore at home*" (Captain). "*They learn to work in a team, as we also learn that there are different cultures inside it*" (Chief Housekeeper) and "*it is interesting working together*" (Bar Manager). Three dimensions of Personal Growth were pointed out, first of which is Learning about other Cultures (F=11, N=11). According to the Hotel Inventory Controller "*a multicultural crew brings about many beautiful things. You can learn from others. You see how the other culture lives*". This dimension is followed by the Open-mindedness towards other cultures (F=2, N=2), as in becoming more openminded and cosmopolitan through working in an international crew, and the opportunity of Improving Language Skills (F=1, N=1).

Moving on, the category of Diversity is seen as an opportunity of an international crew by two of the managers (F=3, N=2). "*Multinationalism has the advantage that you, in fact, bring together people from these diverse origins and in doing so, have a substantially mixed structure where nobody has the potential to put themselves above others*" (Staff Captain).

Furthermore, a Comprehensive Destination Knowledge has been pointed out as a category (F=2, N=1), because "*it is an advantage to have crew members on board from many of the countries that we travel to and maybe to get some information about the countries*" (Hotel Manager). Native speakers are highly beneficial as they can offer their help and support for when it comes to excursion dispatches or clearances.

Lastly, the Chief Engineer introduced the concept of interpersonal Formality amongst crew members (F=1, N=1), as from his experience, members of a single nationality crew "(…) *are getting more familiar with each other than necessary (…). They are forgetting who is who*".

As stated beforehand, the possible and actual Challenges arising with a diverse crew predominate the Opportunities. The most frequently mentioned challenge is the category describing Discrimination and Prejudice (F=11, N=9). Nevertheless, only three of the interviewees voice to have actually witnessed discrimination in the ship-space. On board "*(…) they are all very close with each other, 400 crew members on a very limited space. (…) This is why these topics are very critical*" (Captain). In contrast, the majority of interviewees acknowledge the risk of discrimination, but predicate to "*(…) have never experienced something like that before*" (Bar Manager) and that "*discrimination does not happen here*" (Executive Chef).

The second most mentioned category consists in Language and Communication Barriers (F=9, N=3), because "*(…) what is difficult with so many nationalities, is to bring them all together to the same language*" (Hotel Inventory Controller). *"[The] language on board is English and this works well, but of course it is not like communicating in your mother tongue*" (Captain) and also dialects matter, as different origins come with different pronunciations of the English language. Non-verbal communication turns out to be of importance as well, as interpersonal approximations can easily be taken the wrong way and

"there are indeed a few mistakes that are being committed in communication, in mutual perception (...)" (Staff Captain).

The category Culture Clash describes *"the challenge (...) to combine or establish many cultures and religions in a small working environment or rather living environment"* (Hotel Manager) (F=6, N=6). According to the Captain, *"(...) people are different, so you have to be aware that they sometimes have some little conflicts"*. For example, *"the sense of time of some nationalities is a different one"* (Maître d'Hôtel).

Furthermore, the Formation of Groups has been noticed as a possible challenge by five of the managers (F=5, N=5). Some mention that on board *"(...) it is difficult that some groups are very large and prefer to stay amongst their own"* (German Teacher). However, others state that groups in their department are *"(...) separated by moods and interests"* (Bar Manager) and not by nationality, and that at events *"(...) they all sit together, no matter if they are from Indonesia or Philippines or Germany or Bulgaria or wherever. They celebrate all together"* (Chief Housekeeper).

The following category of Differing Work Ethics (F=5, N=5) has been mentioned previously in relation to the section of Cultural Differences. Crew members of different nationalities exhibit different attributes when it comes to how they carry out tasks and what attitudes they contribute to the daily work context, which makes it in turn *"(...) very difficult to get them on the same page"* (Executive Chef).

"(...) The crew also has to share cabins. Sometimes different nationalities are being put together. That does not always work" (Chief Housekeeper), which introduces the challenge Cohabitation in a crew context that was registered five times (F=5, N=4).

Moreover, crew members joining the cruise ships bring along a set of Differing Qualifications, Backgrounds and Habits, which is likely to impose challenges on daily business as well (F=3, N=2). Growing up in different environments, the crew members were subject to different education and upbringing, and therefore bring along diverse sets of qualifications and habits to the ship-space. According to the Executive Chef, for example, his galley staff members *"(...) cook differently at home, they work differently at home, they clean differently at home"*.

Two last categories relative to Challenges of International Crew have been pointed out, that both have been mentioned by only one interviewee, but that nevertheless have been classified as important for the matter of this study. On the one hand, there is the aspect of Limited Space (F=1, N=1) that imposes difficulties, as for the crew members "*the broadest area is where they work, but it will get even more restricted when work is over and they are in their cabins*" (Captain). On the other hand, Religious Restrictions have been mentioned as a challenge, since, for example, some Muslim crew members had "*(...) problems in the galley to work with pork or to serve alcohol*" (Hotel Manager).

4.4.   Management of International Crew

The following section lays out the different managerial practices the heads of departments employ in order to ensure the best possible cooperation in their diverse departments. As a result, this section is one of the two most determining ones for the matter of this study, which can be underlined by the high number of codes manifested (F=237, N=13). As opposed to the other sections highlighted so far, the categories will not be put in order according to their frequencies, but according to the sequence of actual HR processes that start with recruitment, continue with training, performance appraisal, operational management and end with the processes of rehiring or letting go of employees. The main categories established are Evaluation of Employee Suitability, Training and Briefings, Superordinate Values, followed by Communication, Intercultural Relationship Building, Cultural Self-Realisation, as well as Conflict and Discrimination Management, and lastly Staff Stability.

4.4.1. Employee Selection

Consequently, the first category to be highlighted is the Evaluation of Employee Suitability and Prerequisites (F=4, N=2). The management found out that some nations featuring specific cultures rarely consider working on a cruise ship, for example due to religious restrictions of working with specific consumables. Furthermore, it is important that a crew member has to be "*a very openminded person and openly handle all topics*" without holding prejudices (Maître d'Hôtel). Lastly, English is the working language on board and fluency is required as implied in the Maître d'Hôtel statement that "*this is a prerequisite to work on a cruise ship (...) in the first place*".

4.4.2. Training

The Training and Briefing of employees is being emphasised by the managers with a total of 23 codes (F=23, N=8) and can be further divided into four subcategories developed in the following. According to the F&B Manager, trainings are held by "*(...) every department, no matter if it is the Bar Manager or the Restaurant Manager, they do that automatically. It is also required by the company*". The managers do trainings in order to convey to their employees "*(...) what is good, what is bad, what can be done, and what should not be done*" (Bar Manager). Especially in the Food and Beverage department, daily trainings, like menu briefings take place, "*(...) where everyone gets a menu, the Executive Chef prepares show plates and then we show everything and explain everything*" (F&B Manager). Trainings are being documented through a training list that has to be signed and are usually hands on.

The first and most coded subcategory of Training and Briefing is Autonomous Peer Training and Motivation, which has been highlighted by four of the interviewees (F=7, N=4). From experience, crew members are staying with the company for more than one contract. As a result, "*they already know the ship (...) and they know what [the managers] want*" (Chief Engineer). Consequently, "*(...) when there is new crew coming on board, the old crew always supports the new crew*" (F&B Manager) and trains them accordingly. Furthermore, high performing crew members motivate their co-workers to keep up with their performance standard.

Another way to train new crew members can be found in the subcategory of Slow Pace and Augmenting Tasks (F=4, N=3). Accordingly, new crew members start with simple tasks, until they are proficient enough to move on to the next one. "*Employees that are [on board] for the first time (...) get positions where they do not actively work together with the guest. Mostly they start as utilities, as general help workers*" (Hotel Manager). Their progress is being closely observed and "*over the time, months or years, [they] proceed to the front*" (F&B Manager).

Training, nevertheless, does not only happen on board, but also before the crew members' first contract in so-called Training Centres at their home countries (F=3, N=2). The Training Centres are "*(...) hands on and theoretic. [The crew members] get a direct briefing. We present the company Sea Chefs, we present the company Phoenix, so that the candidates know what to expect, in case they are being employed*" (Chief Housekeeper). As a result,

prospect employees are being trained beforehand as regards their envisaged tasks on board, as well as informed about the company and professional requirements that they are getting involved with.

The last subcategory of Training and Briefing is directed at the heads of departments and the need for Self-Education with regards to their international teams (F=2, N=2). It is essential for managers to know the present cultures and their attributes, and "*(…) to show interest in the cultural diversity (…)*" (Captain).

4.4.3. Superordinate Values

Throughout the interviews, a set of Superordinate Values could be constituted that fundamentally characterise the management style of the heads of departments. The importance of this section is highlighted by it being the second most coded section with a frequency of 51 total codes (F=51, N=11). The Superordinate Values identified result in four categories, which are Respect, Benevolence, a Superordinate Goal and Equality, as well as Support.

The category Respect exhibits the highest frequency with 20 codes and has been mentioned by ten of the interviewees (F=20, N=10), who agree that "*the most important thing is respect. To respect each and every other culture just the way they are*" (Chief Purser). This goes as far as applying Culture Respecting Alterations to the working environment, which has been determined as a subcategory (F=10, N=5). These alterations to normative processes are implemented especially due to religious reasons, as for example, "*(…) for the Muslims, there are facilities to pray. This ship also has a mosque*" (Hotel Manager) and the managers "*(…) cannot dictate them a duty where they usually pray at this time*" (Maître d'Hôtel). With regards to alimentation, the Executive Chef takes care that "*(…) officers are handled separately - they have a separate part of the galley where they cook European. And for the crew, we have more Asian food. If we have Hondurans, we also cook Honduras Rice. We also have dishes without pork for the Muslims*". Nevertheless, alterations also happen on an interpersonal level, for instance, "*when you criticise the Filipinos, it can never be in a group. It always has to be done face to face. Those are rules we have to follow*" (Hotel Manager).

The following category of Benevolence (F=12, N=5) deals with the managers going the extra mile for their employees, as crew members "*(…) have a high affinity to companies*

where they realise that they are treated adequately" (Staff Captain). The Executive Chef states, for example, that "*every Sunday [the crew members] get ice cream and we prepare pizza. (...) I try to think of something special from time to time. The crew works very hard here and they need to have decent food. I would never cut anything, and I do not care about how much it costs. The crew is important*". One specific part of the managers' benevolence is the so-called Crew Welfare committee (F=4, N=2), "*(...) which is composed by voluntary crew members, who are organizing events for the crew, if it is parties, excursions, bingo nights, sports events, karaoke nights... To do what the crew really likes*" (Hotel Manager). This committee is a democratically elected juncture between crew and leading officers to represent the crew's concerns and needs in frequent Crew Welfare meetings. Nevertheless, the Hotel Manager takes care that "(…) *Crew Welfare is always made up of different nationalities, that is not in the hands of a single nation. Also, that [they] have women and men, to have that fairness*". Furthermore, the higher workload resulting from being a member of the Crew Welfare committee is being remunerated by management.

