FILIPINOS SAILING ON THE SEVEN SEAS
– A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS WORKING ON INTERNATIONAL VESSELS

Thesis for a Degree of Bachelor
Studies in Organizational and Human Resource Development
Work Life Science
15 credits

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Summary

Background
The rough labour market in the Philippines affects the employability. The Philippines has an unemployment rate of in-between 7-8 percent. Therefore, many Filipinos are seeking employment overseas. Today, ten percent of the population are working on the globalized market. The globalization has affected the industry, where 28 percent of the entire world’s seafarers are Filipinos. Previous researches establish that Filipinos are popular because of their knowledge in English and due to their adaptability.

Purpose
Our aim is to examine why a group of Filipino seafarers choose their profession. The aim is also to examine how they experience their work on international vessels, as well as if they experience any changes in life when working as international seafarers.

Method
We made a qualitative study through a ship management located in Manila in the Philippines. We used semi-structured interviews, which were applied on ten seafarers.

Results
Our respondents mention the well-paid wages as an important reason when choosing to work as a seafarer. The wages are significant in order to support family members and to have the opportunity to live a wealthy life. The seafarers are working long periods away from home that causes homesickness. A good relationship with the crew is for many seafarers important, since they are living and working together.
Acknowledgements

This thesis is a result of the fieldwork we conducted in the Philippines in the autumn of 2011. Creating this thesis was a challenging task for both of us. Not only have we been illuminated by the work of the Filipino seafarers, we have also been living in their society and experienced their culture. This opportunity has been educating, fun, exiting and a memory for life.

However, we could not produce this thesis on our own. We would like to thank all of the accomplices for being a great support. First of all we would like to thank the Minor Field Study scholarship, provided by SIDA, for giving us the opportunity to carry out this fantastic journey. Without their scholarship, this journey would not have been possible.

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To all we are highly grateful, thank you!

Nina Lindgren and Jessica Nilsson
Gothenburg, February 2012
Pasasalamat

Ang tesis na ito bunga ng aming pananaliksik na ginawa sa Pilipinas noong Taglagas taong 2011. Ang paglikha ng sanaysay na ito ay isang malaking pagsubok para sa aming dalawa. Hindi lamang para ipaliwanag ang mga gawain ng mga mandaragat gayun din ang kanilang pamumuhay sa lipunan at maranasan ang kanilang kultura. Ang pagkakataong ito ay nagbigay sa amin ng malaking aral, saya at tuwa at ala-ala sa buhay.


Nagpapasalamat kami sa aming tagapamahala na si Erik Ljungar sa lahat ng tulong sa paggawa ng aming tesis. Siya ang aming gabay sa panahon ng aming paghihirap na mabuo ang proyektong ito. Nagpapasalamat din kami kay Kristina Bartley sa pagbibigay ng idea at inspirasyon para makahingi ng tulong na pinansiyal. Ang kanyang karanasan sa pagsusuri at pagsisiyasat sa ibang bansa ang aming naging inspirasyon para isakatuparan ang aming layunin.


Sa wakas, ang pinakaimportante, nagpapasalamat kami sa lahat ng mga mandaragat na buong pusong isinalaysay ang kanilang mga kahanga-hangang kasaysayan. Itong kanilang mga kasaysayan ang aming layunin, kung hindi dahil sa kanila hindi namin maisasakatuparan ang paggawa ng sanaysay/tesis na ito. Ang mga mandaragat na ito ay nagbigay sa amin ng ala-ala ng saya at tuwa at mga ala-ala na makabugaw damdamin.

Ang aming malaking pasasalamat para sa lahat!

Nina Lindgren at Jessica Nilsson
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CHAPTER 1

1 Introduction

Our thesis is founded upon an education focusing on work coupled with a genuine interest in the subject. The aim of the thesis was to illuminate how a group of Filipino seafarers experienced their work on international vessels and what impact this work has on their lives. We decided to concentrate our thesis on Filipinos, since they as of today constitute a large part of the crew involved in maritime work on a global scale. Another significant reason for the project is the population that are working in foreign countries, consequently the seafarers, which results in an important income for the Philippines as a nation. An interest in the global and constantly changing labour market is what eventually made us choose to focus on the topic. The seafaring profession is in many ways considerably different from other forms of employment and we therefore believed it would be interesting to highlight.

Researchers of today indicate that the companies’ eagerness to lower their variable costs affects the labour of the vessels. The employees of the world merchant fleet have for the past 25 years been a crew of 80 per cent multicultural and multilingual seafarers (Progoulaki & Roe, 2011, p. 8). The Seafarers International Research Centre showed in 2002 that 28 per cent of the seafarers were Filipinos, and 81 per cent of them had backgrounds of high poverty (Zhao & Amante, 2005, pp. 537-539).

Most of the other countries in east and south Asia have had a rapid economical growth. For the Philippines, the economical growth has been minor. This contributes to an enormous cleft in income and one third of the population is considered poor (Nationalencyklopedin). The Philippines foreign debts are large and according to the World Bank in 2008, the loan was estimated to be about 61 billion dollars (Landguiden). A very important source of income for the Philippines is the 10 per cent of the population that is working in foreign countries, sending money home to their families (Regeringskansliet). Statistics of 2009 showed that more than 17 million dollars representing 11 per cent of the GDP, was sent home by workers overseas (Landguiden).

The republic of the Philippines has a strong demand of labour, accommodation, health- and medical care for the constantly increasing population. One quarter of the population has a lack of full employability and the unemployment rate was between 7-8 percent in the year of 2010 (Nationalencyklopedin 1). Despite more openings, the unemployment rate keeps growing because of the many young Filipinos who enter the rough labour market (Landguiden).

The stories of our respondents conveyed a particularly interesting insight into the life of a seafarer. The fact that we concentrated our thesis on individuals from a developing country working in a globalized labour market is what made the thesis interesting, we believe. In hope of shedding light upon the maritime industry, we expect to enrich and teach the readers of this thesis concerning the situation of the Filipino seafarers. This makes the thesis important and relevant for both our own education and others, as a study in the Philippines as a country and a group of individual Filipino seafarers’ lives.
1.1 Background
We obtained empirical material for the thesis from the Philippines. Since we believe this developing country is particularly different from our country of birth and as Swedes are going to read this paper, we believed it would be important to contribute with some facts concerning the country. We chose to do this with the intention of offering the reader some guidance for better understanding our thesis. Furthermore, we believed it would be important to contribute with facts around the globalization, as it acts as a background to the point of our study. We chose to present fact that we believed were relevant in relation to our aim.

1.1.1 The Philippines
The Philippines are situated in the southeast of Asia. The area of the country is 300 000 km² (Sweden’s area is 449 964 km²). The Philippines lies to the northeast of Indonesia and consists of 7100 islands, of which 880 are inhabited. The biggest island is Luzon, with the capital of Manila. The division of the Philippines is the region capital Manila, the autonomous area of Muslim Mindanao and 79 provinces, which have been gathered in 17 regions (Nationalencyklopedin 1). The monetary unit is peso, and 1 PHP is approximately 0,17 SEK (FOREX).

The Philippines is a republic with a democratic system. The president has only one opportunity of mandate, which entails six years of being the head of the State, government and Supreme Commander. He is a very powerful individual in the Philippines. The elected candidate of the 2010 presidential election was Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III, son of Corazon Aquino who was president 2004-2010 (Landguiden).

The population is 94 million and contains many different minorities although 95 per cent are Filipinos. Of 2010 statistic the population of Manila went up to 11,2 million. The birth rate was 26 per mille and the death rate 5 per mille, which gives a population growth at 2,1 per cent. Though the Philippines has a large amount of emigration that results in a number of 1,95 per cent in population growth (Nationalencyklopedin 1).

The majority of the population is Christian, whereas 80 per cent are Roman Catholics. Around 10 per cent belong to the independent church and the remaining number are Muslims, evangelical Christians, supporters of the old tribal religions and there are a few Buddhists (Nationalencyklopedin 1).

The official language is English and Filipino, also known as Tagalog. The largest domestic languages are: Tagalog, Cebano and Hiligaynon. English is used in the administration, judicial systems, army, education and police. Even in the media English is used, though Tagalog steadily increases its influence as the primary language (Nationalencyklopedin 1) and conversely the knowledge of English, which is considered to have deteriorated in recent years (Landguiden).

The Philippines has a traditional six-year elementary school for children of beginners at the age of seven to twelve. The teaching is in Tagalog and English and the education is free of charge. Though the school supplies class uniforms, traveling has to be paid. This might be an impediment for poor families. Most children are registered but defection is usual. Many areas have no school and in bigger cities these are often over-inscribed. As to education of higher level there is college, the university and higher vocational schools. The latest statistics showed that 28 per cent of men and 32 per cent of women studied on higher levels (Nationalencyklopedin 1).
Statistics from *Philippine Overseas Employment Administration* (POEA), from year 2010, showed that 347,150 Filipinos seafarers are employed overseas. Additional statistics revealed that a number of 19,975 new Filipino seafarers were registered during the years 2004-2010 (POEA, pp. 31-34).

