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**CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN TURKISH  
OFFICERS' WORKPLACE: A STUDY ON INTERPERSONAL,  
INTERGROUP AND INTERORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL**

**Egemen ERTÜRK**



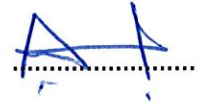

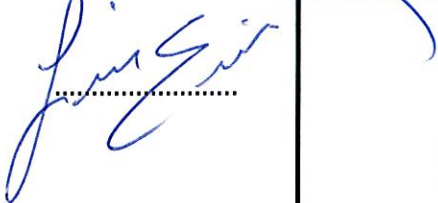
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this doctoral thesis titled as “**Conflict and Conflict Management in Turkish Officers’ Workplace: A Study on Interpersonal, Intergroup and Interorganizational Level**” has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

....../....../2020

Egemen ERTÜRK

## **ABSTRACT**

**Doctoral Thesis**

**Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**

**Conflict and Conflict Management in Turkish Officers' Workplace: A  
Qualitative Study on Interpersonal, Intergroup and Interorganizational Level  
Egemen ERTÜRK**

**Dokuz Eylül University**

**Graduate School of Social Sciences**

**Department of Maritime Business Administration**

**Maritime Business Administration Program**

**“The ship” is an unorthodox workplace due to numerous differences. The work and living spaces are one and the same, there is no place to go to relax when the work is over, family and friends are out of reach and the organizational structure is almost military-like, with high level of hierarchy. Ships are workplaces where working in harmony does not only affect the work performance, but the safety of life and goods on board, and the ship as well. However, despite these conditions that are the backdrop of conflict, and where the consequences of conflict can be a lot more severe when compared to the orthodox workplaces the ship as a workplace and the reasons for conflict that arise among seafarers are yet to be studied in this literature. Due to these reasons, this study aims to fill this gap by identifying the reasons for conflict in seafarers' workplace, perceived by officers themselves and the decision makers who consist of human resources and crew managers of shipowning and ship managing companies. For this aim, a semi-structured interview was carried out with officers who are actively working on board ships. A total of 20 interviews had been carried out with officers, and in those interviews a total of 29 reasons for conflict have emerged. Following focus group study that was carried out by decision makers provided 18 emerging codes. Findings of the study show that there are various differences among officers and decision makers on what constitutes a reason for conflict on board ships. Identification of these reasons will help better**

**understand the conflict situations on board ships as well as contribute to the workplace conflict literature.**

**Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Management, Seafarers, Workplace, Human Resources Managers**



## **ÖZET**

### **Doktora Tezi**

**Türk Zabitlerinin Çalışma Yerlerinde Çatışma ve Çatışma Yönetimi:**

**Kişilerarası, Gruplararası ve Örgütlerarası Boyutta Bir Çalışma**

**Egemen ERTÜRK**

**Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi**

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**Denizcilik İşletmeleri Yönetimi Anabilim Dalı**

**Denizcilik İşletmeleri Yönetimi Programı**

“Gemi” birçok sebeple sıradan bir çalışma ortamından çok farklıdır. Gemilerde çalışma ve yaşam alanlarının aynı olması, mesai bittiğinde gidip rahatlanacak bir yerin olmaması, aile ve arkadaşlardan uzak olma ve yüksek bir hiyerarşiye sahip olan örgüt yapısı ile gemi diğer çalışma alanlarından ayrılmaktadır. Gemiler, uyumlu çalışmanın sadece iş perforansı değil, can ve mal güvenliğini de yakından ilgilendirdiği çalışma alanlarıdır. Bu farklılıklara ve çatışmanın sonuçlarının sıradan çalışma alanlarına göre çok daha ciddi olduğu bir yer olmasına rağmen, bir çalışma alanı olarak gemi ve gemiadamlarının yaşadığı çatışmaların sebepleri literatürde bulunmamaktadır. Bu sebepten ötürü, yapılan çalışma, aktif olarak gemide görev alan zabitlerle yapılandırılmış mülakatlar, ve armatör ve gemi yönetim firmalarının insan kaynakları ve personel müdürlerinden oluşan karar vericiler ile bir odak grup çalışması uygulanarak çalışma alanlarındaki anlaşmazlıkların sebepleri tespit edip, literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Zabitler ile yapılan 20 mülakatta, toplam 29 çatışma sebebi tespit edilmiş olup, takip eden, 6 karar vericinin katılımıyla gerçekleştirilen odak grup çalışmasında 18 çatışma sebebi tespit edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonucunda, zabitler ile karar vericilerin nelerin gemide çatışmalara sebep olduğuna dair fikirleri arasında çeşitli farklar olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu tespitler gemilerde yaşanan anlaşmazlıkların daha iyi anlaşılması, çözülmesi ve önlenmesi gibi hususlarda yardımcı olabilecek olmanın yanı sıra, iş yeri çatışmaları literatürü için de önemli bir katkı sağlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler: Çatışma, Çatışma Yönetimi, Gemiadamları, Çalışma Alanları, İnsan Kaynakları Yöneticileri**



**CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN TURKISH OFFICERS’  
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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ABS	American Bureau of Shipping
CCB	Conglomerate Behavior Theory
CDI	Chemical Distribution Institute
Directive	Directive on Manning Ships with Seafarers
DPA	Designated Person Ashore
FLE	Foreign Language Exam
GT	Gross Tonnage
HR	Human Resources
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
ISM Code	International Safety Management Code
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MLC	Maritime Labour Convention
Regulation	Regulation for Seafarers and Marine Pilots
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
STCW	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
TCC	Turkish Commercial Code
TMLC	Turkish Marine Labour Code

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The first section of this thesis aims to present the problem statement and the purpose of this thesis along with the significance of the study and its research questions.

#### **1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Conflict and conflict management have been important topics for scholars and organizations for the past three decades, however, this emphasis on conflict have not been transferred to one of the most stressful and demanding occupation, seafaring both in academic scene and the legislative bodies regarding maritime labour. Seafarers are an essential part of the global economy as almost 80% of the trade is carried out by maritime transport (UNCTAD, 2019). Despite this fact, seafarers face suboptimal working conditions, in a line of work which by its nature, is temporary, and regulations they are subjected differ depending on the ship's flag (Bauer, 2008). Seafarers work and live in confined spaces, they can stay on shore unassigned to any ship for extended periods of times, and personnel circulation is very high (Glen, 2008).

Considering these reasons, International Maritime Organization (IMO), named the year 2010 as the "Year of the Seafarer". IMO Secretary-General at the time, Mitropoulos (2010) defined the seafaring job as difficult and demanding, without a chance to blow off steam with friends and family, social activities, no change of scenery or place, basically, no chance to properly relax, just the same place for working and living, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, for months. This is the definition of a workplace that is gravid for conflict. The job is demanding and stressful, on top of that, seafarers cannot leave this place of work, they live with the same people they work with, that means any minor inconvenience has the potential to escalate, as it is impossible to ignore someone.

When a literature review was carried out regarding seafarers' workplace conflict, it can be seen that factors that can be the antecedents of conflict such as mental health and psychological stress (Iversen, 2012; Carotenuto et al., 2013) being apart

from their families (Thomas et al., 2003), their health (Elo, 1985; Hansen et al., 2005), fatigue (Wadsworth et al., 2006; Parker, et al., 1997; Smith, 2007) and women seafarers employment (Thomas, 2004; Belcher et al., 2003) were studied along with what can be the consequence of conflict, such as mortality and fatality of seafarers (Roberts and Marlow, 2005; Nielsen and Roberts, 1999) and human factor in maritime accidents (Chen et al., 2013; Chauvin et al. 2013). However, none of the studies handles the issue in any relation with conflict and the notion of conflict seems to be overlooked in the seafarer literature as a whole. While it is understandable to some degree that scholars missed this issue, maybe due to the hierarchical structure and chain of command on ships, which might have led them to believe that it is a conflict management system on its own, what is more important is that organizations such as IMO or International Labour Organization (ILO) would go about without addressing this issue in any of their conventions. Exclusion of conflict as a subject in Standards of Training and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) prepared by IMO, which regulates the competencies required for seafarers to be employed on ships, and Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) prepared by ILO, which regulates the working and living conditions of seafarers on board, seems to be an oversight.

## **1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Conflict in the seafarer's workplace has dire consequences more often, when compared to conflict in ordinary workplaces. A fight among ratings can escalate and result in the death of the master (İstikbal, 2019), a seafarer that is left out by the other crew members can have a nervous breakdown, and try to set the ship on fire (Deniz Haber Ajansı, 2015), a cadet that has been forced to work 20 hours a day, in bad conditions, can die on board (İstikbal, 2019b), unpaid wages can result in mutiny (Voytenko, 2013, Voytenko, 2014), and a mutiny can result in a shoot-out and a grounding (The Maritime Executive, 2016), for instance.

In addition, as an antecedent of maritime accidents, conflict situations on board actually represents a problem for the world as a whole. Since marine accidents could result in a historical legacy being damaged irreparably, seas and oceans being polluted by oil spillages, or if the accident was to occur in the arctic regions, it can threaten the



ecological balance of our world. It can be concluded that conflict on board could result in irreversible damages, with its effect ranging from one people to all.

As it can be seen from the above noted few examples which are just scratching the surface regarding the consequences of conflict in seafarers' workplace, the stakes are incomparable to a regular workplace. This fact makes it clear that the significance of identifying the reasons for conflict and ways to prevent and manage it are non-negligible.

Results of this thesis will provide valuable information for seafarers, managers of shipowning or shipmanaging companies, and governing bodies in relation with seafarers' working and living conditions, regarding conflict and conflict management, while also contributing to the work place conflict literature by investigating the reasons for conflict in a workplace such as the ship.

### **1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This thesis aims to identify the reasons for conflict in seafarers' workplace and develop propositions for requirements regarding the better management and prevention of conflict. For this aim, reasons for conflict for both seafarers and decision makers that consist of human resources managers and crew managers of shipowning and ship managing companies will be identified and compared. In addition, required competencies for conflict management skill of seafarers by the decision makers are aimed to be identified.

### **1.4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

In this exploratory study, two qualitative research methods were used. First, in order to learn about the reasons for conflict, Turkish officers that are actively working were inquired, using the semi-structured interview method. This method was chosen since it is suitable for phenomenological studies, as it allows the participant to talk freely in a conversational manner, about their experiences regarding the subject.

Second method used was the focus group study, which was carried out with the decision makers. This method was chosen as it allows the interviewer to collect data

from multiple experts at the same time, allows group discussion and as it is suitable for the exploration of rather new subjects.

## **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Even though there have been multiple studies that shows well managed conflict can be productive, conflicts are still almost always perceived as destructive and it should be avoided (Tjosvold, 2006). However, the seafaring industry suffers from the fact that conflict merely being ignored, or unknown when it comes to living and working on board. This fact is the main reason behind the first research question of this study, to learn the reasons that cause any person on board ships to experience conflict, in this scope, the research question is developed as follows:

**RQ 1)** What are the reasons for conflict in seafarers' workplace on personal, group and organizational levels?

Ship is not only a different workplace, but a different kind of organization as well. While it has its own organizational structure and dynamics, the ship has an interdependent relationship with the shipowning/ship managing company on shore and those who work on board are employed, and have their needs tended by managers working in these companies. Therefore, their understanding regarding conflict is essential for what those working on board experience. Thus, the study aims to find out the difference in how the actual workers and managers perceive what induces conflict. The second question is developed as follows:

**RQ 2)** What are the differences in perceived reasons for conflict among seafarers and decision makers?

As previously stated, a well-managed conflict can be productive and positive, especially in a workplace such as a ship, where a person cannot have a change of place or scenery in order to gather their thoughts. In order to properly manage a conflict situation, one needs to be competent to deal with this complex phenomenon. Seafarers

are expected to be competent in many various fields and matters in order to be eligible to be employed on board, in this study it is argued that conflict management should be one of these competencies and the next research question aims to find out what is required for such a competency. The question is developed as follows:

**RQ 3)** What are the competencies required for seafarers regarding conflict management?

## **1.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, its main limitation is the sample size, and its focus on Turkish seafarers. Due to these facts, this study may lack generalizability.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

In this section of the thesis, the term “conflict” and “conflict management will be defined. Types of conflict will be handled in terms of their functionality, their emergence and their range. These ranges include personal, group and organizational conflicts. Following that, conflict management and related conflict management theories will be explained. With this section it is aimed to construct a better understanding on what is “conflict” and how it can be managed.

#### **2.1. DEFINITION OF CONFLICT**

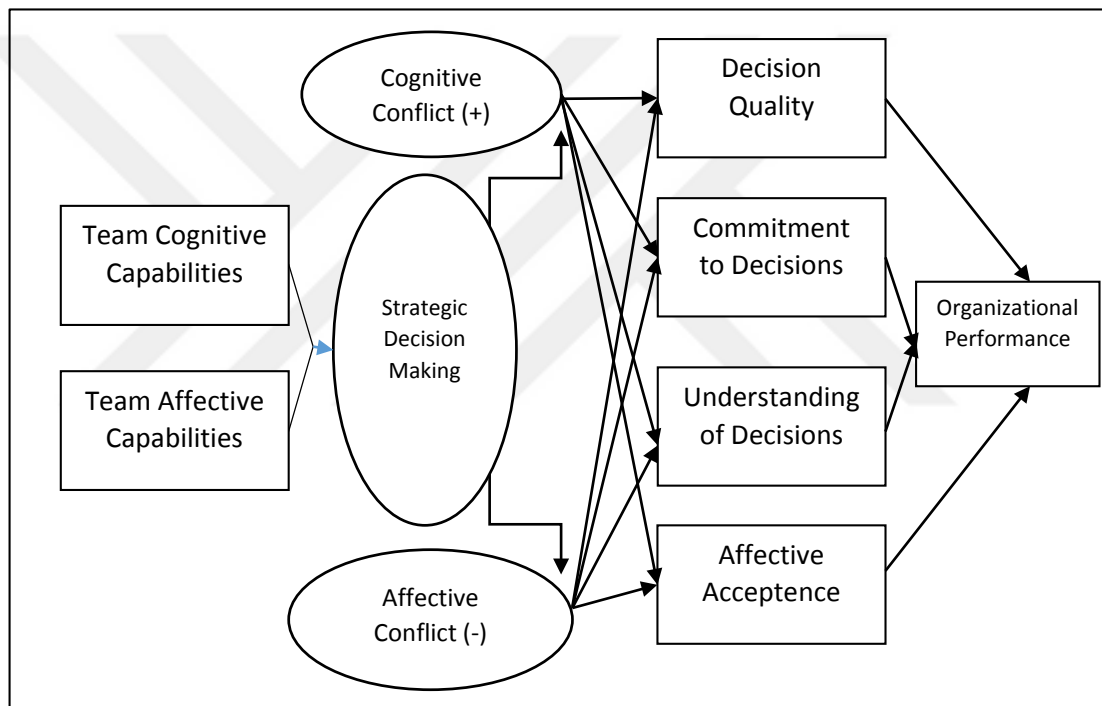
The term “conflict” has various meanings depending on where it is used. In business sense, conflict also has multiple definitions produced by numerous authors and scholars with slight differences and nuances. Proksch (2016) defines conflict as the interaction of multiple people pursuing a common goal, Griffith and Goodwin (2012) give depth to this definition by stating the people who are in pursuit of a common goal are independent, the common goal is incompatible, and the pursuit itself is competitive and Jeong (2009) underlines the expression of differences among multiple people often manifest itself with intense hostility. It can be deduced from the definition of these authors along with many others that, conflict arise when same goal is chased by more than one person, which cannot serve all without compromise, creates friction and disagreement among parties involved.

#### **2.2. TYPES OF CONFLICT**

Conflict can arise from any reason and cover various ranges. The dominance however, is shown around the classification of conflict with task related conflict and relationship related conflict. In their research, Jehn (1997) lists the classifications of scholars studying conflict starting with Guetzkow and Gyr (1954) who classify conflict as “affective”; which refers to conflict in interpersonal relations and “substantive”, which refers to conflict that involves the task of the group. Coser (1956) names the

same concepts as “emotional conflict” and “goal-oriented conflict. However, Amason (1996) distinguishes the conflict types as “cognitive” and “affective”. According to Amason and Schweiger (1994), cognitive conflicts arise when a group is working toward a common goal and in such a process, the conflict that surface regarding how to reach that goal produces strategic thinking, innovation and thus provides a positive outcome. On the other hand, affective conflict; also known as “psychological conflict” presents itself when parties find their feelings and emotions coincide while working toward said goal.

**Figure 1:** Conflict’s Effect on Strategic Decision Making



**Source:** Amason, A. (1996)

Due to its various nature, there are more than one way to classify types of conflict. Akova and Akin (2015) analyzes the most faced types of conflict in businesses in accordance with their functionality, emergence, range and place in organizational hierarchy.

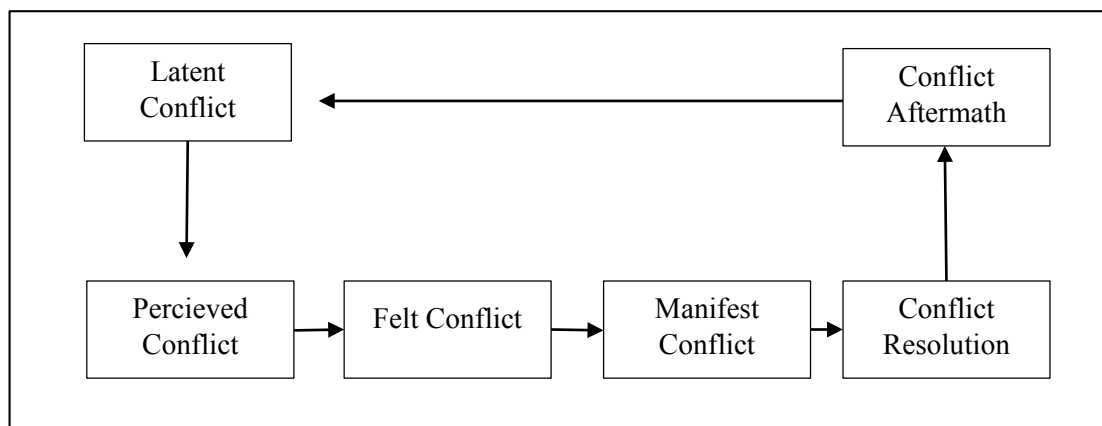
### 2.2.1 Conflict Types in Terms of Their Functionality

Conflict types in terms of their functionality are classified as functional conflicts and dysfunctional conflicts. The logic behind this classification is fairly straight-forward. In times when a certain conflict is harmful for the organization on the path to achieve its goals it is classified as dysfunctional conflict. Whereas a conflict that contributes to the efforts by providing information on what part of the process needs improving or by stimulating change and innovation, can be classified as functional conflict (Koçel, 2001).

### 2.2.2. Conflict Types in Terms of Their Emergence

Pondy (1967) laid the foundations of classifying conflicts in terms of their emergence and came up with the now generally accepted conflict episode concept. His four level of concepts are widely acknowledged by the scholars and represent certain points of time in the conflict life cycle. Below figure shows the Pondy's Conflict Episode Concept.

**Figure 2:** Pondy's Conflict Episode Concept



Source: Pondy, L. (1967)

In the latent conflict stage, the reasons for a conflict to arise are present, it represents a potential for conflict which is mainly due to competing for scarce resources, difference in goals, role conflict and such (Pondy, 1967). Perceived conflict occurs when parties feel (perceive) there is indeed a conflict in place. Feeling of being hard-done by, or unacceptance are indicators of perceived conflict (Seval, 2006). Suppression mechanism and attention focus mechanism comes into play in order to limit the perception of conflict in one's awareness (Pondy, 1967). When the conflict is not only perceived but now felt; along with emotions such as anxiety, tension and disaffection, but yet to be addressed by the parties, this stage is called felt conflict (Gaski, 1984). In last stage, as the name suggests, parties manifest action over the conflict that arose. Manifestation can be done via verbal arguments, open aggression or physical altercation in extreme cases. Parties may aim to get back at each other by attempting to thwart one another's goals (Jones, 2012).

### **2.2.3. Conflict Types in Terms of Their Range**

The range of a conflict defines the parties involved in said conflict. The parties can be people, groups or even organizations.

#### **2.2.3.1. Personal Conflict**

In the personal conflict literature, the phenomenon is handled under two sections, one of which is the intrapersonal conflict which describes the conflict experienced by a person on their own, and the other is interpersonal conflict which describes the conflict that arise among at least two individuals with competing goals.

##### **2.2.3.1.1. Intrapersonal Conflict**

Lewin's (1935) research is one of the pioneering studies focusing on intrapersonal conflict, in which the author classifies intrapersonal conflicts experienced by an individual in three multiple-goal conflicts, the first being the tendency to pursue two separate goals with positive expected outcomes

(approach/approach), second being avoiding two separate goals with negative expected outcomes (avoidance/avoidance) and the last being both pursuing and avoiding a certain goal with a positive and negative expected outcomes simultaneously (approach/avoidance). Higgins' (1987) work approaches the matter from a slightly different perspective, stating an individual has two actual selves, the kind of person they believe they are, and the kind of person they believe the others think they are. This concept has been labeled in later studies as "want self" and "should self" (Loewenstein, 1996, Bazerman et al., 1998, O'Connor et al, 2002). The "want self" craves immediate benefits whereas the "should self" is more focused on long-term consequences of actions and the intrapersonal conflict stems from the restraint of "should self" over the "want self".

In an organizational context, Lewin (1948) describes the interpersonal conflict as incompatibilities and discrepancies that often occur when an employee of an organization is asked to perform a task outmatching their expertise, interests or values. Intrapersonal conflict in an organizational framework stems from five sources which are misassignment and role ambiguity, inappropriate demand on capacity, organizational structure, supervisory style and said individual's position in the organization (Cox, 2003).

#### **2.2.3.1.2. Interpersonal Conflict**

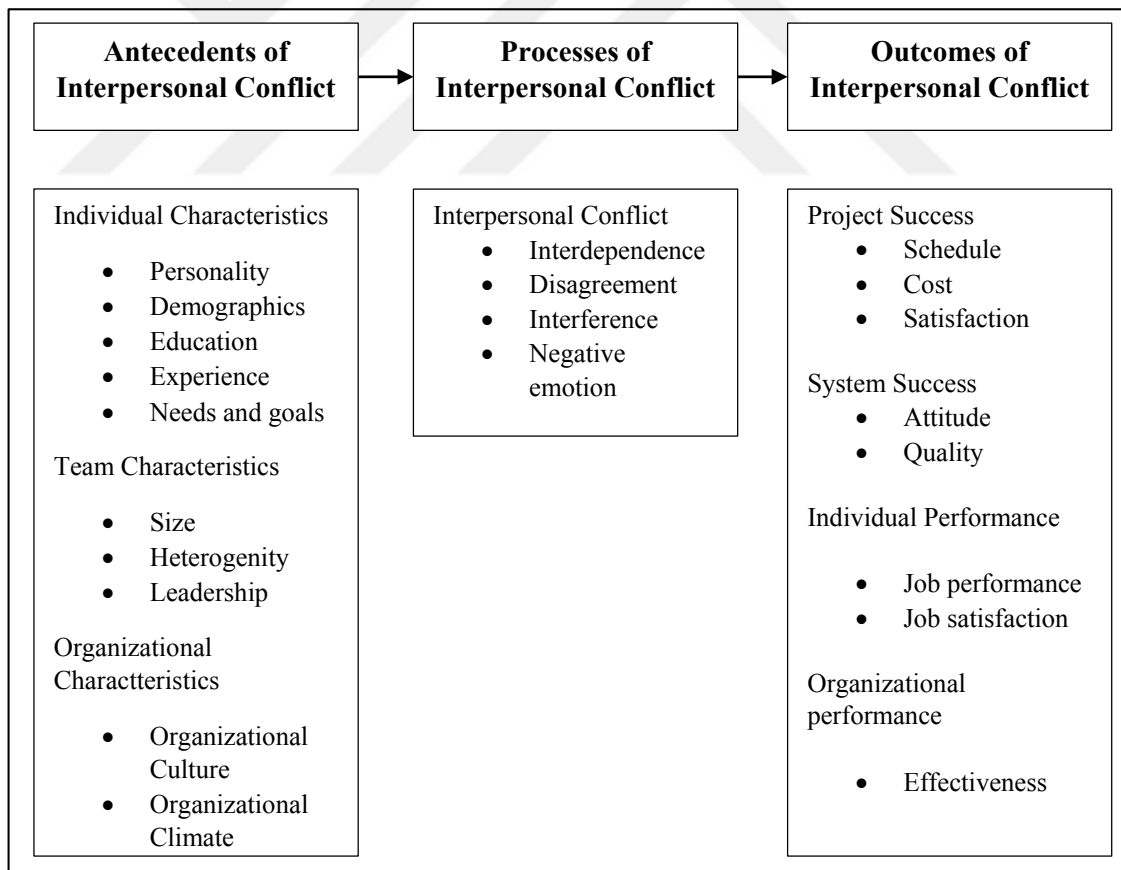
Interpersonal conflict in the workplace can be faced as a minor disagreement or can be as severe as physically attacking a coworker (Spector and Jex, 1998). While there are many varying definitions for interpersonal conflict, the studies of Galtung (1996); Pondy, (1967); Putnam & Poole, (1987); Thomas, (1992a, 1992b); Wall & Callister, (1995) provide three general themes that are present in any interpersonal conflict incident: interdependence, interference and disagreement. Interdependence exists when for each party, reaching their individual goals somehow depends on the actions of the other. Disagreement exists when parties think there is a difference in their goals, values, needs or opinions. Interference exists when one or more parties interfere with others in their pursuit for their goals, which results in negative emotion, in this framework Barki and Hartwick (2001) define interpersonal conflict as:



A phenomenon that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals.

Below figure gives an in-depth view of the life cycle of an interpersonal conflict episode. Barki and Hartwick (2001) list the antecedents of interpersonal conflict in four main headings which are individual characteristics of the parties, the characteristics of the team, the characteristics of the project that is being worked on and the characteristics of the organization in question. The resulting conflict of these antecedents can be caused by interdependence, disagreement, interference and negative emotions according to the authors. Lastly, depending by the conflict management style implemented, outcomes of the conflict were categorized depending on the success of the project, the system, individual performance and organizational performance.

