

SIRC Report to the PYA on Living and Working Conditions Aboard Yachts

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This report was commissioned by the
[Professional Yachtsmen's Association](#)



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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is based upon data collected by the Professional Yachtsmen's Association (PYA) utilising a questionnaire designed with the assistance of Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC). Analysis of the data from the questionnaire was conducted at SIRC and the report was also written by SIRC staff. The PYA took responsibility for the questionnaire distribution and administration.

The questionnaire was placed on line and the link to it was sent to 2031 PYA members in the period 2/07/10 - 02/08/10 (one follow up email was also sent to members in the period concerned). Additionally the PYA placed the link on their website and sent emails about the survey, and the link to it, to their media contacts, to crew agencies, and to management companies. In total the responses from 1503 were sent to SIRC for analysis on 02/08/10.

The ratio between the responses from the website link and those from the PYA email was approximately 70:30. A check on significant differences between the responses of PYA and non-PYA members did not reveal any evidence of systematic bias as a consequence of the questionnaire being open to non-members.

Sample

- The majority of respondents (83%) worked aboard 'motor' yachts.
- 39% of respondents worked aboard vessels of between 41 and 60 meters in length. 31% worked aboard smaller vessels of between 24 and 40 meters and 20% worked aboard larger vessels of between 61 and 100 meters.
- Over half (55%) of respondents worked aboard vessels constructed between 2004 and 2010 (inclusive).
- Vessels were flagged with a total of 45 different registers. However there was some significant clustering: 44% of respondents worked aboard vessels flagged with Cayman Islands; 17% worked aboard UK-flagged vessels; 7% worked aboard Isle of Man flagged vessels.
- 59% of respondents worked aboard vessels which were privately owned.
- 67% of respondents worked in 'outside' (deck) jobs, 17% worked on the engine, and 16% worked in hospitality.
- The sample was highly skewed towards senior ranks. 44% of the sample was made up of Captains/Relief Captains (593 Captains and 15 relief Captains). 8% of respondents were also in the senior rank of Chief Engineer.
- Most respondents were male (85%).
- Most respondents were single (65%).
- The average age of respondents was 39.
- Most respondents were from OECD countries. 41% were from the UK, 11% were from Australia and 9% were from the USA. Nationality was grouped for the purpose of analysis throughout the report.
- Respondents had worked in the yacht sector for an average of approximately 12 years.

- The majority of respondents (86%) did not have previous experience in the Merchant Navy.
- The majority of respondents (65%) planned to work in the yacht sector for at least the next five years.

Findings – employment terms and conditions

- The majority of respondents had permanent / indefinite / unlimited contracts. Of those on fixed term contracts the average length of contract was 1.44 years.
- Most respondents were paid in either Euros or US Dollars. Those paid in Euros tended to be paid more than those paid in dollars. The most common salary for Euro earners was in the range 5-7000 Euros per month.
- Most respondents (77%) did not have National Insurance contributions made by employers on their behalf.
- Just over half of respondents (53%) were entitled to sick pay.
- Most respondents (94%) did not have private pension contributions made for them by employers.
- On average respondents were entitled to 41 days paid annual leave including public holidays.
- 42% of respondents did not take all of their paid leave.
- Most respondents (93%) were not members of a trade union.
- Most respondents (63%) were not members of the PYA.
- Whilst in port most respondents (88%) did not work on a shift/rota basis although roughly a third worked on a shift/rota basis when guests were onboard.
- In general hours of work increased markedly when guests were onboard from an average in port of 8.6 hours (no guests) to 13.79 hours (with guests) and from an average at sea of 10.48 (no guests) to 14.32 (with guests).
- Hours of work when at sea generally exceeded hours of work when in port
- Whilst at sea most respondents (53%) worked on a shift/rota basis although this surprisingly decreased slightly to 48% when guests were onboard.
- In the two months prior to completing the questionnaire most respondents had spent more time in port (44% of time) than they said they had spent at sea (29% of time).
- On average guests were reported to be aboard respondents' vessels for a third of the last eight weeks (i.e. 18.54 days).
- Over the twelve months prior to completing the questionnaire respondents estimated that their boat was at sea for 23% of the time and that they had guests onboard for a similar proportion of time (23%).
- The majority of respondents (74%) suggested that their boat at least occasionally put to sea in rough weather and 7% of respondents stated that this happened 'regularly'.
- Job insecurity had been experienced by most respondents (75%)
- Work related stress had been experienced at least occasionally by almost all respondents (94%) and over half (54%) had experienced this often (22%), very often (21%), or always (11%).
- Just over three quarters of respondents had experienced a lack of training opportunities and 65% had experienced lack of career progression.

- There were statistically significant differences in terms and conditions for different groups of workers. In general men, captains, those with longer experience in the industry and those on larger boats tended to have the better terms and conditions of employment.
- Those working on motorboats reported having guests onboard significantly more frequently (19.3 days) over the preceding 8 week period than sail boats (14.8 days), and larger boats were reported to spend fewer days in port. Likewise over the preceding **12 months**, larger boats reportedly spent more time at sea, as did sail boats. Additionally sail boats and larger boats were more likely to put to sea in rough weather. Those on larger boats also reported having guests onboard significantly more frequently over the preceding 12 months than on smaller boats.

Findings - living arrangements

- The majority of respondents (92%) lived and slept onboard.
- Most respondents (95%) worked on boats which were not engaged in ‘day trips’ returning to the same port every night.
- Most respondents shared a cabin (64%). Many of these (57%) shared with people of the same gender as themselves but many (43%) shared with people of the opposite gender. Of those who shared a cabin with someone of a different gender only 51% had any choice over sharing.
- Of those respondents who shared a cabin over half (53%) objected to this at least ‘sometimes’.
- Most respondents (85%) slept in cabins with en-suite bathrooms.
- Most respondents (58%) said that people of different gender shared communal facilities.
- The majority of respondents stated that their preference was to sleep in an en-suite cabin (single en-suite was chosen as first choice by 79% of respondents to the relevant question and double en-suite was selected a first choice for 27% of respondents answering the relevant question).
- More respondents chose as a second preference a **single** cabin **without en-suite** facilities (40%) than a **double** cabin **with en-suite** facilities (35%).
- Most respondents (92%) had natural light in their cabin.
- Most respondents (80%) felt that the lighting in their cabin was adequate.
- The majority of respondents (59%) were satisfied with the standard of their cabins.
- Many respondents (41%) felt that they **did not** have adequate storage space in their cabins.
- Many respondents (40%) felt that noise **was** a problem in their cabin and of these 59% stated that this was ‘all the time’.
- Most respondents (79%) **did not** feel that vibration was a problem in their cabin.
- The majority of respondents (67%) felt that they were able to get adequate rest, however a significant minority (30%) felt that this was not the case and for approximately half of these (46%) this was a problem ‘all of the time’.
- Most seafarers (96%) had a reading light in their cabin.
- Only a minority of seafarers (23%) had access to a comfortable chair in their cabin.

- There was an almost fifty:fifty split between those with a desk/table in their cabin (49%) and those without.
- Most respondents (95%) had a 'wardrobe' in their cabin.
- Most respondents (88%) had drawers in their cabin.
- The majority of respondents had a TV (62%) and a radio (62%) provided in their cabin and slightly more had an audio system (68%).
- The majority of respondents (72%) had internet access provided in their cabin.
- More respondents (48%) felt satisfied with the size of their cabin than dissatisfied (29%).
- The majority of respondents had experienced lack of privacy onboard. Lack of privacy had only **never** been experienced by a small number of respondents (7%).
- The majority of respondents had experienced lack of space onboard. Lack of space had only **never** been experienced by a small number of respondents (9%).
- Most respondents (90%) had access to a mess room onboard and within this most had access to a table/chairs for dining (98%), a television (96%), hot drink facilities (95%), fridge (96%), drinking water (97%). However only 50% of respondents with access to a mess room reported that the mess room had comfortable chairs for relaxing
- The majority of respondents (71%) worked aboard vessels where smoking onboard was prohibited. Of those who worked on boats where it was allowed 78% described there being a separate smoking area.
- The majority of respondents (65%) were prohibited from drinking alcohol when guests were onboard. However, when there were no guests aboard only 17% were not allowed to drink alcohol
- In port most seafarers (58%) could get ashore when guests were onboard however a significant minority (18%) could not do so at all. Generally those able to get ashore when guests were onboard could do so for a period of between one and six hours. When guests were not onboard almost all respondents (99%) could get ashore and two thirds suggested that they could stay ashore in these circumstances for more than six hours.
- Whilst only 65% of respondents had unlimited internet access aboard, only 3% of respondents said that they had to pay for internet access. 11% of respondents said that they did not have any internet access onboard.
- The majority of respondents (72%) did not have unlimited access to the ship's onboard phone and of these 43% said they did not have limited access to the ship's phone. Of the respondents with access, 13% had to pay for telephone access.
- Respondents estimated that for almost six days in every month they were unable to acquire reception for their personal mobile telephones.
- When off duty the majority of respondents had access to: a computer terminal (63%); a music system (85%); internet/wifi (88%); games (64%); DVD library (87%); book library (64%).
- Respondents had permission to use some owner-owned facilities when there weren't any guests onboard: a car (43%); scooter (14%); jet ski (36%); a tender (71%); games room (19%); sports equipment (56%).
- Most respondents (52%) stated that there was not a budget available for onboard crew social/recreational activities.

- In port most respondents (96%) could eat onboard if they wished to. Most respondents (85%) did mostly eat onboard even when in port.
- When ashore most respondents (78%) did not receive any allowance for food.
- Most respondents (92%) felt there was a good variety of food onboard and many (80%) always had access to free soft drinks onboard.
- The majority of respondents (65%) stated that their dietary needs were catered for onboard.
- Many respondents (61%) had not experienced bullying/harassment onboard. However approximately ten percent of respondents had experienced bullying/harassment either often (6%), very often (3%), or always (1%).
- Many respondents (68%) had not experienced discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, or sexual orientation etc. However approximately eleven percent of respondents had experienced such discrimination either often (6%), very often (3%), or always (2%).
- A minority of respondents (20%) had **never** experienced a lack of onboard facilities. Approximately 46% of respondents had experienced a lack of onboard facilities either often (22%), very often (15%), or always (10%).
- Rank was a strongly significant factor with regard to differences in responses between groups of people working in the yacht sector. Captains tended to have better facilities in relation to their living accommodation than others. Gender and years in yachting were also strongly influential factors in patterning the responses.
- Women were more likely to have experienced lack of privacy, harassment and discrimination than men. Those in lower ranking positions and young people were also more likely to have experienced harassment and discrimination.
- The length of boat that people were working on and whether or not it was a motor boat also strongly influenced the results. Overwhelmingly those aboard smaller boats and those working on sail boats had access to fewer facilities in their cabins and mess-rooms. While workers on smaller boats, were more likely to have experienced a lack of space and privacy than those on larger boats.

Findings access/use of shore-based facilities

- Respondents had access to the following facilities ashore: gymnasium (51%); swimming pool (45%); sports club (41%); clubs/association (39%); internet café (66%); cafes/bars (83%); restaurants (84%); cinema/theatre (64%).
- Of those who reported having access to facilities, respondents frequently or occasionally using them were as follows: gymnasium (70%); swimming pool (71%); sports clubs (61%); clubs/associations (53%); internet café (60%); cafes/bars (98%); restaurants (98%); cinema/theatre (90%).
- A significant minority of respondents (13%) felt that there were facilities that they would like to have access to ashore which they didn't have access to.

Perceived benefits of working on yachts

- Salaries were perceived as better than average by the majority of respondents (67%).

- Employment terms and conditions were seen as better than average by less than half of all respondents (44%).
- Just under half of all respondents suggested that access to shipboard facilities was better than average and a similar proportion (45%) considered access to shore-side facilities as better than average.
- Most respondents (69%) rated the lifestyle working aboard yachts as better than average.
- Nearly three quarters of respondents (72%) felt that work satisfaction in their job was better than average and a similar proportion (71%) considered that camaraderie and the social life were better than average in their work on yachts.
- Most respondents (74%) felt that their job gave them better than average opportunities to visit interesting places.
- Job opportunities were seen as better than average by just over half (51%) of respondents whilst fewer (43%) felt that their work on yachts allowed better than average flexibility to change jobs.
- Training opportunities were only seen as better than average by just over a third of respondents (38%).

Conclusion

The majority of workers felt that their terms and conditions were better than average. In general, those working onboard motor boats, larger boats, men, Captains, and those who have been in the sector longest reported more favourable conditions.

Cabins were shared by the majority of the sample and just under half of respondents shared a cabin with a member of the opposite sex. Around half of the people in the sample objected to sharing a cabin and access to a single en-suite cabin was the preference expressed by most people. As a second choice more respondents wanted access to a single cabin with communal facilities than a double cabin with en-suite facilities, indicating that a private cabin took precedence over private bathroom facilities for many people. More women than men, more younger people, and more people aboard sail boats, shared cabins.

The provision of space and communal facilities was clearly affected by the length and type of boat on which respondents worked (with smaller vessels and sail boats tending to have poorer provision).

In terms of other aspects of life and work onboard, the prevalence of bullying and harassment was seen as an issue of concern.

Access to facilities and shore leave were generally viewed positively, with respondents reporting that at times when there were no guests onboard they could get ashore frequently for long periods and often in locations where there were many social and recreational facilities to be taken advantage of.

Introduction

This report is based upon data collected by the Professional Yachtsmen's Association (PYA) utilising a questionnaire designed with the assistance of the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) in 2010. Analysis of the data from the questionnaire was conducted at SIRC and the report was also written by SIRC staff. However, the PYA took responsibility for the questionnaire distribution and administration.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out more about the living and working conditions of seafarers working in the professional yacht sector. A considerable amount is known about the living and working conditions of seafarers in the Merchant Navy but, to date, relatively little research has been done on the working and living conditions on yachts. In the light of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), and its likely application in this sector, this research is therefore timely and arguably necessary.

Method

The questionnaire was designed at SIRC in close consultation with members of the PYA. SIRC staff drafted an initial version of the questionnaire and, where relevant, reference was made to previous similar surveys. Once drafted the questionnaire was circulated amongst PYA members for their comment. Modifications were made and the questionnaire was piloted by the PYA and the results of this pilot were fed-back to SIRC before a final draft was produced.

The PYA made the decision to utilise 'Survey Monkey' as a tool for the on line administration of the questionnaire. Survey Monkey is an online questionnaire software package which allows the user to construct and conduct a survey online. A number of formats are available for questions (i.e. multiple choice, rating scales, text boxes) which can be modified according to the user's needs. Once designed, the questionnaire can be sent to respondents using a number of electronic means, such as email, or they can be presented online at a web address. Responses can be limited to one per IP address. High levels of security and confidentiality are built in to the software and it is possible for the full results to be downloaded to excel spreadsheets.