### 1.1.2 The globalization

The globalization generates opportunities for workers when they are able to get employment overseas. Many Filipinos emigrate because of these opportunities. Those who emigrate are often educated and a reason for working overseas is because it is more well-paid. Even a qualified individual has problems finding an employment with a good wage in the Philippines (Lanzona, 2001, pp. 4-5). The politics in the developing country are instable. The Filipinos working overseas generate an important economical growth for the country (Lanzona, 2001, pp. 57-58). Because of the tough labour market in the country, many young Filipinos only see opportunities of employment overseas (Martin, Abella, & Midgley, 2004, pp. 1545-1558). Despite these opportunities, there are negative aspects concerning the globalization in developing countries. “Filipino workers are greatly exposed to the uncertainties that come along with globalization” (Lanzona, 2001, p. 1). Possibilities of unemployment and dilemmas around the working conditions are only two examples of this (Lanzona, 2001, p. 1).

Simultaneously, as the occurrence and presence of international contacts increases, continents, countries, and the people that inhabit them become more and more dependent of each other. For some, this process does symbolize a threat as it, for others, does act as an important development towards a world of economic and cultural opportunities. People and cultures come across in a way that was unimaginable two decades ago (Hedengren, 2006, pp. 5-6). A wide range of theoretical lines present globalization as a central part of the worldwide development, as it entered the 19th Century (Brante, Andersen, & Korsnes, 2001, p. 106). New technology reduced, as it constantly keeps reducing, both the geometrical distance and the virtual distance between market operators. The Internet makes it possible to connect with people and countries all around the world in just a few seconds, day and night. Technology makes people interact more frequently and over greater distances than ever before (Stier, 2009, p. 19).

The concept and term of globalization is not easily described, partly because there is no clear definition and partly because of the highly subjective meaning of the word. It clearly has a highly different meaning for different people. However, the general consensus does stand: We are all being globalized, as all of us live on the same planet that is uncontrollably a part of the globalization process (Bauman, 2000, p. 5). Even though the general concept of globalization is hard to describe, there are general descriptions. Globalization as a term describes the development within politics, economics and cultures. A changeover takes place, where countries and societies all over the world connect and becomes more or less dependent on each other (Nationalencyklopedin 2).

As a consequence of this modern global community, a naturally hefty competition between companies can be found. In order to survive in this competitive market companies have to focus more on profit today than before. The global market consists of operators striving toward a movement of employees, production and knowledge by working together, chasing the profit and revenues, some through collective bargaining and agreements. In hefty competition, the chances of surviving obviously become greater if the operators work toward similar goals. Some find this a good thing while others find it negative. A number of
scientists state the positive things which global trading results in via aspects of cultural exchanges, that people from different cultures can learn and influence each other in pursuit of a better, richer cultural life in the same way as a they pursue a higher economical standard (Stier, 2009). Some claim that the globalization has increased due to millions of people in Asia escaping starving and poverty through global trading (Hedengren, 2006, pp. 12-24). Other scientist’s state the opposite, that the global market often leads to injustice and unfairness as the multinational companies, with scarce exceptions, exploit the developing countries (Stier, 2009).

1.2 Aim
Our aim is to examine why a group of Filipino seafarers choose their profession. The aim is also to examine how they experience their work on international vessels, as well as if they experience any changes in life when working as international seafarers.

- Why do the Filipino seafarers choose their profession?
- How do the Filipino seafarers experience their working conditions?
- How do the Filipino seafarers experience that the work impacts their living conditions?

1.3 Delimitation
With regard to current resources, we chose to delimit our study. In our aim, we limited our study to Filipino seafarers working on international vessels. We chose to limit the study geographically to the capital Manila in the Philippines on a ship management where we chose ten male seafarers.
CHAPTER 2

2 Previous research

As we examine Filipino seafarers, the following texts are about seafarers or other subjects concerning their work environment. We found all the texts relevant and useful for our project, as they focus on why people choose to be seafarers, their working conditions and the impact that their profession has on their lives. These are all subjects essential to us in pursuing our aim. All previous research represents different themes, which are important for our study. We chose to gather relevant parts from eight different texts and combine them. These we can use for answering our aim.

2.1 The maritime

We found five relevant studies concerning the maritime business. Barnett, Gatfield, Overgaard, Pekcan, & Graveso (2006) carried out their study on seafarers from different countries in Europe. Compared to other professions seafaring requires individuals to leave their homes and to spend long periods of time at sea working and living with their crew. They have their own language and knowledge that does not sense any national boundaries. Instead they see their crew as a brotherhood wherever they might come from (Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 128-131).

Dimayuga (2008) has made a study on the social identities of Filipino seafarers. She termed social identities as “(...) a person’s self-image drawn from his or her group membership” (Dimayuga, 2008, p. 81). Certain social identities such as religion, friends, family and nationality were mentioned (Dimayuga, 2008, pp. 83-85).

Guo, Ye and Liang (2007) carried out a study concerning employment conditions and dilemmas around Taiwanese seafarers. The global market influences their deployment, partly because of the competition from developed countries. They describe the difficulties that Taiwanese seafarers encounter within their profession (Guo, Ye, & Liang, 2007, pp. 130-131).

McKay’s research (2007) compares different reasons as to why the Filipino seafarers are such appreciated and often recruited employees. McKay has studied official material from the government agency POEA (McKay, 2007, p. 617). POEA regulates the land- and sea-based migrant workers (McKay, 2007, p. 631)

Zhao and Amante (2005) completed a study about Chinese and Filipino seafarers: A Race to the Top or the Bottom?, a study concerning working conditions in the global labour market of seafarers. They mention that Filipino seafarers often originate from large families and most of them are married with children. 81 per cent of them have a background of high poverty (Zhao & Amante, 2005, pp. 537-542).

Barnett et al. (2006) were seeking general similarities between European seafarers. They found that their respondents chose their profession for different reasons. The location of their homes had an impact, because of traditions of being a seafarer. Many seafarers had a parent, uncle or grandfather that had worked out to sea, which influenced them. The fine career prospects were also mentioned. This would include status, well-paid wages and opportunities for early advancement and promotions. Another significant reason was the genuine interest in the sea and opportunity to travel (Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 128-131).
One reason why their respondents were staying at sea was because of the ambition of one day becoming a Captain or a Chief Engineer. Other reasons were that they appreciated their jobs, the life of a seafarer and they could enjoy a well-paid salary (Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 131-132).

The respondents mentioned difficulties in social conditions; these would be caused by the cultural differences between the nationalities aboard. They also told about stress that, together with high workloads, would result in feelings of loneliness. Although, the respondents did find the seafaring as a source for better conditions in life compared to working ashore. When working as seafarers, they would earn more money and thereby be able to spend more time with their families since they would have vacation for longer periods of time than usual. One specific reason among the seafarers as to why they begin working ashore would be settling down and starting a family (Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 132-134).

As it comes to the Filipino seafarers, they enter the labour market mostly dependent on crew agencies. Most of the crew agencies are situated in Manila, which had around 417 agencies in 2002. It is the government set up POEA, which regulate the deployment of seafarers and the crew agencies. After joining a crew agency, the seafarers still have to look for jobs on their own. Many Filipino seafarers make daily visits to their agencies in order to stay “up to date” and get informed concerning new announcements and job postings. Seafarers often get together in The Rizal Park in Manila, this is a way of receiving information about working conditions, policies and practices of crewing agencies and shipping companies (Zhao & Amante, 2005, p. 541).

POEA has a general standard concerning the employment contracts; these should not exceed 12 months. Most of the contracts last for between 6-9 months. If the seafarers should want a new contract after one is extended they would have to apply again. The seafarers that do not live in Manila, stay with friends, relatives or rent cheap crowded apartments when searching for job opportunities. How long it takes to acquire a new contract varies. Seafarers that work on shipping companies fully owned by the agency could expect to have a new contract within two months (Zhao & Amante, 2005, pp. 537-542).

Compared to other professions, seafarers are separated from their homes and families, this might result in negative effects on themselves and their families. Science shows that psychological problems can be caused when working away for long periods of time. The work has benefits such as well-paid wages, although the work itself many times is hard and stressful. A relief from the hard work is when the seafarers have time off in port. This was something that the Taiwanese seafarers experienced on the vessels. Some also mentioned that they would prefer to work ashore instead of offshore (Guo et al., 2007, pp 135-138).

All of the Filipino seafarers experienced difficulties when getting separated from their families. As a cure for homesickness, the older seafarers identified with and turned to their religion for guidance and blessing. The younger seafarers rather identified themselves with their friends whom they could share experiences with when in need. Both groups mentioned the importance of having a support network present, which could be a source of strength and inspiration when working at sea (Dimayuga, 2008, pp. 83-85).

Another identification was the Philippines as a country and the cultural identity of the Filipino people. The participants stated that they were happy and proud to be Filipinos.
Some mentioned that the only reason for them to change their citizenship would be because of job opportunities. A conclusion made by Dimayuga (2008) is that the Filipinos aboard have strong ties due to the fact that they identify themselves with each other (Dimayuga, 2008, pp. 86-88).

The Taiwanese seafarers describe socialization with the crew differently than the Filipino seafarers. The key word to describe the connection between Taiwanese and foreign crew is distancing; some describe this as a consequence of the culture differences. When they spend time together, they are often divided into their own groups. One Taiwanese seafarer stated that he only exchanged a few sentences when communicating with crew from other nations (Guo et al., 2007, pp 139-140).