**Figure 3: A General Framework of Interpersonal Conflict**



Source: Adapted from Barki, H., & Hartwick, J. (2001)

#### **2.2.3.2. Group Conflict**

As stated earlier, conflict is and will be present in almost all ranges throughout an organization, from interpersonal level, to intragroup and even intergroup levels (Jehn, 1995). In their study, Jehn (1995) transfers Hackman's (1987) description of a group as: (1) having more than two members, (2) being intact social systems with boundaries, so that members recognize themselves as a group and are recognized by others as a group, (3) having one or more tasks that are measurable, and (4) operate within an organization.

Conflict regarding groups can be handled in two different ranges, one being the intragroup conflict, which covers the conflicts arose in a single group, and other being intergroup conflict, which stretches out to two or more groups experiencing conflict with each other.

##### **2.2.3.2.1. Intragroup Conflict**

Group conflicts, intragroup conflict in particular, have generated great interest among scholars over the years. Studies on group conflict have a main focus on relationship and task conflict (Kabanoff, 1991; Kramer, 1991; Amason, 1996; Pelled, 1996; Jehn et al., 1999). Even though the research shows a great lenience towards negative outcomes from relationship conflict (Tidd et al., 2004) and positive outcomes on team performance from task conflict (Jehn, 1995, 1997); It should not be overlooked that task conflict is very much connected with relationship conflict (Choi and Cho, 2010)

##### **2.2.3.2.1.1. Relationship Conflict**

Relationship conflict can be described as incompatibility and disagreements between members of a group on issues which are not related to a task but related to personal issues. Most of the reports on relationship conflict are on issues such as social gatherings, politics, hobbies and gossip (Jehn, 1997). The consequences of such conflicts are listed by (Jehn et al., 2007) as follows: lack of coordination, lack of

cooperation, lack of cohesion, increase in turnover, increase in absenteeism, decrease in satisfaction, lack of creativity, low commitment and poorer performance.

#### **2.2.3.2.1.2. Task Conflict**

Task conflict emerges when members of a group have different viewpoints on how to carry out a certain task (Arazy et al., 2011). Researches on task conflict show both positive and negative outcomes. Earlier studies on group conflict handle the concept as a threat for group performance and encourage the prevention and immediate resolution in order to increase organization performance, whereas some researchers found that properly managed task conflict can provide improved group performance, group satisfaction (DeChurch and Marks, 2001) and team cohesion (Tekleab et al., 2009)

Choi and Cho (2010) found the relationship conflict to be the precedent of task conflict, and stated the importance of this finding based on the sources of relationship conflict to be known, compared to the more ambiguous sources of task conflict and offers that starting the conflict management process from relationship conflict could be more helpful in prevention or management of task conflict.

#### **2.2.3.2.2. Intergroup Conflict**

As each member of a group is a person, conflict among groups cannot be analyzed without the realization of the individual and interpersonal aspects. Tajfel (1982) defines the intergroup conflict as opposing group goals in obtaining scarce resources which in result births competition whereas superordinate goals birth cooperation. This definition is not that different of interpersonal conflict, but on a group scale.

While some research find increase in interpersonal relations will decrease the perceptions of intergroup conflict and positively affect said interpersonal relationships, since the whole of interpersonal relations are not and could not be positive, there are also findings suggesting the negative experiences can further fuel the intergroup conflict in the same way perceived intergroup conflict could hinder the interpersonal

relations of the group members (Labianca et al. 1998). Before reaching its peak, intergroup conflict can manifest itself through prejudice, discrimination and oppression. If things get more heated it can escalate to dispossession, physical harm or even killings. For such reasons, proper management of intergroup conflict is a critically important issue (Fisher, 1994)

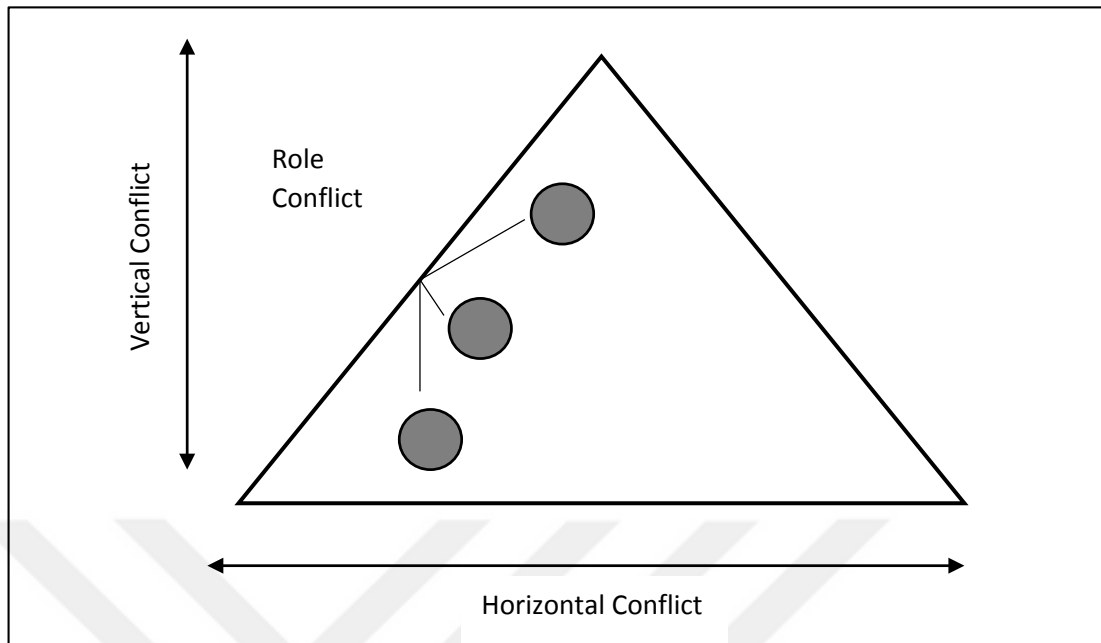
In order to elaborate the reasons for intergroup conflict, one must consider the human factors such as leniency to categorize objects and people immediately upon their perception, a fundamental cognitive process that shapes intergroup conflicts (McDonald et al., 2012). Apart from the individual factors, several group perspective approaches are studied in order to explain the phenomenon that is intergroup conflict.

Ethnocentrism is the practice of putting the in-group (one's own group) in the center of everything and scaling everything else with reference to it (Hewstone and Greenland, 2000). Social Identity Theory, which is developed by Tajfel et al. (1979) assumes people pursue a positive social identity and in this pursuit become members of social groups that can elevate them to that positive identity. In order to achieve this identity, one compares their in-group with others to form a positive psychological difference. Realistic Group Conflict Theory, developed by Sherif (1966) argues intergroup conflicts are more rational than psychological as the groups compete for scarce resources and incompatible goals.

#### **2.2.3.3. Organizational Conflict**

Conflict can happen in and among organizations, the conflicts experienced among the personnel and/or certain groups in the same organization are called intraorganizational conflicts, whereas the conflict between two or more organizations in a system is called interorganizational conflict. Internally, conflict in organizations can be observed on three levels as shown in the figure below (Eunson, 2012)

**Figure 4:** Levels of Organizational Conflict



Source: Eunson (2012:19)

The definitions and explanations regarding these four levels of organizational conflict will be provided in the following section with depth.

#### **2.2.3.3.1. Intraorganizational Conflict**

The title of intraorganizational conflict covers the previously mentioned types of conflict (intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup conflicts) that occur under the roof of a single organization. However, the level of said conflicts can be witnessed in three different hierarchical directions which are role conflict, vertical conflict and horizontal conflict.

##### **2.2.3.3.1.1. Role Conflict**

Role conflict can manifest itself in different ways, it can be caused by incompatible expectations toward the role by members of the organization, incompatibility of two roles held by the same person, or incompatibility of the requirements of a role and the needs of the person who is in that role (Katz and Kahn,

1978). The results of role conflict can be dire for an employee as it can result in stress, dissatisfaction and decrease in effectiveness (Rizzo et al., 1970).

#### **2.2.3.3.1.2. Vertical Conflict**

Vertical conflicts are the ones that occur in the superior-subordinate relationship. These type of conflicts can be more frequently observed with organizations that have high levels of vertical hierarchy and strict, formal structure (Koçel, 2011, Spaho, 2013).

#### **2.2.3.3.1.3. Horizontal Conflict**

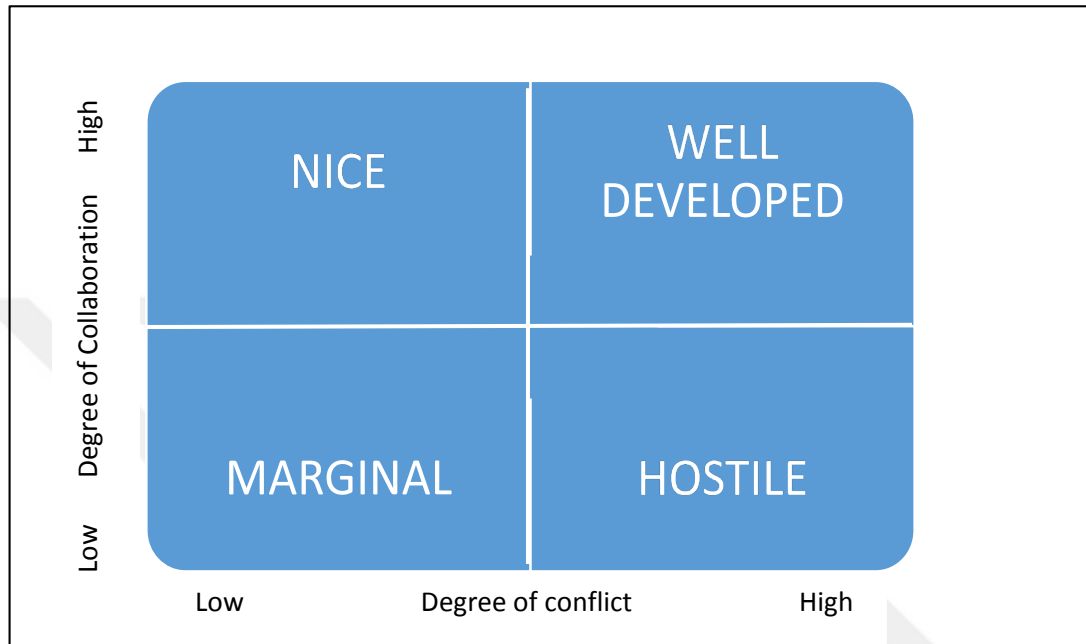
Horizontal conflicts occur among people that are on the same hierarchical level in the organization, and can be caused by competing for scarce resources or the same goal (Spaho, 2013:106). A poorly managed horizontal conflict can be significantly harmful for the organization whereas if the conflict could be well managed it can bear fruitful outcomes for the organizational dynamics (Seval, 2006)

#### **2.2.3.3.2. Interorganizational Conflict**

Interorganizational conflict is looked upon as a special case of lateral intergroup conflict between separate yet functionally interdependent units connected along the flow of work (Pruden, 1969). As organizations are functionally interdependent and the resources are scarce, it is inevitable for interorganizational relations to be absent of conflict. Managing these conflicts effectively and distinguishing constructive and destructive conflict is essential for the stability and the performance of the relation (Assael, 1969). Assael's work concluded five conditions for constructive conflict as (1) a critical review of past actions, (2) more frequent and effective communications between disputants and the establishment of outlets to express grievances, (3) a more equitable distribution of system resources, (4) standardization of modes of conflict resolution and (5) creation of a balance of power within the system.

Vaaland and Hakansson (2003) build on this idea, considering the functional conflict, and approach the matter through two perspectives; conflict itself and collaboration. Figure 4 shows how the degree of conflict and collaboration would result in an organizational relationship.

**Figure 5:** Degree of Conflict Versus Degree of Collaboration



Source: Vaaland, T. I., & Håkansson, H. (2003)

In these four possible combinations, authors highlight the last one with high degree of collaboration and high degree of conflict, which is named well-developed as in this situation the parties do not let the frequency of conflict to be destructive, instead both, through collaboration, achieve their respective goals simultaneously.

In this framework, Moiriar and Rogers (1979) classifies conflict in interorganizational relations in two dimensions which are structural conflicts and operating conflicts. Structural conflicts happen over the identity and responsibilities that govern a relationship. Failure to establish and/or maintain the fundamental rules and principles of said relationship, mainly caused by constraints of external nature would result in a structural conflict, which, in turn paves the way for operating conflicts. Operating conflict is the problem-solving process in the organizational relations. The frequency of disagreements in relations that involves competing goals

and the process of solving said disputes is the main aim of this type of conflict's management.

### **2.3. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT THEORIES**

Conflict management has become an important subfield of organizational behavior in a short period of time and thus, the concern for conflict's management grew rapidly (Kozan, 1997: 338). Conflict management is not to be mistaken for conflict resolution, which implies the act of eliminating or terminating of a conflict situation (Rahim, 2000: 75). While conflict have been associated mostly with negative consequences, moderate levels of conflict can act as a stimulant for individual, group and organizational performance (De Dreu, 2005: 1). The main aim of the conflict management is to limit the destructive aspects of conflict, while trying to achieve a solution that is acceptable and satisfactory for parties involved (Bercovitch, 2014: 109). Throughout the years, studies dealing with conflict management have had different approaches to the definition of conflict and the conflict management process, which birthed different conflict management theories.

Several theories were developed for the subject of conflict management, three of the most relevant ones are the Theory of Competition and Cooperation (Deutsch, 1949), the Dual-Concern Model (Blake and Mouton, 1962) and the Conglomerate Behavior Theory (Van de Vliert et al. 1995).

#### **2.3.1. Theory of Competition and Cooperation**

In his pioneering research, Deutsch (1949a), studies the effects of competition and cooperation in a small group setting through interpersonal interactions of individuals and the analysis of the emerging group process in both competitive and cooperative social settings. Later he goes on to conceptualize the cooperative social situation for a group of individuals and sub-units. His concept for this kind of situation has goals for individuals and sub-units that are interdependent. For any given individual or sub-unit to enter the goal region, all the others that are under



consideration can also enter their respective goal regions. The conceptualization of the competitive social situation consists of “contriently interdependent goals”. In this concept, if one or some portion of individuals or sub-units enter their goal region, the others, to some degree, would be unable to reach their respective goal regions. This was summed up by Deutsch (1949a) as follows: In promotively interdependent goals, if A, B, C, does not obtain their goals, X does not obtain his goal. X obtain his goal only if A, B, C obtain theirs. A, B, C obtain their goals only if X obtains his. In contriently interdependent goals, if A, B, or C obtain their goals, Y does not obtain his goal, Y obtain his goal only if A, B, C do not obtain theirs, A, B, C do not obtain their goals if Y obtains his.

In one of his later studies, Deutsch (2002) summarizes the characteristics of cooperative relations as follows:

1. Effective communication is present, members of the group are attentive to each other, less difficulty in communication and understanding.
2. Friendliness, helpfulness, and less obstructiveness are present and essential.
3. Coordination of effort, division of labor, task achievement, orderliness and high productivity are shown in cooperative groups.
4. Feeling of belonging and self-confidence are obtained in cooperative groups.
5. Willingness to enhance the other's power in order to accomplish group goals increases.
6. Conflicting interest are defined as a mutual problem that can be overcome by collaboration.

Deutsch later lists contrasting characteristics for the competitive process as follows:

1. Communication is lacking as competing members try to get the upper hand by misleading others, this also lowers trust.
2. Lack of helpfulness and obstructive behavior are present and lead to negative attitude among members, people start focusing on the negative aspects of their fellow members.
3. Inability to divide their work as each member duplicates others efforts.

4. Constant disagreement and critical reflection of ideas lowers both self-confidence and the others.
5. Members in conflict try to increase their own power and decrease the others' in the process.

Following this study in which he theorizes what we now call the theory of competition and cooperation, Deutsch (1949b) publishes another study where he tests his theory through an experiment conducted with his students. In this experiment half of the students are exposed to competitive situations whereas the others were exposed to cooperative situations. The first step of the experiment was assigning weekly puzzles for the two groups, which were also divided into smaller groups in themselves. The cooperative group were instructed to come up with one answer for the given problem as a group, and their ranking would be based on the performance of the group and ranked from 1 through 5, the group with the highest average ranking would be exempt from a term paper as a reward. Same procedure would also apply to the competitive group, but with the small difference that the group were announced that the individual performances would be tested and ranked. The one that contributed the most to the solution would be ranked 1 and least would be ranked 5. A similar scenario was applied for another course of his, Human Relations Problem. For this course the students were instructed to discuss in class on human relations and present papers periodically. Again, the cooperative group was encouraged to increase group performance whereas the competitive group were informed their individual performances would be evaluated.

After analyzing the results of this experiment, Deutsch concludes that the hypotheses developed in his preceding study were greatly supported by the experiment. Deutsch (1949b:230) finds the interdependency of cooperative group and the contrient interdependency of the competitive group and traits such as working together, helpfulness and positive communication being present in the cooperative group to be supportive of his theory.

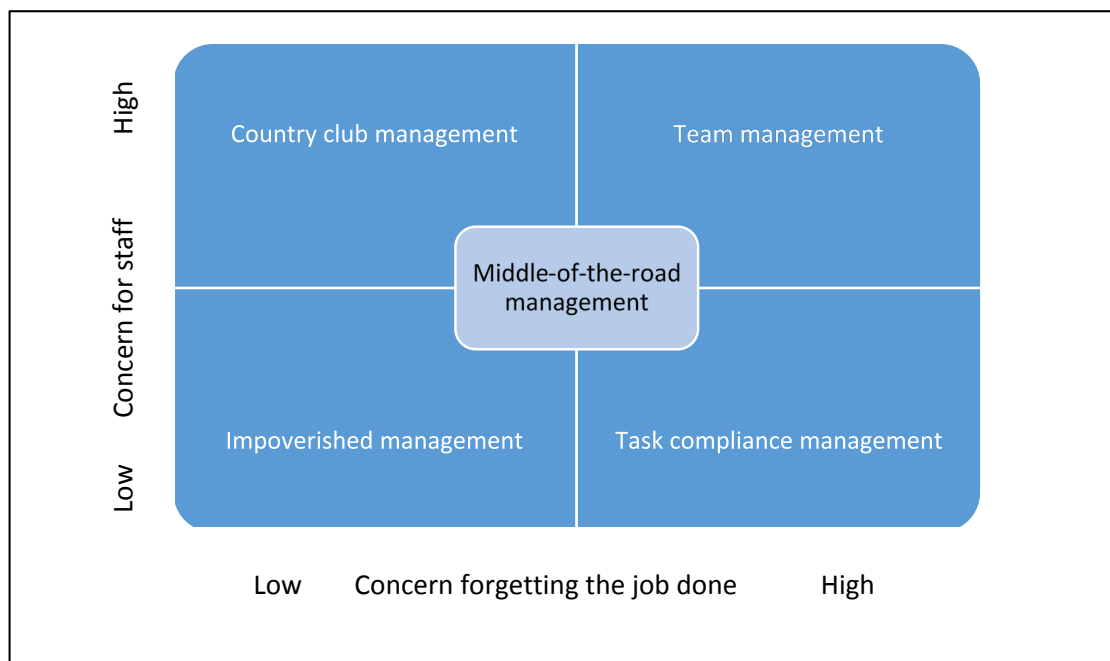
One of the most recent and well received applications of this theory is the study of Tjosvold and Chia (2010). In their study, authors test this theory on the conflict outcomes of two organizations located in Singapore. They find cooperative goals, effective communication and interaction during the conflict and a stronger work

relationship that had been established in prior were associated with positive results. However, the authors also note that competitive environment is not the only source of conflict, in fact the results of their study shows 60% of the conflicts occurred over cooperative goals.

### 2.3.2. The Dual-Concern Model

The Dual-Concern Model is among the most popular, most studied and broadly accepted form of classifying the conflict behaviors (Garcia et al., 2016: 34). The model is based on the assumption that parties' actions in a conflict situation are decided by two concerns: concern for self and concern for others. It was Blake and Mouton's (1962) study that explicitly name-called this concern duality in which they placed (1) organizational needs for production and profit, and (2) human needs for mature and healthy relationships as variables on a grid to identify 5 basic styles of control of managers, which will later become the "Managerial GRID" as it is known in the field of conflict management.

**Figure 6:** The Managerial Grid



Source: Blake and Mouton (1962)

Task compliance management, also known as authoritarian leadership or task management for short, is a behavior which is highly task oriented and almost autocratic towards employees, creativity and initiative are not encouraged and subordinates are expected to follow orders by the letter.

Team management type shows high concern for both task and relationship, the manager leads by example and encourages collaboration among the group, the result is generally an effective and productive set of individuals and team.

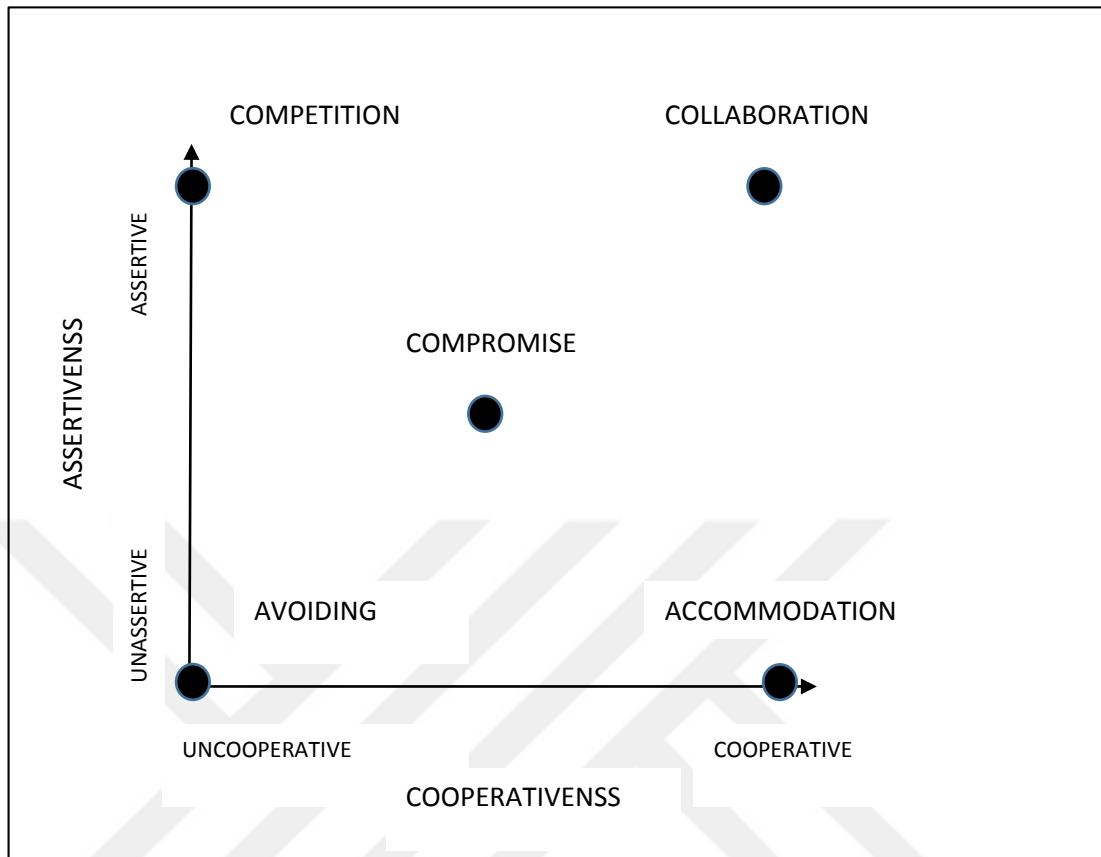
Country club management focuses on relationships and shows lower concern for the task at hand, such managers avoid being authoritative in order to not jeopardize their relationship with the staff.

Impoverished management represents when a manager does not commit to either the task at hand or the relation they have with the staff, as suggested by the name is the least productive type of management, leaving the group of employees without a guide and in among power struggles.

Middle of the road management, or dampened pendulum as it is called by the authors, is a type of management which shows medium amount of concern for both task and staff. It is the act of compromise to balance the needs of the task and the wants of the workers.

Following this research, Thomas (1976) developed a new taxonomy that would elevate this classification of managerial styles from defining just the superior-subordinate relationship to a broader generalization of conflict situations. Thomas and Kilmann (1978) rename the dimensions as assertive (satisfying one's own concerns) and cooperativeness (satisfying other's concerns) and the five styles are called competition, collaboration, avoiding, accommodation and compromise.

**Figure 7:** Two-Dimensional Taxonomy of Conflict Handling Modes



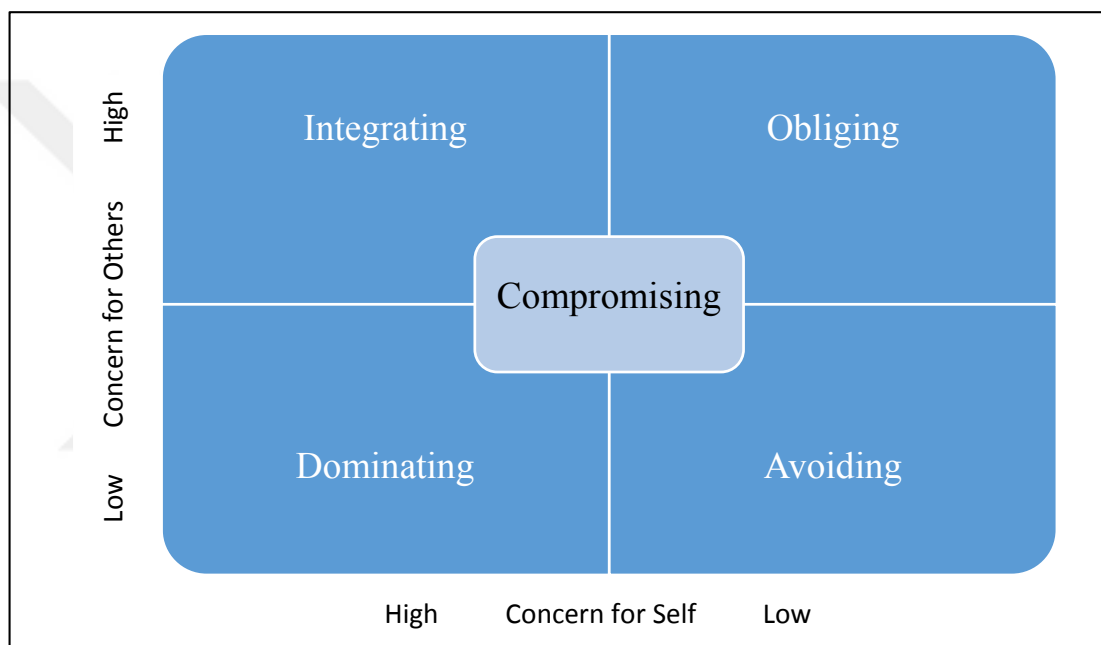
Source: Thomas, K.W. (1992b)

The distinguishing of dimensions is important as Blake and Mouton's previous work only classified the vertical relationship and organizational tasks, this taxonomy can be applied to all kinds of conflict on personal level. This is also represented in the names of the styles of approach to conflict. Competing individual is assertive for its own agenda and shows little to no care for others', an avoiding individual tries to abstain from all conflict situations, accommodating individual tries to please the other party, at the expense of their own needs and wants, and collaborating individual tries to meet their own goal and the others through cooperation. Compromising style, similar to Blake and Mouton's middle of the road management, tries to balance the needs of the parties.