The questionnaire was placed on line and the link to it was sent to 2031 PYA members in the period 2/07/10 - 02/08/10 (one follow up email was also sent to members in the period concerned). Additionally the PYA placed the link on their website and sent emails about the survey, and the link to it, to their media contacts, to crew agencies, and to management companies. In total the responses from 1503 questionnaires were sent to SIRC for analysis on 02/08/10.

The ratio between the responses from the website link and those from the PYA email was approximately 70:30. In undertaking the data analysis a check was run for any systematic bias in the findings reported by PYA and non-PYA members. Whilst there were some minor, but statistically significant, differences in the terms and conditions of the two sub sets of data, these were judged not to be of analytic significance in as much as they did not appear to indicate any systematic bias which could conceivably

have been introduced as a consequence of non-seafarers accessing the questionnaire via the PYA website.

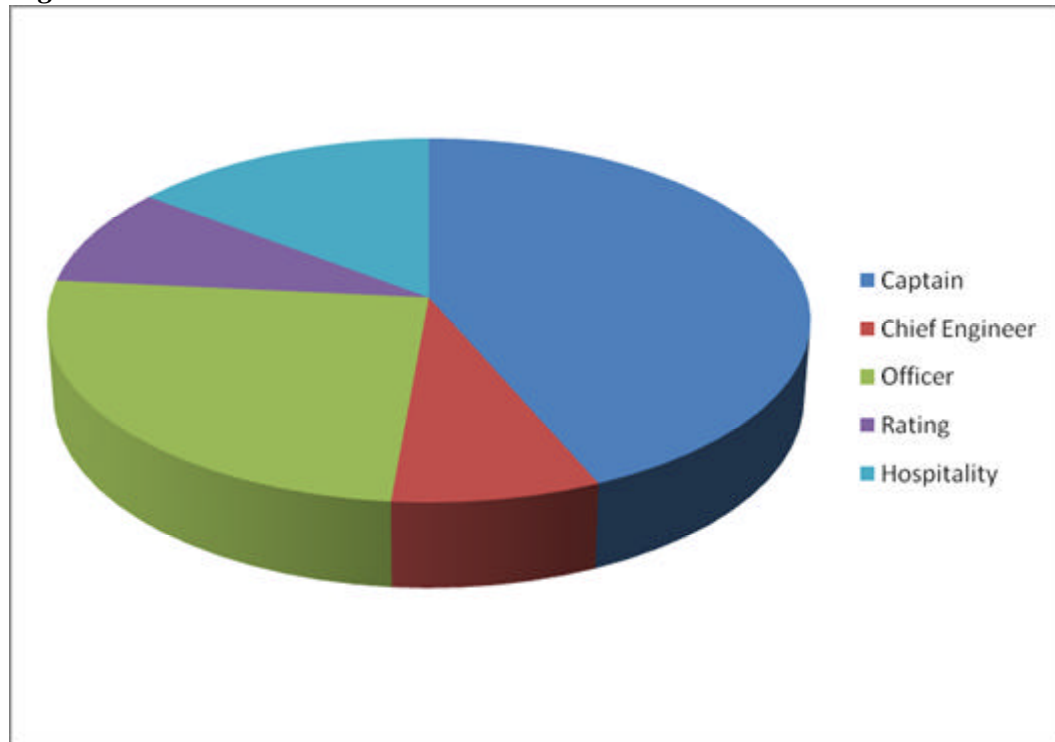
In order to analyse the data the SIRC team imported it into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Data were then cleaned. Some grouping of data was undertaken (for example in relation to rank¹) and some cross referencing and re-calculation of responses had to be undertaken in some cases (for example cross referencing currency with pay and also with internet/phone charges and expressing this as one currency for the purposes of comparison). Having taken the appropriate measures to clean the data, frequencies were initially run off and these were followed by a series of significance tests undertaken utilising chi square.

As a result of the length of the questionnaire, and the large number of statistical tests conducted, a higher test of significance was employed than is standard for many projects. Generally significance is reported at the 95% level of confidence. This means in effect that the researcher is confident that there is only a one in twenty probability that the reported finding has emerged as a result of chance (i.e. a type 1 error). In this report a higher test of significance is utilised and findings are reported as statistically significant at the 99% level of confidence (0.01 and less) and thus significant results are less likely to be a result of chance.

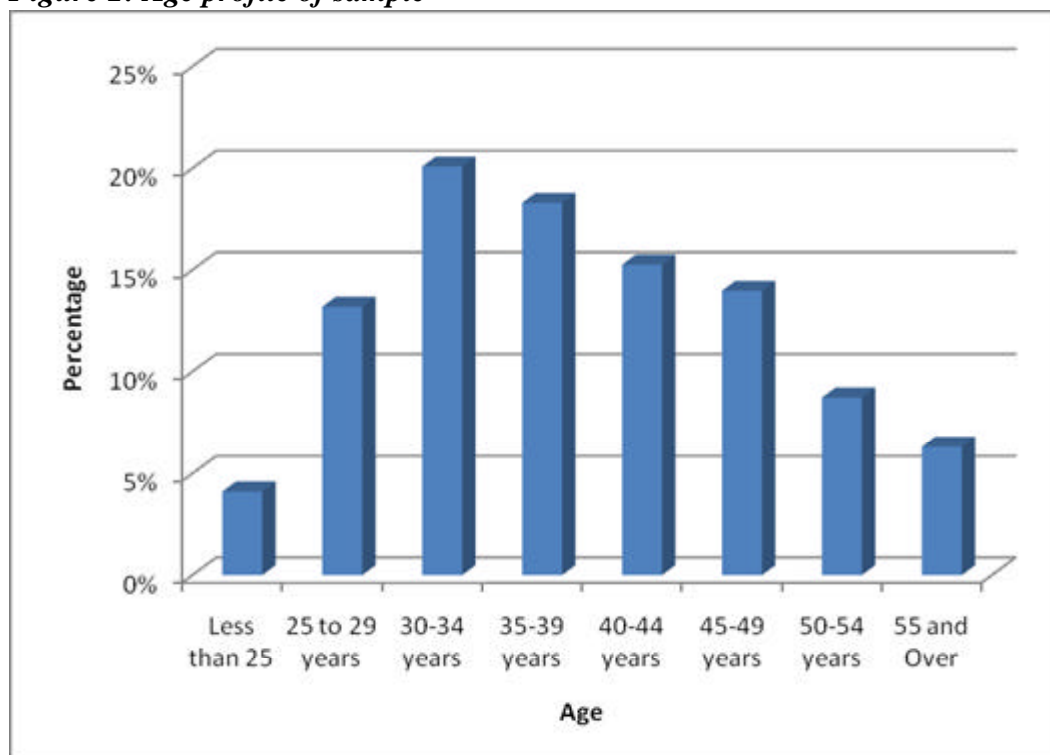
Sample

Despite the best efforts of those involved, the sample did not adequately represent all those who work aboard commercial and privately owned yachts. The most considerable problem with the sample related to the rank of those who completed the questionnaire. The sample was strongly skewed towards higher ranks and Captains, in particular, were strongly over-represented. Forty-four percent of the sample was made up of Captains/Relief Captains (593 Captains and 15 relief Captains) and 8% of respondents were also in the senior rank of Chief Engineer (see Figure 1). Similarly the sample was skewed in relation to 'department' and the majority of respondents (67%) worked in 'outside' (deck) jobs, 17% worked on the engine, and 16% worked in hospitality.

¹ NB jobs on the marine side (i.e. deck or engine work) have been categorised by rank, however, jobs on the hospitality side have not been further differentiated as this would have produced some categories with too few members for the purposes of statistical analysis. Furthermore the categories that could be distinguished within the hospitality sector could not sensibly be conflated with the divisions between ranks on the marine side. Results are presented side by side with marine positions differentiated by rank, and hospitality positions aggregated in a single group.

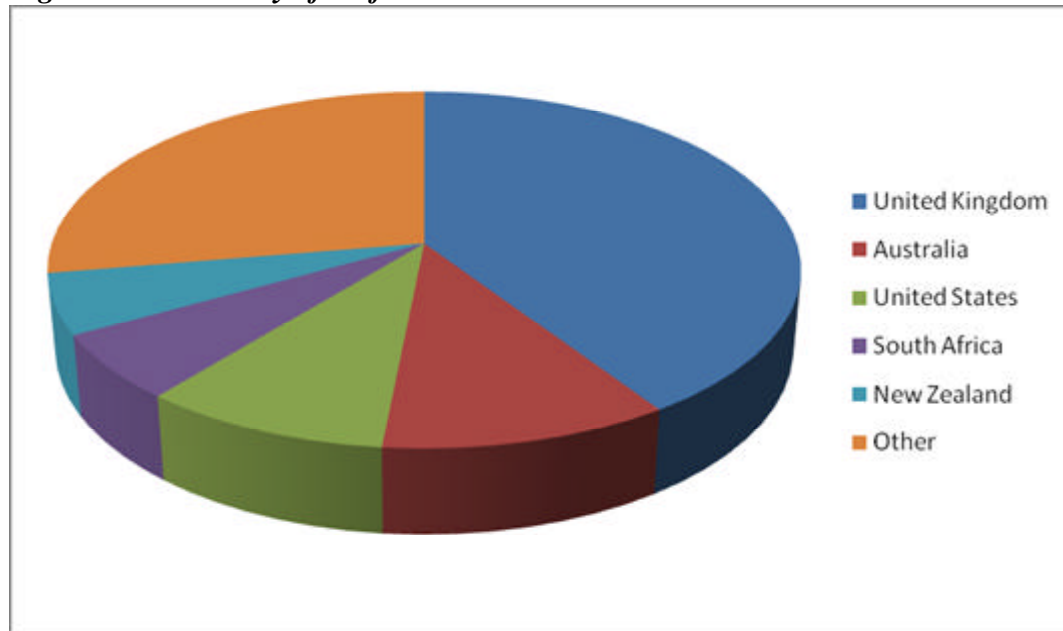
Figure 1: Rank

In terms of the remaining demographic characteristics of the sample it was found to be relatively 'middle-aged' (respondents average age was 39) (see Figure 2), and most respondents were male (85%) and single (65%).

Figure 2: Age profile of sample

In contrast with the Merchant Navy where seafarers are increasingly hired from developing countries the majority of the respondents were from OECD countries: 41% were from the UK, 11% were from Australia and 9% were from the USA (see Figure 3). It is not clear whether this is representative of the nationality of all workers in the yacht sector or whether it is a product of the sampling method.

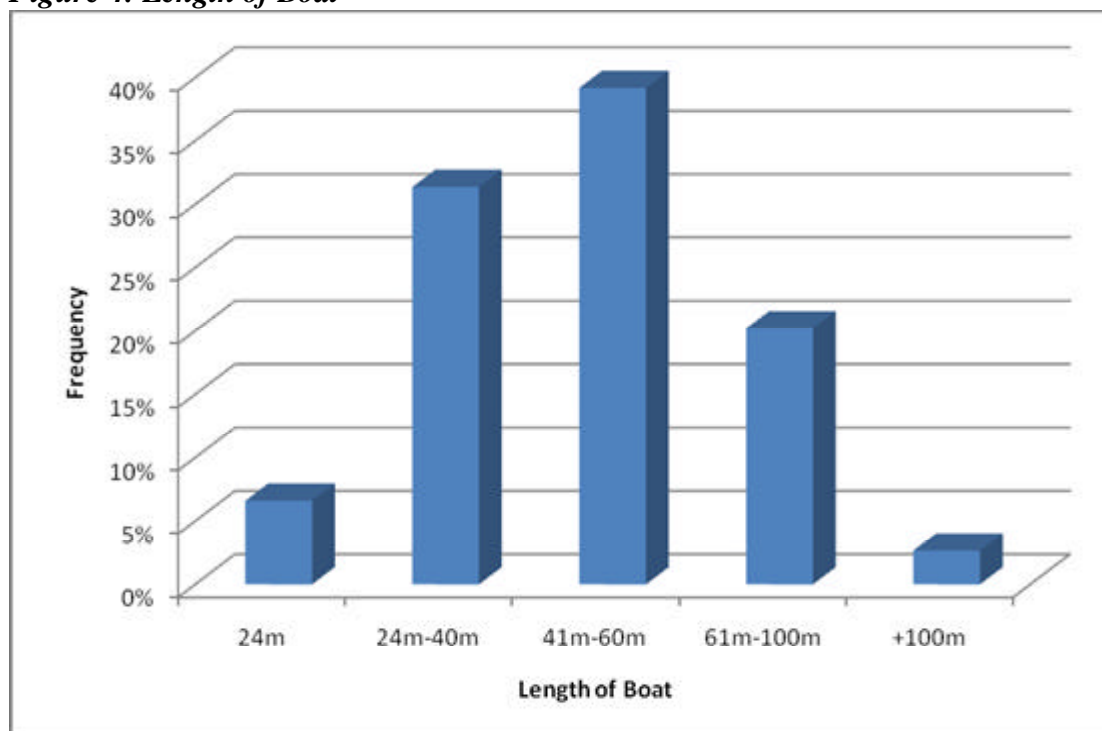
Figure 3: Nationality of seafarers



In terms of background most respondents did not have a background in the Merchant Navy and, on average, respondents had worked in the yacht sector for approximately 12 years. The majority of respondents planned to continue to work in the yacht sector for at least five years.

In terms of the characteristics of the vessels on which respondents were employed the following information is noteworthy. The majority of respondents (83%) worked aboard 'motor' yachts. Thirty-nine percent of respondents worked aboard vessels of between 41 and 60 meters in length. Thirty-one percent worked aboard smaller vessels of between 24 and 40 meters and 20% worked aboard larger vessels of between 61 and 100 meters (see Figure 4). Over half (55%) of respondents worked aboard vessels constructed between 2004 and 2010 (inclusive). Vessels were flagged with a total of 45 different registers. However there was some significant clustering: 44% of respondents worked aboard vessels flagged with Cayman Islands; 17% worked aboard UK-flagged vessels; 7% worked aboard Isle of Man flagged vessels. Fifty-nine percent of respondents worked aboard vessels which were privately owned.

Figure 4: Length of Boat



Findings – employment terms and conditions

Terms and conditions in any sector vary by rank. Within this sample more than half of the respondents occupied the most senior ranks of Chief Engineer and Captain/Relief Captain. It is reasonable to infer therefore that the terms and conditions as described in general terms do not represent the sector as a whole. It is necessary therefore to pay careful attention to the significant differences found in the responses of people of different rank.