When it comes to what contributes to the employability of the Filipinos, McKay states that POEA highly value the education of the Filipino seafarers as well as their ability to speak English well as a strong advantage. According to POEA, Filipino seafarers are employable because they are adaptable, hardworking, friendly and disciplined. Others explain the successfulness of Filipino seafarers as a consequence of them being considered reliable, resilient, well trained and loyal. One of McKay’s conclusions is that they dominate the sea because of the legacy of the American colonial institutions (McKay, 2007, pp. 623-630).

2.2 Emigration in the Philippines

Another interesting study that concerns emigration in the Philippines was made by Martin, Abella, and Midgley (2004). They carried out a project on migration in the Philippines and dilemmas around this. A major element in the Filipino society is emigration. Half of the population has either been abroad or knows a relative that has or is. The migration workers are considered national heroes who support their families with their earnings and send their children to school. They state that the migration workers sacrifice themselves for their family at the expense of being away from them (Martin et al., 2004, pp. 1544-1559).

A goal for many emigrants that return is to initiate their own business. The government and private organisations can help the Filipinos to invest their savings. Although, there are some Filipinos who fail their business and thereby lose their savings. Unfortunately, many young people only see job opportunities abroad. The government states that this migration issue is an option for individuals, rather than an official development strategy, since a large part of the population will eventually emigrate for employment (Martin et al., 2004, pp. 1545-1558).
CHAPTER 3

3 Theoretical approach
This chapter presents our choices of theoretical approaches. We chose to use three relevant theoretical approaches, the dimensions of knowledge, motivation to work and how to motivate the employees. These concepts are intended to aid us in analysing the empirical material in our thesis. Together these three theoretical approaches are complements to each other and therefore they together can be used to confirm each other. Many of the theoretical words are similar to one another, but we consider that only one or two theoretical approaches would have been inadequate. We believe that these three theoretical approaches, their similarities, complements and collaboration strengthen the validity of our thesis.

3.1 The dimensions of knowledge
Allvin, Aronsson, Hagström, Johansson, & Lundberg (2006) are the authors of a publication which is a result of a scientific project that started in 1998. Through surveys, psychophysiological measurements and interviews, the scientists made a number of case studies on companies, governments and organisations. The focus was a wide selection of phenomena. The authors of the publication chose to create an overall picture of the project and to focus on changes in various ways that would effect and influence an individual in our modern society (Allvin, Aronsson, Hagström, Johansson, & Lundberg, 2006, p. 3). For the modern individual, there are different kinds of requirements in order to obtain and keep a job in modern society. These requirements are divided into four dimensions of knowledge (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 60-63).

The cognitive dimension includes the technical knowledge that the individual has to acquire and manage when working for an organization, such as working tasks and the work process. The technical knowledge has come to be more important due to the flexibility that a specific job might demand. This means that the workers themselves must possess the ability to adapt to new situations and constantly seek for further ways to improve and expand their qualifications. This learning process may be an interaction in a group or an individual process (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 61-71).

The social dimension includes the social knowledge. This knowledge is demanded by the individual when working with other people. It is not enough to only participate, an individual must be able to act and impact situations by their own volition. Social skills and social networking is always present and relevant when working with people, as well as mutual trust being an important part of work (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 61-83).

The societal dimension includes the knowledge an individual has to be aware of concerning society, such as culture and context. The individual has to know how to behave according to informal and formal rules. Mutual expectations between the society and the employers are eventually what shape the individual’s relation to work. This relationship is not only constructed by the work, it is also affected by the entire society (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 61-91).

The existential dimension is knowledge concerning the relationship between the individual itself and the actual work he/she practises. Today, working has become an individual implement for personal growth or survival. In order to become independent, the individual has to be dedicated. The individual has to adapt itself in order to become employable.
Although work primarily focuses on the group as a team, it is the individual only who can advance and thereby obtain legitimacy (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 61-101).

The dimensions of knowledge are highly relevant for our project as we focus on how pleased the Filipino seafarers are with their occupational situation and how they experience their work conditions. Since these dimensions concern the requirements of the working individual, it is useful to us.

3.2 Motivation for work
Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner and Barbara Bloch Snyderman (1993) are the authors of a study that focus on which factors that motivates an individual to engage in work. They carried out approximately 200 semi-structured interviews with engineers and officials within the industrial sector. They investigated what attitudes their respondents had towards their own work (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1993, pp. 30-36).

The factors can be divided into hygiene and motivation. The character of the hygiene factors is described as necessary and external, since they protect from dissatisfaction with work and prevent poor job performances (Herzberg et al., 1993, pp. 113-115). Herzberg et al. (1993) list these hygiene factors as working conditions, interpersonal relations-supervision, salary, supervision-technical and company policy and administration (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 81). Their conclusion was that the hygiene factors could not result in higher motivation to work. If these factors are below the employee’s acceptance, they will lead to dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993, pp. 113-114).

Working conditions involve the physical conditions, including everything around the environment. The interpersonal relations-supervision describes the relation an employee has with his or her supervisor. Salary involves the increase of wage or salary and the employee’s expectations. Supervision-technical includes the thoughts an employee has regarding his supervisor’s willingness or unwillingness to delegate responsibility and teach. The company policy and administration involves management structure in the organisation (Herzberg et al., 1993, pp. 46-48).

The factor concerning motivation is advancement, responsibility, work itself, recognition and achievement (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 81). These are described as subjective and internal feelings for individuals (Herzberg et al., 1993, pp. 49-50). Herzberg et al. (1993) find that both hygienic and motivational factors can create the basic needs for the worker. However, it is only the motivational factor that can fully satisfy the worker (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 114).

Advancement is when an employee advances to another position where he/she will have opportunities for work that requires a greater level of responsibility. Responsibility is when an employee has its own responsibilities in his/her work or is responsible for delegating work to others. Work itself is the actual job and the feelings connected to these. Recognition is when an employee feels that he/she gets credits from any other person. Recognition might also be negative, should an employee get criticised or blamed. Achievement also includes failure and examples of this are either the solution of a problem or results of ones work (Herzberg et al., 1993, pp. 44-48).

Since our project focuses on Filipino seafarers’ work-related experiences, which partly includes how satisfied they are, we found this scientific material both relevant and useful for our thesis. This concept explains how motivated an employee is, which we believe can be
useful when examining how content the Filipino seafarers are with their work. By using the theory of hygiene and motivational factor we can analyse the answers from the seafarers, thereby obtaining their specific level of satisfaction.

3.3 How to motivate the employees

Nitin Nohria, Boris Groysberg, and Linda-Eling Lee (2008) carried out a study concerning motivation. Through the book *Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices* combined with their empirical material, they created a model with four factors, which could increase the motivation to work. The four factors are Reward system, Culture, Job design and Performance-Management and Resource-Allocation Processes. The authors consider these factors elementary, by using them managers are able to acquire staff with a greater sense of motivation (Nohria et al., 2008, p. 80).

An organisation with a successful reward system can easily generate motivated employees. Rewarding good performance and offering opportunities in advancement for hard-workers is a way of having a constructive reward system. The culture in an organisation tends to influence the motivation to work. Creating a culture that includes teamwork, collaboration, openness and friendship is important in order to keep employees motivated to work. The job design is the third importance in encouraging employees towards motivation. A job that is meaningful, interesting and challenging will support the motivating factors. An organisation with a successful management tends to influence the motivation to work. It is important to have a clear decision-making way in the organisation. To be fair, trustworthy and have a clear communication is important (Nohria et al., 2008, pp. 81-83).

These concepts are useful and relevant to us since they concern what an organisation should do in order to motivate their employees. Knowing how to motivate employees is useful in our study while researching how pleased the Filipino seafarers are. Our aim is also to examine the seafarers working conditions and to study what factors make them comfortable about work.
CHAPTER 4

4 Method
On the basis of the hermeneutic perspective, we implemented a qualitative study through a semi-structured interview template. This will be described in further detail below.

4.1 The qualitative study
We chose the qualitative study fairly naturally, partly because of our aim and partly because of the fact that we are social scientists. As we felt comfortable with the qualitative approach, we believed that our project would be both fun and maintain a high quality. This was in accordance with Aspers (2007, p. 11). On the basis of our aim, we wanted to look for a deeper understanding concerning individuals and their experiences and views of their lives as seafarers. In other words, we wanted subjective views from a number of individuals. Therefore, we did not want to quantify what we saw and heard (Starrin & Svensson, 1994, pp. 19-23). The qualitative study is relevant for us when researching the Filipino seafarers own experiences and thoughts. It would not have been appropriate to produce a quantitative study since our aim was to examine a group of Filipino seafarers own experiences and thoughts.

4.2 The hermeneutic perspective
You can summarize the hermeneutic perspective in two words – understanding and meaning. You can apply the word “meaning” when you want to describe human activities and the results of human activities. These activities you also want to interpret and therefore understand. In previous studies sourced and based upon the hermeneutic perspective, there are two things to keep in mind. Firstly, the participant has already interpreted their world, therefore we could not ignore their describing and opinions about themselves and the world around them. Secondly, we were the ones who were pursuing the study, therefore we had to reconstruct the participant’s narration into terminology appropriate for social sciences with the help of theoretical concepts. This is referred to as double hermeneutic (Grimen & Gilje, 2007, pp. 171-177). The hermeneutic perspective is relevant for us since we study human beings and the Filipino seafarers.