Authors developed a questionnaire to measure these styles using "Management of Differences Exercise", which includes 30 two-option questions to determine the conflict style preference of the participant.

Acknowledging the two previous studies mentioned above, Rahim and Bonoma (1979) develop their taxonomy, with the name of the dimensions slightly changed (concern for self and concern for others) and the styles for interpersonal conflict as integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding and compromising. They classify integrating and obliging styles as positive-sum (win-win), dominating and avoiding styles as negative-sum (win-lose, lose-lose) styles, whereas the compromising style produces no-win/no-lose outcomes.

**Figure 8:** The Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict



Source: Rahim (1983)

After this well-received study, Rahim (1983) develops a measurement for conflict management styles, named Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory II, a questionnaire that consist of 28 items that measure the conflict behavior styles, which is very popular among conflict management studies.

### 2.3.3. Conglomerate Conflict Behavior Theory

In their study, Van de Vliert and Kabanoff (1990: 200-201) criticize the dual-concern model (Blake and Mouton 1964, Thomas and Killman, 1978, Rahim, 1983)

on the matter that the Managerial GRID analyzes the conflict behavior by depending on just two dimensions and five specific styles as points –rather than areas- on that said grid. Authors argue while the name of the dimensions and the styles have changed from study to study, the suggestion that only one of the styles can be manifested by an individual in a conflict behavior is not accurate.

Due to the mixed motive nature of conflict situations, some researchers argue that the parties try to combine cooperative and competitive styles which is the basis of Conglomerate Conflict Behavior Theory (CCB) (Garcia et al., 2016: 35). It was Van de Vliert et al.'s (1995) study that theorized CCB. In the study authors argue that an individual in a severe conflict situation, is likely to de blend or assemble assertive and collaborative behavior in order to achieve an optimum result where both that individuals own goals and the mutual goal of the parties can be achieved. Van de Vliert et al. (1995: 271) support this assumption with strategies that usually produce mutually beneficial results, such as “firm flexibility” and “logrolling”. Prior being the pursuit of one's own interests firmly at the same being flexible with respect to the means for others interests, and the latter, being forcing for something that is important for one's self and unimportant for the other party, and being accommodating for something unimportant for one's self and important for the other.

The testing of the theory was carried out by an experiment, in which the test group (116 Dutch Policemen) was asked to play out a conflict situation with either a subordinate or a superior. The conflict situation was the unauthorized use of a police car without the knowledge of the sergeant in charge of the police cars. The hierarchical relationship among the subordinates and superiors in the police force made the reactions of the subordinates all the more realistic. The preferred styles were found to be forcing, confronting and process controlling. Followed by problem solving, which was not demonstrated as much as the previously mentioned styles, but more than compromising accommodating and avoiding. This was interpreted by the authors as constitution of distinct modes of conflict management. In a later study, Euwema et al. (2003) find process controlling to be the style to produce substantive outcomes while problem solving, confronting and forcing were found to be important for relational outcomes.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SEAFARERS AND THEIR WORKPLACE**

In order to better understand the context of the ship as a workplace for seafarers, this section of the thesis will analyze the organizational structure of the vessel, the definitions of the ranks and professions in a ship, and regulations on working conditions, employment agreements, health and safety of seafarers from both international and Turkish law standpoints. The inclusion of legislations deemed necessary as they represent the first front regarding the prevention of conflict situations, and after its occurrence, the action that must be taken.

#### **3.1. DEFINITION OF SEAFARER**

The term “seafarer” is defined under the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC)<sup>1</sup> as “any person who is employed, engaged or work in any capacity on board a ship” (MLC, art. 2, para.1-h, 2006). Turkish Commercial Code (TCC)<sup>2</sup> defines seafarers as “people working on board a ship as master, officer, ordinary seamen and in other duties” (TCC, art. 934). While the definition in the TCC is similar to MLC, the definition of the Turkish Marine Labour Code (TMLC)<sup>3</sup> is as follows: “people working on board a ship as master, officer, ordinary seamen, with a contract of service are called seafarers” (TMLC, art. 2).

#### **3.2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF A SHIP**

In order to be operated and managed, ships must be manned by seafarers, which is subject to laws and regulations. Every ship must contain the bare minimum number of personnel on board, in order to be operated.

Regarding ships that fly the Turkish flag, these requirements are specified in the Directive on Manning Ships with Seafarers<sup>4</sup> (Directive). The bare minimum

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<sup>1</sup> Convention Signed:23/2/2006, Entry Into Force:20/8/2013.

<sup>2</sup> Official Gazette Number: 27846, Official Gazette Date: 14/2/2011.

<sup>3</sup> Official Gazette Number: 12586, Official Gazette Date: 29/4/1967.

<sup>4</sup> Official Gazette Number: 30856, Official Gazette Date: 8/8/2019.



number of personnel that shall be on board of boats and ships and the proficiency of said personnel are specified in this directive. These numbers and proficiencies specified in the directive are minimums and can be increased and extended by the shipowner, with keeping in mind the capacity of the vessel to be manned with regards to number of beds, cabins and life-saving equipment on board (Directive). As this subject falls under the jurisdiction of the flag state control, each vessel should be manned by the regulations that their own flag state requires.

According to the Directive, and the International Convention for Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW)<sup>5</sup> published by IMO, the proficiencies for seamen are separated in two departments, one being the deck department, the other being the engineering department.

Personnel in deck crew and engine crew have different duties and responsibilities depending on their positions in the organizational structure and their proficiencies.

### **3.2.1. Master and Deck Crew**

In ships, the deck crew consist of oceangoing master, oceangoing first officer, oceangoing watchkeeping officer, boatswain, able seamen and seamen (Regulation for Seafarers and Marine Pilots<sup>6</sup> (Regulation), art.6-12-13-14-16-2-23-24-25). Required competencies for these jobs are provided in the respective sections below.

#### **3.2.1.1. Master**

The master has various definitions from straight-forward to a broad sense in different regulatory bodies. STCW defines the master as the person in command of a ship (STCW, art. I/1). TMLC has a broader definition which is as follow: “Person who has an executive and administrative authority of a ship, and if for mandatory reasons said person is absent, the proxy of said person is called the master” (TMLC, art. 2-c).

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<sup>5</sup> Convention Signed: 7/6/1978, Entry into Force: 28/4/1984

<sup>6</sup> Official Gazette Number: 24832, Official Gazette Date: 31/7/2002

Proficiencies of the master position can be grouped in three under the STCW, and the Directive. These groups are ships of 3000 gross tonnage (GT) or more, ships of 500 GT or less and ships of between 500 and 3000 GT. However, in the Directive, masters working on ships of 500 GT or less can apply for “limited master” certification.

The STCW requires every master on ships of 3000 GT or more to have the appropriate certification. As for ships of 500 GT or more, chief mates who served for 36 months on board of a ship and successfully completed the STCW A-II/2 training can qualify for oceangoing master status. As for Turkish seafarers that will be manned in Turkish flag flying ships, a score of 65 or more achieved in English examination Foreign Language Exam (FLE) or equivalent examinations (Regulation, art.14).

The competencies required in the A-II/2 section of the STCW code are of managerial nature and include the planning of a voyage and conducting navigation, determining the position and fixing position of ship, determining and allowing for compass errors, search and rescue operations coordination, establishing watchkeeping arrangements and procedures, maintaining safe navigation by the use of radar and similar equipment, weather forecasting and understanding of oceanographic conditions, responding to navigational emergencies, maneuvering and handling a ship in all conditions, operating remote controls of engine and engineering systems and services, planning safe loading, stowage securing, care and unloading of cargoes, assessing the reported defects and damages to cargo spaces, hatch covers and ballast tanks, carriage of dangerous goods, controlling of trim, stability and stress, monitoring and controlling compliance with legislative requirements and measures to ensure safety of life at sea and the protection of marine environment, maintaining the safety and security of the ship’s crew and the operational condition of life-saving, fire-fighting and other safety systems, developing emergency and damage control plans and handling emergency situations, organizing and managing the crew, and finally, organizing and managing the provision of medical care on board.

Other duties and responsibilities of the master will be explained in detail in the following sections of the thesis, regarding both Turkish law and international laws and regulations.

### **3.2.1.2. Chief Officer**

Chief officer is the acting chief of the deck department on board of a ship. Planning, execution and control of the work schedule is the responsibility of the chief officer. While the ship is navigational, it is the duty of the chief officer to be on bridge watchkeeping duty during the hours of 04.00-08.00 and 16.00-20.00. First officer acts as a proxy for the master when necessary. The supervision and control of the cabin crew is also the responsibility of the first officer.

The STCW requires every chief officer on ships of 3000 GT or more to have the appropriate certification. As for ships of 500 GT or more, seafarers who served for 36 months on board of a ship and successfully completed the STCW A-II/2 training can qualify for oceangoing chief officer status. As for Turkish seafarers that will be manned in Turkish flag flying ships, a score of 60 or more must be achieved in English examination FLE or equivalent examinations (Regulation, art.14).

As a managing role, the chief officer competency requirements in the STCW code are the same as a master's, and specified in the A-II/2 section of the code and explained above

### **3.2.1.3. Watchkeeping Officer**

Watchkeeping is considered to be an operational duty and thus requires A-II/1 training certification under the STCW to be employed on ships of 500 GT or more, on top of satisfying other requirements such as the completion of 12 months of service on board of a ship and completion of internship as a deck cadet. As for Turkish seafarers that will be manned in Turkish flag flying ships, graduating from a maritime faculty with a bachelor's degree, and a score of 55 or more achieved in English examination FLW or equivalent examinations is required. However, if the candidate is a graduate from a maritime faculty that offers a preparatory English class, they are exempt from this requirement (Regulation, art.14).

The competencies required under the A-II/1 section of the STCW code are of operational nature and include the planning and conducting a passage and determining position, maintaining a safe navigational watch, usage of radar and similar equipment

to maintain safety of navigation, responding to emergencies, responding to a distress signal at sea, usage of Standard Maritime Navigational Vocabulary and usage of English in both written and oral form, transmitting and receiving information by visual signaling, maneuvering the ship, monitoring the loading, stowage, securing, care and unloading of cargoes, inspecting and reporting port defects and damages to cargo spaces, hatch covers and ballast tanks, ensuring compliance with pollution prevention requirements, maintaining sea worthiness of the ship, preventing, controlling and fighting fires on board, operating lifesaving equipment, application of medical first aid on board, and finally monitoring compliance with legislative requirements.

#### **3.2.1.4. Boatswain, Able Seamen and Seamen**

Boatswain acts as the chief of deck ratings personnel and is responsible for the execution of orders of orders given by the first officer. One other responsibility of this job is reporting the need for stores and any breakdowns or malfunctions happening on the deck (Kan, 2019).

Those who successfully complete 24 months of service on board of a ship as able seaman, have the right to apply to be employed as a boatswain after obtaining a certificate on crew management proficiency from the master (Regulation, art.6).

In order to be employed as a seaman in Turkish ships, one is required to be at least 16 years of age and graduated from primary school, and to successfully completed the seamen education program that is stated in the directive in an authorized institution, or documenting that said person fulfilled at least 9 months of their military service as deck private (Regulation, art.6)

The requirements to be employed as an able seaman in Turkish ships are as follows: (1) being at least 18 years of age and graduated from primary school, (2) serving at least 18 months as a seaman on board of a ship or serving at least 12 months as a seaman on board of a ship and having completed the A-II/5 training under the Regulation in an authorized institution (Regulation, art.6).

### **3.2.2. Engine Crew**

In oceangoing ships, the engine crew consist of oceangoing chief engineer, oceangoing second engineer, oceangoing watchkeeping engineer, donkeyman, able engineering rating and oiler (Regulation, art. 6-12-13-14-16-2-23-24-25). Required competencies for these jobs are provided in the respective sections below.

#### **3.2.2.1. Chief Engineer**

Chief engineer officer is responsible for the efficient and economic running of the engine department of the ship. Repair and maintenance of electrical and electronic equipment on board is the duty of the chief engineer. They are under obligation to, plan and execute bunkering, manage the planned repair and maintenance operations and if needed, keep engine watches (Kan, 2019).

The STCW requires every chief engineer officer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW or more to have the appropriate certification. For ships of 750 kW or more, second engineer officer who served for 36 months on board of a ship and successfully completed the STCW A-III/2 training can qualify for oceangoing chief engineer status (Regulation, art. 24).

The competencies required in the A-III/2 section of the STCW are of managerial nature and include planning and scheduling operations, starting up and shutting down main propulsion and auxiliary machinery, operating, monitoring and evaluating engine performance and capacity, maintaining safety of engine equipment, systems and services, managing fuel and ballast operations, usage of internal communication systems, operating electrical and electronic control equipment, testing, detecting, maintaining and restoring electrical and electronic control equipment to operating condition, organizing safe maintenance and repair procedures, detecting and identifying the cause of machinery malfunctions and correcting faults, ensuring safe working practices, controlling trim, stability and stress, monitoring and controlling compliance with legislative requirements and measures to ensure safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment, maintaining safety and security of the ship, crew and passengers and the operational condition of lifesaving, firefighting and other

safety systems, developing emergency and damage control plans and handling emergency situations, and finally organizing and managing the crew.

#### **3.2.2.2. Second Engineer**

Second Engineer is responsible for watchkeeping in the engine room, management of the engine department ratings, execution of the assignments given by the chief engineer, reporting the equipment needed to the chief engineer and the execution of bunkering operations.

The STCW requires every second engineer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW or more to have the appropriate certification. For ships of 750 kW or more, watchkeeping engineering officers who served for 36 months on board of a ship and successfully completed the STCW A-III/2 training can qualify for oceangoing second engineer status (Regulation, art. 23).

As a managing role, the second engineer officer competency requirements in the STCW code are the same as a chief engineer's, and specified in the A-III/2 section of the code and explained above.

#### **3.2.2.3. Watchkeeping Engineer**

Watchkeeping engineer duty is considered an operational duty and thus requires A-III/1 training certification in the STCW code to be employed on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW or more, on top of other requirements such as the completion of 12 months of service on board of a ship and completion of internship as an engineering cadet (Regulation, art. 14).

The competencies required in the A-III/1 section of the STCW are of operational nature and include the use of appropriate tools for fabrication and repair operations performed on ships, use of hand tools and measuring equipment for dismantling, maintenance, repair and re-assembly of shipboard equipment, electrical and electronic measuring and test equipment for fault finding, maintenance and repair operations, maintaining a safe engineering watch, use of English in written and oral forms, operation of main and auxiliary machinery and associated control systems,

operation of pumping systems and associated control systems, operating alternators, generators and control systems, maintaining marine engineering systems including control systems, ensuring compliance with pollution prevention requirements, maintaining sea worthiness of the ship, preventing, controlling and fighting fires on board, operation of live saving appliances, application of medical first aid on board ship, and finally monitoring compliance with legislative requirements.

#### **3.2.2.4. Donkeyman, Able Engine Rating and Oiler**

Donkeyman acts as the chief of engine department ratings personnel and is responsible for the execution of orders of orders given by the second engineering officer. It is donkeyman's responsibility to act and manage the engine ratings in all repair and maintenance jobs on board. In addition, if needed, donkeyman keeps engine watch whether on voyage or in port (Kan, 2019).

Those who successfully complete 24 months of service on board of a ship as able engine rating, have the right to apply to be a donkeyman after obtaining a certificate on crew management proficiency from the chief engineer (Regulation, art. 16).

In order to be employed as an oiler in Turkish ships, one is required to be: (1) at least 16 years of age and graduated from primary school, (2) successfully completed the oiler education program that is stated in the directive in an authorized institution, or documenting that said person fulfilled at least 9 months of their military service as engine private (Regulation, art. 16).

The requirements to be employed as an able engine rating in Turkish ships are as follows: (1) being at least 18 years of age and graduated from primary school, (2) serving at least 12 months as an oiler on board of a ship or serving at least 6 months as a seaman on board of a ship and having completed the A-III/5 training under the Regulation in an authorized institution (Regulation, art. 16).

### **3.2.3. Cabin Crew**

Cabin crew personnel consist of the cook and steward positions, and tend to cooking of food, cleaning and maintaining the living spaces on board, following and ordering provisions and disposal of kitchen related waste.

#### **3.2.3.1. Cook**

The cook is responsible for the execution of kitchen related duties, serving food on the pre-specified times, readying and protecting the provisions and kitchen equipment, preparation of provision demands and disposal of kitchen related waste in accordance with the waste management plan of the ship.

In order to be certified as a cook on a ship, candidates must (1) be a graduate from gastronomy or food related programs of high school or universities or provide a certification that show the candidate had been working as a cook for minimum of 6 months and (2) complete the basic seamanship course (Regulation, art. 25).

#### **3.2.3.2. Steward**

The steward is responsible for the serving of food, assisting the cook in kitchen related issues, cleaning of common spaces and the officers' chambers. In order to become a steward on a ship, candidates must complete the basic seamanship course (Regulation, art. 25).

### **3.2.4. Supplementary Officers**

The list of supplementary officers is given in the Regulation, art. 4 and the list consists of radio officers, electrical officer, medical officers, and cadets. The competencies required for these positions are explained in the following sections.



#### **3.2.4.1. Radio Officers**

Radio officers are supplementary officers that are responsible for the conduction of communication on ships. Standards for radio officers are set in the Regulation on Radio Operators Qualification and Examination<sup>7</sup>. For the last decade or so, in order to save costs and labor, instead of employing separate radio officers, this job is being carried out by minimum of two deck officers that has General Operator Certificate that is acquired in accordance with this regulation (Nas, 2006).

#### **3.2.4.2. Electrical Officers**

Electrical officers are located among the engine crew in the organizational structure of a ship and they are subject to the requirements of the Regulation, art. 25.

In this article, there are four different competencies for electrical officers, these are electrician, electric officer, electronic operator, and electronic officer. A ship can be manned with only an electrical officer, a combination of the afore mentioned, or with all.

#### **3.2.4.3. Medical Officers**

Medical officer position is only required for passenger ships that carry more than 100 passengers and that will sail more than 3 days. Ships that carry less than 200 passengers are obligated to employ one medical officer whereas ships that carry more than 200 passengers are obligated to employ at least one doctor on board (Directive, art. 5).

There are three types of medical officers, these are doctor, nurse, and medical officer.

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<sup>7</sup> Official Gazette Number: 25482, Official Gazette Date: 4/6/2004

#### **3.2.4.4. Cadets**

There are two types of cadets on ships, a deck cadet and an engine cadet. Regulation, art. 25 states that candidates that are students of maritime schools can be employed as cadets on ships for their mandatory internship that is required for their graduation. Directive, art. 9 allows the ship owner to employ one less deck crew personnel if the ship employs a deck cadet, and one less engine crew personnel if the ship employs an engine cadet.

### **3.3. SHIP AS THE SEAFARER'S WORKPLACE**

Seafarers do not work in ordinary workplaces. Their workplace, their home and their get-away are all the same, the ship. The dictionary definition for the word “ship” is “a large boat for travelling on water, especially across the sea” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

There are more specific definitions in related legislative documents, each tackling the definition of the term in accordance with the scope of the concerned legislation. International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)<sup>8</sup>, defines a ship as “a vessel of any type whatsoever operating in the marine environment” (MARPOL, 1973). This broad definition serves the aim of this convention which is preventing marine pollution, so the rules can be applicable to all kinds of seagoing vehicles. MLC (2006) describes the ship as “a ship other than one which navigates exclusively in inland waters or waters within, or closely adjacent to, sheltered waters or areas where port regulations apply”. This definition aims to specify oceangoing vessels for the purpose of meeting the scope of this convention, which is regulating the working conditions of seafarers on commercial ships. TCC, on the other hand, governs the “ship” and “commercial ship” separately. The ship is defined as “any vehicle that is issued for a purpose that requires it to be moving in water, that is buoyant, and not considerably small in size, even in the cases that she cannot move on her own, is considered as a ship” (TCC, art. 931, para.1) whereas the commercial ship is defined as “any ship that has been issued to gain commercial benefit on water, or

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<sup>8</sup> Convention Signed: 17/2/1973, Entry into Force: 2/10/1983.

being used for this aim, is considered a commercial ship regardless of whose account or behalf it is being used for.” (TCC, art. 931, para.2).

The importance of ship’s role as the workplace of seafarer’s stem from the fact that it is not an ordinary workplace or similar to the ones on the land, and seafaring is not an ordinary job. This is the main reason behind IMO naming the year 2010 as the “Year of the Seafarer”. As the secretary general of IMO stated, the ship is the place of work, and also the home of seafarers, with no change of scenery, nowhere to relax properly, and nowhere else to go, 24 hours a day and seven days of the week (Mitropoulos, 2010). In addition to the already harsh work environment, actions taken by shipowners are to increase the productivity of ships result in shorter times in ports, faster turnarounds and most importantly, in an attempt to lower the costs and employing minimum amount of personnel on board (Xu and Zhang, 2016).

### **3.3.1. Regulations on Working Conditions of Seafarers’**

The above mentioned harsh conditions, the amount of personnel working and living on board, and most importantly, the fact that they cannot leave this place for months on end in some cases, requires actions to better the working and living conditions of seafarers on board. There are several conventions and regulations that tackle the issue of seafarers working conditions on ships. Chronologically these can be listed as Accommodation of Crews Convention by ILO, 1970, Merchant Shipping Convention by ILO, 1976, MLC by ILO, 2006 and Crew Habitability on Ships by American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), 2016.

The Accommodation of Crews Convention of 1970 brought regulations on the requirements of accommodation of personnel on board regarding the living quarters, day rooms, bathrooms and other facilities that are essential for basic human living. Later on, ILO published the Merchant Shipping Convention, which regulated the competency and working hours of seafarers on board, manning requirements, safety of life on board, and social security measures. 30 years later, changing technology and global trade called for new regulations regarding seafarers’ life at sea, at this point, ILO came up with MLC, a single, comprehensive body of regulations that covers every aspect of a seafarer’s quality of life and labour. Context wise, it covers the basis of the

two previously mentioned conventions, with amendments made to answer the present needs. Countries who ratified the MLC which already ratified the one or both of the previous conventions are automatically denounced the older ones as MLC is the most recent and complete convention that deals with the same issues.

The Crew Habitability on Ships is developed by the ABS, and it is not an international regulation. ABS provides notations regarding five subjects that affect habitability. These are, accommodation areas, whole-body vibration, noise, indoor climate, and lighting. Depending on how many of the criteria are met, the ship can be notated as HAB, HAB+ or HAB++, and these notations can serve as an indicator for seafarers when boarding a ship.

With regard to its comprehensiveness and the fact that it is the regulatory framework in today's maritime trade, in the following section, articles of the MLC that deals with the workplace conditions on infrastructural level will be analyzed in depth.

#### **3.3.1.1. Maritime Labour Convention on Working Conditions of Seafarers'**

MLC requires its members to meet the criteria set for providing and maintaining decent accommodation and recreational facilities for seafarers working on board. The requirements apply to ships that are constructed on or after the date the convention is in force for the member. Ships built before, are subject to the Accommodation of Crews Convention of 1970. Any new requirements that may arise due to an amendment to the convention would apply to ships constructed on or after the amendment comes in to force for the member (MLC, Reg. 3.1, 2006).

The standards set by the MLC are on the following: the size of rooms and other accommodation spaces, heating and ventilation, noise and vibration and other ambient factors, sanitary facilities, lighting, and finally hospital accommodations

Standards for general requirements for accommodations are listed in the the MLC and are as follows:

a) there shall be adequate headroom in all seafarer accommodation; the minimum permitted headroom in all seafarer accommodation where full and free movement is necessary shall be not less than 203 centimeters; the competent authority may permit

some limited reduction in headroom in any space, or part of any space, in such accommodation where it is satisfied that such reduction:

- (i) is reasonable; and
- (ii) will not result in discomfort to the seafarers.
- (b) the accommodation shall be adequately insulated.

(c) in ships other than passenger ships, as defined in Regulation 2(e) and (f) of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (the “SOLAS Convention”), sleeping rooms shall be situated above the load line amidships or aft, except that in exceptional cases, where the size, type or intended service of the ship renders any other location impracticable, sleeping rooms may be located in the fore part of the ship, but in no case forward of the collision bulkhead;

(d) in passenger ships, and in special ships constructed in compliance with the IMO Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 1983, and subsequent versions (hereinafter called “special purpose ships”), the competent authority may, on condition that satisfactory arrangements are made for lighting and ventilation, permit the location of sleeping rooms below the load line, but in no case shall they be located immediately beneath working alleyways;

(e) there shall be no direct openings into sleeping rooms from cargo and machinery spaces or from galleys, storerooms, drying rooms or communal sanitary areas; that part of a bulkhead separating such places from sleeping rooms and external bulkheads shall be efficiently constructed of steel or other approved substance and be watertight and gas-tight;

(f) the materials used to construct internal bulkheads, panelling and sheeting, floors and joinings shall be suitable for the purpose and conducive to ensuring a healthy environment;

(g) proper lighting and sufficient drainage shall be provided; and

(h) accommodation and recreational and catering facilities shall meet the requirements in Regulation 4.3, and the related provisions in the Code, on health and safety protection and accident prevention, with respect to preventing the risk of exposure to hazardous levels of noise and vibration and other ambient factors and chemicals on board ships, and to provide an acceptable occupational and onboard living environment for seafarers (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 6).