Moreover, eight of the interviewees mention that promulgating and demonstrating working towards a Superordinate Goal and Equality is crucial while managing an international crew (F=12, N=8). According to the Cruise Director, "*there are 29 different nationalities on board and each and every one is equally important for a functioning cruise ship. The colleagues from Phoenix-Team, like the colleagues from the laundry or the bridge, the engine. (...) We all have one goal; we are here for the guest. And it does not matter where you are from and what language you speak*". The managers aim to highlight the significance of equality, as they are "*(...) all in this together and nobody is worth more than the other one*" (Chief Purser) and "*there are the same rules and laws for everyone. (…) This is the alpha and omega for the board culture - that there is equality on board*" (Hotel Manager).

The last value of importance embodied by the heads of departments is Support (F=7, N=4), since crew members "*can always approach [their] managers and supervisors, when they have a problem*" (Maître d'Hôtel), no matter if the issue is work related or personal.

4.4.4. Communication

Ten of the interviewees agree that while managing an international crew, "*(...) communication is the key*" (Chief Purser), which leads to the next category Communication (F=31, N=10). As a consequence, most of the heads of departments are of the opinion that

transparency and regular dialogue are crucial to keep information levels among crew members constantly high, to avoid conflicts inside the teams and to better integrate new crew members.

The subcategory English as a Board Language (F=17, N=7) describes the fact that on board, "*the crew language is English*" (Maître d'Hôtel). This does not only facilitate the communication inside the crew, but according to the Staff Captain, "*(…) the International Safety Management [code] requires that the whole crew has to know one language with regards to the safety on board. In emergencies, for example, and this is the English language, and this is what we focus on*".

4.4.5. Intercultural Relationship Building

The following category, Intercultural Relationship Building, is the most coded one of this section with a total of 70 codes retrieved from twelve of the interviews (F=70, N=12) and can be further divided in four subcategories. For the crew members, it is seen as beneficial "*that through doing something together, working together, they get to know each other better and are considerate of each other*" (German Teacher). Relationships and friendships developed on board are said to facilitate working in a challenging environment like the ship-space. As for managerial measures, the Captain voices the usefulness "*that we minimise the building of groups. And that we do not have these separations, but that we really try to shape it more internationally. (…) It is a relaxed crew that sticks together and (…) the relationship is relatively good*". Nevertheless, as it is unrealistic to be on cordial terms with all co-workers, "*you do not have to be friends, but you have to be able to work together with everyone*" (Hotel Inventory Controller).

The first and highest frequent subcategory deals with Leader Subordinate Relationships (F=18, N=10), which are of equal relevance just as the relationships inside the crew. The managers favour a friendly communication with their team members and make sure they show their faces at crew events. Moreover, to "*give feedback and show appreciation is a very important thing. (…) It is way more important than being critical*" (Staff Captain). According to the Chief Housekeeper, the crew members "*(…) need someone they can talk to. A person of trust*", which is why she states the following: "*So, you just go to the people sometimes and ask them, how are things at home, what does your family do. So that they feel, there is someone taking care of them*".

In order to strengthen relationships inside the crew, outside of working hours, the managers mention to organise a variety of Crew Events (F=14, N=11). The most important event happening regularly and connecting the whole crew across departments is the Crew Party. "*Sometimes we have it with guests, sometimes just crew. We have it around once or twice a month in the evening after dinner. (...) The heads of departments (...) pick out the date when it is possible. And then it is all being organised*" (F&B Manager). Nevertheless, the departments also organise their own events, as the Hotel Inventory Controller states: "*Each week, minimum once, we sit all together and eat together*". In the restaurant team, "*(...) end of the cruise, the tips are being counted. (...) And when we are left with odd amounts, like 200 $ and 5 ct, then we collect this money and do raffles with it, like Bingo*" (Maître d'Hôtel) and also the engine department "*(...) [has their] parties from time to time*" (Chief Engineer).

Moving forward, five of the interviewees refer to creating a favourable Working Atmosphere as being of importance in the management of an international crew (F=9, N=5). The familiar atmosphere on board has been mentioned multiple times throughout the study, since crew members, "*when they are hired and they feel comfortable, they are incorporated pretty fast and it becomes familiar here*" (Chief Housekeeper). Not only the crew members benefit from a favourable working climate, but "*it is [also] nicer for the guests if they feel an atmosphere, where everybody is not that tense and pressured. (...) And this is why I try to do everything with a wink, a bit more relaxed, to joke with the crew, but of course all in moderation. And then, in times where it is important, when it is stressful, everybody is focused*" (Maître d'Hôtel).

The last subcategory of Intercultural Relationship Building consists in Team Work (F=8, N=6). "*What is very important to me is that we always put emphasis on team work. This is very important, that we do not walk alone*" (Chief Housekeeper). Accordingly, the Executive Chef provided an example of Valentine's Day, where the galley staff is challenged with producing rose-shaped marzipan and in such occasion he promotes "*(...) team work. Everybody helps. Upstairs we provide some drinks, some food and in the evening, everybody comes up. In half an hour they were done*".

4.4.6. Cultural Self-Realisation

Another part of successfully leading a diverse crew lies in giving them the room and opportunity to express themselves and their culture on board, which was summarised in the category Cultural Self-Realisation and Expression (F=30, N=7). According to the Captain, "*the liberty has to be granted [to the crew] to live their cultural traits and can only be restricted where they limit the freedom of others*". Examples of crew members being able to incorporate attributes of their own culture in the ship context for the passengers are, for once, the "*(...) dinner of the cooks - we have Indonesians, we have Filipinos, we have Germans and everyone can propose one dish*" (Executive Chef) to be offered in passenger restaurants, as well as "*(...) the crew show, where different nations perform dances, singing, music... It is a nice identification for the passengers with the crew*" (Hotel Manager).

Two subcategories of Cultural Self-Realisation and Expression have been developed, of which the most frequently coded one is Withholding Culture during Working Hours (F=8, N=4). This is based on the fact that on board "*everybody has the possibility to believe in whatever they want but in total, the day-to-day operations on board cannot be impacted*" (Captain). It is crucial that crew members "*(...) never mix work with private issues. (...) If it is religion or a private feeling that you have, you have to try to suppress that. After they finished work or during break time, everybody can do whatever they like, as long as they respect each other*" (Maître d'Hôtel). Interviewees express that there is one board culture analogical to the European culture that is being followed by all crew members during working hours. Moreover, wearing a uniform in the passenger area is obligatory for the crew and since dress codes can be a form of cultural expression and "*you cannot show your personality in uniform*" (F&B Manager), this leads to Uniform stipulated as a subcategory of Withholding Culture during Working Hours (F=3, N=2).

The second and least frequently mentioned subcategory of Cultural Self-Realisation and Expression lies in Cultural Events (F=6, N=4) and deals with national or religious holidays or occasions of different cultures being integrated in the ship environment. The Hotel Manager voices: "*We take care that the nations can celebrate their national holidays. Their culture. We have a faithful crew, and when there is Ramadan, we take care that they can do Ramadan. Or the Filipinos, when they have their Independence Day, or other nations... We just had the Indian holiday, the Festival of Lights, where we prepared Indian*

food". Furthermore, the managers "*(…) organise a Holy Mass for the crew on holidays and this is, especially by the Asian crew, very well received*" (Captain).

4.4.7. Conflict and Discrimination Management

As stated previously, the heads of departments are unaware of discrimination incidents among crew members, but nevertheless, they indicate specific practices when it comes to Discrimination Management (F=24, N=10). In general, it is stated "*(…) as an absolutely common rule that there does not happen any discrimination. If this happens amongst the crew or worse between crew and supervisor, we do not hesitate and react*" (Captain). All interviewees agree that direct confrontation and communication regarding the matter is the most adequate strategy in dealing with discrimination. Severe cases will end in dismissal of the discriminating crew member. The Staff Captain, as disciplinary superior, points out: "*(…) When I see that things are inappropriate, I take this person aside and try to point the person to the matter. Apart from that, it is part of my duty as a Staff Captain, that when something happens on board that goes in this direction, it is the main challenge to settle the incident (…). You always have to view it from both sides and listen to both sides*".

4.4.8. Staff Stability

The last category with regards to managing an international crew was established treating the topic of turnover and employee retention, summarised as Staff Stability (F=4, N=4). Four interviewees report that crew members tend to stay with the company Phoenix Reisen which results in low turnover and high staff stability. The Chief Purser considers the company to be "*(…) lucky that we have many crew members that are working on our vessels for a very long time (…)*". Based on this, the Staff Captain explains, "*(…) that if you treat these employees responsibly, they thank you for it. Especially the Filipino seafarers in every department, wherever they are deployed, they develop a very high feeling of belonging towards the company, a high commitment and loyalty towards the company*".

4.5.   Management of Crew-Customer-Interaction

The section Management of Crew-Customer-Interaction is the second fundamentally determining section for the matter of this study as it deals with managerial practices aiming to match the service expected by the German customer with the one delivered by the

international crew. In order to evaluate the relevance of the empirical object, passenger data from the Passenger Manifest was analysed. At the moment of data collection, there were eight nationalities present among passengers. Of 568 total passengers, 528 were German, 13 Austrian and 13 Swiss, which illustrates that close to all passengers originate from German-speaking countries. Consequently, all 13 interviewees stress the importance of employing certain management strategies in order for the crew to be able to specifically cater to the German customer's needs (F=77, N=13). As opposed to the previous section, the categories of this section will be collocated and explicated according to their coding frequencies.

Consequently, the most frequently mentioned aspect is Learning the German Language with a total of 34 codes (F=34, N=10). The Hotel Manager explains: "*We have German teachers from the Goethe-Institute here on board that teach the crew. And this is also a part of their appraisal. We pay the German classes for them, it is working time that is being paid, and in the end of the German class, they have to do tests*". These classes are structured bilingually, primarily focused on speaking and held in front of diverse groups of crew members separated by departments. As a result, the teaching comprises "*tailored vocabulary for every department. Very service-oriented*" (German Teacher). Nevertheless, the teaching responsibility does not solely lie in the hands of the German Teachers, since the managers are also in charge of practicing the German language with their team, because this "*(...) is the most important for adaptation and integration (...)*" (German Teacher), and reduces the crew members shyness towards actively speaking. The Chief Housekeeper points out: "*If I speak English with them, they also speak English. But if I speak German with them, they also answer in German. We have to support them*".