4.3 Collection of material
Since we wanted to understand and interpret human acts and language, we carried out interviews that gave us relevant empirical material (Aspers, 2007, p. 133). The interviews provided us with information around the respondents’ own experiences, opinions, attitudes, feelings and dreams (May, 2001, p. 148). With our aim, we started by creating a summary mind map of what we wanted to ask our respondents. We proceeded by deciding to use a semi-structured interview, because we thought it would give emphasis to our project.

There are different kinds of “range” within different kinds of interview templates, as to how far you are able to get the respondent to explain his or her opinion concerning a cause or question. A semi-structured interview has a number of specified questions, which can be expanded by follow-up questions. If the opportunity to ask follow-up questions would not exist, it would have been difficult to reach deeper into the respondents’ thoughts, which is something we were striving for in relation to our aim. The follow-up questions also contributed to the interview becoming more of a normal conversation. If we had not preceded the interview from a number of specified questions, it would have been difficult to collect empirical material in relation to our aim. Also, it would have been difficult to
compare the answers (Aspers, 2007, pp. 136-138).

After the decision of performing semi-structured interviews, we prepared an interview template (Appendix 2), from which we composed different kinds of major questions including main points. We chose to begin the interviews with some background information, moving on with questions concerning working conditions, motivation to work and the impact of life as a seafarer. These questions were for our reconstruction of the participant’s interpretations, so that we could make sure that we would get relevant information for our aim. Here we also recovered the reliability by using the same interview template for each respondent. When creating the questions, we had in mind that they should not been leading.

The background question was a way for us to begin a regular social conversation, so that the respondent would not feel like it was an interrogation. Below the questions we had minor reminders containing the facts that we wanted to be answered, the actual “product” of the question, so that no potential facts would go to waste. Before conducting the interviews we performed four trial interviews at the office in Manila. We wanted to experience the differences in cultures between Swedes and Filipinos when conducting an interview in the Philippines. We also wanted to try out the quality of our interview template, so that we would have a chance to reconstruct it if necessary and make sure that we would get sufficient information out of it. This was one way for us to secure the validity of our project.

4.4 Selection

4.4.1 The ship management

We specified our project on a ship management situated in the capital of Manila, since we did not have any previous link or contact with Filipino seafarers.

A ship management is a type of crew management that employs seafarers. We chose a company in Manila because it is a seaport containing many seafarers. This specific ship management hires out employees to different vessels. Today, the company state that they demand thousands of skilled and motivated employees from different nations and cultural backgrounds. In countries where the company operates they claim that they are providing aid to their employees and their families and by doing so contribute to the local communities.

The company is currently supporting young people with education and thereby offering them a better future. The cornerstone of their values is responsibility. The importance of safety and health for their employees is therefore greatly valued.

4.4.2 The respondents

For many researchers, the aim of pursuing a scientific project is to obtain a result, which then may be generalized across an entire population. Although, in order to truly make this possible, the researcher would then be forced to interview all of the individuals in the current population if he/she wanted an accurate account of the overall attitudes and opinions. We therefore made a selection of ten seafarers with different titles. This way, our selection did not represent the entire seafaring “population” from the Philippines, but rather provided us with a deeper understanding concerning the ten seafarers’ experiences (Becker, 2008, pp. 78-85).

We selected our respondents strategically, since we chose them based upon already known qualities (May, 2001, p. 121): international seafarers with different kinds of titles. Since we
did not want to concentrate our project on seafarers with only one specific kind of title, we chose a mixture of seafarer titles. All of them were men, and though our aim was not to draw any conclusions concerning gender, we did not think it would be a problem choosing only men.

We chose ten participants, who were all employed as seafarers on the company. Their age varied from 30 to 55 and they all worked on different kinds of vessels. The respondents were ashore at the time of the interview. Carrying out the interviews on the vessels was not an option since we believed that it would affect the answers in a negative way. We believed that the seafarers would feel more comfortable carrying out the interviews as they were off work. All of the ten participants had different kinds of stories, backgrounds and titles. To make the reading more comprehensible we present a brief presentation of our participants below.

We interviewed a captain, chief cook, second engineer, second officer, second cook, ordinary seaman, chief engineer, steward, oiler and an able seaman. All of them had a post-secondary education. The seafarers lived in the Philippines and had been working internationally from 5-30 years. Eight of them were married and had 1-5 children. The other two lived at home with their parents.

4.5 Codes of ethics
There are four main claims of research ethics within the classical- and social sciences that we applied during the entire project. Below, we will describe and discuss these in detail (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990).

The requirement of information
All the participants were informed about our aim, what we were going to investigate and under what conditions they were to participate. Also, what their function as individuals would be in our interviews. We also informed the participants about the codes of ethics (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990).

The requirement of permission
After informing our participants about our project, they were asked to decide whether to give their permission to participate in the project. The participants had the right to decide for how long and under what conditions their participation would be continued. As mentioned before, they could, whenever they wanted to, discontinue their participating (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990).

The requirement of confidentiality
All concerned remained anonymous before, during and after the project. They were also informed about this. Taking that in practice, we chose not to write the seafarers’ title and/or name when quoting them. Also, we chose not to mention personal information, which could bring suspicions to each individual, thereby disclosing their anonymity. This was the reason why we could not write a presentation of each individual seafarer. We also treated the material confidentially. Having transcribed, we did not write anything personal such as names of persons and companies. This because it would be impossible for persons of any third part to identify the concerned in our project (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990).

The requirement of utilization
We used the material entirely and strictly for our project. We did not pass on any personal information concerning those involved in our project to anyone else. We kept our material in a safe place and used headphones when transcribing it. Once the project was completed, we
erased all evidence such as audio files and transcribed material. This way, we treated the material with proper caution (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990).

4.6 Procedure
The interviews took place in a secluded room at the office. The seafarers whom we interviewed were present at the office. Therefore, the participants thought that the interviews were most suitable to be held at the office.

During the interviews we choose to use easily intelligible English to be sure that no misunderstandings would occur through linguistic factors. However, we did not believe that the language would be a problem, as the Filipinos are partly grown up with and were introduced to the English language at an early stage. We did not wear the dress code of the company, since we did not want the participants to get the impression that we were working for the ship management. By dressing in our private clothes, we wanted to obtain a sense of confidence, that would make the seafarers feel comfortable in telling us their stories. We wanted to make clear that we were students and not higher managers from the office. The managers were all dressed in the dress code (suit) and therefore, we dressed in private and more informal clothes (appropriate summer-dresses). The interviews lasted within a timeframe of 47 minutes to 1 hour and 27 minutes.

Before we began conducting the interviews, we gave the participants an accompanying letter containing the most important information concerning the project (Appendix 1). We informed the participants around their rights, in regard to the codes of ethics and also the eventual aim of our project. We informed them about the audio equipment, the purpose of it and other relevant information, this was in accordance to May (2001). We chose to record the interviews so that we could draw attention to the respondent instead of taking notes all the time. Through this we found that the interviews would consequently result in an ordinary conversation, so that the respondent would feel more comfortable and relaxed (May, 2001, pp. 168-169).

The respondents were all offered refreshments and for the first 15 minutes, we informed them about the background of the project and other relevant information. This, we thought, contributed to the interview not being perceived like a hearing. According to Aspers (2007), we believed it would be important to reflect upon the actual situation of the interview, since we wanted the respondents to feel comfortable (Aspers, 2007, p. 135). We chose to ask questions based upon how instead of why, since the respondents might experience the why as offensive, which would benefit neither the respondents nor the interviewer (Becker, 2008, p. 69). We chose to ask questions based upon “tell us about...” as well, since we wanted the respondents to tell us about their own experiences and thoughts impartially.

During all of the interviews both of us took part in, there was always one of us who was in charge of conducting the interview. The other one would then be able to interpose, but her main task would be to listen and to keep minor notes. We carried out five interviews each, partly because we both wanted to get an insight in the role of interviewer and partly because we then could change experiences and thoughts. We did not believe that the interposing would be a problem, though our intention was still to carry out an interview that would feel like a normal conversation.

In conclusion, we asked all the participants if they wanted to add or ask us anything. We thanked them for their involvement and gave them a minor symbolic gift from Sweden. We thought that this way of ending the interviews was a nice gesture.
4.7 Processing and analysis of material
The analysis of our material took place in close conjunction with the fieldwork. After carrying out an interview, we listened through and transcribed the audio files the same day as they were recorded. This way, time would not generate loss of memory or recollection of the actual interview. Each of us transcribed our individual interviews. Together we read the transcribed material to get an overview. When transcribing the interviews, we did it in relation to the previously mentioned ethical guidelines.

After transcribing the interviews, we started the process of coding it together. We began with an analytical method referred to as the “margin method”. We printed the transcribed interviews and marked the text with pencils of different colours. The colours represented different kinds of themes, which we believed would be relevant, important and useful in relation to our aim. To reach deeper into our material, we also chose to set different numbers beside the colours and in the margin. This way of coding made it easier for us to sort the respondent’s differences and similarities. In our work with processing and analysis of material we worked in relation to Aspers (2007, pp. 157-180).