Standards for ventilation and heating are listed in the MLC and are as follows:

- (a) sleeping rooms and mess rooms shall be adequately ventilated,
- (b) ships, except those regularly engaged in trade where temperate climatic conditions do not require this, shall be equipped with air conditioning for seafarer accommodation, for any separate radio room and for any centralized machinery control room,
- (c) all sanitary spaces shall have ventilation to the open air, independently of any other part of the accommodation; and
- (d) adequate heat through an appropriate heating system shall be provided, except in ships exclusively on voyages in tropical climates (MLC 2006, Standard A3.1, para. 7).

MLC regulates the issue of lighting and requires the sleeping rooms and mess rooms to be illuminated by natural light and supported by adequate artificial light (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 8).

If the ship has sleeping accommodation on board, the requirements for the standards for this subject is as follows:

- (a) in ships other than passenger ships, an individual sleeping room shall be provided for each seafarer; in the case of ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage or special purpose ships, exemptions from this requirement may be granted by the competent authority after consultation with the shipowners' and seafarers' organizations concerned,
- (b) separate sleeping rooms shall be provided for men and for women,
- (c) sleeping rooms shall be of adequate size and properly equipped so as to ensure reasonable comfort and to facilitate tidiness,
- (d) a separate berth for each seafarer shall in all circumstances be provided,
- (e) the minimum inside dimensions of a berth shall be at least 198 centimeters by 80 centimeters,
- (f) in single berth seafarers' sleeping rooms the floor area shall not be less than:
  - (i) 4.5 square meters in ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage,
  - (ii) 5.5 square meters in ships of 3,000 gross tonnage or over but less than 10,000 gross tonnage,
  - (iii) 7 square meters in ships of 10,000 gross tonnage or over,

- (g) however, in order to provide single berth sleeping rooms on ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage, passenger ships and special purpose ships, the competent authority may allow a reduced floor area,
- (h) in ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage other than passenger ships and special purpose ships, sleeping rooms may be occupied by a maximum of two seafarers; the floor area of such sleeping rooms shall not be less than 7 square meters,
- (i) on passenger ships and special purpose ships the floor area of sleeping rooms for seafarers not performing the duties of ships' officers shall not be less than:
- (i) 7.5 square meters in rooms accommodating two persons,
  - (ii) 11.5 square meters in rooms accommodating three persons,
  - (iii) 14.5 square meters in rooms accommodating four persons,
- (j) on special purpose ships sleeping rooms may accommodate more than four persons; the floor area of such sleeping rooms shall not be less than 3.6 square meters per person,
- (k) on ships other than passenger ships and special purpose ships, sleeping rooms for seafarers who perform the duties of ships' officers, where no private sitting room or day room is provided, the floor area per person shall not be less than:
- (i) 7.5 square meters in ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage,
  - (ii) 8.5 square meters in ships of 3,000 gross tonnage or over but less than 10,000 gross tonnage,
  - (iii) 10 square meters in ships of 10,000 gross tonnage or over,
- (l) on passenger ships and special purpose ships the floor area for seafarers performing the duties of ships' officers where no private sitting room or day room is provided, the floor area per person for junior officers shall not be less than 7.5 square meters and for senior officers not less than 8.5 square meters; junior officers are understood to be at the operational level, and senior officers at the management level,
- (m) the master, the chief engineer and the chief navigating officer shall have, in addition to their sleeping rooms, an adjoining sitting room, day room or equivalent additional space; ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage may be exempted by the competent authority from this requirement after consultation with the shipowners' and seafarers' organizations concerned,

(n) for each occupant, the furniture shall include a clothes locker of ample space (minimum 475 liters) and a drawer or equivalent space of not less than 56 liters; if the drawer is incorporated in the clothes locker then the combined minimum volume of the clothes locker shall be 500 liters; it shall be fitted with a shelf and be able to be locked by the occupant so as to ensure privacy,

(o) each sleeping room shall be provided with a table or desk, which may be of the fixed, drop-leaf or slide-out type, and with comfortable seating accommodation as necessary (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 9).

Standards for mess rooms are listed in the MLC and are as follows:

(a) mess rooms shall be located apart from the sleeping rooms and as close as practicable to the galley; ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage may be exempted by the competent authority from this requirement after consultation with the shipowners' and seafarers' organizations concerned; and

(b) mess rooms shall be of adequate size and comfort and properly furnished and equipped (including ongoing facilities for refreshment), taking account of the number of seafarers likely to use them at any one time; provision shall be made for separate or common mess room facilities as appropriate (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 10).

Standards for sanitary facilities are listed in the MLC and are as follows:

(a) all seafarers shall have convenient access on the ship to sanitary facilities meeting minimum standards of health and hygiene and reasonable standards of comfort, with separate sanitary facilities being provided for men and for women,

(b) there shall be sanitary facilities within easy access of the navigating bridge and the machinery space or near the engine room control center; ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage may be exempted by the competent authority from this requirement after consultation with the shipowners' and seafarers' organizations concerned,

(c) in all ships a minimum of one toilet, one wash basin and one tub or shower or both for every six persons or less who do not have personal facilities shall be provided at a convenient location,

(d) with the exception of passenger ships, each sleeping room shall be provided with a washbasin having hot and cold running fresh water, except where such a washbasin is situated in the private bathroom provided,



(e) in passenger ships normally engaged on voyages of not more than four hours' duration, consideration may be given by the competent authority to special arrangements or to a reduction in the number of facilities required; and

(f) hot and cold running fresh water shall be available in all wash places (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 11). MLC requires hospital accommodations for ships that have 15 or more seafarers and that will be on a voyage more than three days. It is also noted that the competent authority can loosen this requirement for ships that embark on coastal voyages even if the voyages are of commercial nature (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 12).

MLC requires ships to have laundry facilities which are positioned and furnished appropriately (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 13), and have spaces that are in adequate size regarding the size of the ship and the number of personnel on board, on the open deck for seafarers to access and use in their off-duty time (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 14).

Ships that are over 3000 gross tonnage shall provide separate offices or one common ship's office for use by deck and engine departments (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 15).

Ships that are regularly calling mosquito infested ports are to be fitted with appropriate devices (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 16), and seafarers are to be provided with recreational facilities, amenities and services as they must work and live on board, and their needs must be met to normalize this situation (MLC 2006, standard A3.1, para. 17).

Following the standards, MLC provides guidelines on these matters such as design and construction of accommodation spaces, ventilation, heating, lighting, sleeping rooms, mess rooms, sanitary accommodations, hospital accommodations, recreational facilities, mail and ship visit arrangements.

In addition to the accommodation related regulations, MLC requires their members to ensure that seafarers are provided with good quality food and drinking water (MLC 2006, Reg. 3.2). Under this regulation, each member is required to ensure the ships that fly their flag must (1) carry on board and serve food and drinking water of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity that adequately covers the requirements of the ship and takes into account the differing cultural and religious

backgrounds (2) provide the seafarers on board with food, free of charge for the period of their contracts (3) ensure that seafarers employed as ships' cooks that are responsible for food preparation, must be trained and qualified for their position on board ship.

Standards for food and catering are explained in detail in paragraphs 1 through 8 of Standard A3.2.

The members of the MLC shall adopt laws and regulations and/or other necessary measures in order to provide the minimum standards for the quantity and quality of food and drinking water and also the catering standards are met on ships that fly their flag, along with the application of educational activities required for awareness and implementation of these standards (MLC 2006, standard A3.2, para. 1).

Each member is required to meet the following minimum standards: (1) food and drinking water supplies, having regard to the number of seafarers on board, their religious requirements and cultural practices as they pertain to food, and the duration and nature of the voyage, shall be suitable in respect of quantity, nutritional value, quality and variety; (2) the organization and equipment of the catering department shall be such as to permit the provision to the seafarers of adequate, varied and nutritious meals prepared and served in hygienic conditions; and (3) catering staff shall be properly trained or instructed for their positions (MLC 2006, standard A3.2, para. 2).

Shipowners are required to ensure that seafarers who are employed as cooks on board are qualified, trained and are found to be competent for this position in accordance with the laws and regulations of the Member in question. In addition, paragraph 4 defines the scope of the training specified in paragraph 3, which is to include practical cookery, food and personal hygiene, food storage, stock control, environmental protection, and catering health and safety (MLC 2006, standard A3.2, para. 3).

Ships operating with less than ten seafarers, can be held exempt from this rule -that requires the carriage of a fully qualified cook- by the competent authority (MLC 2006, standard A3.2, para. 5). In the absence of a fully trained cook, the personnel that will be processing food is to be trained in food and personal hygiene and handling and storage of food on board.

If any circumstances of exceptional nature arise, the competent authority may allow a non-fully qualified cook to be employed in a ship for a limited time, not exceeding one month, or the next convenient port of call, if the person to be employed is trained and/or instructed in food and personal hygiene and handling and storage of food on board (MLC 2006, standard A3.2, para. 6).

The inspection subjects that can be carried out on board, by or under the authority of the master are listed as follows: (1) supplies of food and drinking water; (2) all spaces and equipment used for the storage and handling of food and drinking water; and (3) galley and other equipment for the preparation and service of meals (MLC 2006, standard A3.2, para. 7).

MLC prohibits the employment of any seafarer under the age of 18 as a ship's cook (MLC 2006, standard A3.2, para. 8).

#### **3.3.1.2. TMLC on Working Conditions of Seafarers'**

TMLC, whilst not having a dedicated section for the regulations on the working conditions of seafarers', has regulations regarding food and provisions in article 33, accommodation in article 34, and standards for these two subjects in article 35.

TMLC requires the shipowner to provide food service for seafarers, free of charge, starting from the day the service of the seafarer starts, up until the end. If food service, for exceptional reasons had to stop, shipowner is required to offer an alternative, or pay the seafarers in cash for the period that service of food has been stopped (TMLC, art. 33, 1967).

The shipowner is required to provide accommodation for seafarers, in accordance with their rankings, numbers and the size of the ship, free of charge, starting from the day the service of the seafarer starts, up until the end. If accommodation cannot be provided due to extraordinary circumstances, the shipowner must offer an alternative solution for the accommodation of the seafarers (TMLC, art. 34, 1967).

Article 35 points to the Directive for Accommodation, Health and Provision of Seafarers, for the standards to be applied on these subjects. This directive is prepared by the joint efforts of Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, Ministry of

Health, and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; and it is based on the related sections of the MLC.

Exemptions from the application of the Directive for Accommodation, Health and Provision of Seafarers include ships less than 500 gross tonnage, fishing boats, tugboats, and floating cranes (TMLC, art. 36, 1967).

### **3.3.2. Employment Agreements of Seafarers**

In order to be employed on board ships, seafarers must enter into an employment agreement with the shipowner, or a representative of the shipowner. For the sake of international singularity, MLC sets out regulations on the coverage and structure of employment agreements of seafarers. Naturally, local authorities have their own version of laws, bylaws, regulations or directives that governs the issue. Under this section, MLC regulations and Turkish legislation set out in accordance with the MLC will be broadly analyzed.

#### **3.3.2.1. MLC on Employment Agreements of Seafarers**

MLC requires its members to provide seafarers with a fair employment agreement, and to ensure fairness, sets out some rules in Regulation 2.1 of the convention. This regulation dictates that conditions for employment shall be put out in a clear written, legally binding agreement, that is also in accordance with standards set out in the code, the agreement of the seafarer shall be made in conditions where the seafarer has the time and opportunity to review and seek advice on the terms and accepts on free will, and lastly, to the extent that is allowed by the member's national law and regulations, the agreement must be able to incorporate collective bargaining agreements.

Standards set out in the MLC for the conditions of employment of the seafarers include subheadings such as the seafarers' employment agreements, wages, hours of work and hours of rest, entitlement to leave, repatriation, seafarer compensation for the ship's loss or foundering, manning levels, and lastly, career and skill development and opportunities for seafarers' employment.

Standard A2.1 of the Regulation 2.1 of the MLC present the standards applicable for the seafarers' employment agreements. According to paragraph 1 of this standard, each member must enforce the following requirements in their laws or regulations: (1) seafarers' employment agreement must be signed by both the seafarer and the shipowner or a representative of the shipowner, (2) seafarers must be given an opportunity to examine and if needed, seek legal advice and assistance on the agreement before signing, to ensure they have full understanding of the agreement and enter it with free will, (3) the original copy of the agreement must be signed by both seafarer and the shipowner, (4) clear information regarding the condition of their agreement shall be available for the seafarers and any competent authority, on board and (5) seafarers shall be given a document that proves their employment on board (MLC 2006, Standard A2.1, para. 1).

It is stated that if a collective bargaining agreement is a part of a seafarers' employment agreement, a copy of said agreement must be available on board ship, and if the agreement in question is not in English, a copy of the standard form of the agreement and the parts of the collective bargaining agreement that are subject to port state control must be provided in English (MLC 2006, Standard A2.1, para. 2).

The agreements are required to include the following, regardless of the laws and regulations set by the members: (1) full name, date of birth, and birth place of the seafarer, (2) shipowner's name and address, (3) place and date of seafarer's entrance into the agreement, (4) the capacity in which the seafarer will be employed, (5) wage of the seafarer and if required, formula for the calculation of it, (6) amount of paid annual leave and if required, formula for the calculation of it, (7) conditions for the termination of the agreement; if the agreement made for indefinite period, conditions that entitle both parties to terminate it, along with the notice period required should be included, if the agreement made for a definite period, the date of expiry should be included, if the agreement made for a voyage, port of destination that it will expire should be included, (8) health and social security benefits to be provided by the shipowner, and (9) seafarer's entitlement to repatriation (MLC, Standard A2.1, para. 4, 2006).

Members are required to adopt laws and regulations to set minimum notice periods for early termination of the employment agreements. While the determination

of the period is left to member states, it is stated that this period cannot be shorter than seven days (MLC 2006, Standard A2.1, para. 5).

Regulation 2.2 is concerned with wages, and states all seafarers must be paid for their work regularly and in full, in compliance with their employment agreements. Standards for wages of seafarers are set out in Standard A2.2 and as follows: (1) Payments to the seafarers are to be made at no greater than monthly intervals, (2) Seafarers must be provided with an account that shows the payments due, amounts paid, additional payments and if the payment is made in a different currency than the one agreed upon, the exchange rate applied, (3) Shipowners must take measures that allow the seafarers to transfer their earnings in full or in part, to their families, dependents or legal beneficiaries, and any charge for this service must be reasonable in amount and exchange rate.

Regulation 2.3 requires each member to regulate and establish maximum working hours and minimum rest hours in consistency with the code. Hours of work defines the time seafarers are required to do work on account of the ship and hours of rest defines the time, excluding the short breaks, time outside hours of work.

Working hours for seafarers, as it is for other workers, should be based on 8-hour day with one day per week and public holidays as rest days. Members can authorize different working hours, but these conditions cannot be less favorable than this standard (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 3).

Paragraph 5 through 8 of this standard provide the maximum number of hours of work or the minimum number of hours of rest. Maximum hours of work are limited to 14 hours in any 24-hour period and 72 hours in any seven-day period (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 5). In the same paragraph, members are held required to provide minimum of 10 hours of rest in any 24-hour period and 77 hours of rest in any seven-day period for the seafarers.

Above mentioned rest hours cannot be divided into more than two periods and one of these periods cannot be less than six hours. The two periods cannot be separated by more than 14 hours (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 6)

This standard advises to conduct musters, fire-fighting and lifeboat drills, and any drills that are mandatory due to domestic or international laws and regulations

should be carried out in a way that minimizes fatigue, and disturbance on rest periods (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 7)

Shipowners are required to compensate the rest hours for a seafarer that is called to duty in their rest hour (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 8). Further increasing of the hours mentioned in Paragraphs 7 and 8 can be allowed, if the competent authority deems it necessary (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 9). Members are required to post a table of the schedule of service at sea and service in port, and the maximum hours of work or the minimum hours of rest required by applicable laws and regulations, for each position on ship. This table should be in standardized format in the working language and/or in English (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 10).

As for tracking the compliance to the above mentioned standards, Members are required to keep records of work and rest hours of each and every seafarer on board. These records should be given to the seafarers (individually) and must be endorsed by the master and the seafarer (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 12).

The last paragraph of this standard notes that the master, can make any seafarer work any hours that are necessary, for the immediate safety of the ship, people on board or cargo; or for helping other ships or people in distress at sea (MLC 2006, Standard A2.3, para. 13).

Regulation 2.4 aims to ensure that seafarers have adequate leave. For this aim, MLC requires its members to give annual paid leaves in appropriate conditions, in accordance with the code and grant seafarers shore leaves in order to maintain and improve their health and well-being. Standards for regulations on entitlement to leave include the following: (1) With special needs of seafarers kept in mind, each member should adopt laws and regulation to determine the minimum standards for annual leave, (2) paid annual leave entitlement should be calculated of a minimum two and a half calendar days per month of employment, and (3) any agreement that waives the right to a paid leave is prohibited.

Regulation 2.5 recognizes the right for seafarers to repatriate with no cost to themselves, under circumstances that are specified in the MLC. Members are required to provide financial security to seafarers that are repatriating in accordance with the code. According to the Standard A2.5.1 a seafarer can rightfully repatriate if their employment agreement expires while they are abroad, their employment agreement is

terminated by the shipowner or for justified reasons, by the seafarer; or when the seafarer can no longer carry out their duties arising from the employment agreement.

According to the Regulation 2.6, seafarers are entitled to compensation if they are injured, suffered loss or became unemployed due to ship's loss or foundering. Standard A2.6 requires shipowners to pay the seafarers on board an indemnity against unemployment in every case of loss and foundering of any ship.

Regulation 2.7 deals with the issue of manning, in order to ensure that seafarers work on board ships with enough number of personnel that is required for the safe and secure navigation of the ship. Standard A2.7 requires ship to be manned with a crew that is adequate in term of size and qualifications, in compliance with the minimum safe manning document issued by the competent authority.

In Regulation 2.8, MLC invites members to adopt national policies that encourage career and skill development, and increase employment opportunities across their borders, for seafarers. These policies are expected to provide the maritime sector with a competent workforce, help seafarers increase their competencies, qualifications and employment possibilities.

#### **3.3.2.2. TMLC on Employment Agreements of Seafarers**

TMLC has similar regulations on employment agreements of seafarers, regarding the format, duration, termination, repatriation, work hours, and wages. Articles 5 to 30 cover the above mentioned issues. It is stated that the agreement must be in written format, made in two copies, one for the seafarer and one for the shipowner (TMLC, Art. 5, 1967). Information that must be written in the agreement are listed as follows: (1) full name and the address of the shipowner, (2) full name, address, and registration number of the seafarer, (3) name, registration number, gross tonnage, and the registry of the ship that the seafarer will be employed on, (4) place and date of the agreement, (5) the capacity in which the seafarer will be employed, (6) place and date of seafarer's entrance into the agreement, (7) Specification on whether the agreement made is for a definite period of time, if so, specification of that period of time, if it is voyage based, specification of the voyage, (8) decided upon wages and the basis of said wages, (9) place and time of payment of wages and the account number the



payment will be made, (10) conditions for advance payment, (11) other conditions regarding the job (TMLC, Art. 6, 1967).

The time periods that a seafarers' employment agreement can be made are defined by the TMLC. This article states agreements made for a definite period of time expires on the date specified, if the ship is still on voyage, the agreement shall expire on the first port the ship calls and is secured. Agreements made on a voyage basis expires when the ship arrives at the port of destination and unloading of her cargo is complete (TMLC, Art. 7, 1967). The conditions for the extension of previously mentioned agreement types are defined as follows, if the seafarer and the shipowner mutually agree to continue, for agreements made on voyage basis, the agreement can be extended for the period of the next voyage, and if the agreement made for a definite period, the agreement extends for the same period of time (TMLC, Art. 8, 1967).

Conditions that entitles shipowners and seafarers to rightful termination of the agreement are as follows. If a seafarer (1) at any port, does not return to service on board before departure, (2) cannot serve on board due to arrest, imprisonment, or being banned to work on a ship, (3) acts against the law and/or employment agreement to the shipowner, (4) acts against the maritime rules and customs to the shipowner, then the shipowner becomes entitled to rightfully terminate the employment agreement. On the other hand, if a shipowner (1) does not pay the wages of the seafarer in compliance with the laws or the employment agreement, (2) acts against the law and/or employment agreement to the seafarer, (3) acts against the maritime rules and customs to the seafarer, then the seafarer becomes entitled to rightfully terminate the employment agreement. If conditions such as the ship being out of voyage for more than 30 days and/or the seafarer, for any reason, can no longer work on board ships, be it due to illness, impairment, or injury, both parties are entitled to rightfully terminate the agreement (TMLC, Art. 14, 1967). Period to terminate the agreement is limited to 6 days from the day any of the parties finds any of the above mentioned breaches, and 1 year from the occurrence of the incident in question (TMLC, Art. 15, 1967). If the termination takes place while the ship is on voyage, the execution of termination shall happen in a decided upon port, if that decision changes, the first port the ship calls (TMLC, Art. 17, 1967). The shipowner is required to issue a notice if a

termination takes place. This notice should be in written form and include the reasons for termination (TMLC, Art. 18, 1967).

If the termination of the agreement takes place in foreign countries, unless there is another condition in the employment agreement, the shipowner is responsible to repatriate the seafarer to the port of registry of the ship and pay the necessary travel and food expenses (TMLC, Art. 21, 1967).

Articles 26 through 28 govern the conditions for work hours on ships. Maximum hours of work on board is 8 hours per day and 48 hours a week, divided equally to the days of the week (TMLC, Art. 26, 1967). If there are more than one captain on a ship, the master, if there are more than one engineer on a ship, chief engineer, and doctors and medical officers are exempt from the above mentioned restrictions for work hours (TMLC, Art. 27, 1967). Any work carried out surpassing the conditions in article 26, shall be deemed overtime. The rate for one hour of overtime work cannot be less than 1.25 times the regular hourly rate. Any work deemed essential by the master for the safety of the ship, people on board and/or cargo of the ship, fire drills, evacuation drills, and any other mandatory drills shall not count towards overtime (TMLC, Art. 28, 1967).

Conditions related with the wages are set out state that payment intervals cannot be longer than 1 month. If the employment agreement expires or is terminated, shipowner must pay the wages of the seafarer swiftly and in full (TMLC, Art. 29, 1967).

### **3.3.3. Health and Safety of Seafarers**

The ships' status as a moving working and living space makes the issue of health and safety of seafarers an even greater issue than it is for employees working on land. The dangerous nature of the work and the fact that incidents may happen miles away from any land, let alone any hospital or medical facility, calls for strict regulations on both safety and medical care on board ships. With these conditions in mind, several conventions tackled the issue of health and safety on board ships. These conventions include MLC, STCW, and SOLAS.

The 1994 amendments to SOLAS brought about the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, which is the successor of IMO's Guidelines on Management for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention. This guideline, and the ISM code have the same aim of eliminating human error and management faults that cause accidents. However, the difference of ISM code is that through SOLAS, which is widely accepted and mandatory to comply in order to participate in seaborne trade, the code is made obligatory, thus it became binding for the whole of the maritime industry (IMO, 2017a)).

In the following sections, above mentioned conventions and code will be analyzed regarding the chapters and articles in relation with the health and safety of seafarers.

#### **3.3.3.1. MLC on Health and Safety of Seafarers**

MLC requires its members to ensure that every seafarer that is employed on a ship that fly their flag have access to immediate medical care while working on board and that care and protection are to be provided free of charge. In addition, members are to give access to any seafarer in their territory that needs immediate medical care, to their medical facilities on shore (MLC 2006, Reg. 4.1).

Standard A4.1 details the medical care measures that must be provided on board and ashore. MLC states that (1) seafarers must be given health protection and medical care that is comparable to the ones that are given to the workers ashore, which includes immediate access to medicines, medical equipment, medical information and expertise, and facilities for diagnosis and treatment, (2) seafarers must be given the right to visit a qualified medical doctor or dentist in ports of call, where practicable, (3) to the extent that is available in the Member's national laws and regulations, the medical and health related services provided are to be free of charge, and (4) measures are not limited to the treatment of the seafarers but also include preventive measures such as health promotion and health education programs (MLC 2006, Standard A4.1, para. 1).

The competent authority is required to adopt a standard medical report form that will be used by the ship's master and medical personnel both onshore and on board (MLC 2006, Standard A4.1, para. 2).

Each Member shall adopt laws that regulates the requirements for on board medical care facilities and equipment, as well as training on ships that fly its flag. MLC delves in the details of these regulations and sets out minimums such as: (1) every ship must have a medicine chest, medical equipment and medical guides, (2) ships that carry more than 100 people and regularly engage on international voyages for more than 3 days must employ a qualified medical doctor, (3) ships that do not carry a medical doctor, are required to have either at least one seafarer on board who is in charge of medical care and administering medicine as part of their regular duties or at least one seafarer on board competent to provide medical first aid; persons in charge of medical care on board who are not medical doctors shall have satisfactorily completed training in medical care that meets the requirements of the STCW, and (4) competent authority must provide medical advice by radio or satellite communication to ships at sea which is available 24 hours a day, and free of charge for all ships irrespective of their flag (MLC, Standard A4.1, Par. 4, 2006).

Regulation 4.2 of the MLC regulates the shipowners' liability in cases of sickness, injury or death that is a consequence of seafarers' employment on ship. Standard A4.2.1. lists the minimum standards for shipowners' responsibility on health protection and medical care as follows: (1) shipowners are to be liable for the costs of seafarers working on their ships in case of sickness and injury, occurred during the period of their employment agreement, (2) shipowners must provide financial security for the compensation in case of the death or long-term disability of seafarers, which is a result of occupational injury, illness or hazard, on terms of national law, seafarers' employment agreement or collective agreement, (3) shipowners are to be liable to pay the expenses of any medical treatment, necessary medicines and therapeutic appliances until the sick or injured seafarer recovers, and (4) shipowners are to pay the burial expenses in the case of death occurred on board or ashore, during the period of employment agreement (MLC 2006, Standard A4.2, para. 1).