In addition, learning the German language is not envisaged for all crew members, which leads to the subcategory Limitation to Frontline Staff (F=8, N=5). On board, there are "*(...) German lessons for the personnel that is in direct contact with the guests*" (Hotel Inventory Controller), which solely comprises service staff from the restaurant, bar, housekeeping, spa and galley department.

Moreover, learning German on board and the success in doing so is backed by specific Contract Conditions, voiced by three of the interviewees (F=3, N=3). The Maître d'Hôtel expounds it as following: "*(...) We also have to put a little pressure on them, so that everyone takes it seriously. There is always a German exam after the teacher has been on board (...) If they fail five times in a German exam, (...) then they get a no-return for the*

company. (...) We require that everyone takes it seriously and we work towards as many crew members as possible understanding the basics and being able to communicate with the guests".

However, in order to offer the best possible service to the customer, the heads of departments point out that mastering the German language does not suffice. As a result, the category Culture-Specific Training was developed (F=29, N=9). The managers on board try to "*(...) make it accessible for the employees, how Germans are and how they act. (...)*" (Staff Captain). The Bar Manager explains that "*[this] is why we always have trainings. We have our standards. Because when the passengers come, the questions have to be asked correctly and the order has to be taken correctly*".

Culture-Specific Training can have multiple dimensions. Managers focus on four different subcategories while educating their employees on German culture. The most frequently mentioned of those is the German Cuisine (F=6, N=3). On the one hand, this encompasses the Executive Chef that has to "*(...) train [the galley staff] to cook German. We have German guests on board and they know the German food. Lentil soup, pea soup, and so on. It also has to taste German*". On the other hand, the restaurant service personnel has to know the German dishes and eating habits in order to correctly offer and serve them to the passenger, since "*the Filipinos for example, they have a completely different culture of eating. (...) A Filipino never ate a Schnitzel in his life*" (F&B Manager).

In addition, the crew members receive specific training with regards to Privacy and Respect (F=5, N=4), in order to adequately communicate verbally and non-verbally with the German customer. Asian crew members, for example, are said to be very affectionate, and in interactions with the German passenger, "*they have to learn to keep their distance*" (Chief Housekeeper), and they must not "*speak in [their] mother tongue (...), because it is impolite for someone that does not understand and might think that they speak badly about him*" (Hotel Manager). More specifically, Privacy and Respect was further mentioned relative to Non-Verbal Communication (F=1, N=1), since the interactions in some national cultures include physical contact, but it is crucial for the crew members to learn that they "*cannot kiss the guests and cannot hug them. (...) They have to respect them*" (Bar Manager).

The following subcategory of Culture-Specific Training aims at introducing the crew to German Habits (F=2, N=2), and at educating them to incorporate their knowledge in

delivering the service catering the German passenger's needs and not necessarily performing the tasks the way they learned it in their home country. The Chief Housekeeper names an example: "*In the United States and actually everywhere else, just not in Germany, the duvets are being folded under the mattress. (...) We do trainings to tell them, do not fold the duvets under the mattress. (...) When there is a specific situation, you have to tell them, not everybody likes that*".

Lastly, Culture-Specific Training does not only happen behind closed doors between leader and subordinate, but also between crew and passenger, introducing the subcategory Learn from Customer (F=2, N=2). Crew members get the chance to experience first-hand what determines German culture, since the "*(...) guests also show what is German culture (...)*" (Hotel Manager).

Moving on to the next category, five of the interviewees highlight the Role of German-Speaking Crew Members when managing the crew-customer interaction (F=10, N=5). The leading officers, the reception, as well as the Phoenix-Team inevitably have to be fluent in the German language, "*(...) in order to understand the guest and cater to their wishes*" (Cruise Director). Since the average age of the passengers is relatively high, "*they are poorly educated in the English language. Of course, the guests want to express their wishes and want to know that they are attained*" (Cruise Director). The Hotel Inventory Controller states that it is crucial for "*(...) all German speaking officers to walk rounds and help in every language problem. The guests approach the officers when something happens*". Moreover, the German-speaking crew members are in charge of helping out their fellow co-workers on two levels. On the one hand, they can serve as translators in conversations between crew members and customers and on the other hand, they "*(...) should speak German with the crew as much as possible, so that they can improve their language skills*" (Cruise Director).

Anyhow, the heads of departments occasionally need to deal with passengers complaining about crew members due to discrepancies based on cultural differences that cause Conflicts (F=3, N=3). Eastern European crew members at the reception, for example, "*(...) do a very good job, but still get complaints from passengers that they are unfriendly. (...) They are not unfriendly, they are just a little bit more distanced than an Austrian for example*" (Chief Purser). The Chief Housekeeper suggests "*(...) to communicate clearly. I always talk a lot with [the crew members] and I always say, put yourself in the guests place*".

5.   Discussion

Cultural diversity is a central and critical topic for organisations in hospitality and tourism management, as it is inherent to the business itself, both due to the mobility of customers and the international pooling of employees. The topic has further gained traction in the last decades as it challenges the assumption that individuals will hold fundamental beliefs, values or habits that converge into aligning them with what is expected in organisational activity, but not necessarily made explicit (Rousseau, 1989). In hospitality and tourism organisations, such as cruise ships, the relevance of such alignment becomes even more critical due to the high interdependencies among employees in a restrained space. This situation is prone to exponentiate issues arising from cultural differences that lead to miscommunication or diverging behaviours within the crew and towards customers. This is particularly true for cruises that serve a single-origin customer segment. In such cases, a culturally diverse crew could be seen as a liability in the sense that there is a probability of displaying behaviours that are not in line with the single origin customers' expectations. While being confronted with communication issues that pertain to the use of different languages, to attitudes or the display of behaviours that diverge from the customer's norms, crew members and their managers find themselves in conflict between operating as "one crew - one team", and preserving their own cultural identity and being able to express it.

Although the challenge to tackle this issue is clear for both hospitality and tourism management theory as well as the practitioners, little is known about how cultural diversity in cruise ship crews is being managed while serving a single origin customer segment. The aim of this research is to explore this under-researched topic and to fill an important research gap.

To achieve this purpose, based on the literature review conducted, this study has deployed a qualitative research by interviewing key management personnel working at the cruise company Phoenix Reisen, specialised in serving German-speaking customers, while operating with a multicultural and diverse crew. The data collected in the course of this research targeted the composition of departments, explored perceptions of cultural differences, how these created opportunities as well as challenges to the working environment, and lastly what specific management practices and policies were set in place to tackle this, both at the crew-management and the crew-customer level.

46

In this section, the findings will be expounded, and the research question answered by highlighting HRM practices that successfully tackle challenges and lever opportunities to support a functionally integrated but culturally diverse crew.

This discussion will unfold by firstly assessing whether the chosen empirical grounds are suitable to research the topic. Secondly, it sets focus upon exploring the relationship between challenges, opportunities and managerial practices. Thirdly, it offers a conclusion which pertains to the overall balance of managerial approaches on the case studied, and to what could be taken as best practices in leveraging cruise management effectiveness based on cultural diversity. Finally, this leads to a set of recommendations regarding HRM policy, while acknowledging the limitations of the study, as well as opportunities for future research.

With regards to the crew internationalisation on board, the results section highlighted the relevance of the research environment, as it is in fact highly international. On the opposite side of this international crew stands the customer segment targeted by Phoenix Reisen, which is, in contrast, almost solely originating from German speaking countries, such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland. However, the vast majority of passengers have their origin in Germany, only around 7% of them emanating from other countries, as derived from the passenger manifest. As a result, the ship-space is fundamentally characterised by cultural differences, not only inside the crew, but also between crew and customer. In order to underline the presence of cultural diversity in the ship's environment, a Hofstede Cultural Analysis of the four most prominent nationalities, Bulgaria (blue), Germany (purple), Indonesia (green) and the Philippines (orange), has been conducted (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Hofstede Cultural Analysis

(Source: https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/)
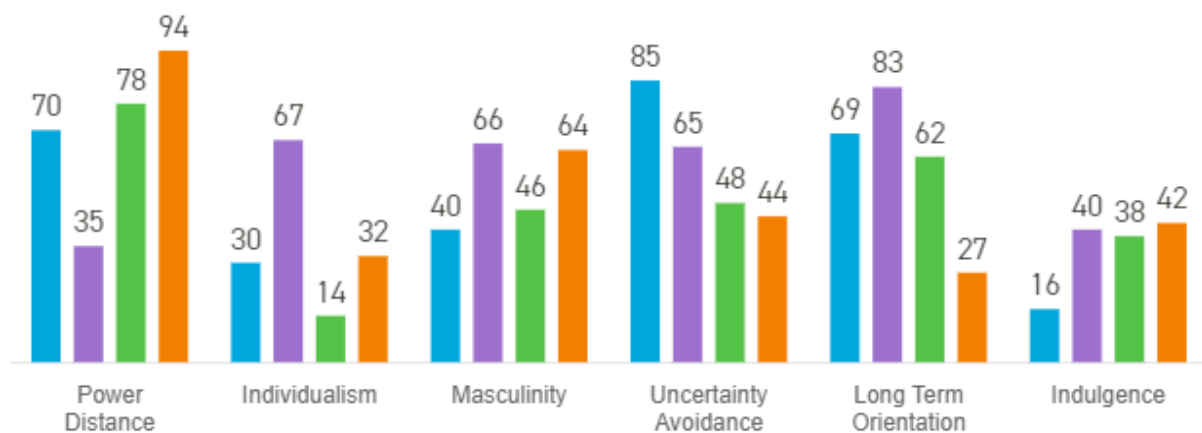
This Hofstede Cultural Analysis revealed substantial cultural differences between the four nations in all of the six categories, which are Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term Orientation and Indulgence. With a score of 94, the Philippines exhibit a very high Power Distance, which implies the Filipinos valuing strict hierarchies and clear directions by managers. Germany, however, reaches a low score of 35, as it emphasises more participative and decentralised organisational structures. Bulgaria and Indonesia both score relatively high, both also depending on hierarchical structures. With regards to Individualism, Germany's score of 67 is substantially higher than the other countries' scores, which underlines its focus on self-actualisation, whereas especially Indonesia, with a score of 14, can be classified as highly collectivist, valuing group affiliation. Moving on, Bulgaria and Indonesia can be classified as low Masculine societies, whereas Germany and the Philippines are considered Masculine societies. Masculine societies are characterised to emphasise competition and achievement, as opposed to low Masculine or Feminine societies that put more value to quality of life. With a score of 85, Bulgaria has a high tendency of Uncertainty Avoidance, feeling the need for rules and security. The Philippines with their score of 44, however, show a more relaxed and flexible attitude. With regards to Long Term Orientation, the Philippines exhibit a very low score of 27, which underlines their focus on tradition and quick results. In contrast to this, the comparably high score of the other three nations shows their pragmatism and orientation towards the future. Lastly, Bulgaria scores very low in the category of Indulgence, which highlights its Restrained and controlled culture. Germany, Indonesia and the Philippines all score around 40 and can therefore also be classified as Restraint, although they exhibit less controlled desires and impulses than Bulgaria.