4.8 Validity and reliability
Research is valid when the conclusions are logically and convincingly drawn (May, 2001, p. 96). One way of ensuring the validity was to control that our method was useful and relevant to use while collecting material. Since our aim was to investigate the respondents’ own experiences, we ensured the validity in our project through qualitative interviews. When planning and creating our interview template we always kept our aim in mind. Our supervisor and two other persons with experience of the subject read the interview template through before we began with our trial interviews. Furthermore, the trial interviews aided us in creating an interview template in a decent, more adapted way. When carrying out the interviews, we made sure that the respondents stuck to the subject. Moreover, we chose to transcribe and code the material right after performing the interviews. By doing so, we strengthened the validity as we ensured that our way of collecting empirical material was relevant and useful for the project. In addition, we present relevant background information and theories that strengthen the validity of the empirics. The previous research also strengthens the validity of our project since it includes facts about seafarers and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW).

The research is reliable when the result is genuine (Thurén, 2007, p. 26) As we chose to use the semi-structured interview along with the same interview template including the same questions and main points for each respondent, we thereby ensured the reliability within our project. Our questions were shaped in a way that made the respondents tell us about the subject by themselves. We did not want them to feel forced to tell us certain things, which is why we used questions such as how and tell us about... instead of why. By giving the respondents an accompanying letter and explaining the content before the interviews, we clarified the reliability since we believed that they were comfortable with telling us the truth. When presenting the result, we chose to use a number of quotations. This was a way of strengthening the reliability.

4.9 Our pre-understanding
The researchers own pre-understanding, ideas and concepts of the world always create the basis of scientific research, something impossible to ignore. In other words, it is impossible to be completely objective and therefore it is important to pay attention to this fact and issue (Becker, 2008, pp. 21-24). According to the hermeneutic perspective, pre-understanding is necessary for further understanding. All individuals, even scientists, understand the world
and its phenomena by their own merits. You are unable to totally perceive the world with a completely blank mind (Grimen & Gilje, 2007, p. 179).

One of the authors of the current study has a father who regularly works with Filipino seafarers. This contributed benefits when collecting empirical material. We therefore had a certain pre-understanding of life as a seafarer, which simplified the construction of the interview template. Since the other author did not have these experiences, her involvement made it possible to keep the study neutral. During the interviews we also had the benefits of making conversations with Filipinos and understanding the culture itself, since one of us has Filipino roots and previous experience from the Philippines as a country.

However, a pre-understanding that we both shared was that Filipino seafarers choose to work abroad because of the higher wages so that they can provide for their families. Since the employability in the Philippines is limited, we thought that the choice of becoming a seafarer is an advantage.
CHAPTER 5

5 Results
This chapter is based upon the interviews of the respondents’ own experiences and thoughts. These thoughts are presented under different headings to support easier reading. All of our respondents have at least one quote cited in the text below.

5.1 The vessel
All of the respondents told us about life as a seafarer. One of our participants compared the vessel to “(...) a floating society”. The society of the vessel is like any other society. Every competence, every employee is an important asset to the vessel. Whether you are in the highest or the lowest of positions, everyone is needed for the vessel to float. Electricity and water in the tap is not an obvious thing that works and is something that the vessel society has to fix on their own when out of order.

The respondents also told us about the hierarchical system aboard. Like in any other society, there is a hierarchy with different kinds of ranks and positions. The captain and the chief engineer are in the highest of positions. The crew on the vessel can be divided into three main departments: the deck, the engine and the steward’s. The number and professions of the employees depends upon the type and size of the vessel. We have, through information provided to us by our respondents, constructed a hierarchical system for a vessel. One example of this system is illustrated in Figure 1 below. As mentioned, this system varies from vessel to vessel.

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Figure 1 – one example of a hierarchical system
The respondents told us about their own professions and their main tasks which will be presented in the three main departments below.

_The captain_ is the master of the ship and consequently the highest responsible officer. He/she is also the vessel’s outward face and has the legal responsibility. If anything happens, the captain is always the one to act and respond. _The second officer_ is mainly responsible for the navigation of the ship, as well as maintaining the charts and navigational equipment. _The able seaman_ is a combined day worker on deck and watch-keeper on bridge, or one of these two roles. _The ordinary seaman’s_ duty is the maintenance of the deck department areas and equipment, as well as maintenance duties such as, for example, cleaning and painting.

_The chief engineer_ is the master of the engine and technical department. All operations and maintenance that concerns engineering and technical equipment are his or her responsibility. _The second engineer_ takes orders directly from the chief engineer. He/she supervises the daily work in the engine department. _The oiler_ is involved in the team responsible for maintenance in the engine department.

_The chief cook_ is the master of the steward’s department. He/she is responsible for everything concerning the food such as orders, menus and managing the kitchen. The chief cook is also responsible for the beddings, towels and light medication. _The second cook_ assists the chief cook with the actual making of the food. A second cook is often needed on the passenger ships, when the crew is larger than 100 persons. _The steward_ sets the tables and takes care of the dishes. He/she also cleans the officer’s cabins and does the laundry.

### 5.2 Becoming a seafarer

There are three notable different kinds of reasons why our respondents choose to work as seafarers. One reason is the tradition in their families of being seafarers. Another significant reason is the well-paid wages and the third reason is the opportunity of visiting different kinds of places.

Some respondents mention that many of their relatives have been or are seafarers, which in turn caused them to become seafarers themselves. Another intention is the opportunity of travelling around the world for free. All of the respondents mention the well-paid wages as a primary reason when choosing to work on board, especially when comparing to work ashore in the Philippines. A common view among the respondents is that leading a reasonably decent life when working ashore in the Philippines is very hard and nearly impossible. When working internationally as a seafarer, you earn more and are therefore able to create an economically wealthier living-standard, which is regarded by many as highly desirable: One seafarer expresses himself in these terms:

"I like to think, being a seafarer is a very nice thing. Especially, when the current salary in the Philippines is very low and when you are a seafarer it is a different kind of story. My idea is that it’s much better if I am a seafarer than work in the Philippines. And the best part of it is that I can travel for free - all around the world. Because it’s much expensive if you go as a tourist, it’s much cheaper if you go there for free. That’s why I’m happy!"

Many of the respondents also mention that they chose to become a seafarer because of the ability to provide their families with a good life. With a good salary, they are able to provide a good education for their children and/or support other family members. The seafarers in the Philippines are regarded as wealthy people. But even though there are benefits with
being a seafarer, there are also disadvantages. All of the seafarers mention that life on board is hard, mostly because they spend time away from their families. One seafarer expresses his feelings thus:

"The salary is more than good. It is the best! (...) Other Filipinos, they really think that I am successful, that I have plenty money. But it is very hard to be a seafarer, because first of all, the distance is really away from your family."

All of the seafarers state the importance of their families. Some seafarers mention that they would like to work ashore, so that they could see their families every day. To all, the main reason for working off shore is because of the well-paid wages. One seafarer describes it as a type of sacrifice, for his family:

"Because the most important is family. I sacrifice, even all seafarers are sacrifice. Because, if I earn a small salary, how can I give them a good life? (...) I work hard for my family, not for myself!"

Some of them mention that the hardest part of being a seafarer is when leaving home. One respondent refers to this occurrence as "the departure syndrome". Others mention the difficulties of leaving their crying children. Even though it is very hard, many of them still are pleased. Many seafarers consider their employments a blessing from God. They are employed and are therefore able to support their families. One seafarer describes it this way:

"The feelings before we leave here in Manila, it’s very hard. Very hard, because it’s a long time. But it’s okay, you have to be happy, because you have a work. If you stay in your family, you have no money to spend with them, and then it’s not good. So, I’m happy, because I have a job."

Another seafarer describes this employment as:

"(...) it’s a blessing"

All of the seafarers support family members with their salary. One seafarer says that without his income, his family would not stay alive. He describes it like they would slip into a "coma":

"Something like - my role here on our earth is to have a family and raise your family in a good way. If I stop working they will go in coma."

Several of our respondents are at the ship management, applying for a new contract. They mention that they have applied to other companies as well, to raise the chances of getting a job. One way of acquiring information on crew agencies is by visiting Rizal Park in Manila, where seafarers often get together and exchange information. Many of the seafarers mention that the reasons why they choose this company is because they believe that the company treat the employees well and pay their wages on time. Before signing the first contract, they are offered courses in the training department. This is seen as a benefit. Others mentioned benefit is the good insurances for the seafarers and their families. Some state that their wives are able to contact the office, for help concerning their insurances.

One respondent, living outside of Manila, had to rent a crowded apartment at his own expense, when applying for new contracts. During this time, he is not able to spend his spare
time at home, together with his family, relatives and friends.

5.3 The work aboard

The length of the contracts depends on title, previous experience and the vessels. Usually, the contract only lasts for a shorter period when termed a higher title. One respondent says that, in a previous company, he had a contract lasting 18 months. Today, the respondents have contracts lasting for around two to six months. Several mention that they want to have as short contracts as possible, which you are able to get when you are in a higher position. Aboard the vessel they all have coffee breaks, lunch breaks and sleeping breaks. The time of each brake depends on the vessel. All of our respondents tell us about their own working tasks. They describe that every seafarer is needed; they have their own specific task that they are responsible for. They are all pleased and explain that the tasks are clear for everyone. Some of the head seafarers are responsible for the workers in the lower positions; they give direct orders to them.

Many of the respondents mention that two of the hardest parts of being aboard a vessel are the rough sea and the feeling of homesickness. When problems occur at home, they will not be able to support their families. This is hard for them to handle. Some respondents mention that God is important for them when having a hard time aboard. One seafarer expresses himself:

"The hardest part of being seafarer is the homesickness. You know, if you have problems, you cannot go home right away. And the rough sea. That’s the hardest part."