When the consequence of a sickness or injury is incapacity for work, MLC states the shipowner is liable to pay full wages as long as the seafarer remains on board

or up until the seafarer has been repatriated and pay wages in full or in part, as stated by national laws, from the time the seafarer are repatriated until their recovery. (MLC 2006, Standard A4.2, para. 3).

If the injury sustained whilst not serving the ship, due to willful misconduct, or intentionally concealed when the employment agreement is being made, it is stated that shipowner can be exempt from the liability (MLC 2006, Standard A4.2, para. 5). In addition to these conditions, if the responsibility of the sickness, injury, or death is assumed by the public authorities, shipowner can be exempt from the liability of medical care and/or burial expenses (MLC 2006, Standard A4.2, para. 6).

Regulation 4.3 of the MLC deals with the issues of health, safety and accident prevention. Under this regulation, each Member is to ensure that seafarers working on ships that fly their flag are provided occupational health protection and live, work and train on board in a safe and hygienic environment. The MLC encourages each Member to adopt laws and regulations addressing these matters and lists the subjects that must be included in said laws and regulations. Said laws and regulations must include the following subjects: (1) adoption, implementation and promotion of occupational safety and health policies and programs, as well as training and instruction of seafarers, (2) precautions for prevention of occupational accidents, injuries and diseases on board, and (3) prerequisites for inspection, reporting and correction of unsafe conditions and for investigation and reporting of occupational accidents on board (MLC 2006, Standard A4.3, para. 1).

#### **3.3.3.2. STCW on Health and Safety of Seafarers**

STCW has regulations regarding the emergency, occupational safety, medical care and survival functions of seafarers. Subjects include familiarization, basic safety training and instruction, proficiency in survival craft, rescue boats and fast rescue boats, advanced firefighting, and lastly medical first aid and medical care.

Familiarization training requires seafarers to be able to understand safety information symbols, signs and alarm signals, know what to do if a person falls overboard, fire or smoke is detected, fire alarm is sounded, abandon ship alarm is sounded, identify muster and embarkation stations and emergency escape routes,

locate and equip life jackets, sound the alarm and have basic knowledge of usage of fire extinguishers, and take immediate action when encountered an accident or a medical emergency (STCW 1995, Section A-VI/1, para. 1).

Basic safety training requires seafarers to be trained and instructed in personal survival techniques, fire prevention and firefighting, elementary first aid, and personal safety and social responsibilities (STCW 1995, Section A-VI/1, para. 2).

The minimum standard of competence required for proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats and fast rescue boats are listed in tables A-VI/2-1 and A-VI/2-2 of the STCW and are as follows: for proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats, taking charge of a survival craft during and after launch, operating survival craft engine, managing survivors and survival craft after abandoning ship, usage of locating devices including communication and signaling apparatus, and finally application of first aid to survivors. As for competence in fast rescue boats, taking charge of a fast rescue boat during and after launch and operation of fast rescue boat engine competencies are added (STCW 1995, Section A-VI/2, para. 3).

Mandatory minimum training required for competency in advanced firefighting includes training with emphasis on organization, and tactics and command. In addition, candidates are expected to be sufficient on controlling firefighting operations on board ships, organizing and training fire parties, inspection and service of fire detection and extinguishing systems and equipment, and finally investigation and compilation of reports on fire related incidents (STCW 1995, Section A-VI/3, para. 1-2).

The minimum standard of competence required for proficiency in providing medical first aid and taking charge of medical care on board ship are listed in tables A-VI/4-1 and A-VI/4-2 of the STCW respectively. The subject to be proficient in regarding providing medical first aid is the application of immediate first aid in the event of accident or illness on board. In order to be able to take charge of medical care, seafarers must be competent in providing medical care to the sick and injured while they remain on board, and participation in coordinated schemes for medical assistance to ships (STCW 1995, Section A-VI/4, para. 1-2).

### **3.3.3.3. SOLAS Convention and ISM Code on Health and Safety of Seafarers**

SOLAS is considered to be one of the most important of all international conventions regarding the safety of seafarers and ships. While the first version was adopted following the Titanic accident in 1914, current version that is in force today, which is the fifth version of the convention and was adopted November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974 and entered into force in May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1980 (IMO, 2020).

In this fourteen-chapter convention, there are several chapters dealing with health and safety of seafarers on board. Among subjects such as fire protection, detection and extinction, life-saving appliances and arrangements, safety of navigation, carriage of dangerous cargoes, requirements for nuclear powered ships, and safety measures for ships operating in polar waters, one chapter stands out for the sake of this study and that chapter is “management for the safe operation of ships”. With this chapter SOLAS made the adaptation of ISM Code mandatory and an important step was taken in order to eliminate or at last minimize the human error and managerial deficiencies that threaten the safety of the ship and people on board.

ISM Code’s origin dates back to the end of the 1980s, back then concerns regarding the underwhelming state of management standards in shipping were rising, in 1987 IMO called the Maritime Safety Committee to action to develop guidelines regarding the shore-based management for safer operation of ships. ISM Code requires the companies (ship-owning, ship-operating, bareboat charterer) to establish safety management systems that meet the safety management objectives set out in the code. In addition to this, every company is required to designate person or persons ashore with direct access to the top of the management level. The reasoning behind this requirement is to form a link between the company on shore and those on board ship (IMO, 2017b).

ISM Code applies to passenger ships including passenger high speed craft, oil tankers, chemical tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers and cargo high speed craft of 500 gross tonnage and higher, and other cargo ships and Mobile Offshore Drilling Units of 500 gross tonnage and higher, excluding government-operated ships used for non-commercial purposes (ISM 1994, Reg. 2, para.1-2).

ISM covers subjects such as safety and environmental protection policy, company responsibility and authority, designated person(s), master's responsibility and authority, resources and personnel, shipboard operations, emergency preparedness, reports and analysis of non-conformities, accidents and hazardous occurrences, maintenance of the ship and equipment, documentation, and company verification, review and evaluation.

ISM code requires the company to establish a safety and environmental protection policy and this policy to be implemented and maintained at all levels, both on shore and on board ship (ISM 1994, Part A, Reg. 2, para. 2.1-2.2.).

One of the most important requirements that ISM brought about is the Designated Person(s) Ashore (DPA). In accordance with the code, every company is required to appoint a suitable DPA that has direct access to the top level of management, in order to provide a link between the ship and the company. DPA will be responsible to monitor the safety and pollution prevention aspects of the operations of each ship, and the required resources and shore based support are provided (ISM 1994, Part A, Reg. 4).

In regards with the resources and personnel, companies must ensure that the master employed on board is qualified for command, have comprehensive knowledge of the company's safety management system and recipient of adequate support so is able to perform master's duties safely. In addition to the master, company should also ensure that each ship is manned with qualified, properly certificated and medically fit seafarers, and any new or transferred personnel are properly familiarized to their duties. Personnel that at any capacity, involved in the safety management system of the company must have adequate understanding of the relevant rules, code, regulations and guidelines (ISM 1994, Part A, Reg. 6).

ISM requires that appropriate procedures, plans and instructions for important operations regarding the safety of the personnel, ship and the protection of the environment are established (ISM 1994, Part A, Reg. 7). In addition, through the identification of potential emergency situations, establishing required procedures, implementing drill and exercise programs, and making sure shore-side of the organization can respond at any time against accidents and emergency situations, the



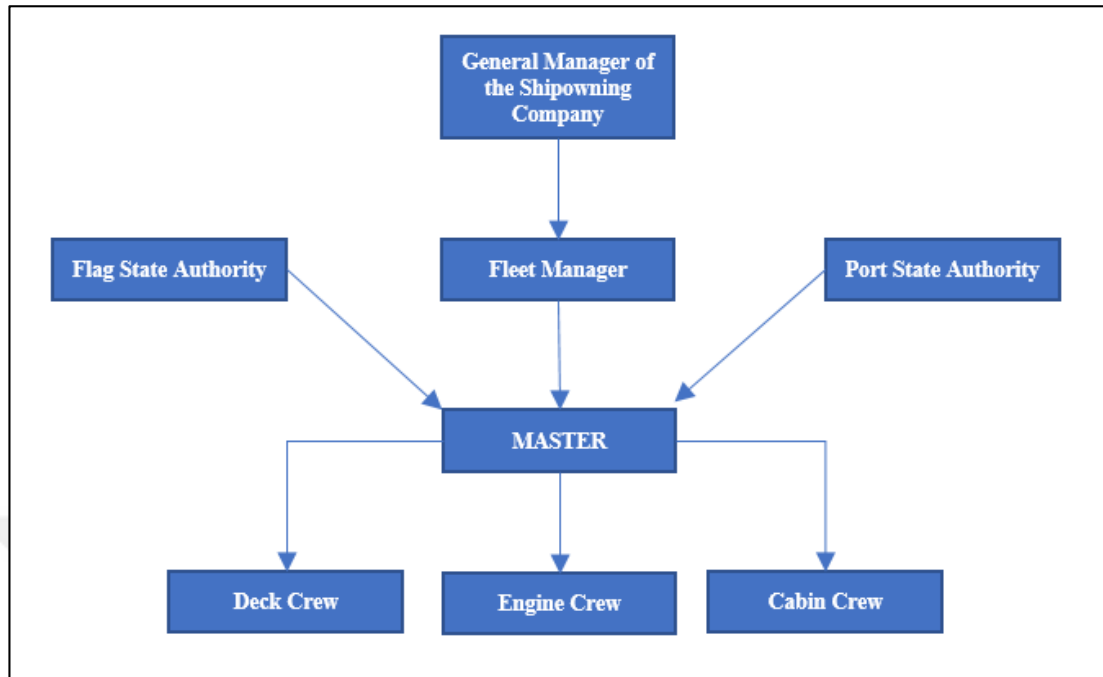
company should be prepared for emergencies (ISM 1994, Part A, Reg. 8, para. 8.1-8.3).

The safety management system adopted by the company should allow for procedures that help report any non-conformity, accidents or other emergency situations so that they can be analyzed, investigated and safety can be ensured once again. This should be followed up by procedures of corrective nature, including prevention of recurrence (ISM 1994, Part A, Reg. 9).

### **3.4. DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE MASTER**

The master is the commander of the ship. Thus both duties and authority of the master are of crucial importance to prevent the occurrence of conflict situations. It is the master's responsibility to ensure that the ship is satisfying the requirements set under domestic and international laws and regulations, company's policies, and port state and flag state regulations. The master is bound by the law to ensure the safe navigation, seaworthiness and cargo worthiness of the ship, safe handling of cargo, management of crew, and maintaining the ship's certification and documentation (Aragon and Messner, 2001).

**Figure 9:** The Master's Hierarchical Position in The Organizational Structure



Source: Adapted from Iordanoaia (2010)

As it is shown in the figure above, the master, who is positioned in the center of the workplace, has responsibilities towards the company/shipowner, flag state regulations of the ships' flag, port state regulations of the ports called through the voyage of the ship, and management duties over the whole crew of the ship, and ship itself.

Due to the nature of his work, the master falls under the jurisdiction of international laws and regulations a lot more often than other occupations. Navigating through many countries means being subject to laws of said countries, many of which, their domestic laws are applicable for the master (Cartner et al., 2009). In light of these information, it is essential to analyze the international maritime law and domestic law that regulates the duties, responsibilities and authority of the master.

#### **3.4.1. Duties, Responsibilities and the Authority of the Master under International Maritime Law**

Almost every country governs the provisions concerning the master along with other seafarers, and their duties, responsibilities and authorities through their laws,

regulations or directorates. However, for some matters, for the sake of uniformity in the international industry that is maritime trade, related international organizations adopt convention to govern specific issues. Even though not every country or state ratify these conventions and become a party, conventions that have accumulated meaningful number of countries and practiced by them, can become customary international law, for countries that have not accepted those conventions.

Customary international law can be summed up as the long-term practice of international laws and conventions that are used and applied by considerable number of countries, which creates a uniform practice, with the adaption of countries that are not party to the said convention. It can be adopted by non-party countries adapting their own legislation and policies accordingly (Cartner et al., 2009). In the globalization era, it is hard to escape the grasp of these international conventions, as even non-party countries have to adopt the rules to their domestic laws in order to continue the trade with countries that did ratify said conventions.

The main responsibilities of the master – safe navigation, ensuring seaworthiness of the ship, safekeeping of cargo and people on board – are presented in domestic laws, but not in the international conventions, at least not explicitly. However, some issues of extraordinary nature are specified in conventions such as SOLAS, MLC and ISM Code.

SOLAS requires masters to share any information through channels of communication that can endanger the navigation of the ship such as, storms, dangerous ice and derelict, winds of force 10 or above on the Beaufort scale, with other ships nearby and the competent authorities (SOLAS 1974, Reg. 31). Masters are also obligated to respond to distress signals regardless of source and regardless of the nationality of persons, and can, for the sake of search and rescue activities, change the course of the ship (SOLAS 1974, Reg. 33). In addition, masters are required to ensure that the scheduled voyage has been thoroughly planned, taking into account the navigational dangers, environmental protection actions and weather conditions (SOLAS 1974, Reg. 34). Finally, it is stated that whether it be the owner, the charterer or the ship-operating company, cannot restrict the taking or execution of any decision of the master, as the master's professional judgement is essential for the safe operation of the ship (SOLAS 1974, Reg. 34-1).

On the other hand, MLC sets some responsibilities for the master in the framework of labor on board, to be more precise, on the subjects of wages, hours of work and hours of rest, repatriation, accommodation, food and catering, health protection and medical care, and accident prevention.

MLC suggest the master should carry out the record keeping, calculation and payment of all overtime worked by seafarers (MLC 2006, Reg. 2.2). Similarly, the master is also responsible for the record keeping and maintaining of daily hours worked by seafarers (MLC 2006, Reg. 2.3). This issue is especially important as proper record of work hours is in direct correlation with the calculation of overtime wages, thus, poor management of this issue can cause conflict among seafarers and the shipowner, leaving the master in liability for the damages caused (Mandin, 2017). Another responsibility of the master is the inspection of accommodations. The aim of these inspections is to ensure that the quarters of the seafarers are clean, hygienic and habitable (MLC 2006, Reg. 3.1).

The master is also responsible to supply adequate amount of food and water and conduct frequent inspections of the kitchen area (MLC 2006, Reg. 3.2). Regarding medical care, the only responsibility that falls on the master is the recording of medical care provided on board ship and on the shore (MLC 2006, Reg. 4.1). However, the responsibilities of the master regarding health and safety protection and accident prevention are vast. According to the MLC, shipowners are responsible to implement occupational safety and health policy program, but the master is the one that is responsible to ensure that this program is applied and executed on board ship, therefore liable with possible shortcomings of the shipowner when drawing up the said program (MLC 2006, Standard A4.3). Maritime labour certificate and the declaration of maritime labour compliance is another responsibility of the master under the MLC (MLC 2006, Standard A5.1.3). One of the most important responsibilities that arise from the MLC is the role of the master in the onboard complaint procedure. Complaint procedures reach to the master or in some cases, complaint can be made directly to the master himself (MLC 2006, Reg. 5.1.5).

The ISM code delegates the ship owning company to define and document the master's responsibilities regarding (1) implementation of the safety and environmental protection policy of the company, (2) motivation of the crew with regards to that

policy, (3) issuing orders and instructions clearly and in a simple manner, (4) verification of observation of specified requirements, and (5) periodical review of the safety management system and reporting of its deficiencies to management on-shore. Regarding the authority of the master, ISM also requires the ship owning company to ensure that the safety management system that is operational on board, contains a clear statement that shows the master's overriding authority and responsibility to make decisions regarding safety and pollution prevention (ISM 1997, Reg. 5).

As it can be seen, every convention approaches the matter of duties, responsibilities and authority of the master from its own framework. In order to find the real extent of the masters' duties and authority, one must look into the related country's domestic laws as the authority and duties of the master, apart from those arise from international laws, can vary from country to country.

#### **3.4.2. Duties, Responsibilities and the Authority of the Master under Turkish Law**

The duties, responsibilities and the extent of the authority of the master is regulated by the TCC in Turkey under four main headings, which are obligation of due diligence, responsibilities, duties, and power of attorney of the master.

The master, for all his actions, especially those that to be executed exclusively by the master, must act in due diligence (TCC, art. 1088).

The master is responsible towards the ship, the cargo, the passengers, and all parties related with those, for damages caused by his fault or failure to fulfill his duties. Following the orders of the shipowner does not relieve the master from liability, as a matter of fact, the shipowner, knowingly ordering the master, will also be deemed liable. However, the master's right that arise from international conventions that Turkey has ratified, regarding limitation of liabilities, are reserved (TCC, art. 1089, 2011).

Duties of the master are handled in a comprehensive manner and include duties regarding the seaworthiness of the ship, compliance with foreign regulations, embarking on a voyage, attendance on ship, consulting with officers, logbook keeping, ship's protest keeping, and protection of shipowner's interest.

The master must ensure that the ship is sea and voyage worthy, and the required documentation for the seafarers and the cargo are available on board, before embarking on a voyage (TCC, art. 1090). In addition, the master should also ensure that the loading and discharging equipment are in condition to serve their purposes, the stowage of the cargo had been carried out in a manner that is compliant with the current maritime rules, the ship has not been overloaded and the holds of the ship are suitable for the cargo to be loaded (TCC, art. 1091).

Due to the nature of his occupation, the master finds himself in foreign countries very often. Thus the master is required to comply with the regulations, especially police, tax and customs regulations of the country he is in, and is liable to compensate the damages caused for his non-compliance. This liability extends to any contraband cargo on board ship (TCC, art. 1092).

The master is obligated to commence the voyage on the earliest convenience, when the ship is ready. Even if the master is in no condition to navigate the ship, due to illness or any other valid reason, the ship's departure or continuing of the voyage cannot be unacceptably prolonged. In this type of situation, the master should inform the shipowner, take necessary precautions while waiting for the orders, otherwise appoint someone else to captain the ship. The master cannot be held liable for the actions of his proxy, unless the choice of the proxy is wrongfully made (TCC, art. 1093).

The master cannot leave the ship at the same time with the first officer the moment loading of cargo starts up until the discharging of cargo is completed. If the master has to leave, he must delegate an appropriate proxy among the officers. This rule can be extended to the period before the start of loading and after the discharging if the ship is in a port that is not secure. In addition, when there is imminent danger or peril, or the ship is on sea, the master cannot leave the ship without valid reason (TCC, art. 1094). In case of peril, even if the master deems it necessary to consult the officers, he is not bound by the decisions they make, and he is liable for the precautions he takes (TCC, art. 1095).

It is mandatory to keep a logbook that includes events that occur on a ship starting with the loading of cargo. The logbook is kept by the first officer, under the supervision of the master. If the first officer has a valid reason to be excused, the master

himself, or an able seafarer appointed by the master keeps the logbook (TCC, art. 1096). Meteorological data, weather and wind to be precise, route of the ship and distance covered, coordinates of the ships whereabouts, level of water in the ballast tanks, sounded water level, boarding and leaving hours of pilot, changes among seafarers, all accidents the ship and cargo encountered, with details, crimes committed on board, birth and death incidents are all to be included in the logbook daily, and signed by the master and the first officer (TCC, art. 1097).

In the event of any kind of accident that resulted or may result in material damage towards the ship or cargo being carried, the master can request a ship's protest to be drawn up, or if it is ordered by the shipowner, the master is obligated to draw up one. A ship's protest can be requested by the shipowner or any party that can prove their interest in the matter. Ship protest can be requested to be drawn up, with haste in the next port of call following the accident, if the ship is in bad condition, in the port of refuge, if the ship has sunk, or for some other reason cannot conclude the voyage, the master or his proxy stops at the first convenient place. If the master dies or becomes unable to draw up the protest, highest ranking officer after him is obligated to draw up the protest (TCC, art. 1098).

The master, even in the ship's demise, is obligated to protect the interest of the shipowner (TCC, art. 1102). This statement paves the way for the power of attorney of the master and its context. Legal actions taken by the master while the ship is in port of registry are not binding for the shipowner, if the master is not acting with a special authorization. However, the master is still authorized to employ seafarers at the port of registry (TCC, art. 1103). When the ship is out of the port of registry, the master is authorized to act on the account of the shipowner on issues such as the manning, bunkering and supplying of the ship, keeping the ship sea and cargo worthy, and safe navigation of the ship. The master can enter into transportation agreements and file suits on matters that fall under his jurisdiction (TCC, art. 1104).

The master, only in conditions where it is a must to ensure the security of the ship and to continue the voyage, is authorized to use loans or buy on credit, the necessary amount for the safety of the ship and the voyage. Shipowner's liability arising from the exchange undertakings of the master arises from the direct authorization given to the master by the shipowner (TCC, art. 1105).

The master's authorities of representation can be limited. If such a limitation had been made by the shipowner, he can only argue that the master's non-compliance with these limitations, to parties that are aware of said limitations are in place (TCC, art. 1106). In addition, if the employment agreement is terminated by the shipowner, he can limit the authorities of the master during the notification period (TCC, art. 1107). The shipowner is liable towards third parties for the legal actions of the master as the commander of the ship. The master is exempted from personal liability if he does not act outside of his lawful authority (TCC, art. 1109).

There are also duties and responsibilities of the master towards the shipowner. The master is responsible to inform the shipowner regularly regarding the condition of the ship, incidents that happen during the voyage, contracts made, suits filed. In addition, in cases of change of route, interruption of voyage, extraordinary repairs and purchases, the master should ask for orders of the shipowner. The master is obligated to answer the shipowner upon the return of the ship to the port of registry, or whenever it is requested by the shipowner. The master should note any kind of sum apart from the freight, that is given by the shipper or the consignee as compensation or reward as payment due for the shipowner (TCC, art. 1110).

The master cannot load any cargo on the ship on his own account, without the consent of the shipowner. If the master does not comply with this restriction, he is to pay the maximum freight that can be asked for cargo with similar specifications, at the place and time of loading. In cases where the freight paid by the master does not cover the damages that are incurred by the shipowner, shipowner's right for compensation are reserved (TCC, art. 1111).

The master has responsibilities regarding the parties that have interest over the cargo which are loaded on the ship. It is the obligation of the master to show the due diligence required to protect the cargo, thus protect the interest of the related parties. When there is a need for extraordinary measures to be taken in order to stop or diminish the damages of a peril, the master, if possible, should ask for the orders of the parties related to the cargo, and again, if possible comply with said orders. If there is no possibility to ask for the orders, the master acts on his own but should inform the parties as soon as possible (TCC, art. 1112). If there is a general average situation, the master should choose his actions regarding the cargo in a manner that will affect the



parties in the mildest way possible (TCC, art. 1115). The shipowner is liable to compensate the parties as a consequence of the master's actions (TCC, art. 1117).

In times when the ship is unable follow its route, due to unexpected reasons, the master can, while keeping in mind the requirements of the situation and the resources at hand, continue the voyage on a different route, suspend the voyage for a short or long period of time or return to the port of origin (TCC, art. 1113).



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN, AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS**

Upon a general approach to the “conflict” issue and “legislation” to prevent the occurrence of said “conflict” in this section the specifics of conflict situations on board ships are investigated. In line with the aim of this thesis, seafarers and decision makers in relation with seafarers were inquired about the reasons for conflict on interpersonal, intergroup and interorganizational level, in seafarers’ working process. In addition, the decision makers were also asked the related legislation on each level and competencies required of the seafarers regarding conflict management. In this section of the thesis, the research methods adapted, population and sampling processes, data collection and organization, the rigor of the study and the findings will be presented.

#### **4.1. RESEARCH METHOD**

Qualitative approach was chosen for this study as the research questions are of an exploratory nature and qualitative methods enables the researches to deeply investigate a certain phenomenon. In other words, qualitative approach describes and illuminates a subject (Silverman, 1998). While quantitative research pursues generalization, qualitative research allows for the interpretation of data that cannot be reduced to numbers easily (Anderson, 2010).

For the purpose of answering the research questions in the best way possible, the semi-structured interview method was chosen as it allows for deep investigation of a certain matter. Secondly, focus group method was chosen for identification of competencies required for conflict management skills as this method allows the researcher to acquire information from multiple experts at the same time. A more detailed explanation of both methods and the reasoning behind their application in this study will be presented in the following subsections.

#### **4.1.1. Semi-structured Interview Method**

Semi-structured interview interviews are one of the most widely used method for qualitative studies (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) as it allows the participants freedom to elaborate on their thoughts, talk about their particular interest areas and expertise with the added benefit of the ability to question certain responses to greater depth (Horton et al., 2004).

Main aim of the interviewers adopting unstructured or semi-structured interviews is the desire to learn more about the experiences the participants had, the difference between unstructured and semi-structured interviews is the fact that, in unstructured interviews, there is no guidance, no probing question from the interviewer (Rose, 1994). That is why semi-structured interview was found to be the perfect fit for this study, along with serving the purpose of the exploration of the phenomenon of conflict, semi-structured interviews also allow the participants to talk freely about their views and experiences, but when a matter of interest or a compelling phenomenon came up, the interviewer was able to delve deeper with probing questions.

However, the method is not without its disadvantages. Newcomer et al. (2015) state that semi-structured interviews are time consuming and labour intensive to carry out and requires the interviewer to be well informed about the subject matter. Lastly, without serious commitment of time and personnel, semi structured interviews lack the generalization ability of standardized surveys.

#### **4.1.2. Focus Group Method**

A focus group consists of a group of people, preferably between six to twelve, gathered to talk about a subject that was decided by the researcher, in an informal setting, where the moderator of the focus group remains non-directive except for keeping the group on subject (Longhurst, 2003). The moderator directs the conversation, encourages the members to participate, and collects the data. The number of focus group members is an important issue as if there are too few participants, the conversation may not be dynamic and stagnate, and if there are too

many, some participants may not have the chance to voice their opinions on the matter (Harrell and Bradley, 2009).

Cullen and Webster (2007) define the purpose of focus group as gaining insight and deeper understanding of a matter as a result of group discussion and suggest that it is suitable for researches on rather new topics. Considering conflict studies are yet to be found on seafarers' workplace, implementation of focus group method was found suitable for this study.