Bearing in mind that these are just the four most prominent nationalities present among crew and customers, it becomes evident that substantial cultural differences characterise the working environment cruise ship, making it a suitable empirical object for research.

These cultural differences can, on the one hand, impose challenges on stakeholders, but, on the other hand, also create opportunities for the crew members. Similar to Bolt and Lashley (2015), the opportunity to learn about foreign cultures and to establish friendships has been pointed out in this study as a benefit of an international crew. From a management perspective, however, emphasis lies on successfully dealing with cultural differences and the

challenges they impose on the working environment, as for example, discrimination, language barriers, minimum privacy or cohabitation (Bolt & Lashley, 2015). Nevertheless, challenges identified by the heads of departments in this study, are not necessarily seen as present disadvantages, but rather as potential risks depending on the effectiveness of management practices. It is important for the heads of departments to emphasise their awareness towards the risk of, for example, discrimination or religious conflicts (Bolt & Lashley, 2015), and to be proactive and constantly prepared to act upon the challenges (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011; Testa, 2007). Especially religion is a well-known source of conflict worldwide, which is, however, reported as being rarely observed on the Phoenix Reisen cruise ships. One possible explanation regarding that matter is the existence of psychological contracts on behalf of the crew members. When deciding to commit to the company and the collateral belief of obligatory reciprocity, they approve the company's values and structures at the same time (Rousseau, 1989). Nevertheless, individuals already have an understanding of their own values, which underlines the exigency of prospect employees to evaluate if and how these match the company's values. In this exact case, prospective crew members need to be aware before commencing the employment that they might have to make compromises when it comes to living their faith due to the working environment, they will be incorporated in. Starting to work on a cruise ship generally comes with a higher risk than starting employment ashore, for employer as well as employee, since crew members are leaving their home country to move to their new floating home that could be thousands of kilometres away and that might be a completely different environment compared to what they are used to (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015). As a consequence, Phoenix Reisen places emphasis on transparency during recruitment procedures (Österman, Praetorius & Hult, 2017; Pfeffer, 1998), but also on creating a favourable working environment for a culturally diverse crew, as long as it is compatible with the ship's processes (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003).

In order to minimise or prevent negative effects of challenges that stem from cultural differences, the managers on board of Phoenix Reisen vessels adopted specific management strategies in the form of HR bundles. Consequently, they understood the positive effect of bundled HR procedures on organisational performance and employee satisfaction (Brewster & Stavropol, 2005; Gould-Williams, 2003; Macduffie, 1995), and introduced a seemingly contradictory mix of strategies. The management on board of the Phoenix Reisen vessels opt for the approach to work presciently towards avoiding conflicts based on cultural differences

by, on the one hand, setting strict ground rules and regulations, but, on the other hand, by being transparent, tolerant and benevolent towards the crew. When linking this case with the Competing Values Framework by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), it becomes evident that the strategies employed exhibit an internal organisational focus while making use of the full range of flexible versus controlled organisational structure. As a result, the challenge is to balance the competing values of flexibility versus stability with an internal focus, which can be collated to the Human Relations Model, focused on employee wellbeing and cooperation, against the Internal Process Model, focused on a strictly regulated and stable working environment (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). With regards to this research, the challenge that the heads of departments are tackling is finding the right balance between strict framework conditions and working towards a good and personal working climate, as well as between the organisational and national cultures (Testa, 2009).

These rigid organisational structures manifest themselves in multiple areas throughout the cruise environment (Antonsen, 2009; Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Dennett, 2018). The area in which these structures are most apparent is the nautical department along with safety on board, since it is where lives are at stake and what passengers view as indispensable (Radic, 2018). All crew members need to be certified and trained regarding safety and security measures on board and have to complete according trainings regularly (Österman, Praetorius & Hult, 2017). Nevertheless, rules and regulations are being enforced in all areas of the ship-space in order to ensure a consistent high standard service being delivered to the customer. From a cultural perspective, this also encompasses that individual cultures of crew members cannot be overly prominent, primarily in the passenger area and during working hours, in order to ensure smooth day-to-day operations with a focus on delivering the service to the passengers that they anticipatorily acquired. It is important that diversity is being held within a specific bound, because otherwise building an organisational culture will be hindered. Withholding one's individual culture is not per se an act of suppression, but rather the acceptance of enacting a required professional culture, without losing sense of the own national culture. In this sense, all national cultures will contribute to building a suitable professional culture. With regards to the customer segment served, crew members are asked to partially adapt to the European board culture, in order to deliver the service that matches the passenger's standards and expectations, as this cultural environment is where they originate from. Phoenix Reisen offers a German product, which is an attribute highly valued by the passengers. On the contrary, if crew members do not succeed in adequately adjusting

their behaviour during working hours, it might be a source of conflict and might impede the service offered. The strategy for crew members is to invariably keep it professional and follow the expected code of conduct when in the passenger area (Radic, 2018).

In order to avoid misunderstandings, inaccuracies and conflicts, the managers frequently stated to communicate clearly what they expect of the crew and how the surrounding conditions are constituted. Transparent and explicit communication is seen as essential when it comes to HRM and leadership in general business, but especially in a culturally diverse setting like the cruise industry (Butler, Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2014; Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011; Lisak & Erez, 2015; Testa, 2007). This way, managers do not only ensure the crew being on the same page with regards to how the service ought to be delivered, but also are they able to actively detect conflicts in early stages, if not prevent them in the first place. Differing work ethics based on cultural diversity, for example, might not impact the quality of the work performed by international crew members, but it substantially impacts the way it is carried out. As a result, managers communicate the on board standard and accomplish a holistically delivered service in the best interest of the firm (Testa, 2007). Furthermore, culturally leveraged characteristics, such as the openness and cordiality of the Filipino service personnel, do not impact the base service, but they impact the way that the customer perceives it, especially with regards to professionalism (Chiou, Chao & Hsieh, 2020; Chua, Lee, Goh & Han, 2015; Radic, 2018). Interactions in which crew members face the customer without the necessary distance, as it is seen by the passenger, can be problematic and degrade the quality of service perceived. Consequently, the heads of departments make the European board culture accessible to crew members and communicate the extent to which, in this case, friendliness, openness and politeness is expected by the German customer (Radic, 2018). In addition, when it comes to discrimination and conflict management, transparency and communication are being prioritised, since they minimise room for misunderstandings or rumours. Also, according to Lisak and Erez (2015), communication fosters trust and mutual values. Although discrimination is reported to rarely be observed on board of the Phoenix Reisen vessels, the heads of departments are prepared with according communicative management practices, giving everyone the chance to explain themselves, since misunderstandings are likely to happen, especially due to cultural differences.

Another fundamental attribute of the regulated ship-space, acknowledged by a substantial number of the heads of departments, is its explicit training system, so that crew members who experienced dissimilar education can best possibly cooperate in the ship-space and serve the customer's expectations. In fact, literature on HRM in the tourism industry agrees on the importance and benefits of an elaborate training scheme to best leverage workforce productivity and satisfaction (Al-Refaie, 2015; Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011; Livitchi, Hacina & Baran, 2015; Pfeffer, 1998). The instrument of training centres that Phoenix Reisen and the cooperating corporations employ, allows employees to immediately be integrated into the work environment as soon as they embark the ship. These training centres are beneficial because, on the one hand, schedules on board are tight, so that time for trainings is scarce. On the other hand, prospective crew members learn what to expect from the cruise environment and get a chance to experience at a greater length if it is a suitable surrounding for them and their culture. The ship-space is a complex entity that requires time to be fully understood, which is why novel crew members start at the bottom of the hierarchy and work their way up executing augmenting tasks and learning everything from scratch. Working on a cruise ship, however, does not solely comprise the employee's specific position and tasks, but also being incorporated in an environment with intricate structures, hierarchies, processes and departments (Antonsen, 2009; Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Gibson, 2008). Besides augmenting tasks, Phoenix Reisen integrates new members into the workspace through peer training, which disburdens managers, saves training time and ensures hands-on education (Pfeffer, 1998). In diverse teams, nevertheless, training comprises more than just education about the working processes themselves, and aspects like diversity training (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011), culture-specific training and language classes need to be considered. This was clearly observed in the company, as, in order for the crew members to better understand and cater to the European culture, managers on board conduct trainings that are geared to familiarise them with cultural aspects like the German cuisine or habits. Especially the culinary aspect is highly valued by cruise passengers (Whyte, 2017), which stresses the importance for the galley staff to be educated on German recipes and the German taste that the typical customer is used to and expecting. Moreover, where cultural differences impede verbal and non-verbal communication between crew and customer, crew members are trained to respect the customer's culture with regards to privacy. Nevertheless, language barriers do belong to the most prominent challenges in diverse work environments (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011), which is being countered on board with German language classes. On the one hand, this helps the crew to feel confident in the European culture surrounding, but on

52

the other hand, it is a mandatory prerequisite for frontline staff, in order to ensure service quality and unobstructed crew-customer communication.

Along with learning the German language, one of the interesting findings is the company's decision to hire a core German native speaking staff. This decision reflects the need to account for clear communication with customers to guarantee high service quality standards (Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011). In cruise business, the importance of service quality has not been fully researched, but there is no reason to assume it would play a minor role in satisfying and retaining customers. Chua et al. (2015) conducted a study to close this research gap and found that among three dimensions of service quality (Interactional Quality, Physical Environment Quality, and Outcome Quality), in cruise business, Interactional Quality was the only predictor of the passenger's perception of value, which then sequentially increased customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The heads of departments agree that interactional quality is critical for the user experience, conforming to Radic (2018) who stresses the importance of behavioural principles, such as courtesy and personalisation with regards to service interactions. Particularly in conflict situations, crew-customer communication needs to be immaculate, not only to handle complaints, but also to recover from service failure (Chou el al., 2020; Radic, 2018) which is why on board of the vessels operated by Phoenix Reisen, a certain number of native or fluent German speaking crew members is obligatory, mainly concerning the leading officers, the Phoenix-Team and reception team. These actors are the ones primarily addressed with criticism, problems and dissatisfaction by the passengers and communication barriers in equivalent situations exacerbate the issue and therefore dissatisfaction of the customer. As a result, fluently German-speaking staff is essential here to ensure the passenger feeling taken seriously and to eliminate preventable conflicts.