Overview of general terms and conditions

Almost two-thirds of respondents (61%) had permanent/indefinite/unlimited contracts. This compares favourably with seafarers within the Merchant Navy where a recent study reported that 96% were on fixed term contracts (Kahveci and Nichols 2006: 112) Where yacht crew reported being on fixed term contracts the average length of contract was 1.44 years². However, a small number (4.3%) reported having no contract at all and this is relatively unusual within the context of the contemporary Merchant Navy.

Generally respondents were paid in Euros (64.1%) or US dollars (33.6%); the remaining respondents (2.3%) were paid in nine different currencies. For the purpose of analysis we use the Euro as the standard rate of comparison. (Dollars were

² Due to the large variety in forms of contract in use many respondents simply wrote a comment relating to their contractual arrangements, while others appear to have reported the length of time they have actually been employed rather than the formal length of their contract. As such the data presented above should be treated as tentative.

converted using XE.com on 16.08.10 at a rate of 0.78162). Due to the small numbers, other currencies were not included in the analysis

For those paid in US dollars 60.3% of respondents earned in the range equivalent to 2,345-7,035 Euros per month. The most common salary was in the range equivalent to 3,908-5,471 Euros per month (21.6%). This Figure compares closely to the median salary for senior officers in the Merchant Navy (3,908-5,862 Euro p.m.) as described by Shiptalk in their *Life at Sea Survey* 2007/8, however they did note considerable variation in salaries due to differences in nationality (Shiptalk 2008a: 20).

Workers on yachts who were paid in Euros tended to receive a higher salary than those paid in dollars. The most common salary was in the range of 5-7,000 Euros per month, with (66.4%) of respondents receiving earnings in the range 3-9000 Euros per month. Such differences are liable to be highly sensitive to changes in exchange rates, as one respondent stated when discussing the attraction of working in this sector:

“It was the money and great exchange rate from EU to AU though this is also lacking at the moment.” (#108)

Just over half of the respondents were entitled to sick pay and, on average, respondents were entitled to 41 days paid annual leave although 42% stated that they did not take all the leave they were entitled to. In this part of the questionnaire respondents were asked to state how many days paid annual leave they were entitled to and 6% stated that they were not entitled to any. A further 176 respondents did not respond to the question which could have been because they did not get annual leave, but as we are unable to ascertain their reason for not answering the question, they have had to be excluded from the analysis. Sixteen percent of respondents claimed to have more than sixty days annual paid leave which is high and includes a number of people stating they have more than 100 days paid annual leave (6% of sample). When these people are removed from the analysis the average number of days paid leave falls to 34 days. Little survey data are available regarding the availability of paid leave in the Merchant Navy however 38% of respondents replying to a survey undertaken by Shiptalk in 2007/8 stated that they were in receipt of paid annual leave (Shiptalk 2008a: 19). This number may not include seafarers who consider ‘leave pay’ paid each month at sea as part of their overall salary, and may therefore underestimate the number of merchant seafarers who are in receipt of paid annual leave.

Most respondents (77%) did not have National Insurance contributions made by employers on their behalf and only a little over a half of respondents (53%) were entitled to sick pay. Most respondents (94%) did not have private pension contributions made for them by employers. In contrast in the Merchant Navy the limited available evidence suggests that more seafarers may receive some pension contributions. The Shiptalk survey of 2007/8 indicates that 30% of respondents in the Merchant Navy received pension contributions (Shiptalk 2008a:20). Similarly a study by Kahveci and Nichols of seafarers in the car carrier sector suggested that amongst 276 ratings, 68% of those working on nationally flagged ships, 28% of those on FOC ships with ITF agreements, and 20% of those on FOC ships without an ITF agreement received pension contributions (Kahveci and Nichols 2006:175).

Most respondents were not members of a trade union (93%) or the PYA (63%). This compares unfavourably with the Merchant Navy where a recent study suggested that the majority of workers on car carriers (57%) were represented by a trade union (Kahveci and Nichols 2006: 169).

Significant differences in general terms and conditions

Captains (73%), older, and more experienced workers, were more likely to have a permanent / indefinite contract than other groups of workers.

As would be expected salaries varied according to rank with captains tending to be paid the most (e.g. 29% earned more than 11,000 Euros per month) and ratings the least (e.g. 55% earned 1-3,000 Euros). Generally men, older, more experienced workers, and those on motor boats tended to earn more.

Leave rates varied according to gender, type of boat and length of boat. Men, workers on motor boats and those on larger boats tended to get more leave. Men (60%) were more likely to take all of their leave than women (48%), and workers on larger boats were more likely to actually take all their leave.

There were no significant differences between groups of workers in terms of whether their employer paid national insurance contributions or contributed to a pension. However there were differences in terms of who received sick leave. Men were more likely to receive sick pay (55% compared to women 43%), as were Captains, those with longer experience in the industry, and respondents working on larger boats.

In general men, captains, those with longer experience in the industry, and those on larger boats, tended to have the better terms and conditions of employment.

Overview of hours and the context of work

In the **two** months prior to completing the questionnaire most respondents had spent more time in port (44% of time) than they said they had spent at sea (29% of time). This contrasts with workers on car carriers for instance who spend between 72% and 89% of their time at sea (Kahveci, and Nichols 2006: 147). On average guests were reported to be aboard respondents' vessels for a third of the last eight weeks (i.e. 18.54 days). Over the **twelve** months prior to completing the questionnaire respondents estimated that their boat was at sea for 23% of the time and that they had guests onboard for a similar proportion of time (23%). Whether or not respondents worked on shifts and the hours of work undertaken were related to whether boats were in port or at sea and were also affected by whether or not guests were onboard.

Whilst in port most respondents (88%) did not work on a shift/rota basis although roughly a third worked on a shift/rota basis when guests were onboard. Whilst at sea, most respondents (53%) worked on a shift/rota basis although this surprisingly decreased slightly to 48% when guests were onboard.

In general, hours of work increased markedly when guests were onboard from an average in port of 8.6 hours (no guests) to 13.79 hours (with guests), and from an average at sea of 10.48 (no guests) to 14.32 (with guests). Hours of work were also

affected by being at sea or in port and when at sea the hours of work generally exceeded the hours of work when in port.

Respondents were generally required to work in rough weather conditions from time to time and this was not just due to unpredicted changes in weather states. The majority of respondents (74%) suggested that their boat at least occasionally put to sea in rough weather and 7% of respondents stated that this happened 'regularly'.

Job insecurity had been experienced by most respondents (75%) and work related stress had been experienced at least occasionally by almost all respondents (94%). Over half of the sample (54%) had experienced this often (22%), very often (21%), or always (11%). Just over three quarters of respondents had experienced a lack of training opportunities and 65% had experienced lack of career progression.

Significant differences in hours and the context of work

There were no significant differences between workers in terms of the hours of work undertaken when in port with no guests onboard. However when there were guests onboard significant differences emerged in the hours worked by different groups of workers based on rank, gender and length of boat - with hospitality workers (14.6 hrs), women (14.7 hrs) and those on boats of 24-40m (14.5 hrs), tending to work the longest hours. Chief Engineers, men and those on boats longer than 100m tended to work the least hours.

This situation reversed, however, when boats put to sea without guests. At such times Chief Engineers (11.5 hrs) and males (10.8 hrs) tended to work the longest hours, whereas hospitality workers and women tended to work the fewest. Those on sail boats and those on smaller vessels also tended to work longer hours at sea. With guests onboard at sea there were again significant differences between workers' hours; hospitality workers (14.8 hrs) and those on smaller boats tended to work the longest hours.

When in port there were significant differences between groups of workers as to whether they worked shifts/rotas. Ratings were the most likely to work shifts whether there were guests (63%) or no guests (20%) onboard as were those on larger boats (see Figure 5). Additionally when there were guests onboard those with less than three years experience (48%) were more likely to work shifts than their more experienced colleagues. Those working on motor boats (35%) were also more likely to work shifts than those on sail boats (21%).

Again the situation changed at sea, at such times almost three quarters (73%) of deck and engineering officers (other than captain and chief engineer) reported working shifts. Boat length was again significant with 60-63% of those on boats 41-100m in length working shifts. When guests were onboard ratings worked more shifts than other ranks (73%) (see Figure 6) as did those workers on motor boats and larger boats.

Figure 5: The percentage shifts split by rank and whether or not there were guests onboard when in port

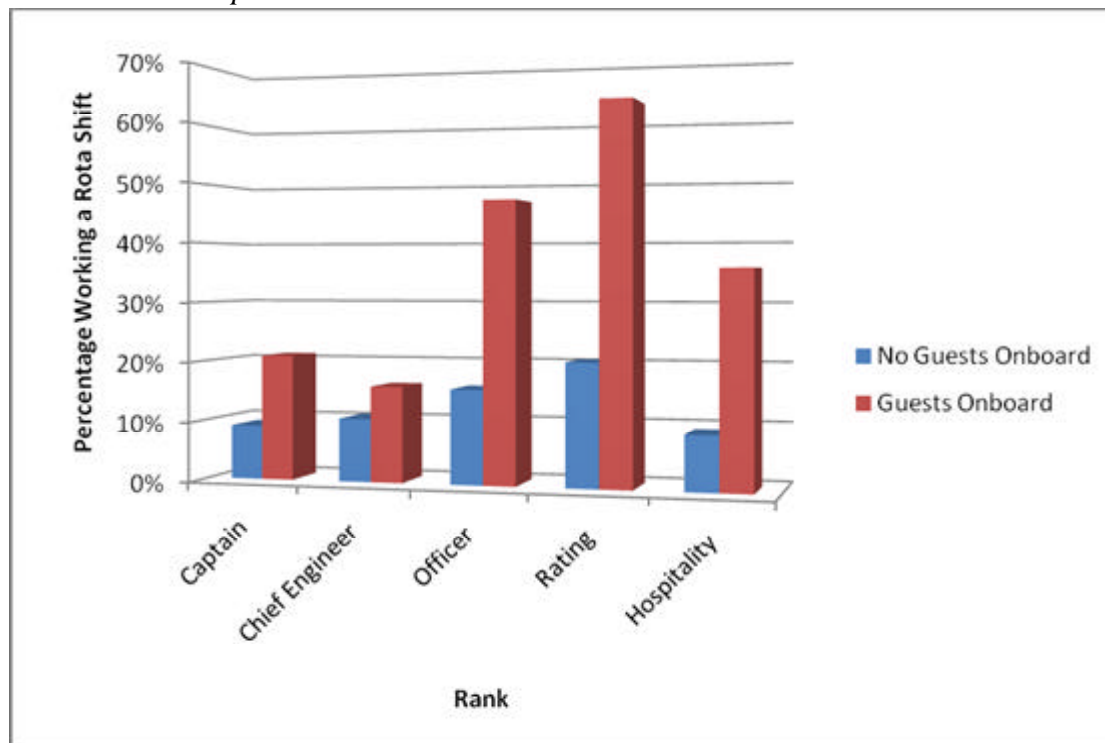
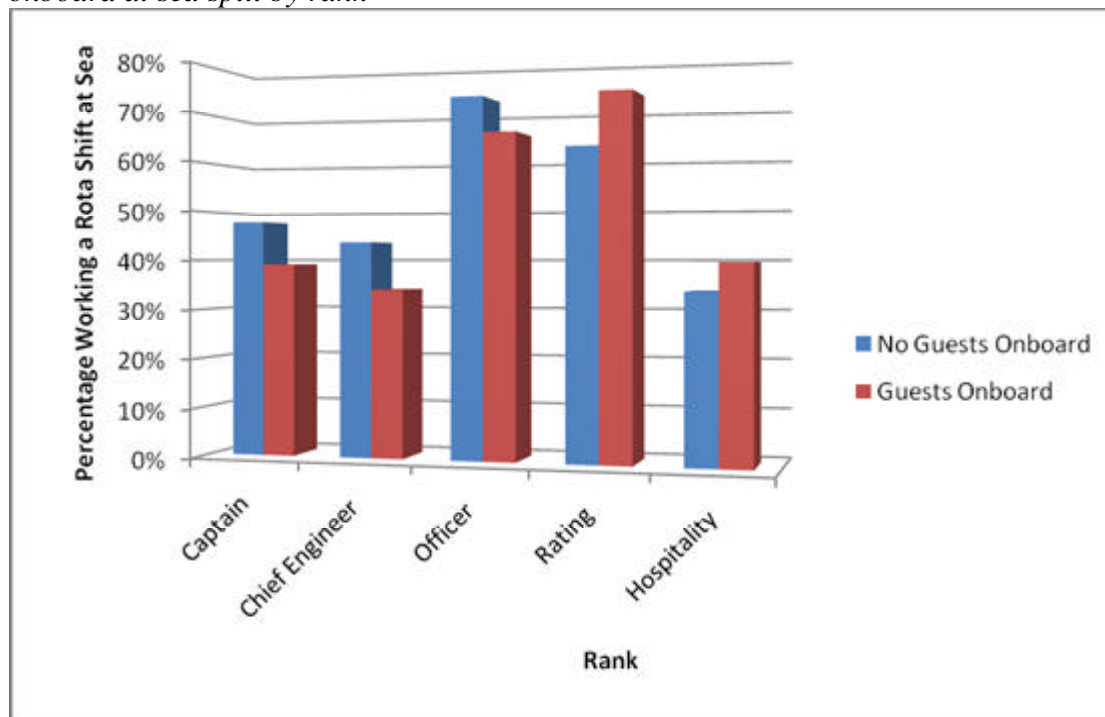