Most of the participants perceive the environment on the vessels as pleasant. Many of them mention the gym as a positive quality on the ships and most of them are comfortable with their cabins. One seafarer expresses some positive aspects around his ship and its environment:

"It’s very nice, more than in my home. Because, on board you have sauna, and I don’t have it at home, it should be very expensive with the electricity. On board it’s for free. Going to the gym also, and here at home you have to pay and it’s very expensive. The cabin is very good, because we have one cabin each. And it’s very nice. I feel at home”.

Many of the respondents are using the Internet and/or phones to communicate with their families when they are aboard. This is an important source when living under the circumstances and they find the communication with their families needful. One seafarer expresses himself:

"(...) thank God for Internet!"

The seafarers do not explain a lot concerning their supervisor aboard. Although they mention that the relationships between them are mostly working fine, but this is something that depends upon the person. One seafarer says:

“Really depends on the person. You can be a Filipino and be an asshole.”

As a cure for the homesickness, many of the respondents highly value their colleagues aboard. Spending time with their colleagues, Filipinos and other foreign crew equally, on spare time is natural to many seafarers. Some explain that they are like a family on board.
and that their colleagues are like siblings to them. During their spare time they sing karaoke, talk and watch TV together. One seafarer expresses his thoughts around the importance of the colleagues as:

“Important because to remove loneliness I need to talk with them. We need the company. No good if always alone. Better talk to each other, communicate to become happy all the time.”

Another seafarer says:

“(…) very important. We are talking after my job, everybody sit in the messroom or watching TV together. I treat them like brothers, not only friends - like brothers. (…) We are under same house - one house. (…) I help you if you are in need. Because we are one family.”

The colleagues are not only useful when they feel homesick. Aboard, they have to work as a team. Many of the respondents find the communication between colleagues important, otherwise problems will occur. Most of the time the communication between the foreigners is not a problem, but issues and problems might appear through dialectical or difficulties concerning the English language. Even though this may be hard, they still have to cooperate. One seafarer gives an example of how they work as a team aboard:

“On board vessel we work as a team. It’s just like basketball – you cannot be envy with someone passing you the ball - we work as team. We must consist whether we like it or not.”

When working with people from other nations, some respondents talk about different kinds of adjustments they adapt to. Sometimes it is complicated working with foreign people, because of the in culture, taste, religion, language and attitude differences. One respondent explains what he considers an adjustment as:

“”There are a lots of adjustments. For example, I am eating rice for breakfast, mostly. But once I’m in Sweden, I can eat bread instead of rice, I can adjust me for your culture.”

Even though difficulties might appear when working with people from other nations, the respondent perceives this as a learning opportunity. Respondents that work in the steward’s department express that they have to learn to cook different kinds of food, from different kinds of countries. One goal is mentioned by both of the cooks: they always want to satisfy every taste of the crew. Their cuisine selection has become more variable, through travelling around the world and working with foreigners. Other respondents describe the work with a crew from other nations as a mutual exchange process of teaching and learning. One respondent describes this like:

“”The positive that they help also the seafarers. As long as we are working together, it is learning and teaching. You have to work together.”

Another seafarer finds the communication with the foreigners good. He explains that he can learn from them and that they, in turn, are always willing to teach him:

“”They teach me their knowledge, it’s nice. Sometimes if I don’t know - I just ask them to learn me.”

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To learn, improve and to adapt themselves is a common important asset in their work as seafarers. As mentioned above, the food is one of the major issues around this discussion. One of the cooks described the issue of finding it hard to satisfy everyone in the crew, expressing himself thus:

“It’s very hard, you cannot please everybody, different food. In the offshore vessel we have about ten different people. The mix is European, English, Asian. So I use to learn everything about cooking Spanish and everything, American I can cook also. So I can adept myself. So I can give food that satisfied.”

The other cook agrees with the importance of improving and adapting oneself and ones work. He wants to grow in his profession and wants to satisfy the crew he is cooking for. He believes that professional and individual development is not only important for himself and the people aboard, it is important for every human being. When ashore he is used to taking different kinds of courses, he expressed himself:

“When I’m not on board (…) I’m always thinking about that - what can I do to improve myself? This time, I have attended this course of food carving, like making flowers in watermelons. It was two days with special training. It’s very very important for me to improve myself. Because you cannot stay only in one (…) So, all people, not only going on board, are the same. So that when I go on board, people be happy about me.”

Even other seafarers express the importance of professional improvement. If you do a good job and improve yourself, you increase your chances of gaining a new contract.

5.4 The life of a seafarer
All of our respondents agree that the life of a seafarer is tough. Being a seafarer affects their lives in different stages, positive and negative. As mentioned above, every seafarer considers the financial aspect of the job a main incentive. This affects their living conditions in a positive way since they are able to support family members. Some of the respondents mention that the best thing is that they are able to spend money without being restrained by a low budget. One seafarer comments:

"Finances is very good. If I want to buy something I can buy (…) If I want to buy I new car I have a new car: (…) That is the benefits of being a seaman. You see, if you want to go to my pocket I still have money. It’s not like before, you have to squeeze and tie your pocket before spending money - think twice. My money here now it’s very much, something like I’m satisfied of what I’m receiving. I can buy everything I want.”

Others mention that they are able to provide their children and/or siblings with education. One respondent explains:

"It helps me a lot. Because, first thing - I help my mother since my father past away. And number two, my sisters and brothers, I send them to school. I pay all expenses on their school, so that’s the big thing that helps me. If I don’t have work abroad, I don’t know…"

Other respondents mention that they have to keep their budgets low since they don’t know if or when they will receive a new contract. Therefore, many of them save money for the future. Usually, the younger respondents save their money so that they, in the future, can afford a house of their own. These respondents also strive for promotion and experiences
throughout the world. They describe the promotion advancement as career opportunities, when you are educated to captain or chief engineer you still have to start on the basic level of the department and then advance further. The older respondents tend to envisage their future ashore, spending time with their families. Some of the older seafarers had already been promoted or did not want to advance further.

Several of the respondents explain that their life as seafarers has affected their relationships, which is an emotional difficulty. Having children and spending time away for long periods is described as difficult. They are not able to raise their children in the same way as if working ashore. One seafarer expresses that it can be hard to have a girlfriend or a wife when signing a contract for many months, because they would then be separated from each other:

“Let’s say you sign it for ten months, if you sign the contract it’s a long time. That’s why the other relationship to your family or maybe your girlfriend your wife sometimes affected (...) For me (...) I cannot have that long relationship because been separated is hard. You are away from your love ones. That’s why for me, I have no experience from relationships - I am single.”

Another seafarer expresses the difficulty in missing out on his children growing up. He describes how once when he signed a new contract, his wife was pregnant and when he came back, his baby could already walk. He explains:

“I leave my house my wife is pregnant. When I come back my baby big, now walking (...). That is the loose of a seafarer. We don’t see that moment. That is the loose.”

Apart from affections in finances and relationships, the respondents mention their health as another consequence in their lives. Some mention that working aboard is very physically exhausting and that you will get tired. There are respondents who tell about hair loss, pneumonia and side effects when taking heavy medication against malaria. These are affects that influence their health when working aboard. Some respondents also mention weight loss when working on vessels, because of the hard work and the gym, which to the Filipinos is appreciated. One seafarer tells:

"In our ship we have this gym. So in the ship I can exercise, but in the Philippines, I only eat and sleep. So I’m getting fat on the Philippines. So I have more health issues when I’m at home than if I’m aboard."

A few seafarers explain that they can afford to start a business at home when working as seafarers. There are some seafarers who have their own businesses. For example, they run a computer shop, a restaurant, a welding shop and one drives a taxi. Those seafarers, who do not run a business of their own, mention that in the future they would like to start one. The salary is therefore an important value for them when starting a business in the future. Some seafarers mention that starting a business is entirely up to them. Some explain that you always have to stand on your own and the opportunity of receiving help is limited in the country. They mention that they do not have any faith or trust in the government.

5.5 The Filipino seafarer
Many of our respondents mention that they have graduated from Philippine Merchant Marine Academy in Manila, a famous school that educates seafarers. This education is has
fees and many respondents explain that their family and relatives had to save money for long periods of time, before they got the opportunity to enter the school.

For many of the respondents it is important to do a good job. It is important that every person involved is satisfied with them as employees, partly because this is a way of assuring their next contracts. All of them mention that the Filipinos are the world’s leading suppliers in seamanship, partly because they are hard working. Some of them also add that there are Filipinos who can be lazy. A couple mention their aptitude in English, which makes them easy to communicate with. Another significant reason, which makes them popular, is their attitudes. One seafarer explains their attitudes as "elastic":

“(…) because we work hard. And because of our attitude. Because the Filipinos attitudes is elastic. Because we adapt the culture from the west. It’s very easy for Filipinos seafarer, to adjust from the west and different nationalities (…). Because in our history - we colonised from Americans, and Europe. That’s why we are so popular. (…) And the language. (…) in Asia, only the Filipinos can understand English. Some can, but they cannot be understand because of the pronunciations. (…) but not all Filipinos are hardworking, some are lazy.”

Respondents believe that they are trusted as a crew. One seafarer expresses that this is one of the reasons why he is proud to be a Filipino seafarer:

“I heard it from my previous vessel, they said that, and when I heard that - I’m proud to be Filipino. They are trusting us. Filipino they trust, they can trust the Filipino.”