In expressing the tacit assumption of the competing values balance thesis (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983) there is the effort of managers on board, alongside with strict rules and obligations, to create a favourable and personal environment for diverse crew members where they feel respected. Fair supervisors creating a favourable social surrounding in a work context evoke job satisfaction on the part of their employees, which in turn reflects on the customer (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003; Larsen, Marnburg & Øgaard, 2012; Radic, 2018). "Happy Crew - Happy Guest" is one of the guiding principles of the ship-space, as for crew members, a substantial part of their lives revolves around the ship and

they, therefore, also feel the need for personal self-fulfilment in a professional setting. Managers emphasise equality amongst employees, as they all work towards a common goal and are subject to equal treatment (Pfeffer, 1998). This, in turn, prevents crew members from feeling less valued than their co-workers, as unfairness is a great source of discontentedness (Larsen, Marnburg & Øgaard, 2012). The most valuable instrument to ensure that the crew's requests and concerns are being taken seriously, however, is Crew Welfare, as in the crew's direct representation. As a result, a crew's representative is being heard in front of top management, voicing the concerns of all crew members. Under regular working circumstances, it might be difficult for crew members in lower positions to transmit their interests and wishes to the highest levels of the hierarchy (Gibson, 2008).

The managers on board of Phoenix vessels operate in agreement with Hofstede (2001 & 2010), Hu et al. (2003) and Testa (2007), who state that diverse cultures in a professional surrounding need to be respected and understood in order to foster a team identity. As a result, they pursue the necessity of self-education with regards to the diverse cultures present in their teams, for them to be aware of cultural characteristics and attributes that might be peregrine to their own culture. Kulkarni, Gupta and Ramamoorthy (2013) agree that management practices should be culture specific, which stresses the importance of the development of cultural intelligence on behalf of the heads of departments (Lisak & Erez, 2015). It is in the best interest of managers on board to get to know their crew and understand them, and only with this knowledge obtained and the experience accumulated, they are able to implement culture respecting alterations to the surroundings. With regards to convenience, they might as well implement the European board culture throughout the whole ship-space, but they do conduct alterations to normative processes in order for the crew to feel comfortable and respected. Especially when it comes to communication, cultural adaptation based on the managers' cultural intelligence is necessary, for them to effectively deal in culturally diverse settings (Lisak & Erez, 2015; Testa, 2007). Additionally, diversity is being respected through creating space and circumstances for crew members to live their cultural attributes like religion, holidays or food. The ship-space is so extensive (Papathanassis, 2017; Weeden, Lester & Thyne, 2011), that it can accommodate a variety of amenities for crew members, like a holy mass, cultural events or diverse food options. Particularly the food aspect has proven to be crucial to be considered (Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003) and it is highly valued by the crew to find familiar food options or to find culinary restrictions based on their culture respected in the crew mess or during events.

Working on a cruise ship goes alongside being away from home for an extended period of time and as a result, many crew members are afflicted by homesickness (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015). In order to counteract this, the managers on board frequently report making an effort to bring a part of the crew members' cultures to the working environment through cultural self-expression and cultural events. There are occasions novel to previous literature, such as the crew show or the dinner of the cooks, where crew members are being given a stage to express and present their culture in the public area. Thus, presenting their culture in front the passengers as audience fills crew members with pride and strengthens a feeling of self-fulfilment, especially as these presentations are predominantly rewarded by phenomenal feedback. In addition, employees are likewise given the opportunity to live their culture in the crew area, as a benefit just for themselves, through the hosting of cultural events and holidays. This way, they get the chance to celebrate important cultural holidays although being distant from their country of origin and at the same time to proudly show their co-workers, who in turn get to expand their horizon and learn about foreign cultures.

Nevertheless, homesickness will always be present throughout the crew, since being on a ship does not only mean being physically distant from home, but also does the enclosed ship-space impose difficulties on communication with the family, due to unflexible work schedules and compromised access to telecommunication (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015). Consequently, managers on board make an effort to show support to their team members, as one of the frequently mentioned Superordinate Values in the ship-space, through being approachable with regards to issues of any kind, through regularly showing interest in their personal emotional states, and through proactively working for solutions with regards to private, as well as professional issues. The actions taken by Phoenix Reisen concerning crew homesickness are in line with practices cited in previous literature (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003; Larsen, Marnburg & Øgaard, 2012): giving priority to communication links, organizing social activities, guaranteeing good working and living conditions together with a good working atmosphere on board and also allowing family visits and, whenever possible, to go ashore at destinations.

Along with previous studies (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Bolt & Lashley, 2015; Dennett, 2018; Gibson, 2008; Sehkaran & Sevcikova, 2011; Testa, 2009), management on board understood and strongly acknowledged, that relationships are pivotal for crew members, who often view their co-workers as family, which is why relationship building is

given strategic priority. Close relationships between crew members are what shapes life at sea, fostering self-fulfilment and psychological safety together with employee satisfaction and, resulting from that, customer satisfaction (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Bolt & Lashley, 2015; Testa, 2009). Accordingly, department leads promote situations in the ship environment that are meant to develop and strengthen relationships between crew members, but also between leaders and subordinates. Leader-subordinate relationships, for instance, are crucial for managers in order to get to know their team members, particularly if they originate from a different cultural background, so that team cooperation can be perfected (Al-Refaie, 2015; Pfeffer, 1998). During working hours, the emphasis primarily lies on respecting hierarchies (Gibson, 2008), but the anomaly here is that these hierarchies lose big part of their sternness after working hours, where crew members from different departments and hierarchy levels spend their free time together at eye level. On a cruise ship, crew members are working and living in the same environment with the same people every day. As a result, they create a private life on the grounds of their working space through, for example, facing their colleagues in a non-professional way and building relationships with them. As for facilities suitable to nurture these relationships, the ship-space already allows for establishing a private life on board due to spaces of assembly, like the crew mess or the crew bar. Nevertheless, the managers on board make sure to foster a work-life balance for the crew members, through organizing crew events and therefore creating a space for them to get to know their co-workers on a personal level. The crew party, for instance, is essential for employees on board to be given the chance to rest their minds after working hours, although they are not able to physically leave their workspace. Another aspect realised by the heads of departments is directed at constantly improving the working conditions and creating a favourable working atmosphere (Bardelle & Lashley, 2015; Hu, Zhao & Carter, 2003; Larsen, Marnburg & Øgaard, 2012). The mind-set that they communicate is to keep it familiar and casual to some extent, so that the crew feels comfortable, but during interactions with the customer or intense situations of any kind, discipline and perfectionism is expected. Furthermore, alike Al-Refaie (2015), emphasis is placed on fostering team work inside the crew. Not only is this beneficial from a professional and productive perspective, but also does it help the crew to connect with each other and associate positive affirmations with the relationship on the basis of a sense of achievement.

6.   Conclusion and Managerial Implications

Overall, managers on board of Phoenix Reisen vessels use a bundle of apparently competing HRM strategies to efficiently deal with cultural diversity in their crews. Nevertheless, the critical aspect with regards to these two strategies, comprising strict rules and regulations on the one hand and the creation of a favourable diverse working atmosphere on the other hand, lies in finding the right balance for crew members to feel comfortable and respected, but also incentivised regarding productivity at the same time. The absence of discrimination and religious conflicts in this case, as according to the interviewees, together with the high degree of staff stability, is a probable indicator of successful management practices. In fact, when comparing the results discussed above with Pfeffer's (1998) set of Seven Practices of Successful Organisations, a high degree of resemblance can be observed. Employment Security is granted through the focus on staff stability, together with Selective Hiring of New Personnel through transparent recruitment processes. Self-Managed Teams are fostered by team building activities and a Comparatively High Compensation Contingent is achieved by remuneration predominantly being higher than in respective countries of origin. In addition, Extensive Training can be observed pervasively in all divisions of the ship-space, and Reduced Status Distinctions and Barriers show in equal treatment of crew members, as well as private relationships across hierarchy levels. The only of Pfeffer's (1998) principles not covered by this research is the Sharing of Financial and Performance Information, which does, however, not necessarily rule out its contingent presence in the ship-space. As a result, this study leaves us with a set of best practices for managers in the cruise industry.

In a highly diverse and high-involvement business surrounding like a cruise ship, there is a lot to take into account for managers, and specific leader characteristics, like emotional and cultural intelligence, can be a decisive factor with regards to management effectiveness (Butler, Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2014; Dawson, Neal & Madera, 2011; Lisak & Erez, 2015; Testa, 2007). Consequently, it is essential for the heads of departments to be attentive to their team and its individuals, to learn from and about them, and generally to gain experience in managing a diverse workforce. With this knowledge, they are able to develop custom managerial practices that best cater the diverse crew, and that make use of the adequate proportional balance of competing values. Rigid rules and regulations, on the one hand, give structure to the working environment and ensure a flawless service delivery,

whereas introducing benevolence, respect and support to the ship-space, on the other hand, plays a role in fostering employee satisfaction and their intrinsic motivation.

As a result, managers need to establish and maintain clearly structured hierarchies, as well as strictly regulated framework conditions, so that crew members have specifically assigned tasks that they execute accurately according to the vessel's standards and to board culture. Furthermore, the communication on board, especially between managers and subordinates, needs to be transparent and explicit in order for the crew to be informed about the ship-space and to know exactly what is expected of them. Employee training, in addition, as subject to explicit schedule and contents, helps to obtain equally high skill levels among crew members and to deliver a continuously high-quality service. Training on board of cruise ships, however, should not only be task focused, but also include education on the customer's culture, behavioural norms, work ethics and language. Additionally, peer training should be considered. Lastly, the need to manage crew-customer interactions between the German passengers and international crew members emerges, since they are vulnerable to cultural differences and fundamentally characterise the service delivered. As a consequence, the aspiration to a full alignment with the customer's expectations with regards to service standard, behaviour and communication, especially in terms of service recovery, calls for measures such as employing a minimum of crew members that have the same origin as the customer. These managerial implications show that the ship-space needs an extensive amount of structure, in order to function properly and efficiently, which in turn significantly determines employee performance.

On the other side, however, managers on board of cruise ships are advised to make an effort to keep their crew happy by being committed to fairness and equality in the work space, as well as by giving the crew a voice through representation in front of top level management. When it comes to respecting diverse cultures and minimizing homesickness among crew members, the heads of departments introduce cultural alterations to conventional structures, for instance regarding religious, food or communicative aspects, so that they feel supported in their fundamental values and attitudes. A novelty approach emerging from this research lies in offering the crew room for cultural self-expression through, for instance, entertainment or culinary exhibition, characterised by respect and non-suppression. Lastly, a substantial part of diversity management has developed to be the promotion of relationship-building, among crew members and equally among leaders and subordinates, by means of

creating a work-life-balance inside a working environment through bringing crew members together, as well as distinguishing between professional and private behaviour and circumstances. On a cruise ship, employees work and live together on multiple months contracts. This symbiosis of profession and privacy calls for a symbiosis of management practices as well. As a result, managers on board need to be capable of occupying multiple roles, as for instance, the strict leader and the empathic leader, while maintaining credibility in front of all stakeholders involved. Concluding, if intercultural relationship-building strategies prove successful, team cohesion based on personal relationships and a sense of social belonging, can be achieved.