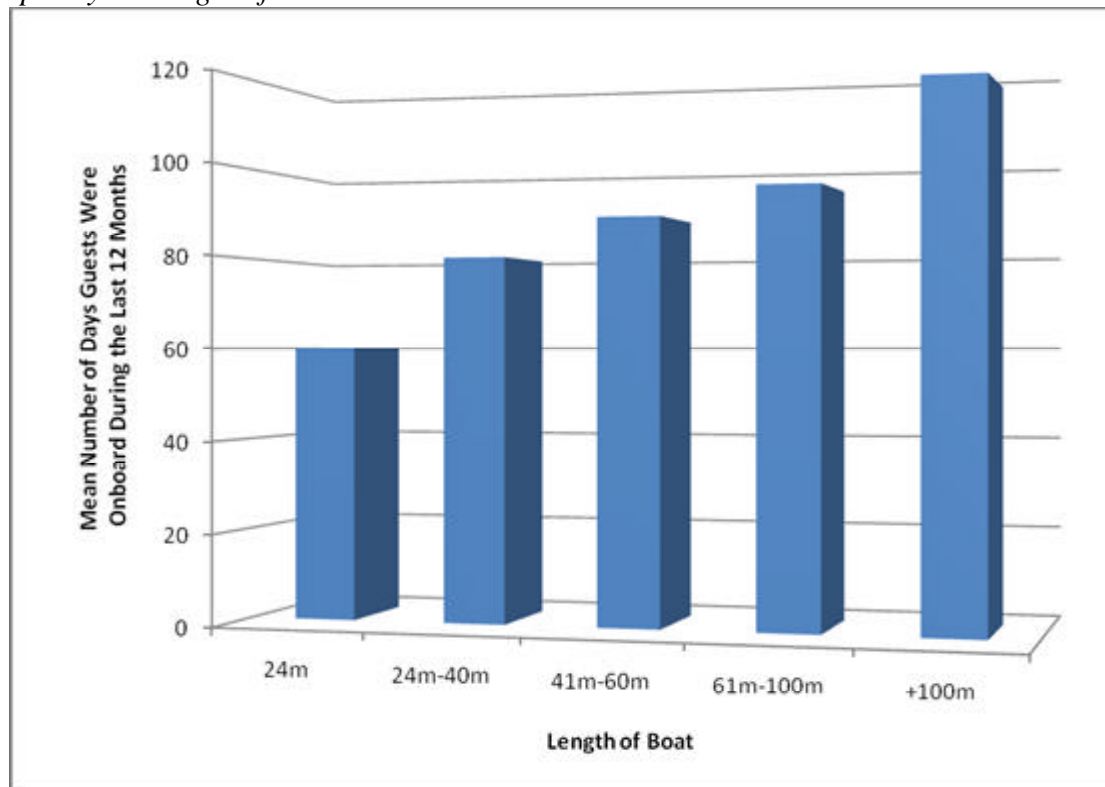
Figure 6: The percentage working shifts when there were guests and no guests onboard at sea split by rank



Those working on motorboats reported having guests onboard significantly more frequently (19.3 days) over the preceding 8 week period than sail boats (14.8 days), and larger boats were reported to spend fewer days in port. Likewise over the

preceding **12 months**, larger boats reportedly spent more time at sea, as did sail boats. Additionally sail boats and larger boats were more likely to put to sea in rough weather. Those on larger boats also reported having guests onboard significantly more frequently over the preceding 12 months than on smaller boats (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: The mean number of days guests were onboard during the last 12 months split by the length of boat



As would be expected the reported working patterns and hours of work of different groups of workers varied depending upon whether there were guests onboard and whether the boat was at sea or in port. Groups of workers appeared to be affected differently at different times. Likewise, how frequently the boat put to sea was seen to vary according to whether it was a sail, or motor, boat and its size.

Findings - living arrangements

Once again it is vital to take into account the skewed nature of the sample and the associated over-representation of senior ranks when interpreting the findings relating to living arrangements. Generally speaking, the higher up an employee gets in an organisational hierarchy the more access they are likely to have to better living (where supplied by employers) and working environments. Single, rather than shared, offices for management might be typical in a shore-based context and at sea in the Merchant Navy the equivalent lies in not only office space arrangements but also cabin and recreation spaces. This is also likely to be the case in the yacht sector and therefore statistically significant variations in responses are reported carefully.

General overview of cabin arrangements – whole sample

The majority of respondents (92%) lived and slept onboard boats and most (95%) worked on boats which were **not** engaged in 'day trips' returning to the same port every night. Despite the skewed nature of the sample most respondents shared a cabin (64%). Many of these (57%) shared with people of the same gender as themselves but many (43%) shared with people of the opposite gender. Of those who shared a cabin with someone of a different gender only 51% had any choice over sharing.

Of those respondents who shared a cabin over half (53%) objected to this at least 'sometimes'.

In terms of washing facilities, most respondents (85%) slept in cabins with en-suite bathrooms which were utilised by all cabin occupants. However, most respondents (58%) said that people of different gender shared communal facilities.

Respondents were asked to describe their cabin preferences. Inevitably the majority of respondents stated that their preference was to sleep in an en suite cabin (single en-suite was chosen as first choice by 79% of respondents to the relevant question and double en-suite was selected as a first choice for 27% of respondents answering the relevant question). In relation to the preference for a double en suite this may have been selected by some members of couples working together onboard and it may also have been selected by those who would have liked to have their 'own' double en suite cabin in which they could have slept alone or with others of their choice as the opportunity arose. Some care therefore needs to be taken in the interpretation of this finding.

In terms of their expressed second choices more respondents chose as a second preference a **single** cabin **without en-suite** facilities (40%) than a **double** cabin **with en-suite** facilities (35%). It appears therefore that single cabins took precedence over en suite facilities for many respondents.

The majority of respondents had access to natural light in their cabin (92%) and most (80%) felt that the lighting in their cabin was adequate. Most seafarers (96%) had a reading light in their cabin.

Storage space was regarded as adequate by the majority of respondents (59%), however, a significant minority (41%) felt that they did not have adequate storage space in their cabins.

Similarly many respondents were not satisfied with the noise levels in their cabins and 40% felt that noise was a problem. Of these 59% stated that this was 'all the time'. In contrast vibration was regarded as much less of a problem and most respondents (79%) did not feel that vibration was a problem in their cabin.

The majority of respondents (67%) felt that they were able to get adequate rest, however a significant minority (30%) felt that this was not the case and for approximately half of these (46%) this was a problem 'all of the time'. This does not contrast all that dramatically with the limited data that we have available from the merchant shipping sector. A 2006 study of fatigue amongst merchant seafarers also showed that the majority of respondents (58%) felt that they got enough sleep or more

than enough (Smith et al 2006). A more recent and on going piece of research currently being undertaken at the Seafarers International Research Centre, demonstrates that on analysis of 174 questionnaires returned to date by merchant seafarers, 34% of respondents feel they get sufficient sleep or more than sufficient sleep (Sampson et al internal report 2010).

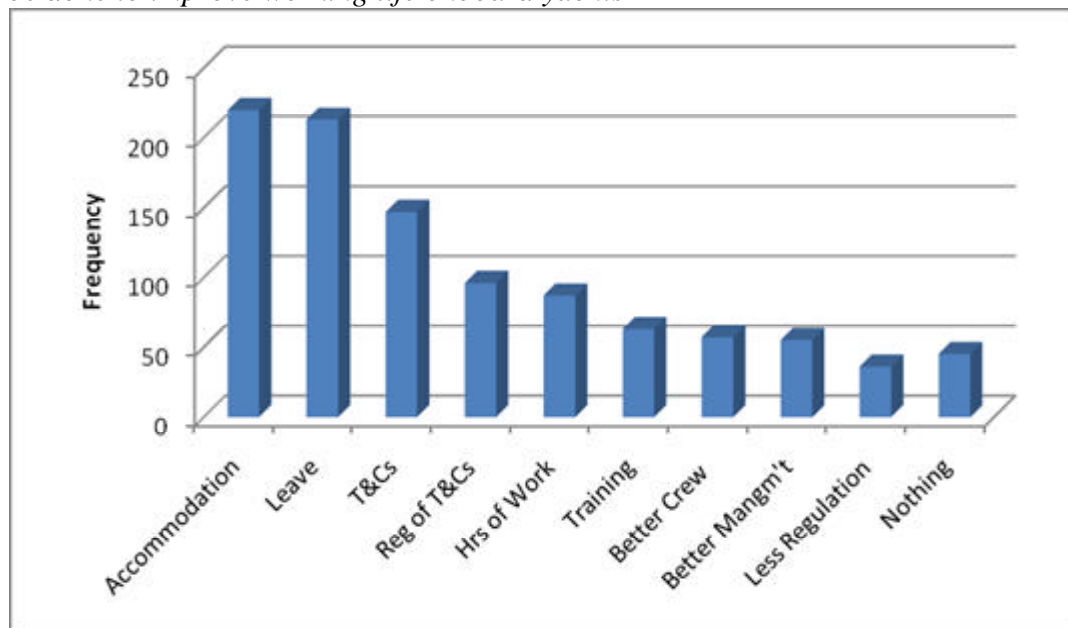
In relation to cabin furnishings most, but not all, respondents had access to a cupboard/wardrobe (95%) and drawers (88%). Fewer had access to a table and a comfortable chair for relaxing. There was an almost fifty: fifty split between those with a desk/table in their cabin (49%) and those without, and only (23%) had access to a comfortable chair. Generally space was regarded as a cause for objection by about a third of the sample although more respondents (48%) felt satisfied with the size of their cabin than dissatisfied (29%). In terms of the standard of cabins more respondents, the majority, (59%) felt satisfied with the standard than unsatisfied (21%). If we compare this to the limited (and somewhat dated) data available from the Merchant Navy, in an ITF/MORI survey of 'seafarer living conditions' a slightly higher percentage of merchant seafarers (66%) reported that they were satisfied with their accommodation (ITF, 1996:51).

A range of facilities including a TV (62%), a radio (62%), and an audio system (68%), were provided in some respondents' cabins. (32%) were fortunate in having access to all of these but by contrast (14%) of respondents did not have access to any of them. The majority of respondents (72%) had internet access provided in their cabin. However (8%) reported that they did not have access to either a TV, a radio, an audio system or internet access in their cabins.

It is important to note that of 887 respondents who answered the free text question 'What could be done to improve working life aboard yachts?' a quarter (25%) chose to mention accommodation. Furthermore, of the ten most frequently mentioned categories of response to this question 'accommodation' was the most frequently cited area where improvement was desired³ (see Figure 8).

³ For a fuller discussion of responses to this question and details of the categories in Figure 8 see page 29.

Figure 8: The 10 most frequently cited answers to the open question about what could be done to improve working life onboard yachts



Significant differences in cabin arrangements

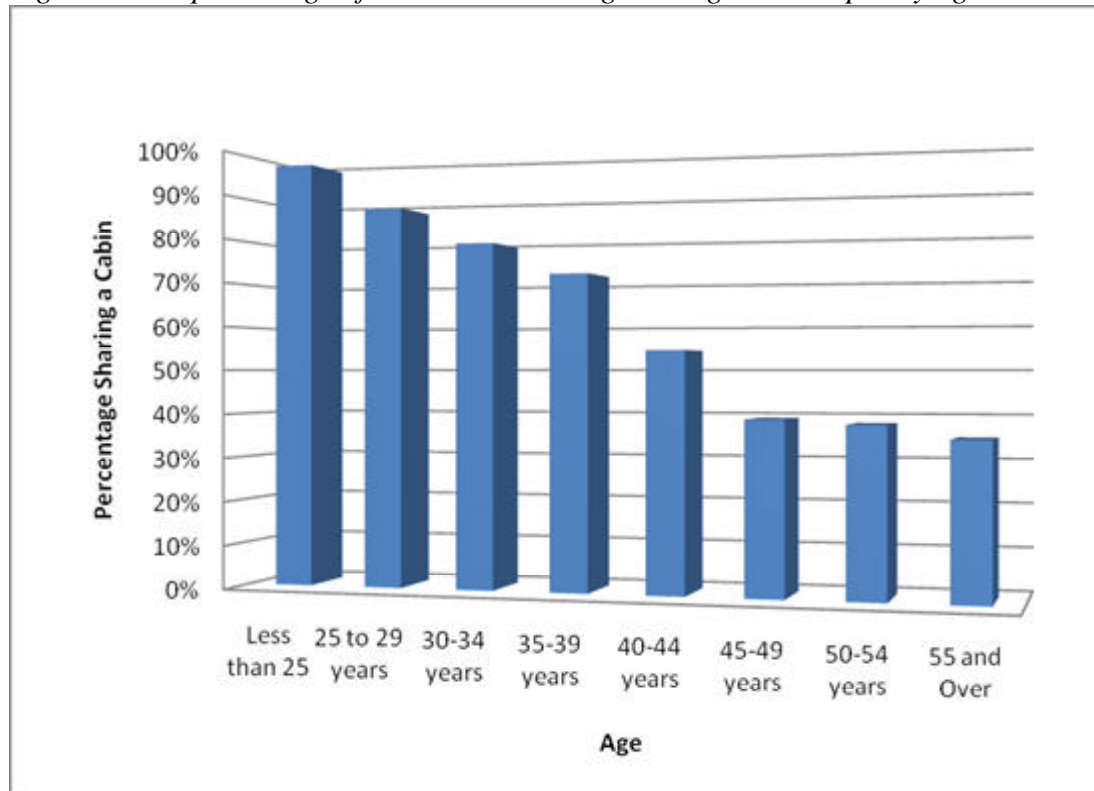
There were a number of statistically significant differences found in the responses to questions about living arrangements. Given the way in which the sample is skewed towards senior ranks, and Captains in particular, these need to be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

Whilst the majority of respondents lived and slept aboard, Captains, those who worked on motor boats, those who worked on smaller boats, and those who had been longer in the yachting sector were less likely to do so than others.

In terms of sharing a cabin rank was again important and Captains were much less likely to share a cabin than chief engineers and lower ranks. Only 40% of Captains shared a cabin, whilst 64% of chief engineers, 81% of other officers, 93% of ratings and 88% of the hospitality staff responding to the questionnaire did so. This means that the general pattern presented by the overall data for cabin sharing is likely to give the impression that more workers in the sector have access to a single cabin than is the reality.

More surprisingly perhaps the data demonstrate that more women (86%) than men (60%) shared a cabin. More predictably younger people were also more likely to share cabins, with 98% of under-twenty fives and 87% of 25-29 year-olds sharing, as compared to 39% of 45-49 year-olds tapering off to 35% of people over 55 (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: The percentage of workers indicating sharing a cabin split by age



The type of boat was also statistically significant in relation to whether people shared cabins or not with more on sail boats sharing a cabin (73%) than on motor boats (61%).

Where people shared, chief engineers (71%), officers (73%) and ratings (86%) tended to share with people of the same gender as themselves. Captains (27%) and those working in hospitality (51%) were less likely to share with people of the same gender. It is not possible to determine whether or not this reflects a tendency to work with partners onboard or to be allowed to sail with partners.

Males (61%) were more likely than females (43%) to share with people of the same gender and younger people were more likely than older people to share with people of the same gender. Similarly people who had worked longest in yachting were least likely to share with people of the same gender (see Figure 10). This could indicate that older people may be sailing with partners (see Figure 11).