Another seafarer expresses his thoughts around Filipino seafarers:

"Commonly what I see - there is always, and will always be a Filipino aboard."

Some respondents mention that the Filipino seafarers are referred to as “heroes”. Others mention concepts such as “idols” and all of the respondents agree that the work as an international seafarer is highly ranked. They mention the importance of bringing dollars into the country and the benefit of not having to pay taxes. One respondent expresses:

“We are heroes because we give dollars to our country. (…) Our dollar is something very important to our country. So we are the one giving our country dollars. They are very proud - they call us heroes. That’s why we don’t pay any tax.”

Several of our respondents would like to work ashore. However, the labour market in the Philippines is not made for everyone. The competition is hard because the population is too numerous for the labour market to handle. The respondents describe that many Filipinos only see opportunities of employment abroad partly because the salary is better there.
6 Discussion
This chapter will present a discussion concerning our result, where we shall link the previous research, theoretical approach and empirics together with our own thoughts. This chapter also includes a discussion concerning our method, where we are going to formulate a critical reflection.

6.1 Discussion of results
Below, we will discuss the results connected to our aim. To simplify the reading, we have divided the discussion into different headlines. The headlines are: *Filipino seafarers working on international vessels*, *Working conditions* and *The impact on life*.

6.1.1 Filipino seafarers working on international vessels
According to the European seafarers, the choice of being a seafarer is partly by tradition, either in the family or in their society. Other reasons are the well-paid wages and the opportunity to travel (Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 128-131). In our research, we noticed three comparable reasons and incentives: tradition in family, well-paid wages and the opportunity to travel for free. The family tradition was for the respondents one of the main reasons. Many of them had a relative who was working or had been working aboard a vessel. This has also been clarified in Martins et al. (2004, pp. 1544-1559) research about OFW.

The tradition in society that the European seafarers mentioned was not mentioned by our respondents, although we can still compare this with the extensive tradition in the Philippines of being a seafarer. As mentioned earlier, 28 per cent of all personnel involved in maritime seafaring are Filipinos (Zhao & Amante, 2005, p. 537). Our seafarers claim that this is because of the high unemployment rate in the Philippines and because the profession leads to employment.

Many of our respondents mention that the well-paid wages are optimal when choosing to be a seafarer. Wages are a hygiene factor that is only able to protect the worker from being dissatisfied and prevent poor job performances (Herzberg et al., 1993, pp. 113-115). We believe that wages do have a more extensive impact for our seafarers than what Herzberg states, since previous research and our research shows that wages are an important source when choosing to work as a seafarer. The importance of wages was in our research not only important when choosing the profession, but also one of the main factors when it came to being pleased with the job. For example, many of our seafarers explain that they have to work aboard to be able to support their family. Martins et al. (2004, pp. 1544-1559) also illuminated this in his study where the OFW sent their earnings back home to their families.

The well-paid wages are a requirement if the respondents want their families to live a reasonably decent life in the Philippines. Respondents mention that they would rather work ashore, but that it would be impossible. We believe that this issue is very burdensome and difficult for the respondents. Being a seafarer is a sacrifice and they have to pay the price when not being able to spend time with their families.

The opportunity to travel for free was something all seafarers in our research mentioned. Some of them were eager to see and explore the world around them. This was the finest part of being a seafarer. Some seafarers mentioned that, in the future, they would like to start
their own businesses. Previous research declares that the government can help the Filipinos with allowances (Martins et al., 2004, pp. 1545-1557). Although our respondents explain that you have to do it on your own, that the government won’t help you. We believe that the situation in the Philippines, including the government, is very complicated and that the population basically have to get along by themselves. This might lead to a great demand for work, and we believe that many people are prepared to do anything for a job.

6.1.2 Working conditions
According to previous research, crew agencies are the essential way of getting employed as a seafarer, although after joining a crew agency, the applicant still has to apply for contracts (Zhao & Amante, 2005, p. 541). The ship management had employed every individual participating in our research, although they only got paid per contract. Some of the seafarers were at the office applying for new contracts. The respondents explain that they apply for several crew agencies simultaneously to enhance their chances of getting a contract, as once they finish a contract they stand without wages.

When applying for many crew agencies and different contracts, our seafarers have to be able to be flexible in the cognitive dimension (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 61-71). Some of them also mention that they meet up with other seafarers in the Rizal Park, where they exchange information around crew agencies. Those respondents living outside of Manila mentioned that they had to rent crowded apartments when applying. This is also mentioned in Zhao and Amantes (2005) research, where Filipino seafarers have to pay for renting apartments (Zhao & Amante, 2005, pp. 541-542). We believe that this is an issue for our respondents. Instead of spending valuable time ashore with their families, they have to search for new employment to survive. Some respondents also mentioned that they had to keep the budget low, because they did not know if or when they would receive a new contract. We registered that many of our seafarers were highly tied to and dependent on the contracts.

At this particular company, the seafarers’ contracts last for between 2-6 months. This is shorter than what Zhao and Amante (2005, p. 542) declared in their research. Our respondents mention that they would like to have shorter contracts, and that this is a benefit that the ship management offer. We noticed that those seafarers who had higher positions in the hierarchical system aboard had shorter contracts and the respondents with the lowest positions had the longest.

Our seafarers chose this ship management because they treat their staff well and always pay their wages in time. The ship management also offer them insurances for themselves and their families. Before beginning a contract they are able to take courses in the training department. A decent company policy and proper administration are important hygiene factors (Herzberg et al., 1993, pp. 46-48) and we believe that this is important, partly because the company culture affects the employees.

Upon asking our seafarers what the hardest part of their profession was, they mentioned the rough sea along with the tough and stressful work that sometimes gets dangerous. They mention that the hard work might sometimes affect their health. Since our seafarers experience their work this way, we believe that this can lead to dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg et al. (1993) the environment is included as a hygiene factor, and it might lead to dissatisfaction if not satisfactory. The Taiwanese seafarers also experience hard work and stress. This strengthens the assumption that the environment aboard may not be the most adequate place to practise work.
However, the environment has its benefits in nice cabins, gyms and other spaces. These are spaces where our seafarers spend their spare time, some mention that these rooms are in better, nicer condition than their actual homes. This could be explained by the fact that 81 per cent of the Filipino seafarers have a background of high poverty (Zhao & Amante, 2005, p. 539). Furthermore, we noticed that the respondents with the lower positions were more satisfied than the respondents with higher positions. This could be explained by the environmental conditions, which to the respondents with lower positions are much better than in their actual homes. Though, these respondents tell off dangerous and stressful work, which can be explained by the manual and physical nature of their work, compared to the white-collar nature of the work that the respondents with higher positions perform.

Nohria et al. (2008) believes that a successful management generates motivated employees. It is essential to have clear decisions within the organisation, as this communication is very important (Nohria et al., 2008, p. 83). The basic system of the organisation on our seafarers’ vessels is hierarchy. They describe the communication as clear and functional and since the professions are well defined, they know each responsibility that every individual carries. Should a problem occur, they refer to the individual whom it may concern. According to this, we believe that the vessels have a clear management and it seems like the communication is straightforward. According to our seafarers, there are opportunities for advancement. Many of them see themselves in higher positions in a few years. One reason why the European seafarers were staying at sea was because of their ambition to advance (Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 131-132). Advancement is a motivating factor, which means that our seafarers can be pleased since there is an opportunity of advancement (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 46). We noticed that the younger respondents with lower positions strove for promotion. This was, for some, an important source of being pleased with their work.

A well-established reward system is able to generate motivated employees (Nohria et al., 2008, p. 81). As mentioned earlier, the well-paid wages are very important for our seafarers and they are highly pleased with them. These wages affect their lives in many ways. They are saving their money to pay for the education of family members, buying a house of their own, starting a business along with other investments. Several of our respondents had their own business and others had intentions of starting one. This is usual for the OFW (Martin et al., 2004, p. 1557).

All of our respondents have their own specific working tasks, which for every seafarer aboard is clear. Most of them are specialized and has their own assignments, they also delegate tasks to the seafarers in lower positions. This delegating of responsibility is an important hygiene factor (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 47). Our respondents express that every person on a ship is important. Every seafarer is satisfied with his working tasks. According to Herzberg et al. (1993) it is important to have positive feelings concerning the actual doing of the job to stay motivated (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 48).

All the respondents are willing to learn more and seek new knowledge, partly for themselves and partly because they want to satisfy others. One seafarer tells about taking courses when on vacation, because of the importance of improvement. Many of the seafarers explain that improvement is a way of ensuring a new contract. Nohria et al. (2008) believe that the job designs are important in order to keep the employees motivated. The job has to be meaningful, interesting and challenging (Nohria et al., 2008, pp. 82-83). We believe that one specific task is what makes a job meaningful. The eager to learn more makes the work interesting and challenging. According to the cognitive dimension, the individual always has to search for new knowledge (Allvin et al., 2006, p. 70). This is something that our seafarers
seem to be aware of because of their willingness to improve. This can also be synchronized with the existential dimension. Today, independency and personal development are important sources of survival in the labour market (Allvin et al., 2006, p. 95). The seafarers’ ways of collecting important knowledge is what makes them grow as individuals, thus making them more able to survive on the labour market.