6.1. Limitations

Although the aim of this research was attained, it was subject to some limitations that will be noted in the following. First of all, the underlying research can be classified as a case study, which is, by definition, a source of data that is bound to the specific or idiosyncratic aspects of a given organisation at a given time. Consequently, external generalisation might be subject to contingencies. However, the research topic itself is very much restricted and the cruise industry abides to the same international law and rigid standards, which creates structural isomorphism due to mimetic pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) at industry level. This means, we are not expecting strong contrasting procedures between cruise companies.

Furthermore, as this is a qualitative research design, there is the possibility of biased findings due to the personal approach employed, either by making specific unconscious choices pertaining to the interview questions, the interviewees or when leading the interview process. Nevertheless, all cautions were taken to avoid this risk. Namely, the interview script was built on top of the literature review and validated with the supervisor, the interviewees were selected to represent the most critical decision makers on a cruise ship, and the semi-structured type of interview gave room to the interviewee to introduce elements that were not explicitly addressed in the questions. Moreover, the categories were derived from the literature review on the one hand, but also admitted emerging categories in the course of the content analysis on the other hand. Subsequently, the coding and content analysis were subject to an intercoder agreement procedure, in order to verify that the coding was executed

neither arbitrary, nor biased, and as a result offered an indication of convergence and reliability.

A sample size of 13 interviewees can be taken as a limitation, since small sample sizes might compromise significance. However, in qualitative research, there is no minimum requirement with regards to this matter (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, 2013), as long as the interlocutors can account for the most important perspectives on the phenomenon under study, in order to offer a comprehensive understanding of it. On another note, qualitative research implicates a point of saturation, at which no new information can be derived from collecting more data (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013), which stands in favour of keeping sample size small. Furthermore, the sample in this research is limited to interviewees in managing positions and the German teacher, omitting crew members of lower hierarchical levels, which could imply data being unilateral. Anyhow, this limitation would merely apply, if the objective of this research would be one step ahead examining the effectiveness of diversity management and not establishing how cultural diversity is managed in the first place, which can be most accurately answered and explained by the ones behind these managerial strategies.

As an ultimate plausible limitation for research conducted in 2020, the COVID-19 crisis could have played a role in this study. However, the data was collected between July 2019 and March 2020, which precludes this limitation. Conversely, these findings do not reflect the post-COVID-19 reality and they might be subject to some sort of change according to the behavioural change that can be expected from this collective experience. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of cultural diversity management on board of a ship will supposedly remain stable.

6.2. Future research

Since the field of HRM in the cruise industry is clearly under-researched, the outcomes of this study can constitute a starting point for future research. It becomes obvious that there is, in fact, scope for further research in order to develop a broader understanding of the matter of this study. In order to amplify the generalizability of results, more data could be collected from other cruise operators around the world with similar key attributes, as in a multicultural crew and a single origin customer segment. Furthermore, as stated, future study could explore the implementation and effectiveness of the management strategies deriving

from this research. Subsequently, this could mean incorporating interviews with crew members of all hierarchical levels, as well as customers, in order to draw a bigger picture. Possible approaches could include the employee's perception of feeling their individual cultures respected by managers, of cultural self-realisation and of requisite aspects of diversity management that they consider absent in the current environment. On another note, the customer's impression of the crew and professional organisation on board could give an outside perspective on diversity management effectiveness with regards to crew cooperation, adaptability and service quality. Lastly, these best practices obtained in the course of this research may be quantitatively studied by adopting or developing scales that allow for statistical testing of interdependencies and moderating effects that diversity management on board can have, integrating crew, management and customer variables.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Interview Outline (semi-structured)

1. Position:

   Nationality:

   Gender:

   Age:

   Time with the company:

   Time working on cruise vessels:

2. How many nationalities are present in your department?

3. Which nationality is the prevailing one?

4. What are, in your opinion, opportunities that an international crew brings about?

5. What are, in your opinion, challenges that an international crew brings about? Can you give examples of situations where these challenges arise?

6. With what means are you trying to overcome those challenges?

7. How are cultural differences showing in your department? Give examples.

8. An international workforce comes with a variety of cultures. How do you manage to respect and reinforce different cultures?

9. What do you consider important while dealing with different cultures?

10. Nevertheless, a solely German-speaking customer segment is being served by the company Phoenix Reisen Bonn GmbH. How do you manage to overcome cultural differences and train your crew respective to serving the D-A-CH culture?

11. If applicable, how are you working towards strengthening relationships inside of your department?

12. If applicable, what do you do if you witness discrimination inside of your department?

13. If applicable, what are you doing to overcome language barriers?

Appendix B.

Code Dictionary

Code Dictionary	Definition	Example
Interviewee Attributes	Description of the interlocutors	n.a.
Position	The position that the interviewee occupies onboard	"As a Staff Captain you are the designated representative of the Captain." (Staff Captain) "Chief Engineer is to summarise and observe the maintenance system of the engine. Not only in the engine room, in the hotel and all the sub-departments which are belonging to me." (Chief Engineer)
Nationality	The nationality of the interviewee	"I come from Hungary. I was born in Hungary. But I live in Ukraine for seventeen years." (Hotel Inventory Controller)
Gender	The gender of the interviewee	"Female" (Chief Housekeeper) "Male" (Bar Manager)
Age	The age of the interviewee	"39 years old" (Chief Purser)
Time with PHX	The time that the interviewee is working on Phoenix Reisen cruise ships	"On Phoenix vessels for four years." (Executive Chef) "I am working on Phoenix vessels since 2007." (F&B Manager)
Time on Cruise Ships	The time that the interviewee is working on cruise ships in general	"20 years already. Since 2000... I started. I was at home for one year to work there, but other than that, 19, almost 20 years at sea" (Bar Manager)
Department Composition	The composition of nationalities that can be found in the interviewee's department	"In the hotel department, we have 15 nationalities at the moment." (Hotel Manager) "Filipino, Indian, Indonesia, Russian, Ukraine, Romanian, Poland, Bulgaria... Eight, I hope I do not miss anyone. Eight, eight nationalities definitely. And the most are Filipinos." (Chief Engineer)
Reason for High Proportion of Filipinos and Indonesians	Reasons for why there is a high proportion of Filipinos and Indonesians working on cruise vessels	"The Philippines are a nation of seafarers. They are specialised to train employees for the hotel and nautical department." (Hotel Manager) "The salary that the Filipino colleagues get, regarding the background of living expenses in their own country, are fantastic remunerations. And this news travelled far." (Staff Captain)

Cultural Differences	Differences between crew members based on their national culture	n.a.
Work ethics	The crew members' work ethics with regards to different cultures	"Some nationalities are a bit more hard-working and the others not so hard-working." (F&B Manager) "They cook differently at home, they work differently at home, they clean differently at home." (Executive Chef)
Reliance on instructions	The degree to which crew members rely on instructions by their supervisor with regards to different cultures	"They wait to get clear instructions." (Staff Captain)
Illness	The way illnesses are being handled in the working environment with regards to the different cultures	"For us it is like that, we continue to work, but some, if they have a headache, they immediately go to the doctor to try staying one day in his cabin." (Bar Manager)
Attitudes / Characteristics	Differing characteristic traits or perspectives of crew members respective to their culture	"The Filipinos are open-minded. They are, I do not want to say loud, but when they greet the guests... They are more open. The Indonesians are more conservative. They are more quiet" (Chief Housekeeper)
Habits / Traditions	Differing customs or traditions that crew members developed because of the culture they identify with	"You can say, there are cultures like Indonesians, that are not used to sleep in beds. We had the case that they put their mattresses on the floor and slept there on the mattress because they do not know it any different." (Hotel Manager) "I remember when we had Eastern Europeans and celebrated Christmas, they celebrated Christmas at Three Magi holiday and then it also happened that I was invited and it became clear to me they have it way later." (Captain)
Food / Cuisine	Culinary customs that the crew members know and value because of the culture they identify with	"The Filipinos cook a completely different Bolognese. They put sugar in it. That's horrible. They have a completely different mentality when it comes to food." (Executive Chef)

Religion	Differing religious beliefs of the crew members based on the culture they identify with	"Religion is always a topic. Everybody has a different religion. My Filipino colleagues are very christian, I am also protestant, but, I would say, I am not the one that goes to church every day or every Sunday. This is different with my Filipino colleagues. They, I would say, value a holy mass for the crew a lot and always go there. For example, we have Indonesians that are partly Muslim and we have to watch that they eat at specific times." (Maître d'Hôtel)
Culinary restrictions	Culinary restrictions, as in prohibited culinary items, based on the crew members religious beliefs	"We also have many Muslims here that do not eat pork." (Executive Chef)
Dress Codes	The way crew members dress or are used to dress based on their culture	"We also have fun with the Filipino crew that comes for the first time. They are not used to wear closed shoes. They wear sandals or flip flops all their life or are wearing a uniform for the first time." (Hotel Manager)
Opportunities of International Crew	Advantages and positive side effects of an international crew	"Almost exclusively advantages can be found and big opportunities." (Captain)
Personal growth	The opportunity to personally benefit from an international crew and to better oneself	"You get to view beyond your own nose and experience different views and experience way more diversity than in a job ashore at home." (Captain)
Learn about other cultures	The opportunity to get to know and learn about foreign cultures	"And they can learn about the cultures - from the food to how they think." (Bar Manager) "A multicultural crew brings about many beautiful things. You can learn from others. You see how the other culture lives.) (Hotel Inventory Controller)
Open-mindedness	The opportunity to become more openminded towards foreign cultures	"I think you become more openminded towards other cultures. You take a lot for yourself out of it." (Chief Purser)
Improve language skills	The opportunity to learn a new language or improve existing foreign language skills	"First, we speak English. Not Filipino or, I don't know, Tagalog or so. It is good that we can speak English and everyone understands." (Bar Manager)
Diversity	The advantage of culturally diverse crew members contributing to the working environment	"Multinationalism has the advantage that you, in fact, bring together people from these diverse origins and in doing so have a substantially mixed structure where nobody has the potential to put themselves above others." (Staff Captain)