Figure 10: The percentage of workers sharing a cabin with others of the same gender split by years at sea

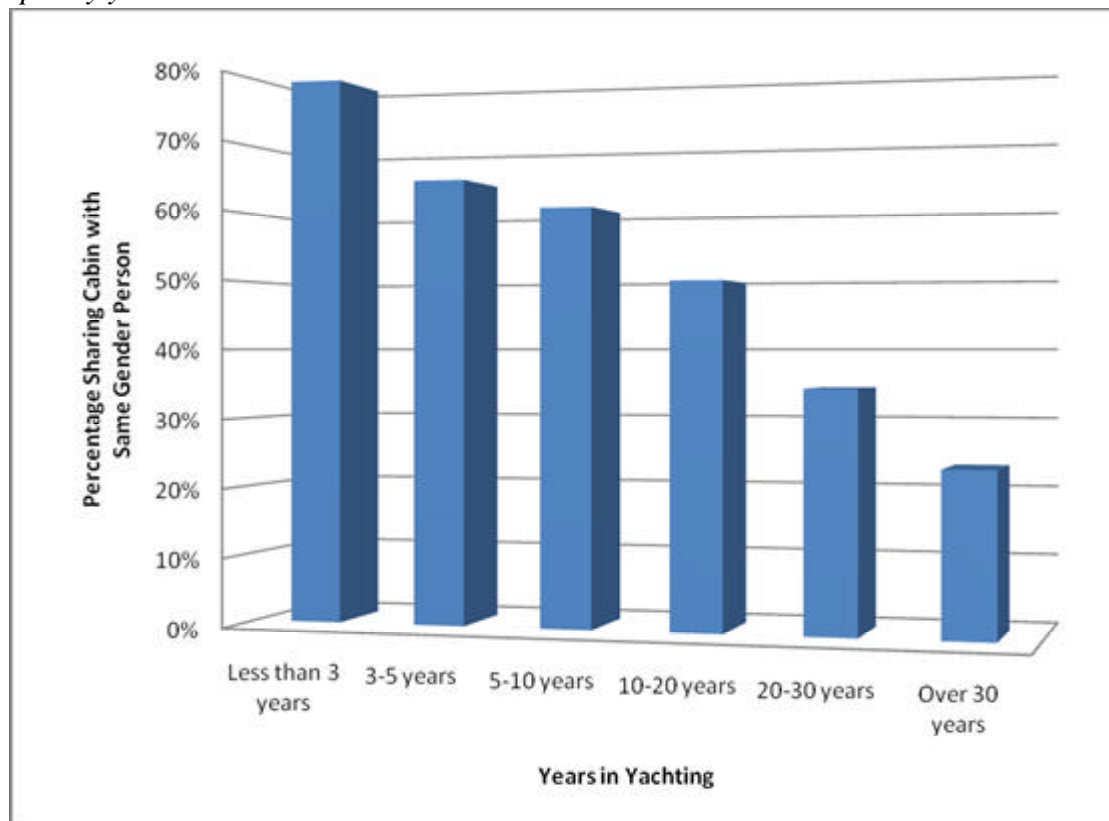
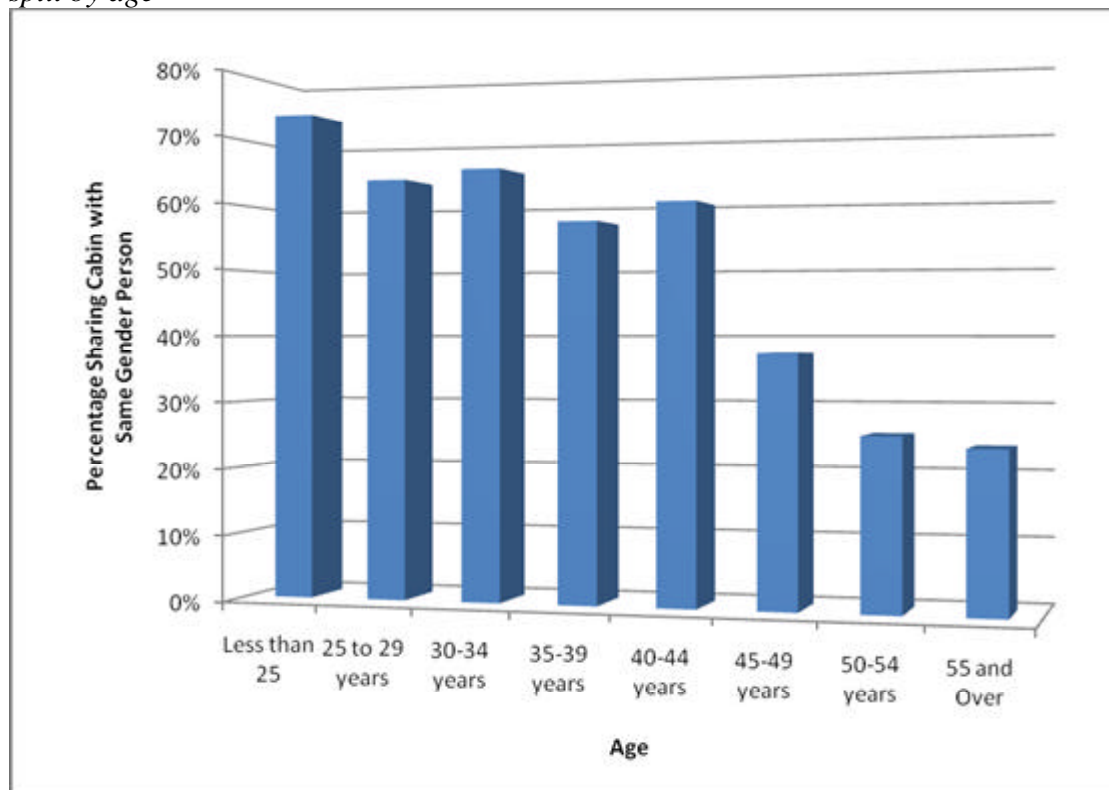
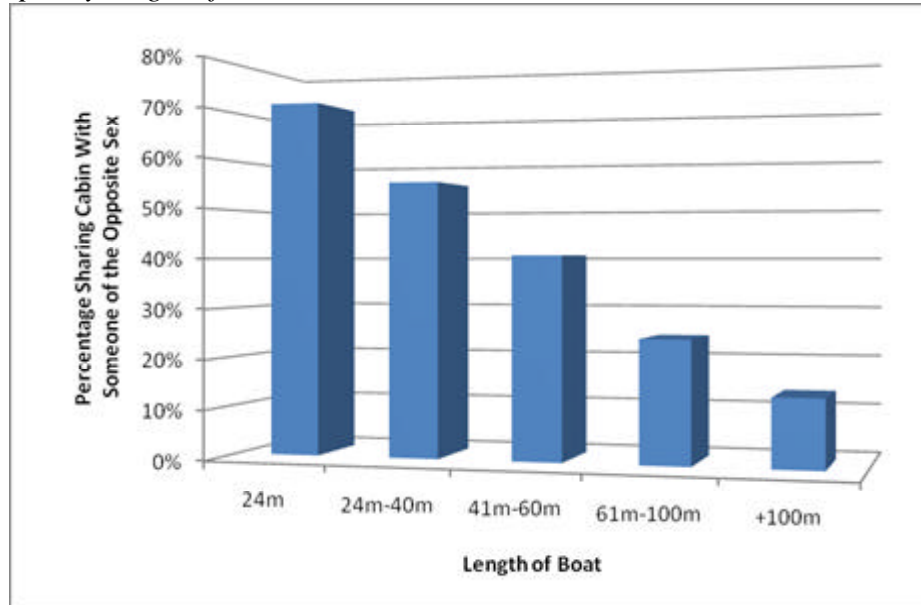


Figure 11: The percentage of workers sharing a cabin with others of the same gender split by age



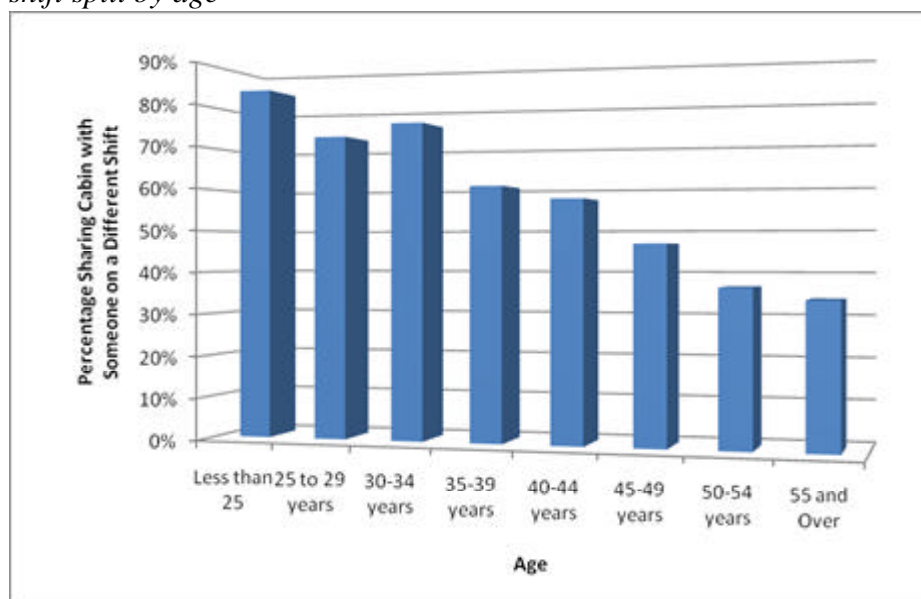
In terms of boat length people were more likely to be sharing with others of the opposite sex if they worked on smaller boats (see Figure 12). People on bigger boats were more likely to be sharing with people of the same sex.

Figure 12: The percentage of workers sharing a cabin with others of the opposite sex split by length of boat



In relation to rotas and sharing a cabin Captains (41%) and Chief engineers (62%) were less likely than others to be working a different rota from the person they were sharing with (officers 76%, ratings 86%, hospitality 68%). Older people were less likely to share a cabin with someone working a different shift than younger people (see Figure 13). People working on small boats were less likely to be sharing a cabin with people working a different rota than people on larger boats.

Figure 13: The percentage of workers sharing a cabin with someone on a different shift split by age



Captains (46%) were the least likely to mind sharing a cabin and chief engineers (68%) the most likely to mind sharing a cabin, as the following comment indicates.

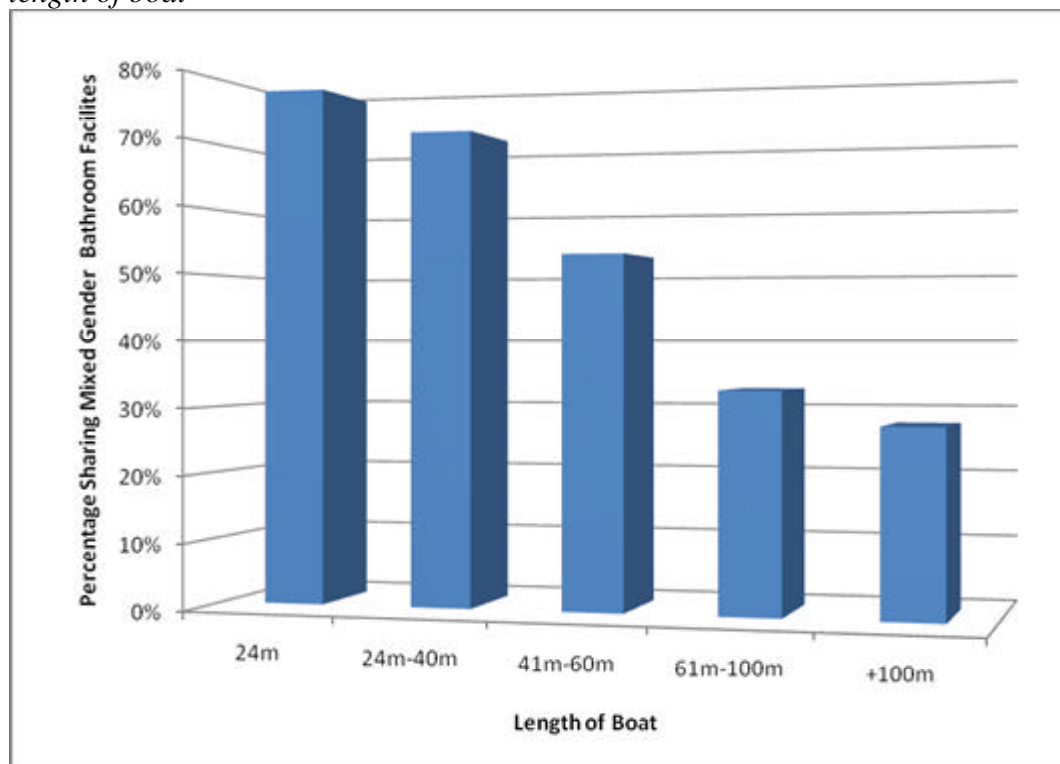
If I had my own cabin (like the Captain) then I would have been tempted to remain in the industry. Unfortunately, the status of the Chief Engineer is far below that of the Captain and I believe that this issue should also be addressed. # 1216

Officers (54%), ratings (52%) and hospitality staff (51%) were all split roughly fifty: fifty in terms of objecting to sharing a cabin all or some of the time. The only other significant difference identified, was between workers aboard sail boats and workers aboard motor boats. Aboard sail boats sharing appeared to be better accepted with only 40% of respondents who shared a cabin objecting to this. In contrast aboard motor boats the Figure was 55%.

People working on sail boats (70% of all those on sail boats) were less likely than others to have an en suite cabin.

People aboard motor boats (54%) were less likely to say that people of different genders shared communal bathroom facilities than people working on sail boats (69%). People working on larger boats were less likely to say that people of different genders shared the same bathroom facilities (see Figure 14).