Concerning something previously mentioned, we believe that many seafarers do not take education for granted. Education is simply too expensive for many Filipinos. However, our respondents mentioned a sense of gratitude, since they had an opportunity to educate themselves abroad through the people from other nations. We understood that they seized opportunities to learn from each other in order to improve themselves in other ways than conventional education might be cultural.

The good relationship that our seafarers’ experience with their bosses is a hygiene factor. However, our seafarers state that this depends on the boss’s personality, which they sometimes may experience as less good (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 46-47). Our seafarers value their entire crew and emphasizes their importance. They are living under the same roof and spend a lot of time together. Some define them as brothers and sisters, a great comfort when feeling lonely and missing home. Previous research shows that Filipino seafarers have strong ties to each other. They identify themselves with the crew when in need, as they support them with strength and inspiration (Dimayuga, 2008, pp. 85-88). The social dimension is shown in our seafarers’ obligation to work as a team, where they have to act and impact in situations together (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 61-83).

Our seafarers mention that the friendship, collaboration and openness are necessary when working aboard. It is important to have a comfortable culture, in-between colleagues, since it influences the motivation to work (Nohria et al., 2008, p. 82). Even though the respondents are highly aware of and describe the established hierarchical system aboard, they regard their team and colleagues as family. We believe that they value the crew and the culture aboard since this affects how pleased they are with their work environment. Since they spend a lot of time together and only have each other to address, we believe that it is important to be able to spend time with every employee aboard, regardless of their title in the hierarchical system. We believe that it is not like any other hierarchical system of a regular land-based organisation, simply because they live together. They see each other 24 hours per day; therefore the hierarchical system is different, more humane.

Our seafarers valued the work with people from other nations, as they are able to experience and learn from them. The communication with foreign crew works well, therefore learning and teaching is not a problem. Though, some respondents mention the adjustments they have to accept and adjust to when working internationally. Both Taiwanese and European seafarers had problems when working with foreign people because of cultural differences (Guo et al., 2007, pp 139-140 and Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 132-134). One of our respondents mentions the years of colonisation that the Philippines underwent as an influence as to why Filipinos are so easily adaptable to other cultures. It appears that their societal dimension (Allvin et al., 2006, pp. 61-91) is a benefit because they have knowledge about different cultures and on how to behave in different contexts. McKay (2007) also states the colonisation as a reason of why the Filipinos are successful employees.

Another significant reason of why the Filipino seafarers are popular is because they are educated (McKay, 2007, pp. 623-630). Our seafarers visualize themselves as successful employees because they are friendly, hardworking, trusted and have expansive knowledge in
English. We believe that the fact that the respondents are educated also confirms their successfulness.

6.1.3 The impact on life
Our respondents explain that their profession as seafarers is considered as highly rated. Filipinos sometimes refer to them as “heroes” for bringing dollars into the country and supporting their families. It is a situation that makes them able to afford a nicer standard of living, although they have to sacrifice themselves in expense. This is also mentioned in Martin et al. (2004, pp. 1544-1559) research. Since some of our respondents mentioned this with pride, we believe this was something that made them feel proud about their profession. The status of professions is also mentioned in previous research (Barnett et al., 2006, pp. 128-131).

The impact of being a seafarer is not always positive. When being away for long periods of time, many of our respondents mention that they experience homesickness. Some miss out on important moments of their children growing up and others are unable to have a girlfriend. This is described as a mental difficulty, which according to Guo et al. (2007, p. 135) might lead to psychological problems. As mentioned before, the crew are important when feeling homesick. Other seafarers turn to their religion when experiencing these feelings. Previous research also suggests that Filipino seafarers use their religion for spiritual guidance and blessing (Dimayuga, 2008, p. 85). We believe that our seafarers in many ways feel distressed due to being away from their families and homes.

Previous research states that The Filipino government consider the migration an option for individuals, although it is not an official development strategy (Martin et al., 2004, p. 1558). Many of our seafarers would prefer to work ashore, although a job with the equivalent salary would be hard to find in the Philippines. They also describe how the labour market cannot offer sufficient work related opportunities. Previous research shows that many Filipino seafarers would change citizenship for a job opportunity (Dimayuga, 2008, p. 86). Many of our seafarers only see opportunities aboard, and therefore they choose to work as seafarers as it gives them better working conditions.

The life of a seafarer is tough. Having a relationship with someone is hard and they are missing out when their children grow up. The work aboard is hard and some get physically exhausted. There are many negative aspects when working as a seafarer.

6.2 Discussion of method
Considering the nature of our aim, it would not have been possible to conduct a quantitative study. The qualitative study was therefore optimal. If, for example, the study would have been requested by the ship management, we believe that a quantitative study would have been more appropriate. The results would have been easier to generalize and simpler to draw conclusions out of, therefore more useful for the ship management. The ship management could work preventively with a wider and more generalized study.

The hermeneutic perspective was the right choice for our project, since we examined human subjective perspectives around their work. The semi-structured interview suited our project since it generated the opportunity of being partly open and partly strict. This made it possible for us to get subjective answers and at the same time to keep the respondents sticking to the subject. Our follow-up questions were also a way of keeping them to the subjects, and be able to get more information when interesting subjects came up.
Our thesis is strengthened by a large amount of previous research that has touched upon the subject, although our thesis is unique. We focus on the Filipino seafarers’ experiences around their work and the impact it has on their lives. These ten seafarers have provided us with information, which is the basis of our study.

We believe that a general problem that might occur when you are interviewing people around their work conditions is that they might beautify their experiences since they are aware of their reputation. Nobody wants to get busted back-talking the boss or in other ways criticizing the company. Though, we did not experience this and we did maintain and preserve their anonymity.

The selection of the ship management was a condition for us to carry out the study. The specific company was chosen since we had a contact person who knew the employees at the office. With more resources it would have been possible to perform the interviews at different companies, that way getting a different overview. With more resources, it would also have been possible to initiate the study with a quantitative study and later develop the results to a qualitative study.

Both of us regarded the role as interviewer as tough, since we did not have any considerable earlier experience of carrying out scientific interviews. Despite some practice we did feel unused to it, and it is possible that the empirics were influenced, although we considered the interview template as helpful. The choice of both of us participating during the interviews felt natural and gave us opportunities of supporting each other. The fact that the respondents would feel uncomfortable when both of us were participating, could have affected the empirics. Though we did not experience this problem, the Filipinos seemed very talkative and happy to tell their stories.

We wrote and carried out the entire thesis together since we considered teamwork important when writing a major thesis. With two persons involved, we believed that it would be easier to criticise and to give feedback through the working progress. Though this process was time-consuming, the result, in our view, is that the thesis more analysed and qualified.

Our pre-understanding has not changed, rather been strengthened by the results of the study. This might be explained by the fact that we were well informed about the subject. By doing research before our departure, we prepared the thesis and ourselves for the journey. Though, we believe that you should always be more prepared. The more prepared you are, the more qualified the thesis. Afterwards, there are always things you discover that you could have done differently.

6.3 For further research
We are pleased with the respondents and their involvement. All of them gave us relevant and useful empirical data. The maritime industry and the Filipino seafarers was something unknown to us. Now, that the thesis is finished, we have found different ways of getting deeper into the subject. We believe that seafarers with more experience would be interesting for a new study. Two of our respondents had been seafarers for more than 25 years; they could tell their stories and reflect in a deeper way than the others. They could also create interesting comparisons about their different experience in work. We also believe that it would be interesting to focus on differences between seafarers of different backgrounds or ages. Another point of view for further research would be to concentrate the thesis on female seafarers.
CHAPTER 7

7 List of references


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Dear Sir!

Our names are Jessica & Nina, we are from Sweden. We were awarded a scholarship from our school, which contributed our visit to Manila. Our aim is to do an interesting school project about Filipino seafarers, a bachelor thesis named “Filipinos sailing on the seven seas”. For that, we need you and nine other seafarers’ experiences and thoughts around your life as a seafarer.

We are working from a Swedish anonymity rule, which means that all concerned are and will stay anonymous. The audio equipment is only visible for the two of us, because of our memories. When our thesis is completed, all recordings will be deleted.

You and the nine other seafarers will contribute the centre of our thesis. Without your help, the proceeding of this school project would not be possible and able to implement.

Please accept our thanks in advance.

Many appreciations from Jessica & Nina 😊

If you have any questions or other, do contact us!

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9 Appendix 2

The interview guide

Apart from the questions, below is what we want out of the question. Examples of asking the respondents can be: “can you tell me more about that”, “how do you feel about that” or “what do you think about that”.

1. Tell us about yourself.
   Age – Family – People in household – Education – Resident

2. Tell us about your profession.
   Title – Experiences – Salary – Expectations – Hardest/best parts

3. Tell us about your way to this job.
   Why seafarer – Process – This company

4. Tell us about your own work aboard.
   Tasks/instructions – Responsibility – Feelings – Hours per day/week – Working periods – Food – Brakes

5. Tell us about your ship, or your latest.
   Length of contract – Workplace – Cabin – Restrooms – Environment

6. Tell us about the people on your ship, or your latest.
   Crew – Relations – Fellowship – Friends – Exchange of knowledge – Communication boss/colleagues

7. What do you want from your work?
   Hygiene factors – Motivation factors – Future

8. How do you feel that your work as a seafarer has affected your private living conditions?
   Finances – Relationships – Possibilities in education – Health changes

9. How do you think the surrounding world sees you as a seafarer?
   Other Filipinos in the population – High/low rank – The government – Popular employees