#### **4.2. POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The population for the interview part of this thesis consist of deck and engine department officers that are currently active in their profession. The main reasoning behind this population decision is the fact that this group represents the most up-to-date views regarding conflict situations on board ships and experienced both superior and subordinate roles. The focus group population consists of crew managers and human resources (HR) managers of shipowning and ship managing companies, as they represent a decision maker figure for issues regarding conflict on board ships.

Purposeful sampling technique was chosen for this thesis, as this method of sampling depends on selecting information rich cases, which can provide vast amount of information of the highest importance to the purpose of an in-depth study (Patton, 2014).

For phenomenological studies such as this one, the number of participants of the interview process is a subject that has been discussed in the literature. While Morse (1994) states the minimum number should be 6 interviews, Creswell (1998) states the number should be between 5 to 25. Without predetermining the number of participants, saturation of the codes shows how many interviews are enough, in their study, Guest et al. (2006) states on two different in-depth interview studies, they reached 90% saturation after 12 interviews, whereas Hennink (2017) et al found through 25 in-depth interviews, code saturation was reached at nine interviews while meaning saturation required between 16 to 24 interviews. The number of participants for the interview part of the thesis was not predetermined and data collection continued to the point that

saturation was reached. Profile information of the interviewees can be found in table 1.

**Table 1:** Profile Information of The Interviewees

<b>Interviewee Code</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Ship Type</b>
SM-01	Master	17 years	Deck	Container
SM-02	Master	6 years	Deck	Tanker
SM-03	Master	10 years	Deck	Bulk
SM-04	Master	12 years	Deck	Tanker
FO-01	Chief Officer	10 years	Deck	Bulk
SM-05	Master	10 years	Deck	Tanker
FO-02	Chief Officer	6 years	Deck	Tanker
FO-03	Chief Officer	2 years	Deck	Tanker
TE-01	Third Engineering Officer	2 years	Engine	Tanker
TE-02	Third Engineering Officer	1.5 years	Engine	Container
CE-01	Chief Engineering Officer	10 years	Engine	Bulk
CE-02	Chief Engineering Officer	8 years	Engine	Bulk
CE-03	Chief Engineering Officer	11 years	Engine	Tanker
CE-04	Chief Engineering Officer	10 years	Engine	Tanker
CE-05	Chief Engineering Officer	11 years	Engine	Tanker
CE-06	Chief Engineering Officer	7 years	Engine	Tanker
FO-04	Chief Officer	10 years	Deck	Tanker

TE-03	Third Engineering Officer	2.5 years	Engine	Bulk
SO-01	Second Officer	4.5 years	Deck	Container
TE-04	Third Engineering Officer	5 years	Engine	Container

8 participants were contacted for the focus group part of the thesis as the consensus in the focus group literature shows a minimum of 6 participants is required for a well-formed focus group (Cooper and Schindler, 2003; Morgan and Scannell, 1998; Kelley, 1999; Leitao and Vergueiro, 2000). In the end, 6 participants attended the focus group, 2 of the other contacted participants could not make the meeting due to scheduling complications. Profile information of the participants can be found in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Profile Information of The Participants of The Focus Group

<b>Participant Code</b>	<b>Type of Company</b>	<b>Title of the Participant</b>	<b>Experience Position/Industry</b>	<b># of ships owned/managed by the company</b>	<b># Seafarers on board</b>
HR-01	Shipowner	HR Manager	3 years/21 years	4	80
CM-01	Manning Agency	Crew Manager	6 years	10	300
HR-02	Shipowner/Ship Management	HR Manager	12 years/15 years	7	197
HR-03	Technical Management	HR Manager	3 years/6 years	12	15
HR-04	Shipowner/Ship Management	HR Manager	2 years/8 years	5	100
CM-02	Ship Management	Crew Manager	6 years/10 years	6	104

### **4.3. DATA COLLECTION AND ORGANIZATION**

Two main tools are used to gather information gathering for this thesis. They are: semi-structured interviews and focus group method. As previously stated, semi-structured interview method was chosen as it allows the participants to express themselves and their experiences in a conversational setting, through open ended questions. Predetermined questions for the interviews were aimed to learn about the reasons for conflict in seafarers' workplace on three levels. First question aimed to understand the reasons for conflict on the interpersonal level. The second question was on the reasons for conflict on the intergroup level. Lastly, participants were asked to consider the ship as a sole organization and evaluate the reasons for conflict on interorganizational level, which includes parties such as the shipowner/ship management company, the charterer and/or the cargo owner.

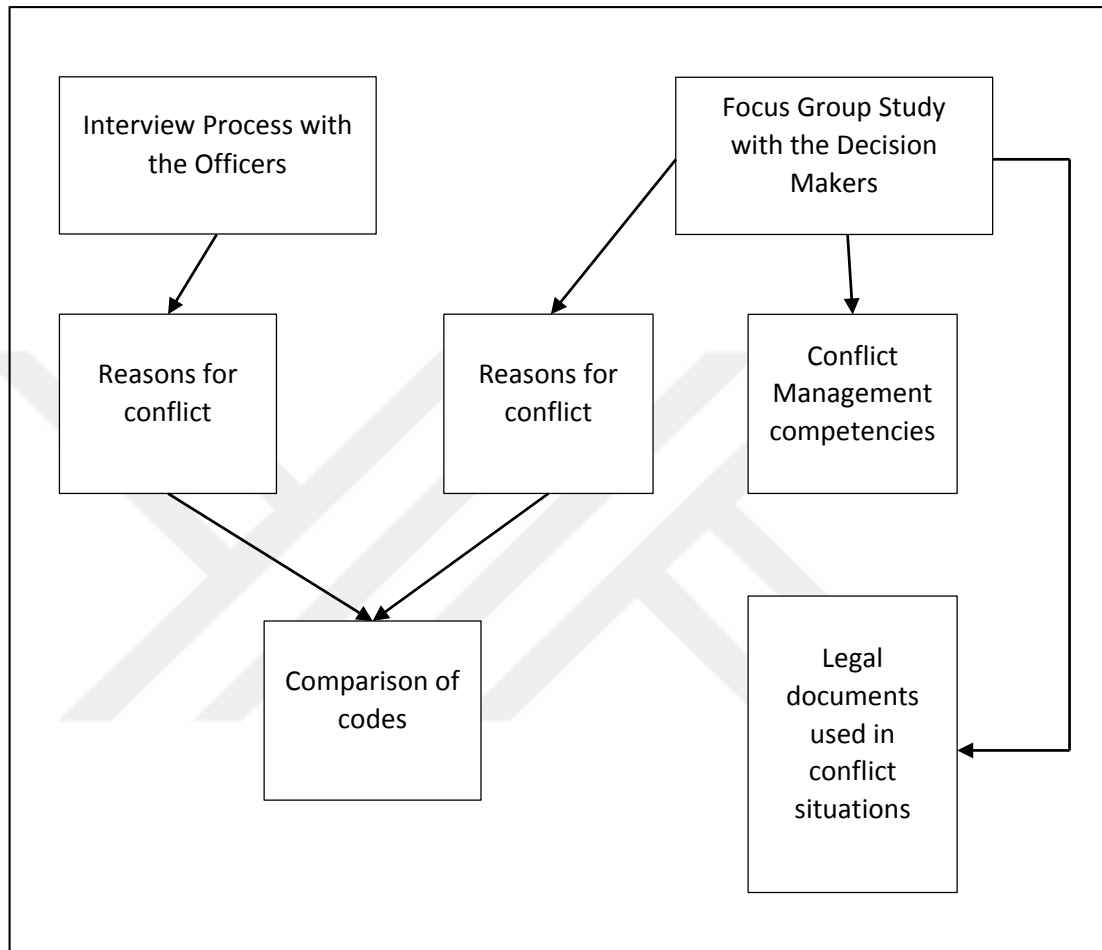
A total of 20 interviews have been conducted with seafarers that are actively working on board ships. 11 of said interviews had been conducted face to face while 9 had been conducted using video calls via Skype application, due to measures taken against Covid-19 outbreak. Duration of the interviews ranges from 30 minutes to 1 hour. The more experienced the participant was, more likely they were to talk longer, as they witnessed and accumulated more information regarding conflict situations.

As for all interviews, both face to face and via Skype application, participants were asked permission for the recording of the session. Following the completion of each interview, the recording as transcribed in the original language (in this study it was Turkish) and quotes presented in the findings section were translated to English. Coding was carried out by the author and another peer scholar separately and later compared to ensure rigor. Correction of the codes were made after discussing which code will be more appropriate.

Focus group study was carried out with 6 decision makers that consist of HR and crew managers of shipowning and ship managing companies. The study was carried out on Microsoft Teams application which allowed all participants to be seen, heard and recorded simultaneously. In the focus group, participants were asked the same predetermined questions as the participants of the interview process, but with added inquiries on competencies required for conflict management and legal

documents that is effective in dealing with conflict situations that happen on board, on each level. Following figure shows the data collection process:

**Figure 90:** Flow Diagram of the Research Design



In the transcription and coding process, MaxQDA 2018 software was utilized. The analysis of the relations of the codes and their frequency was also computed by this software. However, as this study quantification was not the goal, in that sense, frequency of the codes was presented as supporting information only.

#### 4.4. RIGOR OF THE STUDY

As it is the case for quantitative research, qualitative research should also provide actions in order to improve its trustworthiness. Work of Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1986) laid foundations for rigor (trustworthiness) in qualitative research. Their model proposed four criteria for a rigorous qualitative study which



were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Later on the work of Wallendorf and Belk (1989) added integrity among those criteria. In the context of rigor of a qualitative study, credibility defines the adequate and believable representations of the constructions of reality studied; transferability defines the extent to which the findings of the study can transfer to other contexts; dependability defines the extent that the findings of the study are not prone to the time period and the participants of that study, and similar results will be achieved if the research was repeated; confirmability defines the ability to understand and keep track of a researcher's interpretation by the data and other records in the study; and lastly, integrity defines the extent that the study was free of lies, evasions, misinformation or misrepresentation.

In this thesis, steps which are taken to ensure the rigor of the study are as follows:

In order to ensure the credibility of the study, during the interviews, for the purpose of eliminating bias, interviewer abstained from comments, instead probing questions were used when further comments were needed for clarification. Furthermore, during the coding process of verbatim transcripts of the interviews, another researcher provided inter-coding assistance, codes were compared using MaxQDA 2018 software.

In order to ensure transferability, purposeful sampling was adapted and the participants were chosen accordingly. Seafarers that were included in the study are chosen from deck and engine departments on equal numbers, while also representing every ship type. In addition, as seafarers work on different ships and with different crews almost on each contract, their experiences can be considered more transferrable when compared to a regular office employee.

As for the sake of dependability, the interview process was continued until the saturation was reached, instead of a predetermined number of interviews.

As for the aim of achieving confirmability, participants' questions about others and the results of the previously carried out interviews was not discussed, in addition, the focus group participants were also not informed about the results of the interview process. As for the emerging code, in the findings section, every code was followed up by quotes from the participants that matches it.

Lastly, in order to maintain integrity, participants' names and their companies' names are kept anonymous, mention of other company names during interview and focus group processes were redacted and parts that were requested to be kept off the record was also redacted from the transcripts.

## **4.5. FINDINGS**

In this final section of the study, research findings will be revealed. Findings on the interviews and the focus group will be presented in separate subsections. The analysis of the interviews will present answers on RQ 1, by showing what the participants perceive as reasons for conflict on interpersonal intergroup and interorganizational level. RQ 2 and RQ 3 will be answered by the analysis of focus group application. The comparison of perceived reasons for conflict of focus group members and interview participants will provide the answer for RQ 2 whereas the criterion provided by the members of the focus group regarding the competencies required for conflict management will provide the answer for RQ 3.

### **4.5.1. Findings on Reasons for Conflict in Seafarers Workplace from The Interview Process**

The first research question of this thesis is as follows: What are the reasons for conflict in seafarers' workplace on personal, group and organizational levels? In search for the answers for this question, responses of seafarers who participated in the interview process of this thesis will be analyzed in three subsections which are interpersonal level, intergroup level and interorganizational level. Upon the completion of the coding process, a total of 29 codes have emerged. Table 3 shows the codes that emerged in the study with their frequency.

**Table 3:** Frequency of Codes Emerged From The Interviews

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
culture-ethnicity-religion	15
hierarchy	14
working hours	13
working conditions\food	11
commercial concerns	10
communication	10
education	9
ego	9
stress\contract	8
age-generation gap	8
distributive justice	8
personal traits	7
job allocation	7
stress	6
meritocracy	6
not meeting the demands of the ship	5
alumni favoritism	5
role ambiguity	4
stress\being away	4
mobbing-grudge	4
idleness	3
alcohol-smoking	3
gender	3
exhaustion-burnout	2
conflict resolution	2
wages	2
culture-ethnicity-religion\politics	2
working conditions	1
gossip	1

In the conducted interviews, all participants discussed matters that cause interpersonal and intergroup conflict, however, interorganizational conflict was mentioned by 11 of the participants. This proves that while interpersonal and intergroup conflicts are experienced by everyone on board, ship, as an organization

does not always face conflict against shipowner, ship management firm, charterer or cargo owner. In addition, when the profile of the participants that experienced interorganizational conflict one way or another is analyzed, it can be seen that 9 of the 11 participants are either ship master, or chief engineering officer. In addition, one of the remaining two is a first officer. In light of this information it can be argued that, as the majority of the participants that experienced interorganizational conflict are those of higher responsibility in the context of ship hierarchy, this range of conflict may not apply to all seafarers on board. Table 4 shows the codes that are associated with each range of conflict and how many times it has been associated with that range by the participants.

**Table 4:** Code Relationship Matrix of The Interviews

<b>Codes</b>	<b>INTERPERSONAL</b>	<b>INTERGROUP</b>	<b>INTERORGANIZATIONAL</b>
hierarchy	7	2	0
culture-ethnicity-religion	5	8	0
culture-ethnicity-religion\politics	2	0	0
working hours	5	8	0
working conditions	1	0	0
working conditions\food	6	2	0
communication	6	3	0
distributive justice	3	3	0
commercial concerns	1	0	9
job allocation	7	0	0
education	9	0	0
personal traits	6	2	0
ego	5	4	0
meritocracy	4	0	0
stress	6	0	0
stress\being away	4	0	0
stress\contract	8	0	0
alumni favoritism	0	4	0
age-generation gap	3	4	0
mobbing-grudge	2	1	0
role ambiguity	0	4	0
idleness	3	0	0
not meeting the demands of the ship	0	0	5
gender	2	1	0

wages	1	0	0
exhaustion-burnout	2	0	0
alcohol-smoking	1	2	0

Following subsections will analyze the reasons for conflict for each level, which are interpersonal level, intergroup level and interorganizational level, respectively.

#### **4.5.1.1. Findings on Interpersonal Level from The Interview Process**

In order to understand the reasons behind conflict situations on board, participants were asked firstly, about interpersonal conflict situations. A total of 25 reasons for conflict emerged regarding the interpersonal level. Below subsections explain the emerging reasons, with quotes from the participants of the interviews.

##### **4.5.1.1.1. Hierarchy as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

It can be seen that “hierarchy”, which is implemented on vessels primarily to eliminate all conflict situations without giving it a chance to grow, was seen as an important factor for causing it. The main consensus among participants was that hierarchy and the authority of the superiors and the duties they assign were constantly challenged by the subordinates, just to see how much they can get away with. However, as the following quote from a participant show, it is not a one-way street:

CE-05: *Superiors can manipulate their subordinates, or can abuse their authority. Sometimes subordinates become competitive in order to get in the superiors' good books. This manipulative competitive environment breeds conflict.*

Few other participants noted that the strict hierarchy can be destructive, and actually is in decrease, as a younger generation picks up the mantle as superiors.

FO-04: *Officers used to distance themselves as their ranking got higher, old-timers were all like this, it is still there but is decreasing. A very strict hierarchy can lead to conflict situations as unwarranted hierarchical pressure from superiors, some relationships gets to the breakaway point.*

However, there is a reason for hierarchy to be implemented on ships, and even though participants are aware of the problems caused by it, they state its absence is also problematic and it should be respected and followed.

SM-03: *There was this time that the chain of command and the hierarchical structure of the ship was broken and an incident was brought up to the company by a rating, concerning the first officer, by-passing the master. His excuse was, "I feared that if i told the master, he would be mad at me and make me do all the dirty work". This is caused by not knowing the nautical customs, ratings are not that good when it comes to respecting customs.*

This fear while misplaced, is not unwarranted as there are multiple reported situations where superiors can fixate on their subordinates and commit acts of mobbing as this participant states:

FO-01: *I personally witnessed a Philippine boatswain forcing Indonesian ratings to serve him alcohol (which is against their beliefs as Muslims), and assignig them the hardest and messiest jobs. This resulted in boatswain being shipped out.*

One other aspect of the challenges of the hierarchical setting is the adaptation of newcomers. A participant working as a chief engineering officer, who is the highest ranking officer in the engine department made this statement regarding the issue of adaptation:

CE-06: *It can be hard for the newcomers to adapt to the hierarchical structure, and in the process, they get in to all kinds of arguments and quarrels.*

#### **4.5.1.1.2. Job Allocation as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

Another important reason for interpersonal conflict was stated to be “job allocation”. This issue was named solely as a reason for interpersonal conflict, not extending to the other levels. The importance of job allocation was stated by participants as follows:

FO-01: *Job allocation is an important matter. There are some jobs that are liked and some jobs that are hated, some jobs that are easy, and some jobs that are hard. It is not that much of an issue when you are working with Asian ratings, as they*

*are usually doing the jobs they are given without any objections, but it is a big problem with Turkish ratings.*

*CE-02: Job allocation is crucial. Some ratings may not like the job you are assigning them, or there can be some personnel that can say “this is not my job”. For this reason, you must assign the jobs that fit the expertise and personality of a person. An oiler excels at painting, the other excels at mechanics, if you assign them the wrong jobs, none of the work gets done properly.*

#### **4.5.1.1.3. Education as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

Similar to “job allocation”, “education” was an issue that is seen as important, and again, solely as a reason for interpersonal conflict. The problems caused by education, or lack thereof, is almost unanimously connected to the interpersonal conflicts between an officer and a rating, and also among ratings. Officers state the lack of education of rating when compared with themselves, cause conflict situations in work, situations where foreign language is required, and social life on board. These quotes describe the situation regarding education:

*SM-02: Interpersonal conflict can be observed more among ratings, as they don’t know how to talk, it is all about their level of education.*

*FO-04: ...another issue is the difference of perspective between an officer and a rating. We are trained and educated for this occupation, and it becomes a way of life for us. However, it is not the same for the ratings, as they are not any trade schools for them, anyone that meets the requirements can become a rating on a ship. The difference in education level is massive.*

*SM-04: The difference in the level of education between officers and ratings is a big problem. Turkish ratings, almost always don’t know English. They see the seafaring job as a last resort, so there is no education or foreign language to be found with them. They see every contract as their last, saying they will quit the sea after the contract is done. However, the Philippine’s consider this an occupation, they are trained and educated for this occupation since the primary school and it makes a vast difference.*

#### 4.5.1.1.4. Stress as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict

“Stress” with its sub codes “stress of being away” and “stress of long contracts” was the most dominant reason for conflict that is solely stated on interpersonal level by more than half of the participants. There are few participants who handles stress on its own, and not in its sub codes. Their comments can be found as follows:

CE-02: *We are in constant stress while working on board, especially those who work in the engine department of old ships, in times like that, when some problem comes up, you can be short-tempered as an already agitated person. If you consider the opposing person is in the same condition, there you go, a rapidly escalating conflict.*

FO-04: *If you ask me, the most important reason for conflict is stress, especially in tankers. Every job, every task has its own hurdles. As chemical tankers have lots of voyages, and there is a lot of work and the tempo of the work is quite high, stressed out people can react differently than usual, you can get angry really quickly, I know by experience.*

One aspect that is stressed enough to warrant its own sub code is the “stress of long contracts” more than half of the participants handled the issue of stress from the perspective of long contracts. In addition, long contracts have been linked with burn-out by two participants who are ship masters. Their comments on the issue are as follows:

SM-03: *Long contracts cause burn-outs, conflict situations generally occur among people that are nearing the end of their contracts, they tend to be a little restless, when they believe they are departing soon, they start to lay about, their work performance dips, and they start to be hard to get along with.*

SM-01: *Probably the biggest reason for interpersonal conflict is the stress and burn-out experienced by the personnel, you can observe late in their contracts, people get more agitated, problems come out of thin air.*

Other participants’ comments on stress caused by long contracts can be found below:

TE-01: *Long contracts and inability to depart after the end of contract are important reasons. As companies look at this situation from a financial perspective,*



*they want to change personnel as few as possible. This is really hard on interpersonal relations. There are people who start up fistfights or swear at the superior officers on purpose, just to get sent away from the ship.*

TE-03: *...or maybe you have been kept on board for too long, let's say you were on a 4-month contract, but at the end you could not depart for some reason, and had to work for two more months. Those extra two months can be nerve wrecking, and you can present your problems, though unwillingly, to your coworkers.*

Similarly, being away from land, friends and family has such an effect on seafarers, it manifests itself on a sub code as “stress of being away”. Stress of working long-term contracts are worsened by the stress of being away and confined in a space where you work and live, with the same people but away from those who you love, and away from any social activity. Participants express their feelings on the subject as follows:

FO-04: *When you are away from your family, at sea, on a piece of metal, with very little to blow off some steam, your tolerance hits rock bottom. You cannot tolerate something you would in your first month, on your fourth month.*

CE-02: *The first reason for interpersonal conflict is the psychological factors. When you have been away for long, the disputes you may have with friends and family, manifest on board.*

TE-04: *Nowadays, with the coronavirus, nobody can get off while in port, or end their contract and depart, you are stuck. So, any little thing can escalate to a whole deal. Both your performance and your psychology worsens, you get agitated a lot easier.*

#### **4.5.1.1.5. Culture-Ethnicity-Religion as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

Along with its sub code “politics”, “culture-ethnicity-religion was found to be another dominant reason for interpersonal conflict. Maritime transport is, by its nature, international and the composition of ship’s personnel is no different. Most ships’ crew consist of seafarers from different cultures and nations, sharing the same work and living space. Following quotes shed light on to the situation:

SM-03: *One of the leading reasons for conflict is the segregation of ethnicity and religion. Actually, even if you don't do it on purpose, someone from another nation can be so different than you, you just can't get along. Some cultural rituals can be inconvenient for personnel from other cultures. Some Sri-Lankan personnel burns incense in their quarters and it disturbs the Philippine personnel. Philippine's love to do karaoke but when it is Indonesians' praying time, they find that to be rude and disrespectful.*

CE-02: *There are vast differences among cultures, top management level seafarers and company personnel should keep that in mind. They should know the people and their countries' customs and act accordingly. Philippines value being a group, as they always live with their families, you should never embarrass them in front of people. Officers from Philippines and Indonesia tend to not dine in the officers' lounge, but with their fellow countrymen in the personnel lounge. I found that strange and intervened, however that was wrong of me, it is their culture, you cannot force to change that.*

CE-04: *When there are multiple nationalities on board, there can be numerous reasons for conflict, religious discrimination is a certainty, and cultural differences can play a part as well. For example, one culture can be comfortable and open with homosexual relationships, but not every personnel can be respectful or understanding of that.*

In some cases, single-nation crews can experience culture or ethnicity based conflict situations as well. Following quotes elaborate on the matter:

SM-02: *I work on a single-nation crewed ship, but still you can experience conflict situations among people from different regions of the country.*

SM-05: *In single nation crewed ships, there are no problems regarding religion, language or race, but differences in culture are still relevant. Think about Turkey for instance, people from different regions have different cultures, and this can cause conflict.*

FO-03: *...someone can fixate on the other, just because he is from Black Sea region, there are people who experience distress because of their ethnicity, even in single-nation crews. When you are working on a ship you do not have the chance to*

*just pack up and go home, you are stuck with this person that is tormenting you, living and working together, and it becomes a torture for both parties.*

#### **4.5.1.1.6. Working Conditions as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Working conditions”, had been named as a reason for interpersonal conflict almost exclusively with its sub code “food”. What the employees eat perhaps never been more of an issue, as it can be substituted at will, in almost all workplaces but the ship. Following quotes from the participants express just how much of a deal one meal actually is on board:

CE-01: *In multi-national ships, the fact that you cannot cook for each and every nation, poses a problem. Once there was this Philippine personnel that everybody loved, and the cook made him Philippine rice every meal, but this special treatment caused an uprising, people were mad, asking why was he getting what he wanted and no one else.*

CE-05: *... another issue, as rare as it may be, is the quality of the food. Eating is the single most important social activity on board for the personnel. If the food supplied is of low quality or insufficient, or if sought after supplies such as fruits are rarely supplied, people can argue over who ate how much of anything.*

CE-06: *The cook is the most important person on board. If his cooking is bad, it effects everyone on board. As people has no chance to go out or do any other kind of social activities, the only time they are happy is when they are eating. If the food is bad, and it is an ongoing situation, this can lead to serious conflicts.*

TE-03: *Food is essential. If the cook is not good, since our whole world is about food on board, everyone tends to be more tense and aggressive.*

SO-01: *Food causes many problems, because it is our only motivation. If your cook is good, everyone is happy, if you can get another serving when you want, all is good. There are personnel that are in the good books of the cook and there are those that are in his bad books. Those two, more often than not gets in to arguments, and later on this escalates to everyone versus the cook. The master and the first officer have the authority to change the cook, however as it is hard to find a cook to work on*

*board, they are very hesitant about it. Then the personnel get mad with the master and the first officer for not changing the cook.*

The only mention of “working conditions” outside the context of “food” was stated as follows:

*SM-01: The working conditions on board is really important. On the last ship I worked, there was no television, no internet on board and we made very busy port calls. The exhaustion of those people on board can easily lead to conflict situations.*

#### **4.5.1.1.7. Working Hours as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Working hours” is found to be an issue on both interpersonal and intergroup levels. The problem seems to be mainly about the work that is forced outside a personnel’s shifts. Following quotes explain the situation in its entirety:

*TE-04: Ratings tend to slow down the work given if its outside his/her shift hours. I work on my shift and the rest is not my problem, “we’ll do it tomorrow” is their attitude.*