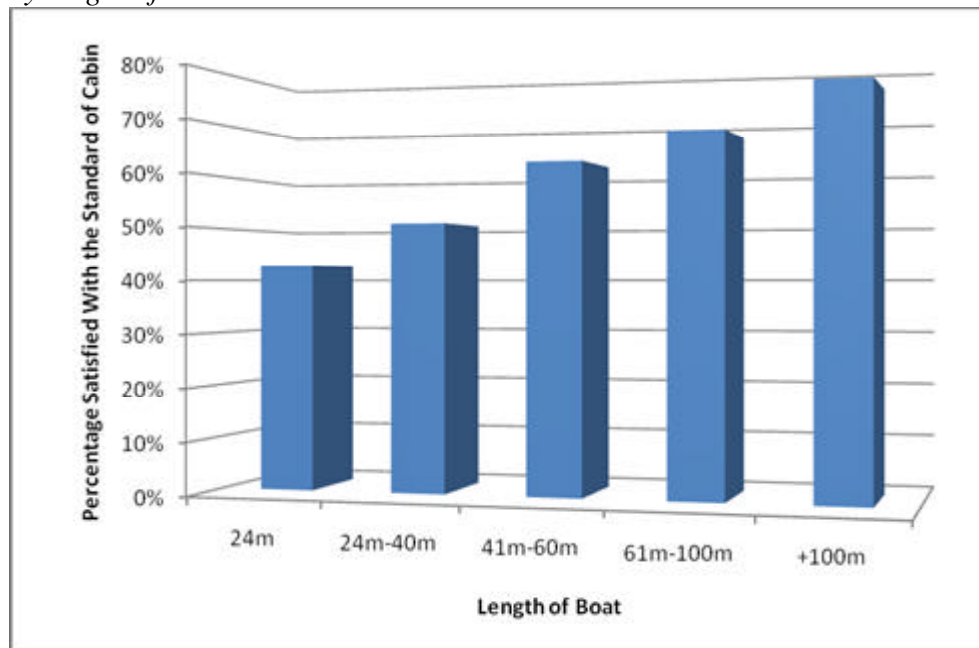
Figure 14: The percentage of workers sharing mixed gender bathroom facilities by length of boat



Captains, ratings, and those who worked aboard motor boats tended to be more satisfied than others with the size of their cabins. Those who worked on larger boats were also more likely to be satisfied with the size of their cabin (see Figure 15). In

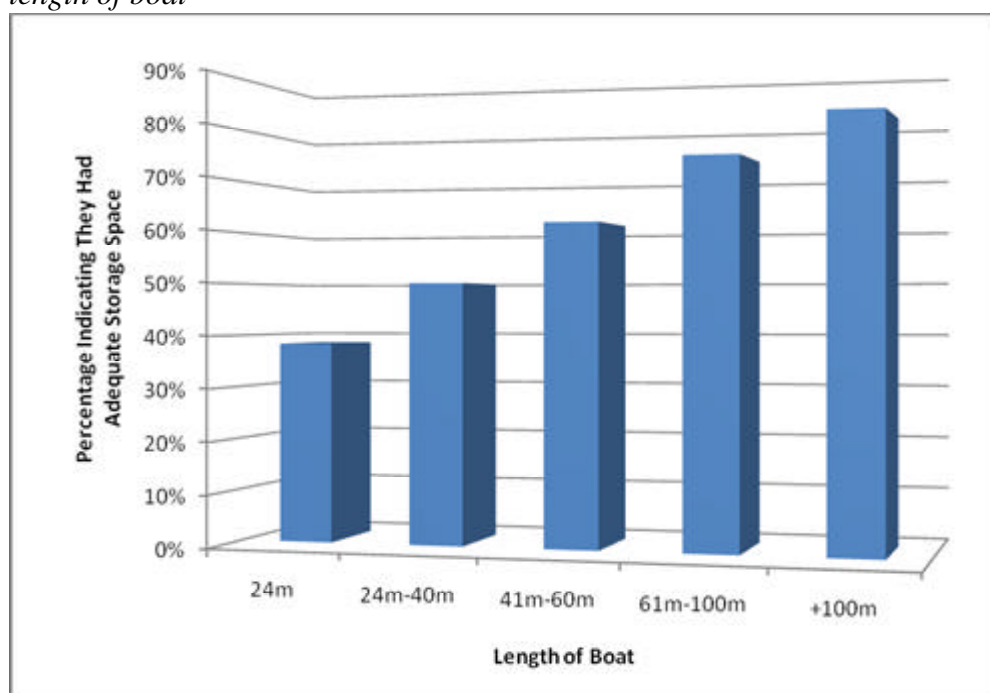
terms of the standard of cabins there were statistically significant differences between those who worked aboard motor and sail boats and those who worked on different sizes of boat. More respondents aboard motor boats were satisfied with the standard of their cabins than respondents working on sail boats, and those on larger boats were more satisfied than those on smaller boats.

Figure 15: The percentage of workers satisfied with the standard of their cabin split by length of boat



Captains, men, people on motor boats, and people on bigger boats, were more likely to feel that they had adequate storage space than others (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: The percentage indicating that they had adequate storage space split by length of boat



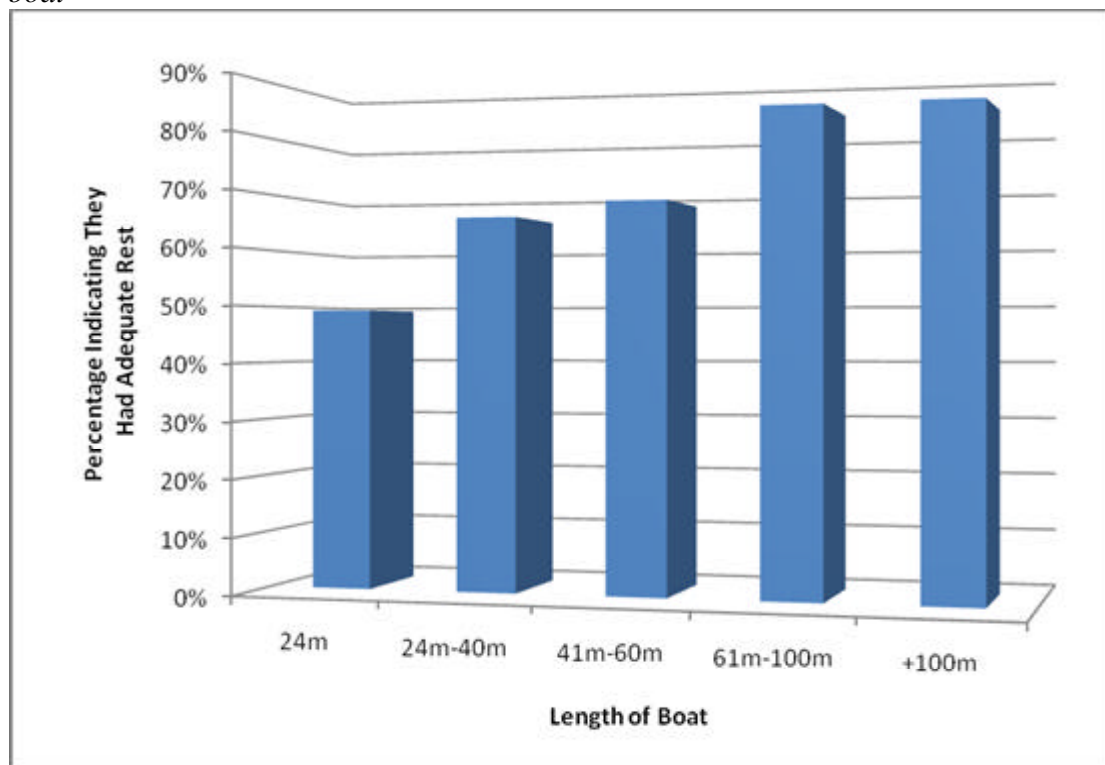
Men, Captains, and those who had worked longest in yachting, were most likely to suggest that lighting in their cabins was adequate.

Those who worked in hospitality, women, and those working on motor boats were more likely to report that noise was a problem in their cabins than others.

Ratings, those who worked in hospitality, and women, were more likely than others to report that vibration was a problem in their cabins.

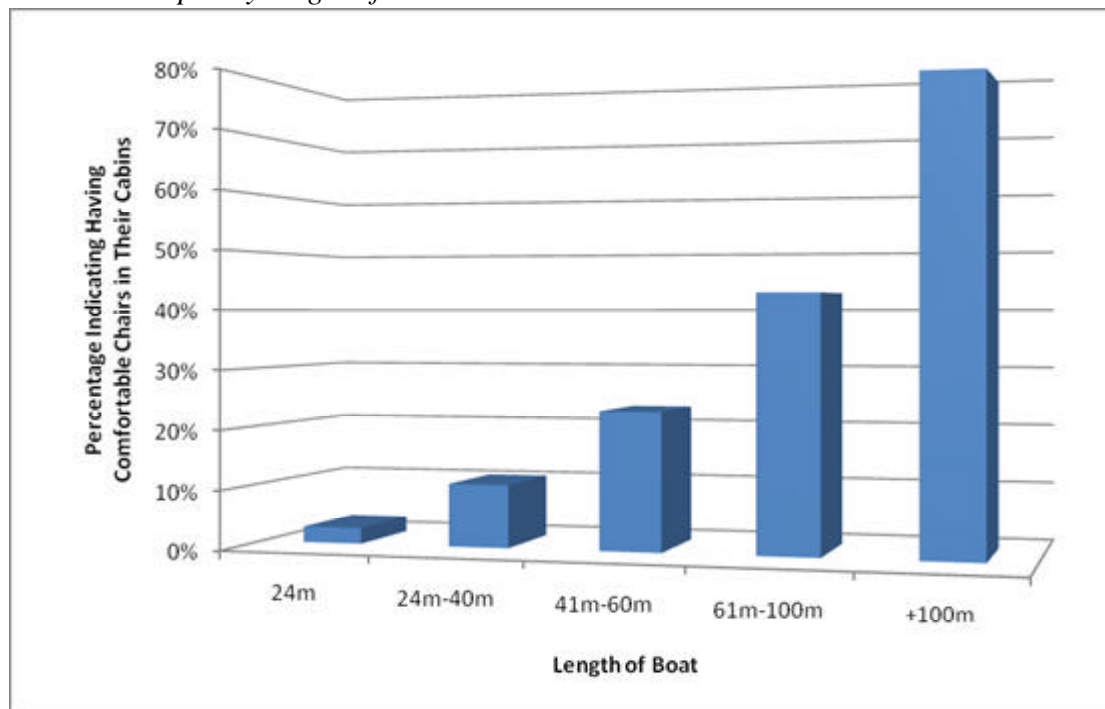
Women, chief engineers and respondents in hospitality were least likely to report that they got adequate rest. The size of the boat also had a strong impact on reports of adequate rest. Far fewer respondents on smaller boats reported getting adequate rest than aboard larger boats (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: The percentage indicating that they got adequate rest split by length of boat



Men (25%), Captains (28%), those who had been in yachting longest (40% of those who had been in yachting for 30 years or more), people working aboard motor boats (25%) and people working aboard bigger boats (see Figure 18) were more likely to have a comfortable chair in their cabins.

Figure 18: The percentage of workers indicating that they had wcomfortable chairs in their cabins split by length of boat



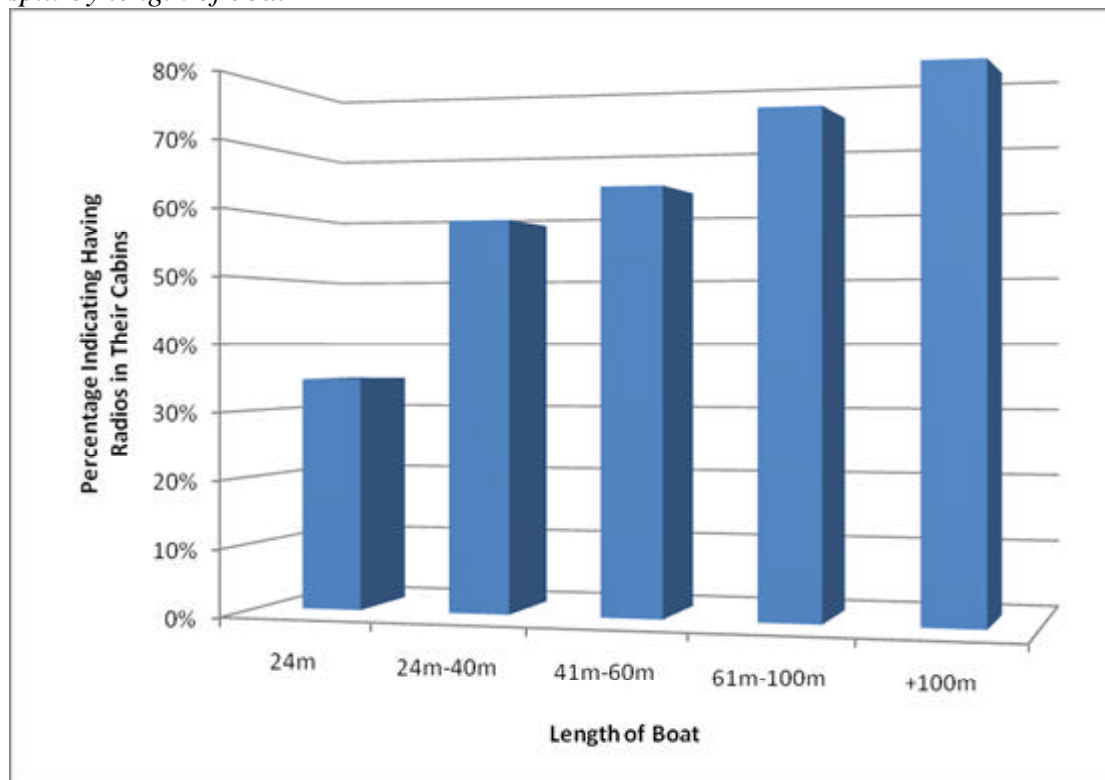
Captains (55%), men (51%), older people, people who had worked in the sector longest, people working aboard motor boats (52%), and people working aboard bigger boats were more likely to have a table/desk in their cabins than others.

People working aboard vessels of less than 24m were much less likely than others to have drawers in their cabin (only 60% had drawers compared with a total of 88% for the whole sample).

Captains (71%), men (63%), middle-aged (40-49 year-olds) people on motor boats (66%), and people working on bigger boats were all more likely to have a TV in their cabins.

Men (64%) people aboard motor boats (65%) and people aboard larger boats, were more likely to have access to a radio in their cabin (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: The percentage of workers indicating that they had radios in their cabins split by length of boat



Men (69%), those on motor boats (71%), and those on bigger boats were more likely than others to have an audio system in their cabins.

Whilst there were no significant differences between rank and access to the internet in cabins, people aboard motor boats and people on bigger boats were more likely than others to have internet access in their cabins.

Overall, it was apparent that rank was a strongly significant factor with regard to differences in responses between groups of people working in the yacht sector. Captains tended to have better facilities in relation to their living accommodation than others and were generally more satisfied with them. The skewed nature of the sample which includes a high number of captains means therefore that satisfaction with living accommodation is likely to appear higher than is likely to be the case across the sector as a whole. Similarly the facilities currently provided in cabins across the sector are unlikely to be as good as they appear to be on the basis of these data.

Other than rank a number of other factors were strongly influential in patterning the responses. Amongst these were gender and years in yachting.

The length of boat that people were working on and whether or not it was a motor boat also strongly influenced the results. Overwhelmingly those aboard smaller boats and those working on sail boats had access to fewer facilities in their cabins.

General overview of communal living arrangements

The majority of respondents (90%) had access to a mess room onboard and within this most had access to a table/chairs for dining (98%), a television (96%), hot drink facilities (95%), fridge (96%), and drinking water (97%). However, only 50% of respondents with access to a mess room reported that the mess room had comfortable chairs for relaxing. A number of individuals commented on this when asked what could be done to improve the yachting sector, as the following examples illustrate:

I would like to have a full size crew-mess where the 6 of us can sit and talk together and not a transformable laundry room into a crew-mess. (#1278, Cpt.)