Comprehensive Destination Knowledge	The opportunity to benefit from the crew members' knowledge of their countries of origin and native languages	"We are a cruise ship that is cruising all around the world, it is an advantage to have crew members on board from many of the countries that we travel to and maybe to get some info about the countries and also to see cultures. Of course, to also use it for us and for the passengers." (Hotel Manager)
Formality	The advantage of diverse crew members maintaining more formal relationships than single origin crews	"When it is only one nationality, for example, (...) people are getting more familiar each other than necessary and than should be." (Chief Engineer)
Challenges of International Crew	Possible and actual disadvantages and risks of an international crew	n.a.
Discrimination / Prejudice	The risk of crew members being subject to discrimination or prejudice by their co-workers based on their cultural origin	"In fact, in these nine years, I never witnessed a fight inside the crew where it was about religion." (Maître d'Hôtel) "This is very sensitive. You cannot forget that on board, different than a company ashore, there are different liberties. They go home in the evening and leave the working area. Here, they are all very close with each other, 400 crew members on a very limited space." (Captain)
Language / Communication Barriers	The challenge of differing native languages impeding communication	"What is difficult with so many nationalities, is to bring them all together to the same language. That everyone understands." (Hotel Inventory Controller) "There are indeed a few mistakes that are being committed in communication, in mutual perception." (Staff Captain)
Culture Clash	The risk of encounters of diverse crew members causing conflicts on the basis of cultural differences	"Generally, the challenge is to combine or establish many cultures and religions in a small working environment or rather living environment." (Hotel Manager)
Formation of groups	The risk of crew members with the same cultural background forming groups and staying solely among themselves in their free time	"It is also difficult that some groups are very large and prefer to stay amongst their own. And individual people might have problems to belong to them. Or to find someone." (German Teacher)

Differing work ethics	The challenges that differing work ethics based on diverse cultures impose on operating processes on board	"Problems and challenges are that the guys, when they come new to the ship, it is very difficult to get them on the same page." (Executive Chef) "The sense of time of some nationalities is a different one. For example, Germans are putting a lot of emphasis on punctuality and like to be five or ten minutes early. This is not the case with some nationalities, and this can cause conflicts." (Maître d'Hôtel)
Cohabitation	The risk of conflicts arising through diverse crew members sharing a cabin	"The crew also has to share cabins. Sometimes different nationalities are being put together. That does not always work. They have to come to an arrangement. There might be fights." (Chief Housekeeper)
Differing Qualifications / Backgrounds / Habits	The challenges that arise through crew members growing up in diverse environments while experiencing dissimilar education	"They cook differently at home, they work differently at home, they clean differently at home." (Executive Chef) "You have to consider the different cultures and different habits of these people. How they have grown. (...) The food, the habits, the culture of the different nationalities." (Chief Engineer)
Limited Space	The challenge that the restricted ship-space, comprising a narrow crew area and shared cabins, imposes on the crew	"Here, they are all very close with each other, 400 crew members on a very limited space. The broadest area is where they work, but it will get even more restricted when work is over, and they are in their cabins. Most of them do not have single cabins. Or in the crew mess, crew bar, it is all very narrow, and you are very close together." (Captain)
Religious Restrictions	The challenges based on rules that find their origin in specific religions and that constrain the crew member and manager in their freedom of action	"Religion also imposes challenges. But we are a good example that it works. We found out that some cultures or religions do not fit here so well." (Hotel Manager)

72

Management of International Crew	Specific managerial practices aiming at improving the cooperation of a diverse crew	n.a.
Evaluation of Employee Suitability / Prerequisites	The assessment of prospective employees being a fit for the company and bringing about specific qualifications	"If you work on a cruise ship, you have to be a very openminded person and openly handle all topics." (Maître d'Hôtel) "We had, for example, problems with employees from Malaysia, which are distinctively following the Islam. We had some problems in the galley to work with pork or to serve alcohol. Those are things where we say, these cultures may not be that suitable to work onboard." (Hotel Manager)
Training and Briefings	The actual and continuing education of crew members	"Many trainings... We do it here, every department, no matter if it is the bar manager or the restaurant manager, they do that automatically. It is also required by the company. We do it because we have to work with this people, you know? We have to satisfy our guests" (F&B Manager)
Autonomous Peer Training / Motivation	More experienced crew members educating, instructing and motivating new crew members	"And the old people, when we have new crew coming on board, the old crew always carries the new crew. There I do not have to do big trainings now, because after 3 or 4 days, when I ask a new guy, he already knows, because an experienced one already told him." (F&B Manager)
Slow pace / Augmenting tasks	The scheme that new crew members start at lower levels of the hierarchy, carrying out less complex tasks, and eventually working their way up	"I can say that especially the employees that are here for the first time and speak no German at all, have positions where they do not actively work together with the guest. Mostly they start as utilities, as general help workers." (Hotel Manager) "With me, they learn it from scratch. The new guys that come, they are not stationed directly at the stove, but they start with peeling potatoes, roasting vegetables... Start working their heads." (Executive Chef)
Training Centres	Facilities existing in the most prominent countries of recruitment, in order to previously educate prospective employees and prepare them for working on board	"The training centre exists for two years now and last year it took place the first time for housekeeping. They had trainings for housekeeping and some of our people were there to fulfil that training. After this, they were chosen, and I was surprised that the people that applied there came all from other ships with long time experience. And you could see that. The training they had, was very, very good and successful. And they were all hired. They did a great job there." (Chief Housekeeper)

Self-Education	Managers taking initiative to learn about the cultures they are surrounded with in their teams	"We, as managers, have to be informed, how are the cultures." (Hotel Manager)
Superordinate Values	A set of principles that characterise the way that the heads of departments manage their team members	n.a.
Respect	Managers treating their team members courteously, appreciative and considerate with regards to their feelings and cultural attributes	"The most important thing is respect. To respect each and every other culture just the way they are. Just like I want to be respected as well." (Chief Purser) "We have to respect the other cultures. It only works like this. On a ship, we respect all cultures. All of them. No matter from where. No matter how the culture is." (Hotel Inventory Controller)
Culture Respecting Alterations	Changes to normative processes that Managers establish in order allow for the crew members to live specific cultural attributes or restrictions	"More Asian food. But the officers are handled separately, they have a separate part of the galley where they cook European. And here for the crew, we have more Asian food. If we have Hondurans, we also cook Honduras rice. We also have dishes without pork for the Muslims." (Executive Chef) "We try to not do crew manoeuvres on a Sunday or things like that, that we arrange on top. When we know in advance that it is an important thing for another culture, we can plan with that and respect it also." (Captain)
Benevolence	The Managers showing their fellow crew members kindness, generosity and pursuing the wish of preserve contentment throughout the crew	"They say happy crew - happy guest. This is the main thought." (Hotel Manager) "Yes, every Wednesday and Sunday. Every Sunday they get ice cream and we prepare pizza. And next week, we will prepare XXL burgers. We did that on the Albatros. One for everyone. I try to think of something special from time to time. The crew works very hard here and they need to have decent food. I would never cut anything, and I do not care about how much it costs. The crew is important." (Executive Chef)

Crew Welfare	An instrument as part of the ship-space, made up of a committee of crew members, whose purpose is to ensure crew well-being and to act as spokesperson for the crew	"The most important instrument is Crew Welfare, which is composed by voluntary crew members and who are organizing events for the crew, if it is parties, excursions, bingo nights, sports events, karaoke nights... To do what the crew really likes. Us managers also come to the crew welfare meetings, so that we also know, what kinds of problems are being faced, where do we need what, cabins, news, where does the food taste bad, what do they miss... Then generally, we try to create a good atmosphere. And also, with ideas, how we can entertain the crew a bit." (Hotel Manager)
Superordinate Goal / Equality	The managers making sure to treat crew members equally, disregarding status and cultural origin, as well as highlighting the importance of working towards the same target	"We have 29 different nationalities on board and each and everyone is equally important for a functioning cruise ship. The colleagues from the Phoenix team like the colleagues from the laundry or the bridge, the engine. When we talk with each other in the crew bar or crew mess or at crew excursions, I do not think that there are any discrepancies, antipathies or anything between us. We all have one goal; we are here for the guest. And it does not matter where you are from and what language you speak" (Cruise Director)
Support	The managers offering assistance to crew members through encouragement, comfort and protection	"I try to stay positive. Our help and support... I always try to help my guys and to be with them. Of course. Sometimes it is not easy, but we still try to find solutions, how to improve things for everyone" (Bar Manager) "You can always approach your managers and supervisors, when they have a problem. This is very important for us." (Maître d'Hôtel)
Communication	Managers attaching importance to openly and transparently exchanging information, news, ideas and feelings	"But communication is the key." (Chief Purser) "Generally, I communicate a lot with them. When there is a problem, like I said, in private. But when there is general problem, then also with the whole team. And that the crew also realises that they are a team." (Chief Housekeeper)
English as Board Language	English as a common language on board that has to be and is being spoken in every professional and safety setting.	"One language, everybody needs to speak. And this is English on board. I would say, the rules are also the same for everyone." (Hotel Manager) "The crew has to speak English. This is a safety and security reason. Because the crew has to understand the announcements. In case of emergency, all announcements are in English." (Hotel Inventory Controller)

Intercultural Relationship Building	Promoting and supporting crew members connecting to each other across cultures	"Bring people together. That they have to work together. With me they have to learn together. Learn with each other and form a group. For the heads of departments, they have to try to make them form a team. That they work together, communicate with each other, to be considerate of each other... And yes... That through doing something together, working together, they get to know each other better and are considerate of each other, how they work." (German Teacher) "And like I said, the nice thing at Phoenix is that you know everybody for such a long time, no matter which nationality you have, many friendships have arisen there. It is simply... It does not matter which skin colour you have or which religion." (Maître d'Hôtel)
Leader Subordinate Relationships	Managers putting emphasis on and strengthening the connections between them and their team members	"And this is why I try to do everything with a wink, a bit more relaxed, to joke with the crew, but of course all in moderation. And then, in times where it is important, when it is stressful, that everybody is focused. This is important, that everybody understands this. Everyone can have fun at work. You can always approach your managers and supervisors, when they have a problem. This is very important for us. But all with a wink. Nobody should cringe or wince when I enter the room. This would be the worst for me." (Maître d'Hôtel)
Crew / Team Events	Organizing activities and get-togethers for either the crew as a whole or for the specific departments	"When we have such a hard day or a hard cruise with a full ship, for example, with difficult guests, then at the end of the cruise, we do a little get together. We have a few soft drinks there, and we do a cocktail or beer. Chef prepares pizza or chicken wings. Fried rice... Then we sit together and... It is not a party, it is more about being together a bit, tell some jokes, make some music. We do not do that, but we do it to keep the crew motivated. We also do crew parties. The crew show we do for the guests. But all the rehearsals are so much fun, and it really brings the crew together." (F&B Manager)