*TE-03: If something comes up outside their (ratings) regular shifts, and it happens often, the tension builds.*

Another issue is not working the same hours with others, some instances were quoted as follows:

*SM-05: There can be problems among personnel that do the same job regarding how much work they’ve done and the hours they worked on their shift. Did they arrive late and left early? These kind of things can cause problems between personnel that is on the same hierarchical level.*

*SO-01: Holidays can be problematic. First day of Ramadan in Turkey is the eve of Ramadan for Pakistani’s. On the ship, we granted the first day of Ramadan as a holiday for everyone but since it was eve for them, Pakistani personnel requested the next day as a holiday too, saying they have to call their families. As the higher ranking seafarers were Turkish on that ship, holidays were arranged in accordance to Turkish holidays. However, legally, you have to honor each nations holidays.*

#### 4.5.1.1.8. Communication as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict

“Communication” is an integral part of interpersonal relationships, thus its inclusion as a reason for conflict on interpersonal level is no surprise. Ship is a place where communication and coordination is essential but the hierarchical structure is not the best place for open communication channels, as per the quotes below:

CE-05: *Communication comes in first for me, the way you talk to one and other. For example, when there is a situation you deem unsafe, and you want to warn your colleague, your tone can mean “be careful you are important to us” or “can't you see this is unsafe! Idiot!” There is a big difference in how these two would be perceived.*

FO-04: *...and there is a side effect to this kind of pressure (talks about superior-subordinate relations) and that is the shutting down of communication channels. If you scold the guy, you cannot expect him to come to you and ask you stuff, he hides them, and that is quite dangerous for both you and the ship.*

SO-01: *The master can scold the officers in many ways. Their communication channels are shut, they do not listen, thus we cannot explain ourselves. They just assume what they know is what is right.*

The composition of a ship's personnel is various in terms of education level, nationality, age and gender. Below quotes show that communication can be linked with various other reasons for conflict as both the antecedent and the consequence of them:

FO-02: *Troubles in communication is one of the top reasons for conflict. People have a hard time expressing themselves. Failure to describe a job assigned, or failure of understanding it, is always a reason for conflict.*

TE-02: *... especially the experienced ratings can label you as ignorant towards the profession. This builds a wall in the middle of your communication.*

CE-03: *... inability to explain yourself with the right words is another problem, this causes lack of communication. I think the main reason behind this, is the lack of education.*

#### **4.5.1.1.9. Distributive Justice as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

Perception of justice have always been linked with conflict situations and it is not any different for the ship as a workplace. Similar to “working hours” and “job allocation”, “distributive justice” is a delicate subject that must be handled with care and diligence. Following quotes demonstrate instances of problems stemming from distributive justice, or injustice in some cases:

SM-03: *Older seafarers try to get away from harder tasks. However, this raises a question among others, they start to ask “why do we get paid the same, if we are working harder?”.*

FO-02: *... and there is this one thing, although it does not happen all the time, sometimes people can delegate their tasks to others, which actually their own responsibility. First officers tend to do that, and naturally, it creates unrest.*

FO-03: *Interpersonal conflicts usually start when someone is working less than they should, and the other one picks up his slack. It is not that much of an issue through the voyage but when in port, everyone has their work assigned to them. If you assign a task to three people, that three won't work equally, and that causes the problem.*

#### **4.5.1.1.10. Personal Traits as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Personal traits” was a reason many participants put on the top of the list as a reason for interpersonal conflict. While not delving deep on what kind of personal traits causes problems, terms such as personality and mental state were commonly used to define such traits, as the below quotes demonstrate:

CE-04: *On interpersonal level, first thing that comes to mind is the mental state of the individual.*

TE-03: *On interpersonal level, personality is at the top of the list for me.*

CE-06: *the psychological state of the individual is very important. Some “mental cases” can cause serious problems.*

SM-03: *Psychological problems, family problems and the personality of said individual is all very important.*

CE-02: *...secondly, the relationship among the first officer, chief engineer, and the ship master, who are all in charge of management is very important. Even if you are working with easy going people, the negative approach of any top level management officers can put a person on the defensive mode.*

#### **4.5.1.1.11. Ego as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Ego” was handled as a separate code from “personal traits” as it was specifically name dropped a considerable amount of times. The concept has also been linked with issues such as “age-generation gap” and experience. The issue of “ego” seems to be encountered mostly among officers and from top to down in hierarchical sense. Following quotes give examples for this range of conflict situations:

SO-01: *On interpersonal level, ego comes into play. This situation starts from the university. Upper classes are taught to use their authority on lower classes, and that carries on to the professional life.*

TE-01: *... in the same way, a chief engineer or a ship master that have been away from the work life for too long, try to establish a dominance over the personnel. They fail to understand that times have changed, fail to adapt, and try to deflect the blame to the subordinates.*

FO-02: *... another important reason is ego, and the abuse of power that comes with it. This happens more among the officers.*

TE-03: *Ego can cause many conflict situations. For instance, oilers tend to be older than us, thus they do the tasks we assign them with significant displeasure, and this is a problem.*

#### **4.5.1.1.12. Meritocracy as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Meritocracy” is one of those issues that poses a threat to every work environment. This threat can affect work performance, safety, and personal relationships. Issues that can arise when meritocracy is overlooked are quoted by the participants as follows:

SM-04: *Sometimes, human resources sends some personnel on board, and we find out that he has never worked on a tanker before. Tankers are a place where there is no margin for error. When employing an able seaman, if you choose someone that has never worked on this type of ship before, it is a pathway for problems. On top of that, other personnel will get restless if someone who does not know the job, gets paid the same amount as them.*

FO-02: *If hiring is done correctly, and done according to merit, these conflict situations happen less or maybe even do not happen at all.*

CE-04: *Everyone know that an unqualified personnel is unqualified. However, whether he is qualified or not, he is an officer, so the master should own him up. Although, sometimes these unqualified personnel gang up and stand against the qualified ones.*

#### **4.5.1.1.13. Age-Generation Gap as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

As it was mentioned before, “age-generation gap” is linked with “ego” but also has reasons to be a standalone code on its own. Main reason behind it the fact that older personnel tend to overlook the younger ones, even if they outrank them. Examples were quoted as follows:

SM-03: *Age difference is really important. A 20 year-old seaman and a 50 year-old seaman is bound to have difficulties understanding each other. Older personnel expect more respect and gratitude, and the younger ones don't know how to talk.*

SO-01: *Older ratings tend to not respect us, on the basis of us being younger. They try to teach us how to do our jobs.*

#### **4.5.1.1.14. Mobbing-Grudge as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Mobbing-grudge” was previously mentioned as a consequence of “hierarchy” related conflict situations. However, the following quote demonstrates that mobbing and grudge can be the antecedent of conflict situations as well:



SM-01: *Following the complaint regarding a superior, people tend to fixate on the person who filed the complaint. Such fixations can erupt in some other time and place. Overworking the complainant, making him work under the sun and all that. These type of outcomes are more commonly seen in companies that are lacking a strong corporate culture.*

#### **4.5.1.1.15. Idleness as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Idleness” was found to be an interesting reason for conflict as it was not found in every type of ship and every department. All three of the participants that stated being idle, with no tasks at hand leads to conflict situations out of boredom, or making a mountain out of a molehill, are working or worked for bulk ships in the engine department. Following are the quotes from all said participants, stating why being idle leads to conflict situations:

CE-02: *Older ships have less tendency for conflict as there is always something to do. In newer ships, there is a lot of free time, on top of that if the managers are not competent in assigning tasks, people can fixate on every little thing the other person does, out of idleness. In older ships you don't have time for this as you are working together.*

CE-03: *Biggest reason for interpersonal conflict, especially for the ratings, is when there is no work to do, and they are idle.*

CE-04: *When there is nothing to do, people can fixate on the weirdest things, they can start arguing just for the sake of it.*

#### **4.5.1.1.16. Gender as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

The issue of “gender” or women in seafaring more specifically, is a topic that is improving day by day. However, it is not completely eradicated and as two out of four female participants of this study states, they sometimes face real prejudice. Their quotes show the extent of this prejudice and the history of the place of the women in seafaring.

TE-02: *There are problems that originate due to gender. When you are a woman among men on board, even the lowest ranked personnel does not consider you fit to carry out your duties, you have to prove yourself to everyone.*

SO-01: *There is the issue of men and women. The profession is not accepting of women. There is a superstitious belief that has been around for ages that women are bad luck when they are on board, so we are being a little left out. Since there are 1 or maximum 2 women on board at the same time, you are being left out on the social life as well. You feel like you are not wanted or not supposed to be there. As you continue to feel like this, you can't help but feel resentful, or at times vindictive. They mess up your psychology, thus your reactions towards those people also change.*

#### **4.5.1.1.17. Exhaustion-Burnout as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

When the issue of “stress” was discussed, “exhaustion-burnout” was found to be among the consequences of stress. However, the following quotes emphasis on exhaustion and burnout as the reason for conflict, it is handled as a separate code.

SM-01: *Probably the biggest reason for interpersonal conflict is the exhaustion experienced by the personnel*

SM-03: *Long contracts cause burn-outs, conflict situations generally occur among people that are nearing the end of their contracts, they tend to be a little restless, when they believe they are departing soon, they start to lay about, their work performance dips, and they start to be hard to get along with.*

#### **4.5.1.1.18. Commercial Concerns, Wages, and Alcohol-Smoking as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

All three subjects in this subsection were mentioned by just one participant in the context of interpersonal conflict. While they are harder to generalize when compared with the more frequent codes, these are all real problems encountered by actual seafarers working on board ships, thus should be approached with the same manner as the other codes.

“Commercial concerns” is almost exclusively discussed by the participants in the context of interorganizational conflict. The exception being the following quote:

CE-06: *The work load and commercial pressures from the company stresses the officers, and the officers’ stress transfers to the ratings.*

Payment of wages is an issue of importance as it is the case for almost all workplaces, following quote shows that the ship is no different:

TE-01: *If the payment of wages is behind, the backlash from the personnel can cause all kinds of problems.*

Alcohol is not allowed on board every ship but it is on most, as one of the few social activities on board, it is a privilege to be enjoyed, but shall not be abused, according to the following quote:

FO-01: *Alcohol consumption can sometimes cause problems when the personnel cannot handle their liquor.*

#### **4.5.1.2. Findings on Intergroup Level from The Interview Process**

Second question asked to the participants was on reasons for conflict on intergroup level. A total of 12 reasons for conflict emerged regarding the intergroup level. Below subsections explain the emerging reasons, with quotes from the participants of the interviews.

##### **4.5.1.2.1. Hierarchy as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

Similar to interpersonal level, “hierarchy” was found to be a reason for conflict on intergroup level as well, however, it was not stated as much as it was on interpersonal level. The main reason behind its inclusion on intergroup level lies in the fact that one way or another, the naturally formed groups on board such as officers and ratings and deck department and engine department, depend on hierarchical structure. Following quotes gives example to both these group settings and the reasons for conflict among them:

CE-03: *... lack of discipline is another factor. If the superiors act soft, ratings take the charge. This hierarchical structure should be preserved.*

CE-04: *The dissociation of deck-engine departments mainly stems from the two department heads meddling with the others' personnel. In such arguments, each department head should warn and punish if need be, their own personnel.*

#### **4.5.1.2.2. Culture-Ethnicity-Religion as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

The issue of “culture-ethnicity-religion” was one of the most repeated reasons for conflict for both interpersonal and intergroup levels. However, it can be said that it is more dominant on intergroup level. Interpersonal conflicts often pave the way for intergroup conflicts, as it can be proven by quotes of CE-02, CE-04, and FO-03 (see 4.3.1.1.5), all of which include both interpersonal and intergroup range of conflict. On the other hand, following quotes give instances where intergroup conflict grows without any personal input but mainly caused by the multi-national composition of the crew:

SM-03: *Multi-national crews can group up by their nations and ostracize the others.*

FO-01: *I work in a multi-national crewed ship and the biggest reason for conflict is that some nations can't get along with the others. Mainly Indonesians and Philippines, as they have different religions. Each nation forms their own group and they look out for each other.*

CE-01: *Some nations tend to group up. Even more so, these groups can have sub groups among them that are based on the regions or cities of people from that country*

FO-04: *Hometown-nation based groups are very common, and of course religion based groups are always there.*

SO-01: *There are nation based groups, which is due to the conversations you can have with the members of your own nation. Of course you talk and socialize with personnel from other nations, but it's just not the same. Think about this, there were these Pakistani personnel that were working as engine department ratings, and they would come with their greasy hands and eat the rice with those bare hands, without even washing.*

#### 4.5.1.2.3. Working Hours as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict

“Working hours” was another issue that was often repeated both on interpersonal and intergroup levels. Again, similar to “culture-ethnicity-religion”, it was found to be more dominant on intergroup level. This is mainly due to the fact that deck department and engine department work different hours whether on voyage or in port. Following quotes from the participants that are working on the deck department explain the situation with striking examples:

SM-04: *...during this busy pace, the biggest reason for conflict is the injustice between deck and engine departments. While engine department works 8-5, deck personnel works a minimum of 12 hours, and they get paid the same. Actually, as the work done by the engine department is very hard, you could not work them more than 8 hours even if you wanted. Same problem is present among the ratings of these departments as well.*

FO-01: *The deck-engine quarrel is ever present. The reason behind is the fact that engine department has way better working hours. With the development in automation technologies, it is even better. Sometimes they can call it quits at 3 pm, and it rubs the deck department personnel the wrong way.*

FO-03: *... and as the engine department personnel has no tasks on board when the ship is in port, they leave the ship. Since the deck personnel has to stay and work, they get jealous.*

Engine department perspective is not that different, stating the same conditions but each with their own outlook. Following quotes from the engineering department personnel displays this clearly:

TE-01: *The deck-engine groups are a classic, it happens more frequently on ratings level. The basis is the hours of work. Engine personnel works constantly when the ship is on voyage, but the deck personnel can rest. While in port, it is the other way around, deck personnel work and engine personnel can leave the ship, so they are jealous of each other.*

TE-02: *Deck personnel works very hard when the ship is in port, and that stresses them out, they want the engine personnel to work with them on the odd job or two.*

CE-02: *The beef between deck and engine departments is present because they don't know what each other is actually doing. Sometimes when one group is working and the other is not, it poses a problem. This is not the case in foreign ships, because they pay for overtime. So the main issue is money here.*

#### **4.5.1.2.4. Communication as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

While mainly being named as a reason for conflict on interpersonal level, “communication” was also found to be a reason for intergroup conflict situations. Communication’s role both in group relations and also the personal relations of the heads of said groups, which then transfers the group as a whole is presented in the following quotes:

SM-02: *Between deck and engine department, and sometimes among the departments themselves, officers can find them at the crossroads with the chief engineer and/or the ship master. I think the biggest reason of this is the lack of communication.*

SM-05: *Sometimes a very trivial issue can escalate into a whole deal just because of lack of communication. However, if the department heads have a good relationship, even the big fights can be easily resolved.*

TE-04: *If there is bad blood between the chief engineer and the master, it reflects to the departments. In this kind of situations communication is essential. The lack of communication between those two can affect the whole of the both departments. Port stay time, eating at different times and other work-life activities get effected. You must keep a clear line of communication.*

#### **4.5.1.2.5. Distributive Justice as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

The intergroup aspect of “distributive justice” actually builds up on the interpersonal foundations as it is found to be linked with the same issue and that is the assignment of jobs and task on board. Ratings who are assigned jobs by the officers, experience interpersonal conflict at first, then as each group leans to its group members

with their complaints, it morphs into an intergroup conflict, as it can be deduced from the following quotes:

CE-03: *There is the distinction of officers and ratings, and distribution of assignments lays in the foundation of this.*

CE-06: *Officers and ratings can go face to face because of the distribution of assignments.*

Following these almost identical quotes, an outlook on why this problem might occur was given by a participant as below:

TE-01: *It is all about the workload. It happens among the officers as well, like the first officer transferring some of his duties or responsibilities to the second officer. If the first officer slacks off and pins too much of his work on to the second officer, while the second officer is distributing the assignments, there can be unrest, some people can come up and say "This is not my job, it is your job!"*.

#### **4.5.1.2.6. Personal Traits as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

"Personal traits" in line with its name, is a reason for conflict that has been dominantly linked with interpersonal conflict situations. However, it will be a mistake to assume personal traits of the people in charge of others would not affect all those they manage, in hierarchical settings such as the ship. Following quotes from the participants stress that point:

FO-02: *On intergroup level, deck and engine departments encounter problems generally, and it all comes down to the personality of those in charge of those departments.*

CE-03: *...if the heads of deck and engine departments are out of tune, then groups start to split.*

#### **4.5.1.2.7. Ego as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

"Ego" was found to be a code that is almost as dominant in intergroup conflict situations as it was in interpersonal conflict situations. Again, as it was the case in findings on interpersonal conflict, "ego" was specifically mentioned so many times

that it was handled separately from “personal traits”. However, similar to “personal traits” it was also linked with the people in charge of managing others (i.e. department heads) as the quotes below show:

FO-03: *Abuse of authority and personal agendas being used for satisfying one’s ego pushes personnel away from the ship. Giving such authority and power to people who cannot handle it, leads to them abusing that power and authority to the point of torture towards the personnel.*

CE-05: *There can be an argument between two people and that is mainly due to stress, but if you say group conflict, that is bound to be about the heads of those departments, and the ego trip between them.*

CE-06: *If the heads of the departments get along well, and it does not become a war of ego, the communication is present and well, then there will be no conflict among groups.*

#### **4.5.1.2.8. Alumni Favoritism as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

“Alumni favoritism” is an issue specific to the intergroup conflict level. As the participants of this study were Turkish seafarers, the issue of “alumni favoritism” was handled exclusively on Turkish perspective and thus, cannot be generalized or assumed for seafarers of other nations. One participant stated that “*this phenomenon is in the decrease; it is still present*” (FO-04). Below quotes illuminate why this phenomenon is happening and the range of it:

CE-04: *The seafarer market was a monopoly before, now it is an oligopoly among few schools. Everyone wants to work with those who they spent more time with, who they have more things in common, however, this causes a certain segregation among personnel.*

FO-02: *Sometimes, departments can also have another group among them, based on alumni favoritism.*



#### **4.5.1.2.9. Role Ambiguity as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

“Role ambiguity” is a concept which can be seen often in ordinary workplaces. However, by definition, hierarchical settings should eliminate any role ambiguity. For the most part, this formula proves useful for ships, except the situation of the fitter. Fitter, while accepted to be a member of the engine department, is actually there to work on the whole ship. Fitter allocation seems to be a friction inducing matter between deck and engine departments and thus, the role ambiguity is exclusive to intergroup conflict situations. Following quotes visualize the problems of having to share the only fitter on board:

TE-03: *Having only one fitter on board is a problem because the whole ship is made of metal and he is the one doing the welding. So deck and engine departments can need him at the same time. Deck department wants their job done first, but usually the second engineer will give them a run for their money.*

FO-03: *...and there is the problem of sharing the fitter. Engine department makes up an excuse to not to send him up, even when there is an urgent job that needs taking care of. They just don't want to give him away.*

SM-01: *Role ambiguity happens with the fitter and electrical officer as both these guys work for both deck and engineering department. When that is the case, sometimes they cannot properly order their tasks. Engine crew do not want to give the fitter away, electrical officer answers to chief engineer so he cannot come up sometimes. When it comes to it, I order the first officer to call a safety meeting and order tasks by their importance. The chief and second engineer also attend this meeting. Up there, you talk with them, explain the situation with logic. There is no room for being whimsical at this point. If I, as the ship master, order them to “Give me the fitter!” things would just escalate. This kind of situations can cause considerable problems on board. You can only sort this out with playing by the book.*

#### **4.5.1.2.10. Age-Generation Gap as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

“Age-generation gap” as a reason for intergroup conflict is witnessed on two ranges. One being among officers and the other being between officers and ratings.

Following quotes provide some insight on age and generation gap related conflict situations among officers:

CE-03: *... generation gap is another factor. Younger officers have much different approach, and it is mainly due to the age difference.*

SM-02: *... another difference is generation gap. We are very different than older masters. They have the experience but zero communication skills. We are much more involved, older masters, not so much. We saw what was wrong, and changed our way of management. I used to force my authority on my subordinates as well. This will get you respect but not a smooth running operation. Over time, you get that experience and it just clicks.*

The other range, the age difference and generation gap between officers and ratings, are exemplified by the following quotes:

TE-03: *...there is also the officer-rating aspect. Ratings usually consist of people that cannot work on the land on a better salary, thus they tend to be older than us. When they see a much younger person getting paid better and in a more respected position, they act a little different.*

SO-01: *As the ratings are more experienced and older than us, they tend to look down on us and develop an attitude towards us*

#### **4.5.1.2.11. Alcohol-Smoking as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

“Alcohol-smoking” was found to be the initiator of organically formed groups on board. However, when each –do- group finds a –don’t- group in opposition, tension tends to build up. Following two quotes give examples to both alcohol and smoking based group interactions:

TE-03: *out of nothing you can observe drinkers and sobers group up. If anything goes down between a drinker and a sober, drinkers support the drinker, and the sobers support the sober.*

SO-01: *Smokers can argue with non-smokers. For example, when you are watching a movie, seven out of the group of ten smokes, but the three that don’t smoke will make a deal out of it. Another thing was, when the ship master was a non-smoker,*

*we were expected to put out our cigarettes when he came in to the room, even though it was our break time and there is no rule against that.*

#### **4.5.1.2.12. Mobbing-Grudge as a Reason for Intergroup Conflict**

“Mobbing-grudge” on intergroup level was found to be linked with the challenging and abuse of authority, which are all in connection with “hierarchy”. This code was found to manifest itself as a result of challenge on an officers’ authority and in another case, straight up as abuse of power, without provocation of any kind. Following quotes give instances to above mentioned situations respectively:

FO-03: *Rarely there can be a problem between the ratings and the officers. They make some moves against the first officer, trying to put him in a tough spot but not doing the task he assigned. When the first officer feels this malicious intent, it backfires, and he starts to give them the worst jobs. Very serious mobbing is done to the cadets. As it is very hard to find internships right now, cadets suck up everything in order to not fall from grace.*

FO-03: *Abuse of authority and personal agendas being used for satisfying one’s ego pushes personnel away from the ship. Giving such authority and power to people who cannot handle it, leads to them abusing that power and authority to the point of torture towards the personnel.*

#### **4.5.1.3. Findings on Interorganizational Level from the Interview Process**

Lastly, the participants were asked to inform about the reasons for conflict on interorganizational level on the basis of ship as an organization, and all other parties that are in relation with the ship such as the ship owning/ship management company, charterer, and cargo owner. A total of two reasons for conflict emerged regarding the interorganizational level. Below subsections explain the emerging reasons, with quotes from the participants of the interviews.

#### **4.5.1.3.1. Commercial Concerns as a Reason for Interorganizational Conflict**

While interorganizational conflict was only experienced by half of the participants, almost all of those participants pointed out “commercial concerns” as the reason for this range of conflict. This kind of uniformity was yet to be found on any level of this study. Consensus among the participants was that the ship finds itself under constant pressure by related parties, to be more productive with less costs. Following quotes detail the issue:

CE-06: *Company can order the ship to do things in a short period of time, and the charterers are no different. Both parties put extreme pressure on the ship and its personnel, they can demand things that can put the ship's needs and safety at harm, just to carry the cargo more economically.*

SO-01: *Everyone wants their cargo to be delivered on time but no one wants any extra costs. Last week, we had to anchor for two days because of a storm. Instantly the charterer calls and asks us why we stopped, or why we did not take another route. They are also very sensitive about the bunker consumption, sometimes you got to power through some bad weather, which increases the bunker consumption. They immediately call and ask about that as well.*

Specific to tanker ships, the cleaning of the tanks was found to be an issue that is constantly argued upon between the ship and the charterer/cargo owner. Following quotes present examples for this situation:

SM-04: *It is almost impossible to keep the charterers happy. They are constantly thinking about demurrage and the ship is the only place they can assert dominance. They always argue with us about the time needed for the cleaning of the tanks.*

CE-05: *The problem that usually comes up between the cargo owner and the ship is during the tank cleaning process. Tanks should be washed clean but they want to save time in order to save money. This leads to personnel being overworked, which leads to an unsafe working environment. 99% of the time, things end up being done the way the cargo owner wants it.*

In situations where it is the ship's own company, whether it be ship owning or ship managing company, that puts the pressure on the ship for financial purposes, the range of conflict extends all the way to interpersonal conflict:

CE-03: *The performance pressure coming from the company due to commercial concerns is the biggest reason for conflict between the company and the ship. They force you to overwork your personnel, that, in turn, leads to interpersonal conflict situations.*

CE-02: *In X company, there were pressure towards the ship that neglects the nautical customs. Inspectors demand something to be done, and when the ship says it cannot be done in that amount of time, they go ahead and file a complaint against the ship master to the company. Naturally, this results in the master distancing himself from that company, becoming demoralized, and that reflects to all personnel on board.*

#### **4.5.1.3.2. Dissatisfaction the Demands of the Ship as a Reason for Interorganizational Conflict**

Ship is dependent to the company on shore for their needs, both social and work related. Thus the demands of the ship can affect morale, performance, safety and security of the ship, personnel and cargo. Half of the participants that experienced any interorganizational conflict, stated this issue as the reason of it. Specific to the engine department, demands regarding the spare parts proved to be an important matter as below quotes demonstrate:

TE-02: *Sometimes we can run into some problems with the DPA regarding spare parts. As a representative of the company, they want to go with the cheaper option. You order the name-brand, they get you a knock-off, or they supply it late.*

CE-05: *The company sometimes put off our spare part and stores demands, and it puts the ship and the personnel in jeopardy.*

CE-06: *When the company does not comply with the demands of the ship, then there is a problem. You want spare parts, a change of personnel, food supplies, but they don't deliver, then you have a big problem.*

This last quote ties in well with the ship wide problems encountered when the demands of the ship are not met.