Better mess with more relaxing seating (#63, Cpt.)

The majority of respondents (71%) worked aboard vessels where smoking onboard was prohibited. Where it was allowed 78% of respondents described there being a separate smoking area onboard.

The majority of respondents (65%) were prohibited from drinking alcohol when guests were onboard. However, when there were no guests aboard most seafarers were allowed to drink alcohol and only 17% were not.

Whilst only 65% of respondents had unlimited internet access aboard, only 3% of respondents said that they had to pay for internet access. This may reflect some unanticipated restrictions (i.e. other than cost) placed on internet access such as time quotas or limited access to terminals. In total more than one in ten respondents (11%) said that they did not have any internet access at all onboard. Of those that had to pay for internet use the arrangements varied considerably, however the most common arrangement (n=14) was monthly payments and within this group there was also considerable variation in cost ranging from 10 – 300 Euros per month. The mean Figure was 74 Euros a month.

The majority of respondents (72%) did **not** have unlimited access to the ship's onboard phone and of these 43% said they did not even have limited access to the ship's phone. Of the respondents with access to the vessel's phone, 13% had to pay for it. Such access should be seen in the context of the irregular availability of a signal for mobile telephones and in every month respondents estimated that they were without a signal for around 20% of their time i.e. six days in every month. Respondents who had to pay for the phone either tended to pay per minute or per month. The mean cost per minute was 87 cents, while per month it was 76.2 Euros.

When off duty the majority of respondents stated that they had access to: a computer terminal (63%); a music system (85%); internet/wifi (88%); games (64%); DVD library (87%); book library (64%).

By comparison, an ITF Seafarers' Trust survey of port based welfare facilities for seafarers, reported that only 16% of seafarers in the Merchant Navy had access to onboard email facilities (Kahveci: 2008: 28). Although a smaller study undertaken by Shiptalk (2008) reported that 38% of respondents had access to the internet and 62% to email, the higher response rates may reflect the fact that, within the sample senior

officers from OECD countries were over-represented. The same survey reported that 60% of respondents had access to a DVD library and 42% to a book library (Shiptalk, 2008b:18).

Additionally, some respondents had permission to use some owner-owned facilities when there weren't any guests onboard: a car (43%); scooter (14%); jet ski (36%); a tender (71%); games room (19%); sports equipment (56%).

Onboard just half of the boats where respondents worked there was not a dedicated budget for crew welfare. Most respondents (52%) stated that there was not a budget available for onboard crew social/recreational activities. This Figure coincides closely with the situation in the Merchant Navy. Kahveci (2007:45) reported that 51% of respondents indicated that there was no regular budget for recreational facilities.

A lack of onboard recreational facilities had been experienced in general by most respondents while working on yachts (80%). Many had experienced a lack of onboard recreational facilities only 'occasionally' however, approximately 46% of respondents had experienced a lack of onboard facilities either often (22%), very often (15%), or always (10%).

Food appeared to be regarded as satisfactory by the majority of respondents. Most (92%) felt there was a good variety of food onboard and many (80%) always had access to free soft drinks onboard. The majority of respondents (65%) also stated that their dietary needs were catered for onboard. The responses to food compare well when set against those of merchant seafarers in the (1996) ITF /MORI survey where just two thirds (66%) of seafarers were satisfied with the food onboard⁴.

Significant differences in communal living arrangements

There were a number of statistically significant differences relating to communal living arrangements, these related mostly to type and size of boat.

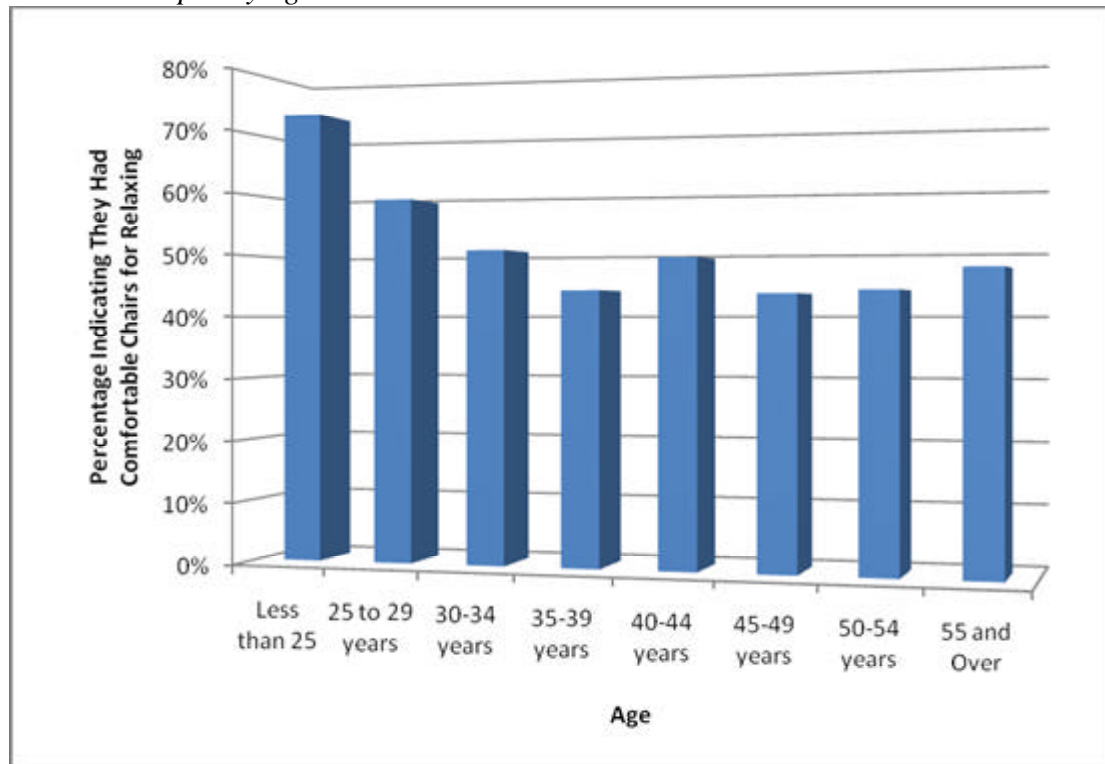
Fewer of those working on sail boats (84%) had access to a mess room than those on motorboats (92%). Likewise only a third (33.3%) of those on the smallest boats (less than 24m) had access to a mess room as compared to more than 84% of those on boats 24m and above. Fewer women (93%) reported having access to a table and chairs than men (99%).

Those on motorboats (52%) and those on larger boats were more likely to have comfortable seating in the mess room. While only a third (32%) of those on boats less than 24m had comfortable seating in the mess room, more than three quarters (79%) reported having such facilities on boats of 61-100m. Unexpectedly there were significant differences reported by age. Older respondents were less likely to report that they had comfortable seating in the mess. Of the youngest group of respondents (under 25 years of age) 73% reported having comfortable seating, whereas for those 35 years or over less than 50% in each age group reported having access to

⁴ NB This research is 16 years-old and cannot be considered a reliable indication of the present day situation in the Merchant Navy.

comfortable seating. This may reflect the subjective experience of what counts as comfortable (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: The percentage of workers indicating that they had comfortable chairs in their cabins split by age



There were significant differences in terms of the provision of televisions in mess rooms. 97% of respondents working on motorboats reported that they had a TV in the mess compared to 88% of those on sail boats. Those on motor boats (97%) and larger boats were more likely to have drinking water in the mess than others.

Smoking policy varied according to size of vessel. Smoking was allowed least on vessels 41-60m (22%). Respondents on both smaller (e.g. less than 24m = 31%) and larger vessels (e.g. +100m = 60%) reported more frequently that smoking was allowed on their boat.

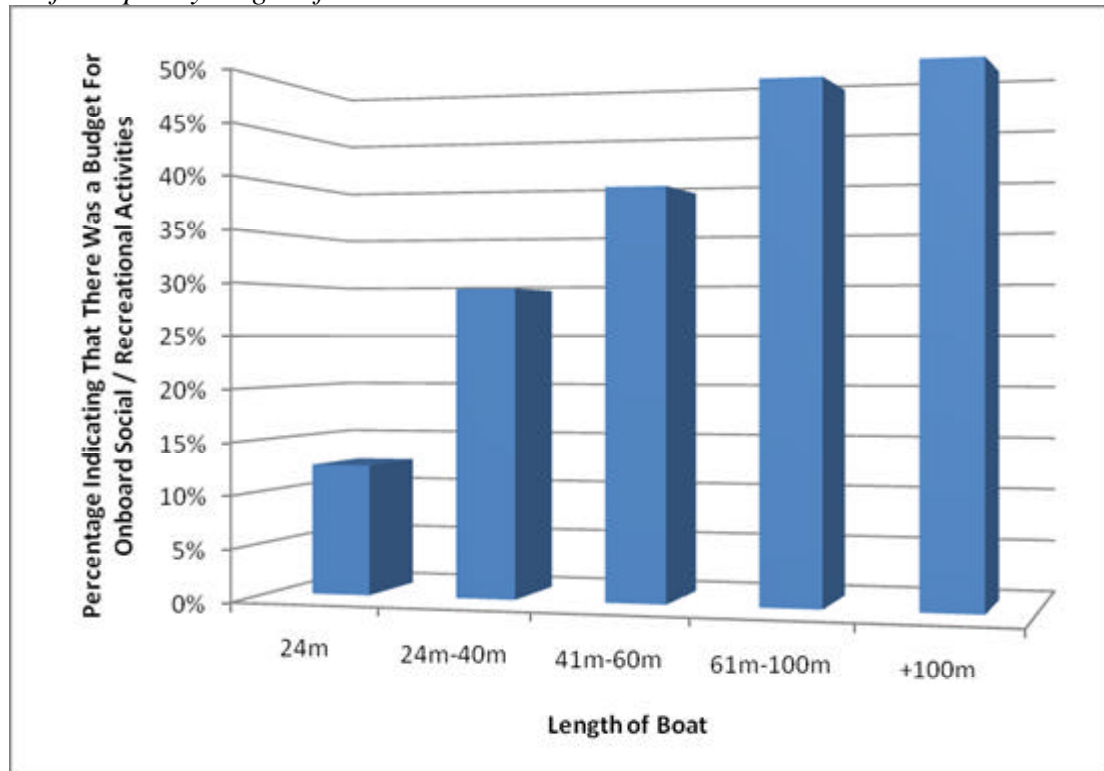
Drinking alcohol onboard was allowed more often on sail boats, both when guests were onboard (51%) and when not (92%), than motor boats (with guests 31% and without 82%). When there were no guests onboard, 80-88% of respondents were allowed to drink alcohol onboard with those on larger boats more likely to be allowed than those on smaller boats. The notable exception was those on boats larger than 100m where drinking was less frequently allowed (40%).

Captains (40%) were most likely, and hospitality workers (16%) least likely, to have unlimited access to a ship's phone. Likewise men (30%) were more likely to have access than women (18%). By comparison differences in access to the internet/wifi related to type and size of boat. Those on motor boats and larger boats tended to be more likely to have unlimited internet access. Respondents on larger boats were also more likely to have access to a computer, music system, games, DVDs, and books as

compared to those on smaller boats, except that those on boats longer than 100m often fared less well than those on boats 40-100m in length.

Captains, men and more experienced workers were more likely than other groups of workers to have access to an owner-owned car or scooter, and to sports equipment. Those on motorboats were more likely to have access to a tender and jet ski than those on sail boats. There was more likely to be a dedicated budget for crew welfare provided on larger boats (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: The percentage of workers indicating that there was a budget for crew welfare split by length of boat



In terms of the provision of communal facilities it is clear that type and length of boat are key determinants, with motor boats and larger vessels generally having better provision. Moreover captains and men tend to fare better than women and those in lower ranks.

General overview of problems onboard

The disadvantages or problems that the majority of respondents experienced onboard, at least occasionally, included lack of privacy and lack of space. Lack of privacy was only described as **never** having been experienced by a small number of respondents (7%). In terms of lack of space slightly more people (9%) described never having experienced it onboard.

There were relatively high levels of bullying and harassment experienced by respondents in the sector⁵. This result may be regarded as surprising given that people may be reluctant to admit to being victims of such behaviour even to themselves. While many respondents (61%) had not experienced bullying/harassment onboard at any time a high proportion (30%) reported occasionally having experienced it and approximately ten percent of respondents had experienced bullying/harassment either often (6%), very often (3%), or always (1%). A number of comments made in free text format supported the quantitative findings in this area and gave some indication of the kinds of problems which crew members had to deal with. The following quote from a chef is offered for illustrative purposes:

Working contracts in this industry are a joke and are not worth the paper they are written on. Some more formalised industrial relations could help this. There is almost no job security in the industry due to this. Also, I think there are a lot of captains who may well be able to drive a boat, but have no concept of the fact that what they are doing is (in fact) running a small boutique hotel, and also have no concept of 'management' of either crew or the vessel. Having completed tickets myself, I know that the technical aspects of operating a vessel are covered, but no where is management skills of both the vessel, crew or owners covered. This should be an obligatory aspect of becoming a captain.
#407

There is little data in this area for the Merchant Navy, however in the rather out of date 1996 ITF /MORI survey (12%) of seafarers reported suffering physical abuse from officers, (9%) physical abuse from others and (18%) suffered mental abuse from anyone (ITF, 1996: 61)⁶. A qualitative study of the very small numbers of women seafarers in the Merchant Navy reported that harassment especially sexual harassment was a feature of their lives (ILO, 2003)⁷.

Discrimination was also reported on the grounds of gender/race/sexual orientation etc. Many respondents (68%) had not experienced discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, or sexual orientation etc. However, 21% described having experienced it 'occasionally' and approximately eleven percent of respondents had experienced such discrimination either often (6%), very often (3%), or always (2%). This compares to the Merchant Navy where fourteen years ago (24%) reported unfair treatment because of race, nationality, and (8%) because of religion (ITF, 1996: 61).

Significant differences in the experience of problems onboard

A greater percentage of women (98%) reported experiencing a lack of privacy as compared to men (92%). Those on smaller boats and workers that had been in the industry longer were also significantly more likely to report having experienced a lack of privacy.

⁵ In a study for the UK Government in 2008 (Fevre, et al 2009) 7% of respondents reported harassment, 1% reported sexual harassment and 7% reported discrimination <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52809.pdf>

⁶ NB these figures cannot be aggregated to give a total response rate for harassment as some respondents are likely to have reported two, or all three, forms of bullying.

⁷ It is relevant to note however that in this same study there were no reported cases of women being required to share cabins with members of the opposite sex.