Working Atmosphere	Managers working towards creating a favourable working climate for the crew	"This means, what I want to say with that, they have a high affinity to companies where they realise that they are treated adequately. If the basic conditions like working tasks, salary, position onboard matches their own career expectations, then they like to stay for a long time." (Staff Captain) "You can see that here on our ships also, that when they are hired and they feel comfortable, they are incorporated pretty fast, it becomes familiar here." (Chief Housekeeper)
Team Work	Managers promoting and enforcing cooperation and the collective execution of tasks inside the crew	"Which is very important to me, that we always put emphasis on team work. This is very important, that we do not walk alone." (Chief Housekeeper) " I do team work. Everybody helps. Upstairs we provide some drinks, some food and in the evening, everybody comes up. In half an hour they were done. That's how it is. Not that someone has to do it alone." (Executive Chef)
Cultural Self-Realisation / Expression	The opportunity for crew members to incorporate a part of their culture in their working environment through disclosing and presenting it to the customer	"We also have things like the crew show, where also different nations perform dances, singing, music... Because it is a nice identification for the passengers with the crew." (Hotel Manager) "We will have a new dinner of the cooks. Because we have Indonesians, we have Filipinos, we have Germans, and everyone can propose one dish. So that we have something else." (Executive Chef)
Withholding Culture during Working Hours	Crew members being required to adapt to the European board culture in all professional situations that do not explicitly allow for them to express their culture.	"Everybody has the possibility and can believe in whatever they want but in total, the day-to-day operations on board can not be impacted." (Captain) "What you do in your free time... You can do what you want. I respect that. But during working hours and the life here together has to be one culture, which is our culture. Like one language. One language, one culture. This is also important. Because, you can imagine. 24 cultures. One walks around without shoes, one walks here... This is not possible." (Hotel Inventory Controller)
Uniform (dress code)	The necessity of wearing a Uniform during working hours and/or in public areas.	"We have a uniform dress code, which is being communicated before the contract is issued, how the dress code looks like. The person itself has to decide if he wants to accept the contract and the conditions or not." (Maître d'Hôtel)

Cultural Events	The ship-space allowing for an integration of national or religious holidays or occasions, that are traditionally celebrated by the different cultures.	"We take care that the nations can celebrate their national holidays. Their culture. We have faithful crew, and when there is Ramadan, we take care that they can do Ramadan. Or the Filipinos, when they have their independence day, or other nations, we just had the Indian holiday, the festival of lights, where we prepared Indian food." (Hotel Manager) "I also like to have a holy mass here from time to time. Then, the board pastor comes here, and you can come and see how crowded it gets here." (Executive Chef)
Conflict / Discrimination Management	How managers deal with disputes inside the crew, for example arising from discrimination	"Discrimination is a variable term. Even if I realise that we are in an area of mutual communication, when I see that things are inappropriate, then I take this person aside and try to point the person to the matter. Apart from that, it is part of my duty as a Staff Captain, when something happens on board that goes in this direction, then this is the main challenge to settle the incident and since it is my view... You always have to view it from both sides and listen to both sides." (Staff Captain) "No, then I take them by the hand, and we have a talk. I do not like that at all. Discrimination does not happen here. Absolutely not." (Executive Chef)
Staff Stability	Managers working towards reducing turnover and fostering employee retention	"The good thing in our company is that we don't have so many new people. Usually people are going home and coming back." (Chief Engineer) "We are lucky that we have many crew members that are working on our vessels for a very long time in the whole service area and that are accustomed to Germans." (Chief Purser)

Management of Crew - Customer Interaction	Managerial practices aiming at improving the manner of international crew members providing a service to the single origin customer	n.a.
Learning the German Language	Crew members learning the German language with the help of a German teacher on board as part of their employment	" We have German teachers from the Goethe-Institute here on board that teach the crew. And this is also a part of their appraisal. We pay the German classes for them, it is also working time that is being paid, and in the end of the German class, they also have to do tests. Depending on the different lessons, they come to different German classes." (Hotel Manager) "When we have enough time, then I do my meetings in English and we do everything again in German. Just to learn a little bit." (F&B Manager)
Limitation to Frontline Staff	Solely crew members that are in direct passenger contact take part in German classes	"German lessons we only have for personnel that is in direct contact with the guests. For us, the most important is that the crew that is together with the passengers does speak German." (Hotel Inventory Controller) "The whole personnel which is working in the service area, which means restaurant, bar, housekeeping, spa, and a bit galley." (German Teacher)
Contract conditions	Specific contractual requirements that have to be met regarding German classes on board	"There is always a German exam after the teacher has been on board and relatively to if they pass or not... If they fail five times in a German exam, which are no impossible exercises, then they get a no-return for the company. Because there is in fact a substantial amount of pressure present, because we require that everyone takes that seriously and we work towards as many crew members as possible understanding the basics and being able to communicate with the guest." (Maître d'Hôtel)
Culture-specific Training	On board education of the crew with regards to German culture in general	"Yes, it is not on a high level, but we try to make accessible for the employees how Germans are and how they act. This is also different. Germans and our German passengers on board, they do not make exceptions." (Staff Captain) "And they are being informed, as in we are telling them how the different cultures are. And what they, for example, like in their countries what a German does not like." (Chief Housekeeper)

German Cuisine	Education of the crew with regards to German cuisine and food habits	"I have to train them to cook German." (Executive Chef) " They have to do a course at home to learn German cooking. How to cook a Schnitzel. A Filipino never ate a Schnitzel in his life. Or a beef roulade or Thüringer Klöße. Yes... And they have to learn that at home. When they know that, they come on board." (F&B Manager)
Privacy & Respect	Education of the crew with regards to respectful and adequate crew-customer interactions that align with the German behavioural culture	"That are some things that you do not touch the guest or not speak in your mother tongue. This is one thing that I have to remind my employees of very often. Especially in the public area, because it is impolite for someone that does not understand, and you might think that they speak badly about you." (Hotel Manager)
Non-verbal Communication	Education of the crew with regards to crew-customer interactions that do not involve spoken word	"For example, you cannot kiss the guests, you cannot hug them... Just not all guests like that. If there comes a waiter and touches the guest... They have to respect them." (Bar Manager)
German Habits	Education of the crew with regards to customs that can be found in the German culture	"Naming a little example: In the states and actually everywhere else, just not in Germany, the duvets are being folded under the mattress. I am at it for years and we also do trainings to tell them, do not fold the duvets under the mattress. Our passengers are no ducks. And they do not want it. Then it works perfectly fine for some time, but in the end they fold the duvets again. When there is a specific situation, you have to tell them, not everybody likes that." (Chief Housekeeper)
Learn from Customer	Passive education of the crew that happens through understanding and adopting the behaviour of German passengers	"And I think our guests also show what is German culture, because we are a German product with German manners." (Hotel Manager)
Role of German-speaking Crew Members	The imperative of hiring crew members that are native or fluent in the German language	"Well, we are the first contact person for our guests. We are representing Phoenix Reisen, which, as a tour operator, charter the vessels over long periods of time. And this is why it is important that we, who are in direct guest contact, speak perfect German, in order to understand the guest and cater to their wishes." (Cruise Director) "Our language is also a big advantage for the crew. We should speak German with the crew as much as possible, so that they can improve their language capabilities." (Cruise Director)

Conflicts	The management of misconceptions or disagreements between crew and customer that are based on cultural differences	"When there is a problem. Dirty bathroom, stains on the pillow... It all happened before. And I say, put yourself in the passenger's shoes. You pay so much money and you save the whole year for this cruise. You pay so much money and are looking forward to this cruise. Then you come and on your pillow is a stain or the bathroom is dirty. They understand it then. But you have to communicate clearly. I always talk a lot with them, and I always say, put yourself in the guests place." (Chief Housekeeper)

Appendix C.

Coding Frequencies

Code System	Coded Segments	Category Total	Documents
Total Codes	554	-	13
Interviewee Attributes	0	89	
Position	23	-	13
Nationality	13	-	13
Gender	12	-	12
Age	13	-	13
Time with PHX	15	-	13
Time on Cruise Ships	13	-	13
Department Composition	21	28	13
Reason for High Proportion of Filipinos and Indonesians	7	-	3
Cultural Differences	0	54	0
Work ethics	9	13	7
Reliance on instructions	3	-	2
Illness	1	-	1
Attitudes / Characteristics	12	-	6
Habits / Traditions	10	-	6
Food / Cuisine	9	-	5
Religion	5	8	5
Culinary restrictions	3	-	3
Dress Codes	2	-	2
Opportunities of International Crew	1	24	1
Personal growth	3	17	3
Learn about other cultures	11	-	11
Open-mindedness	2	-	2
Improve language skills	1	-	1
Diversity	3	-	2
Comprehensive Destination Knowledge	2	-	1
Formality	1	-	1
Challenges of International Crew	0	46	0
Discrimination / Prejudice	11	-	9
Language / Communication Barriers	9	-	3
Culture Clash	6	-	6
Formation of groups	5	-	5
Differing work ethics	5	-	5
Cohabitation	5	-	4
Differing Qualifications / Backgrounds / Habits	3	-	2
Limited Space	1	-	1
Religious Restrictions	1	-	1

Management of International Crew	0	237	0
Evaluation of Employee Suitability / Prerequisites	4	-	2
Training and Briefings	7	23	5
Autonomous Peer Training / Motivation	7	-	4
Slow pace / Augmenting tasks	4	-	3
Training Centres	3	-	2
Self-Education	2	-	2
Superordinate Values	0	51	0
Respect	10	20	8
Culture Respecting Alterations	10	-	5
Benevolence	8	12	5
Crew Welfare	4	-	2
Superordinate Goal / Equality	12	-	8
Support	7	-	4
Communication	14	31	8
English as Board Language	17	-	7
Intercultural Relationship Building	21	70	8
Leader Subordinate Relationships	18	-	10
Crew / Team Events	14	-	11
Working Atmosphere	9	-	5
Team Work	8	-	6
Cultural Self-Realisation / Expression	16	30	5
Withholding Culture during Working Hours	5	8	4
Uniform (dress code)	3	-	2
Cultural Events	6	-	4
Conflict / Discrimination Management	24	-	10
Staff Stability	4	-	4
Management of Crew - Customer Interaction	0	76	0
Learning the German Language	23	34	9
Limitation to Frontline Staff	8	-	5
Contract conditions	3	-	3
Culture-specific Training	14	29	8
German Cuisine	6	-	3
Privacy & Respect	4	5	4
Non-verbal Communication	1	-	1
German Habits	2	-	2
Learn from Customer	2	-	2
Role of German-speaking Crew Members	10	-	5
Conflicts	3	-	3