There were significant differences between groups of workers in terms of their experience of lack of space. Officers were most likely to have experienced a lack of space (95%) while ratings were the least likely (84%). Perhaps not surprisingly more of those on smaller boats tended to report experiencing a lack of space than those on larger boats.

Those in hospitality (59%) and ratings (59%) were most likely to report having experienced bullying/harassment, whereas captains experienced the least (27%). Women were also significantly more likely to have experienced harassment (66%) than men (35%), and younger people than older. The same groups, hospitality workers, women and young people, were similarly more likely to have experienced discrimination.

There were statistically significant differences in the extent to which different groups of workers have experienced problems. Women were more likely to experience lack of privacy, harassment and discrimination than men. Those in lower ranking positions and young people were also more likely to have experienced harassment and discrimination. While workers on smaller boats, were more likely to have experienced a lack of space and privacy than those on larger boats.

Findings access/use of shore-based facilities

In port with guests onboard 58% of respondents reported that they were able to get ashore at least weekly. Of these 15% were able to go ashore several times a week, 37% daily and 9% several times a day. Of the remaining 42%, 24% were able to get ashore but less than weekly, and 18% could not get off while guests were onboard.

When no guests were onboard 99% of respondents were able to get ashore at least weekly. With 88% of these being able to get ashore daily and 39% of those several times a day. Just 2% of respondents were able to get off less often than weekly.

Generally those able to get ashore when guests were onboard could do so for a period of between one and six hours. When guests were not onboard (which was for approximately two thirds of the time over the previous two months) almost all respondents could get ashore and two thirds suggested that they could stay ashore in these circumstances for more than six hours.

This contrasts sharply with the situation in the Merchant Navy, as Kahveci (2007) reported 64% of seafarers surveyed had no shore leave in the previous eight weeks. Kahveci further reported that shore leave tended to last about two hours and seafarers tended to stay in the port area. From his interviews with seafarers it was further reported that “ their main priority was to make a phone call to their families and friends and their shore leave did not extend beyond the phone box either in the port area or the seafarers centre” (Kahveci 2008:33).

In port most respondents (96%) were able to eat onboard if they wished to and most (85%) tended to do so. Generally respondents (78%) were not given a dedicated food allowance when ashore making eating onboard the most economic option.

Access to shore-side facilities is likely to depend on the ports most regularly visited by yachts and particularly their ‘home’ port. In the questionnaire respondents were therefore asked which facilities they had access to and then a separate question about which facilities they used. The results suggested that respondents had access to the following facilities ashore: Gymnasium (51%); swimming pool (45%); sports club (41%); clubs/association (39%); internet café (66%); cafes/bars (83%); restaurants (84%); cinema/theatre (64%).

Of those respondents who reported having access to the above mentioned shore-based facilities the following percentages also reported frequently or occasionally using them as follows: gymnasium (70%); swimming pool (71%); sports clubs (61%); clubs/associations (53%); internet café (60%); cafes/bars (98%); restaurants (98%); cinema/theatre (90%). By comparison Kahveci (2007) reports that merchant seafarers when able to get ashore find themselves restricted within a large industrial port complex and were primarily concerned to use the opportunity to communicate with their families by buying cheap phone cards or using internet facilities.

A sizeable minority of respondents (13%) felt that there were facilities that they would like to have access to ashore which they didn’t have access to.

Perceived benefits of working on yachts

In a free text ‘open question’ respondents were asked about the attraction of working in the yachting sector. Respondents did not just cite extrinsic motivational factors in relation to working on yachts (such as monetary reward) they also cited a range of factors associated with job satisfaction. Monetary reward was noted as an attraction by 495 respondents and travel by 463. These comments were often made in combination. Three hundred and fifty respondents referred to the work itself (i.e. being part of a team, providing a high quality service, job satisfaction, career opportunities, etc). While 219 respondents stated that the working environment, i.e. working outdoors, at sea or on boats was the attraction of working in the sector and this was often expressed in terms of a ‘love of’ or ‘passion for’ these features of the job, as the following comments illustrate;

I love the sea...the camaraderie along with the special places we visit on magnificent vessels makes it a great lifestyle (#296, Cpt.)

It made sense to make a career out of something I am very passionate about even though I came to it very late in life compared to some people. I love the travel and the ocean. (#1180, Chef)

There is nothing else out there that comes close. Travel, interesting places, out-going people and I love boats (#482, Chief Engineer)

As the above comments show a range of other responses were given typically in mixed combinations and included references to: the people (n=187) you meet, work for, or with, and the lifestyle (n=149). Smaller numbers also referred to: the opportunity to go sailing (n=37), freedom (36), leave or being on rotation (n=13),

being able to work with their partners (n=11) and to recreational facilities / activities (n=9).

In comparing their terms and conditions with others the majority of respondents (67%) suggested that salaries were better than average. Overall terms and conditions were seen to compare well with others by a smaller proportion of the respondents (44%) and training opportunities were only seen as better than average by 38% of respondents. Similarly job opportunities were seen as better than average by just over a half of respondents (51%) and less than half (43%) felt that the sector offered better than average opportunities to change jobs.

In contrast there was widespread agreement amongst the majority of respondents that many of the other aspects of working on yachts were more positive. Camaraderie, and the social life associated with working on yachts was described by nearly three quarters of respondents (71%) as better than average. A similar proportion (72%) felt that job satisfaction was better than average for people working aboard yachts. Most respondents (69%) rated the lifestyle working aboard yachts as better than average and the majority (74%) also felt that their job gave them better than average opportunities to visit interesting places.

Desired improvements

887 respondents elected to make comments when given the option to suggest improvements for those working aboard yachts. Improved accommodation (n=220) and leave / rotation (n=213) were the two most frequently mentioned areas that improvements could be made. These were followed by improved terms and conditions (n=147), such as social security benefits or pension provision, and the desire to see contracts and employment practices standardised and regulated (n=96). There was also a desire to see hours of work reduced and regulated, especially when guests were onboard (n=87). Training was also raised as an area that could be improved, in terms of funding and time off to undertake courses (n=63). Other issues that were raised were the desire to see better trained and more committed crew (n=57) and in parallel better management (n=55), it was especially felt that many captains lack adequate skills and training in human resource management. A small number (n=36) thought there was too much regulatory interference in the sector and that any regulation should be sector specific, while a number of individuals took the time to indicate that they thought the industry was fine as it is.

In terms of accommodation the majority of those who made a comment simply stated that they would like to see better crew quarters, and a number suggested that yacht designers could benefit by drawing on the experience of those who work onboard. Others were more specific, stating that they would like more space both in terms of cabins and mess rooms, as the following examples indicate:

Better living!! Cabins so you can go and chill out on your own. Bigger crews mess as we cannot eat together (#76, Second Eng.)

Better crew accommodation with regards to cabin size, crew mess size and better crew areas (#452, Chief Eng.)

Having sufficient space where all the crew can congregate to eat and socialise together was specifically mentioned several times as the following examples show.

Larger more comfortable living area. Wherever possible, I think it would be good for crew to have a dining area and living/relaxing area separate. (#851 Cpt.)

Larger crew mess to accommodate the entire crew comfortably (#107, First Off.)

More crew space. Our crew mess/galley is not big enough for the 12 of us onboard to comfortably eat at the same time, and some of the crew cabins are disproportionately small. (#564, Chief Stew.)

As the above quote illustrates, as well as the communal areas, cabins were also frequently referred to. This tended to be in terms of a number of factors including: size, occupancy, noise, storage and beds.

I think for chief engineers and captains it's all right, but the crew accommodation for the rest isn't great. Not enough space and lack of privacy. The new rules may be a bit over the top, but considering our crew lives onboard 11 months a year, and we have guests onboard for maximum 2 months a year, it's not a bad idea to give crew more space. We travel a lot, so we're stuck on the boat quite often. (#196, Chief Eng.)

Crew quarters size increase and no 3 berth cabins, my last 2 yachts all new builds (2005 & 2009) both have permanent 3 berth cabins. (#1264, First Off.)

Privacy and noise were other issues mentioned, sometimes together, as the following comments illustrate:

Noise reduction between cabins. (#1410, Chief Eng.)

Sound proofing of cabins and bathrooms and the privacy that goes with the latter, smaller but single cabins no problem. (#292, Chef)

Better attention paid to sound proofing crew and officer accommodation. (#480, Cpt.)

Cabin occupancy was also an issue referred to by a number of individuals, especially the preference for single cabins:

I would rather have my own cabin with shared or private facilities than sharing a cabin with another crew member. (#1074, Deck hand)

Having a single cabin (privacy). (#1135, Stewardess)

Single cabins onboard, even if smaller. (#664, Second officer)

Others were more specific and suggested that there would be benefit in certain groups or workers having single cabins, namely officers, chief engineers and watch-keepers.

More single cabin availability for officers expected to carry out navigational watches. (#435, Second Off.)

Bigger crew accommodation, own cabins for watch keepers. (#887, First Off.)

Privacy and not sharing a cabin at 42 years old !! (#1016, Chief Eng.)

Officers, chief engineer, first mate, with their own cabin on over 40m . (#482, Chief Engineer)

More single occupancy cabins for officers – improvement of quality of rest. (#1291, ETO)

Single cabin for Chief Engineer. (#1410, Chief Engineer)

Non-shared cabins for officers (#800, Capt.)

A number of individuals commented that they would like more storage space and a small number specifically suggested that beds could be longer / wider, as the following remarks make clear.

Better accommodation for the junior crew members. We're in the Captains cabin which is fine, but the rest of the cabins do not have acceptable storage space at all and 2 out of 4 have no natural light (#1055, First Off.)

Cabin size/storage on average is pretty poor (I have been lucky to work on rubbish and excellent boats so I have seen the entire range to be able to fairly judge). (#106, First Off.)

Crew cabins ... no matter what boat I have been on, and I'm an officer, so for deck hands or junior crew it's just hell really, just no storage room and beds are just too ... small period. (#820, First Off.)

Crew accommodation. It seems often not important to owners/ boat builders to provide decent crew accommodation. I am talking about functionality, not style. For example, sleeping with your feet out of the porthole as the double bed is too short is not the way to keep crew. (#896, Chief Stew.)

[C]abins with a porthole, and bunks that don't feel like a coffin. (#537, Engineer)

Better sleeping facilities, wider bed with more headroom not in the bow of the yacht. (#716, First Officer)

The final comment below sums up a number of the points raised above.

[I]t would be nice to be able to have a good space to escape, to be able to store your belongings, write a letter or to actually sleep without hearing the crew mess. Although it is the owner's yacht, I feel that there is too much emphasis on their accommodations... The 2 forward cabins have NO portholes & we have 2x 3 berth cabins as well and the Captains Cabin is on the LOWER crew deck (so the owner can have more space) this jeopardizes the yacht's SAFETY (538, Head Chef)

Conclusion

Analysis of the questionnaire data has revealed a series of key insights into living and working conditions in the professional yachting sector. As noted at the beginning of the report given the predominance of senior officers (and notably Captains) in the sample the picture presented of conditions in this work sector is likely to appear to be more favourable than is more generally the case. This is critical when considering the overall results of the survey and when comparing these data with other information available on the Merchant Navy (which generally relies on more balanced sampling).

The situation presented by the collected data appears complex and varied. While it is apparent from the open responses made by participants that there is a high level of enthusiasm for the type of work and lifestyle which yachting entails, nonetheless there are some common areas where improvements are seen by crew members as desirable, and there are also significant difference in workers' experience. Specifically, these relate to the type and size of boat on which respondents are employed. Other key variables that appear to shape workers' experience are their gender, time in the industry and position onboard. In general, in relation to living accommodation and general terms and conditions those working onboard motor boats, larger boats, men, Captains, and those who have been in the sector longest, report more favourable conditions.

In evaluating and interpreting the data it is helpful to make comparisons with other seafarers within the Merchant Navy and the PYA, in commissioning this report, were keen that this should be undertaken. However, there are significant difficulties with this as the data are not matched in relation to timeframe, demographics, or methods. Comparative illustrations are therefore of a very tentative nature and it is recommended that little inference is ultimately drawn from them.

The majority of workers felt that their terms and conditions were better than average and when we considered against the very limited data available on conditions of work in the Merchant Navy, conditions in the yacht sector did not generally compare unfavourably. Thus, more seafarers in this sector appeared to be employed on a permanent basis, annual leave provision seemed to be better, and those who had their salaries paid in Euros may have been better paid. On the other hand more seafarers employed in the Merchant Navy appear to have pension contributions made by employers, and merchant seafarers paid in dollars seem to earn similar wages to those paid in dollars aboard yachts.

Hours of work varied for different groups of workers at different times, depending on whether in port, at sea and whether there were guests onboard. Typically with guests onboard all crew members worked long hours (14 hrs per day) as compared to hours worked by Merchant seafarers. Kahveci and Nichols (2006:115) record for instance that on the car carriers in their study, on average seafarers worked 77 hours per week, i.e. 11 hours per day. However in yachting there were also frequent periods where the boat was in port and hours of work reduced to an average of 8.6 hours a day.

Cabins were shared by the majority of the sample and just under half of respondents shared a cabin with a member of the opposite sex. Around half of the people in the sample objected to sharing a cabin and access to a single en-suite cabin was the preference expressed by most people. As a second choice more respondents wanted access to a single cabin with communal facilities than a double cabin with en suite facilities, indicating that a private cabin took precedence over private bathroom facilities for many people. More women than men, more younger people, and more people aboard sail boats, shared cabins.

Although workers reported that they could often get ashore for frequent respite when in port, seafarers may nevertheless spend a considerable amount of time onboard and the provision of suitable space for relaxation and rest are clearly important. In terms of crew accommodation, while the majority were satisfied with the standard of their cabins there was a greater level of dissatisfaction with the space available. The provision of space and communal facilities was clearly affected by the length and type of boat aboard on which respondents worked (with smaller vessels and sail boats tending to have poorer provision).

In terms of some other aspects of life and work, such as in relation to the prevalence of bullying and harassment, it is very important to recognise that some data available for comparison from the Merchant Navy is extremely old (one central report was written in 1996) and that conditions within the sector are very likely to have improved. In this context the picture presented by the responses to the questionnaire implies a more unfavourable comparison.

On the other hand, access to facilities and shore leave were generally viewed positively, with respondents reporting that at times when there were no guests onboard they could get ashore frequently for long periods and often in locations where there were many social and recreational facilities to be taken advantage of. Moreover a number of respondents reported that they could also use owners' facilities such as tenders, jet skis and cars. In this respect the conditions experienced by those in the yachting sector can be confidently regarded as representing a favourable contrast to the Merchant Navy where access to shore leave is known to have reduced in recent years as a result of the ISPS code and its attendant restrictions, and as a consequence of quicker turnaround times.

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