SO-01: *With ship management firms, you demand something, they say it is expensive and cannot be supplied, later in an inspection, you get a remark for that thing you asked for and they did not deliver, then they scold you for not demanding it before.*

FO-02: *The master and the company can get into some arguments. When the promises are not kept, saying they are going to change personnel and not change them, paying the wages late or not even paying at all. These are all reasons that bring down the ship as a whole.*

#### **4.5.2. Findings on Reasons for Conflict in Seafarers Workplace from Focus Group Study**

The second research question of this study was as follows: What are the differences in perceived reasons for conflict among seafarers and decision makers? For this purpose, a focus group study was carried out with HR and crew managers of shipowning and ship management companies and a manning agency. Analysis of the answers of the participants shows that a total of 18 codes have emerged regarding the reasons for conflict. Table 5 shows the emerging codes with their frequencies.

**Table 5:** Frequency of Codes Emerged from The Focus Group Study

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
communication	6
age-generation gap	6
stress	5
newcomers	5
hierarchy	4
ego	4
meritocracy	4
job allocation	3
commercial concerns	2
exhaustion-burnout	2
organizational culture	2
education	1
distributive justice	1
working conditions\food	1

stress\being away	1
role ambiguity	1
working hours	1
idleness	1

Out of 18 emerging codes, two codes that were not found in the interview process carried out with seafarers are “newcomers” and “organizational culture”. Emerging codes are analyzed in depth in the next section, with regards to their ranges. Table 6 shows the codes that are associated with each range of conflict and how many times it has been associated with that range by the participants.

**Table 6:** Code Relationship Matrix of The Focus Group Study

<b>Codes</b>	<b>INTERPERSONAL</b>	<b>INTERGROUP</b>	<b>INTERORGANIZATIONAL</b>
hierarchy	2	2	0
working hours	1	0	0
working conditions\food	0	1	0
communication	3	1	2
distributive justice	1	0	0
commercial concerns	0	0	2
job allocation	1	2	0
education	1	0	0
ego	2	0	2
meritocracy	2	0	1
stress	3	1	1
stress\being away	1	0	0
age-generation gap	6	0	0
role ambiguity	0	1	0
idleness	1	0	0
exhaustion-burnout	2	0	0
newcomers	5	0	0
organizational culture	2	0	0

Following subsections will analyze the reasons for conflict for each level, which are interpersonal level, intergroup level and interorganizational level, respectively.

#### **4.5.2.1. Findings on Interpersonal Level from The Focus Group Study**

In order to understand the reasons behind conflict situations on board, participants were asked firstly, about interpersonal conflict situations. A total of 15 reasons for conflict emerged regarding the interpersonal level. Below subsections explain the emerging reasons, with quotes from the participants of the focus group study.

##### **4.5.2.1.1. Hierarchy as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

Two participants that stated “hierarchy” as a reason for interpersonal conflict approached the matter from the same direction, which is top-to-down chain of command. However, the parties stated were different. Quote below emphasizes the perception of ratings when ordered by officers:

HR-02: *As the ratings are older and more experienced than the younger officers, they tend to get offended by taking orders from them and think they know better.*

On the other hand, the second quote focuses on the chain of command between the master and/or the chief engineer and other officers and is as follows:

HR-01: *Lately, the approaches of the master and the chief engineer started to become crucial. When they go in old school, without knowing the rules and regulations, the new generation of officers do not handle it well. Most of the big arguments stem from this reason. Just recently, a master lashed at a third officer and the officer quitted, saying he did not receive this kind of treatment even from his parents.*

These quotes depict the layered hierarchical structure on board ships and challenging of authority can happen for various reasons. One of the underlying reasons seems to be the age and generational differences, which is handled in the following section.



#### **4.5.2.1.2. Age-Generation Gap as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Age-generation gap” was found to be the only unanimously stated reason in this research. It was stated as a reason for conflict solely on interpersonal level, but by all of the participants of the focus group. On top of the previous two quotes presented in the “hierarchy” section above, following quotes display the comments made on the effects of the generation gap:

HR-04: *Another important element is the conflict of generations. The difference between generation Z and the previous generations are vast. They seem to be far from the Turkish nautical customs because of how they are raised, the “world revolves around me” mentality and all that. However, they just need to be adapted. The new officers could put themselves in the older ones’ shoes.*

CM-02: *The masters fail to get through to the new generation. Ever improving technology and usage of electronic equipment puts this conflict in to the forefront. Though here is a solution, those who fail to adapt, will be left out.*

CM-01: *Another source is the conflict of generations. We witnessed so many problems because of it. Older generations believe that experience is the key. On the other hand, the new generation thinks they have all the information that is accessible at any given time, and a tendency to be a know-it-all. The respect for experience is gone.*

HR-03: *The new generation and the old cannot be on the same page most of the time. New officers face some challenges getting along with older masters and chief enginners. They can go “I quit!” and leave, just like that.*

#### **4.5.2.1.3. Ego as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

The issue of “ego”, in difference with the findings of the interviews, found to be a standalone code that was not associated with any other reasons outside its context. Participants stated that problems cause by this reason are not found among ratings, but can be seen among officers of the same hierarchical stature or in a top to down manner as it can be seen in the following quotes:

HR-02: *There are many underlying reasons for interpersonal conflict but the biggest one is the ego trip of who knows better, and it exclusively happens among the officers.*

CM-02: *Unfortunately, people can go “I know better, I was like this, I was like that when I was on that ship.” And you just cannot stop it, these people are bound to talk and chat with each other, and eventually things come to that.*

#### **4.5.2.1.4. Newcomers as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Newcomers” was a code that emerged first on the focus group study and it was not stated by the participants of the interview process. To elaborate, the term “newcomers” represent the seafarers that have boarded the ship to join a crew that have already been working together for a while. The issue of “newcomers” was stated by all but one of the participants of the focus group, making it a very dominant reason for interpersonal conflict. The statements from the participants show two different ranges of conflict that occur due to the arrival of new seafarers on board. Firstly, the defensive action by the seafarers on board is exemplified by the following quotes:

HR-02: *... a crew that has been working together for a long period of time tend to have less problems. But whenever we place a new seafarer on board, then starts the –you are new, I have been here longer- fights.*

HR-01: *... then there is the reigning of the older personnel over the newcomers. It can be harder for them to adapt. In addition, masters and chief engineers tend to disapprove of the new generation of officers.*

HR-04: *There used to be other discriminative actions among personnel, now the only thing left is the “I am old, you are new” narrative.*

The other range that can be seen is the newcoming officers’ search for authority over the ratings and the backlash they receive from the ratings that have been working together for a while. Participants voice their opinions on the matter as follows:

CM-02: *...as the ratings tend to be working together for longer periods, the new officer on board can experience some resistance and problems when dealing with them.*

HR-03: *Officers that are new on board, order something to the ratings, due to the stature of his job. However, as he is a new guy ordering the old guys around, there can be some disrespectful reactions towards him, which leads to problems.*

#### **4.5.2.1.5. Communication as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

“Communication” is a code that was found to be a reason on all three levels of conflict, however it was most dominant on interpersonal level with half of the participants of the focus group naming it as a reason for interpersonal conflict. Following quotes from the participants state the importance of communication, or lack thereof, in conflict situations:

HR-03: *The major reason for interpersonal conflict is the lack of communication.*

CM-02: *We also faced similar problems on Turkish flagged ships, and more often than not these problems are caused by lack of communication.*

HR-04: *For interpersonal conflict, lack of empathy is very important, on top of that, people have hard time expressing themselves. As they cannot express what they actually mean, even the smallest of disagreements can turn into serious conflict situations.*

#### **4.5.2.1.6. Stress as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

Unlike the findings of the interview process, stress was mentioned by the participants of the focus group in a general manner and not in the context of the previously emerged sub codes such as “the stress of long contracts” and “the stress of being away”, regarding the interpersonal level except for one participant that talked about the latter. Still it is found to be a dominant factor, being named by half of the participants. The effect of stress on conflict situations are quoted as follows:

CM-02: *There is intense stress present on board. Fast paced operations, continuous work and exhaustion all causes stress to build up. Consequently, stressed out people tend to get in arguments more easily.*

CM-01: *...an underlying reason for this is the job stress, during times of inspection, the stress levels rise throughout the ship.*

HR-03: *...another reason is the fact that tankers face high number of inspections, and the voyages are frequent with continuous operations, these factors build up stress and exhaustion, and that is the antecedent of conflict.*

Apart from CM-01, who is the crew manager of a manning company, two other participants who stated stress as a reason for interpersonal conflict work as HR managers on companies that manage tanker vessels and it can be deduced that stress build up is a matter that can be observed more on this type of vessels compared to bulkers.

The only mention of “stress of being away” was made by HR-03 and as follows:

HR-03: *Seafarers leave their families on shore, any bad news from them or any problems they have with their families can lead them to unrest and thus potential conflict situations.*

#### **4.5.2.1.7. Lack of Organizational Culture as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

The second code that was not found in the interview process but has emerged throughout the focus group study is “organizational culture”. As the title of this sub section suggests, it is not the organizational culture but its lack thereof that can cause interpersonal conflict situations, according to these quotes of the participants:

CM-02: *It is important that the personnel have been working with the company for a long period of time, it forms an organizational culture. As everyone gets to know how each other operates, things go smoother. In order to continue this culture, we try to form our officers from their cadetships.*

HR-03: *We are also leaning towards acquiring officers through cadetship. As they get to know each other, they tend to work better together.*

#### **4.5.2.1.8. Meritocracy as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

As stated in the analysis of the findings of the interview process, merit is an issue of crucial importance especially in a workplace such as the ship, which without proper knowledge and competencies, could be hazardous for life, cargo and environment. The importance of implementing meritocracy was stated by the participants as follows:

HR-01: *It is crucial for the master to be competent. Their handle on laws, rules and regulations, and also their ability in human relations are really troublesome. There are occasions where the solution is very clear, but you look at it, and see that it escalated. "I am the master therefore I am always right" mentality has to change. People know their rights nowadays, so they seek it. In verbal complaint situations we ask for defenses of the parties, and when we look over them, we see that the rating is right and the master is wrong.*

CM-02: *Senior officers, the ones that manage the ship and the personnel on board must be competent in management. You cannot put people in this positions, which have so much authority when they are unmerited.*

#### **4.5.2.1.9. Exhaustion-Burnout as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

Exhaustion was linked with stress both in the findings of the interview process and the findings related to stress in the focus group study. The following two quotes will be repeated, which were also available under the code "stress", to emphasize that both go hand in hand, in the perception of the participants:

CM-02: *There is intense stress present on board. Fast paced operations, continuous work and exhaustion all causes stress to build up. Consequently, stressed out people tend to get in arguments more easily.*

HR-03: *...another reason is the fact that tankers face high number of inspections, and the voyages are frequent with continuous operations, these factors build up stress and exhaustion, and that is the antecedent of conflict.*

#### **4.5.2.1.10. Remaining Emerging Codes Stated as a Reason for Interpersonal Conflict**

The remaining reasons for conflict on interpersonal level were stated by one participant only and will be presented with their quote on the matter. On the issue of “distributive justice” following statement was made by a participant:

HR-02: *When the senior officers assign a task to the lower rated officers or ratings, their reactions, question of authority and etc. can cause problems among them.*

“Working hours” was an issue that was once again linked with the generation gap that is evident and quoted as follows:

HR-01: *New generation officers do not want to work outside their watch. If there was work left to be done, we did not care for the time, but these guys are different. They say that their watch is over and pack up and leave.*

“Idleness” was implied in the following quote as a breeding ground for conflict through its absence preventing it:

HR-04: *...they cannot really have time to stretch these arguments out as it is a container ship and there is a lot of work, and they are tired.*

“Education” was named as a reason for conflict on interpersonal relations between officers and ratings and was quoted as follows:

HR-03: *There is a vast difference among the education levels of officers and ratings. Most of the ratings are just primary school graduates. Naturally there are problems arising from this reason.*

Last reason that was mentioned by a participant is “job allocation” and he states this matter is a common reason for conflict among senior officers.

#### **4.5.2.2. Findings on Intergroup Level from The Focus Group Study**

Second question asked to the participants was on reasons for conflict on intergroup level. A total of 6 reasons for conflict emerged regarding the intergroup level. Below subsections explain the emerging reasons, with quotes from the participants of the focus group study.

#### **4.5.2.2.1. Hierarchy and Job Allocation as Reasons for Intergroup Conflict**

“Hierarchy” was evaluated as a reason for conflict on both interpersonal and intergroup levels. This is parallel with the findings of the interview process as well. In the context of intergroup conflict, both participants that stated it as a reason for conflict argues the same phenomenon and that is the disagreements arising from the place and rankings of the master, chief officer and the chief engineer in the hierarchical structure of the ship and following faction forming among the members of engine and deck departments. Following quotes delve deeper to the situation:

HR-02: *The biggest issue here is the chief engineer saying he outranks the chief officer and thus he cannot give him orders, if these two cannot get along, their departments don't get along as well.*

HR-01: *The master or the chief officer, who is the match for the chief engineer? When you look at it, the master is paid the same as the chief engineer, so he thinks he is on the same level with the master. On the other hand, chief officer and chief engineer, their names and place in the organizational chart is similar. So when these guys are assigning tasks to each other there is always a kerfuffle and that transfers to downstairs.*

As the quote of HR-01 suggests, in similarity with “hierarchy”, the issue of “job allocation” seems to stem from the disagreements between the senior officers of each department and transfer to the members of said departments. HR-03 states this situation as follows:

HR-03: *There are interdepartmental conflicts and conflict situations between the master and the chief engineer. These disagreements are linked with job allocation.*

#### **4.5.2.2.2. Communication and Stress as Reasons for Intergroup Conflict**

The players in question when it comes to intergroup conflict caused by “communication”, or lack thereof, are the same as the previous others, which are the chief officer and the chief engineer. Following quote states the importance of communication as follows:

CM-02: *Usually, the young college educated chief officer and the chief engineer that was raised within the company have hard time getting along and that is almost always caused by either the stress of the job, or a lack of communication among them. Here, the master's attitude is crucial, he needs to be competent in communication skills as well, to patch things up and keep the ship running smoothly.*

As it can be understood from this quote, stress also plays a part in causing disagreements that lead to conflict situations and it does not stay as an interpersonal conflict when it is the heads of two departments that are in question, it reflects to those departments as a whole.

#### **4.5.2.2.3. Role Ambiguity and Food as Reasons for Intergroup Conflict**

The issue of “role ambiguity” presented itself solely on the role of the fitter and its position on the ship’s organizational structure throughout the entirety of this thesis, and it is no different here. Both the interview findings and the focus group study findings shows the role ambiguity of the fitter causes intergroup conflict between deck and engine departments, as this quote states:

HR-04: *The grouping among deck and engine departments can split the ship in half, and sharing of the fitter is another problem between these two.*

The only mention of another group rather than deck and engine departments was found in the mention of “food”, a sub code of “working conditions”. Food was found to be an important issue while analyzing the interviews carried out with seafarers. While it was not mentioned in any other level by the decision makers that participated in the focus group study, following quote shows it can ignite intergroup conflict situations:

CM-01: *The most we observe intergroup conflict is between the deck and engine departments. However, if the food is bad, they can gang up on the cabin crew. That is how important food is on board ships.*



#### **4.5.2.3. Findings on Interorganizational Level from The Focus Group Study**

Lastly, the participants were asked to inform about the reasons for conflict on interorganizational level on the basis of ship as an organization, and all other parties that are in relation with the ship such as the ship owning/ship management company, charterer, and cargo owner. A total of five reasons for conflict emerged regarding the interorganizational level. Below subsections explain the emerging reasons, with quotes from the participants of the focus group study.

##### **4.5.2.3.1. Commercial Concerns as a Reason for Interorganizational Conflict**

In similarity with the interview process, “commercial concerns” is found to be a reason exclusive to the interorganizational level. Parties include the charterers, the ship, the company and the ports, the latest being stated for the first time during the focus group study and was not mentioned throughout the interview process. Following quotes help better understand the gravity of the situation:

CM-01: *We run into some problems with port employees, as the rules and regulations for tankers are very strict, and more rules means more money. It is really cumbersome to try to prevent any problems in fulfilling our obligations to the charterer, or in some cases acting like there is no problem.*

In some cases, as it was stated by the seafarers in the interview process, the ship and its company can find themselves on the crossroads, as this quote states:

HR-01: *Most of the time it is a sham fight. We talk one way to the ship and other to the charterer. If you do not want to lose money, you cannot say everything to the charterer, you have to conceal some information. When it comes to ports, every one of them is different, Europe is strict whereas you have to use bribes in West African ports. Sometimes you have to jump through hoops just to hide the fact that the engine of the ship was shut down for a while, from the charterer. Or in other times when something went wrong because of something the office did, you act like it was the ship's fault, but you are actually in it together, it is all about the commercial concerns.*

#### 4.5.2.3.2. Communication as a Reason for Interorganizational Conflict

Communication on interorganizational sense was not found in the interview process, however it is present on every level on the focus group study. While the context is the same over all participants' statements, which is the fact that lack of communication leads to conflict situations, as the quote from HR-04 shows, HR-03 stated that too much communication between the office and the ship can breed conflict among parties as well. This was the first instance where the reason behind the code "communication" was not its absence, but its surplus.

HR-04: *One of the biggest factors, both in the emergence and resolution of interorganizational conflict situations, is the masters' inability to express themselves both in foreign languages and social interactions. In addition, problems that stem from the ship can cause problems between the company and the charterer. As charterers do not have nautical expertise and experience, masters can misunderstand some demands or comments of these parties and react with haste. These reactions can turn into conflict situations and we have to step in to solve it.*

HR-03: *It used to be very hard for the ships to communicate with the office on shore but nowadays the communication channels are open 24/7. Masters used to make their own decision on the fly, but now, they have to check with the office first, this can be tiresome for them.*

#### 4.5.2.3.3. Ego as a Reason for Interorganizational Conflict

The ego that comes with the position with such high authority is inevitable for the masters. However, if not managed properly, it can be destructive for the person and organizations he is affiliated with. Following quotes demonstrates the stances of decision makers on this issue:

HR-04: *The masters' and the chief officers' ego can sometimes get ahead of themselves and cause problems with third parties.*

HR-02: *There is no more "I am the captain; I can do what I want" like it was used to. Shipowners do not want to work with these kind of masters as well. Now they want to work with people that will do as they wish and not do anything without them*

*knowing if possible. Because the consequences of conflicts with charterers and port authorities can reach different heights.*

#### **4.5.2.3.4. Stress and Meritocracy as Reasons for Interorganizational Conflict**

“Stress”, while being most dominant on interpersonal level, is found to be a factor on interorganizational level as well. However, it might not apply for all types of vessels as the participant makes the following statement for tanker vessels, with shorter periods between charters:

*HR-03: Short periods between charters and the stress this causes over the ship as a whole can pit the ship and the owner or manager against each other.*

The importance of merit for seafarers on board and the problems that can arise if meritocracy is overlooked are stated by the following quote:

*CM-02: The most dealt with parties for ships are Chemical Distribution Institute (CDI) inspectors and port operators. Crew on board must be competent in their profession in order to do well on inspections and must be fluent in English. Especially older masters encounter problems in situations where they need to get in contact with the charterers and take directions because of it.*

#### **4.5.3. Comparative Analysis of Interview Process and Focus Group Study Findings**

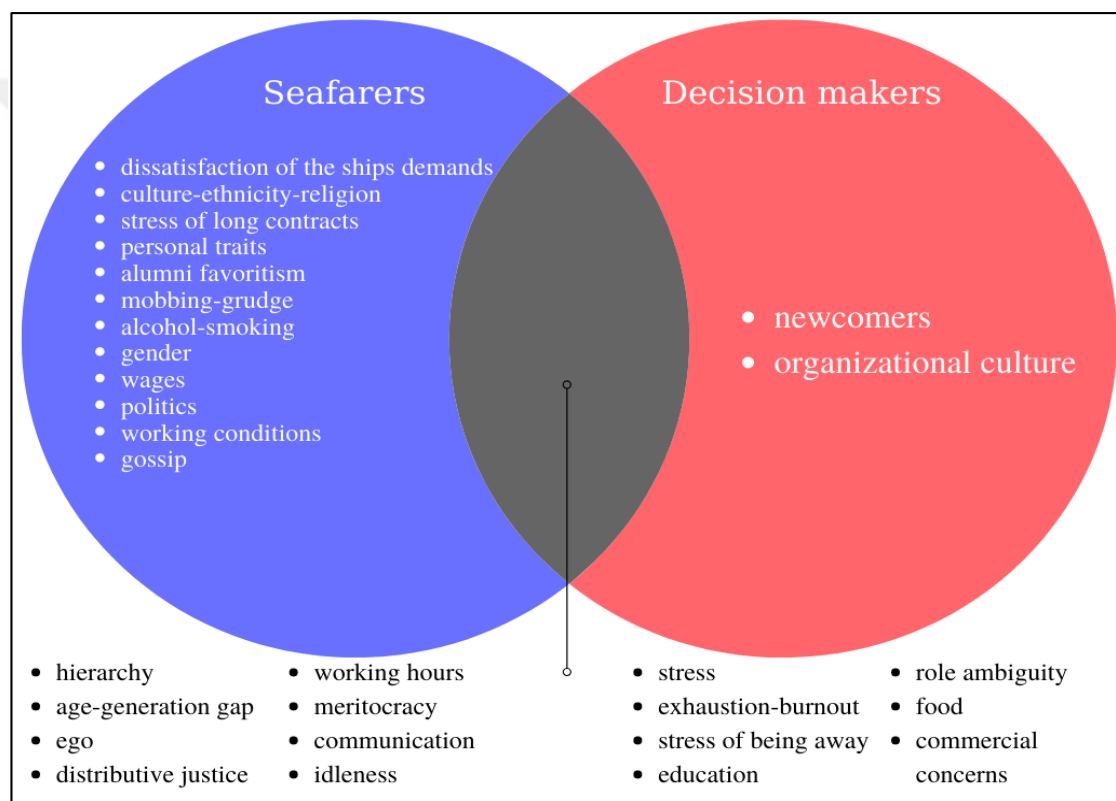
The second research question of this thesis is as follows: What are the differences in perceived reasons for conflict among seafarers and decision makers? In order to answer this question, findings of the interview process carried out with seafarers and the findings of the focus group study which was carried out with decision makers will be compared and analyzed respectively on each level of conflict.

In the interview process that was carried out with active seafarers, a total of 29 codes have emerged as reasons for conflict in seafarers’ workplace. The following focus group study that was conducted with the participation of crew managers and HR

managers of shipowner, ship management, and manning companies saw a total of 18 codes emerging.

Out of these findings seafarers stated 13 reasons for conflict that was not mentioned by the decision makers. On the other hand, the number of reasons for conflict that was stated by the decision makers and not the seafarers are 2. A total of 16 reasons were stated by both groups. Figure 11 shows the distribution of codes as below:

**Figure 101:** Venn Diagram of The Comparative Analysis of Codes



On interpersonal level, a total of 25 reasons were found from the interviews conducted with seafarers. For the focus group study conducted with decision makers, this number is 15. Issues such as “culture-ethnicity-religion”, its sub code “politics”, “working conditions”, its sub code “food”, “commercial concerns”, “personal traits”, “stress of long contracts”, “mobbing-grudge”, “gender”, and “wages” were stated as reasons for conflict on interpersonal level by seafarers but not by the decision makers. The issue of “newcomers” was the only reason for conflict on interpersonal level that

was stated by the decision makers and not the seafarers. Comparison of codes on this level can be found in Table 7 below.

**Table 7:** Comparison of codes on interpersonal level

<b>Exclusive to Seafarers</b>	<b>Exclusive to Decision Makers</b>
culture-ethnicity-religion	newcomers
culture-ethnicity-religion/politics	-
working conditions	-
working conditions/food	-
commercial concerns	-
personal traits	-
stress/contracts	-
mobbing-grudge	-
gender	-
wages	-
alcohol-smoking	-
<b>Overlapping Codes</b>	
hierarchy	meritocracy
working hours	stress
communication	stress/being away
distributive justice	age-generation gap
job allocation	idleness
education	exhaustion-burnout
ego	

On intergroup level, a total of 12 reasons were found from the interviews conducted with seafarers. For the focus group study conducted with decision makers, this number is 6. Issues such as “culture-ethnicity-religion”, “working hours”, “distributive justice”, “personal traits”, “ego”, “alumni favoritism”, “age-generation gap”, “mobbing-grudge”, “gender”, and “alcohol-smoking” were stated as reasons for conflict on interpersonal level by seafarers but not by the decision makers. No reason

was found that was exclusively stated by the decision makers on this level. Comparison of codes on this level can be found in Table 8 below.

**Table 8:** Comparison of Codes on Intergroup Level

<b>Exclusive to Seafarers</b>	<b>Exclusive to Decision Makers</b>
culture-ethnicity-religion	-
working hours	-
working conditions	-
working conditions/food	-
distributive justice	-
personal traits	-
alumni favoritism	-
mobbing-grudge	-
gender	-
ego	-
alcohol-smoking	-
age-generation gap	-
<b>Overlapping Codes</b>	
Hierarchy	
working conditions/food	
Communication	
role ambiguity	

On interorganizational level, a total of 2 reasons were found from the interviews conducted with seafarers. As for the focus group study conducted with decision makers, this number is 5. “Dissatisfaction of the ship’s needs” and “commercial concerns” were the two reasons for conflict on interorganizational level stated by the seafarers. Out of this two, “dissatisfaction of the ship’s needs” was stated solely by the seafarers. On the other hand, issues such as “communication”, “meritocracy”, “organizational culture”, “stress”, and “ego” were linked to interorganizational conflicts exclusively by the decision makers. Comparison of codes on this level can be found in Table 9 below.

**Table 9:** Comparison of Codes on Interorganizational Level

Exclusive to Seafarers	Exclusive to Decision Makers
dissatisfaction of ship's needs	communication
-	ego
-	meritocracy
-	stress
-	organizational culture
<b>Overlapping Codes</b>	
commercial concerns	

#### **4.5.4. Legal Documents Used in Conflict Situations on Ships**

In the focus group study, the participants were asked for the rules, regulations and legislations that govern the conflict situation occurring on each level. Starting with interpersonal level, the answers of the participants will be provided in quotes.

HR-02: *For interpersonal conflicts, the main legal regulation is the employment agreements of the seafarers. Whether it be the Turkish flag or any other foreign flag, all contracts have these terms regarding these matters.*

HR-01: *Terms of TMLC and MLC are applied, however, if somebody has a problem with the master, we have to get him off board one day or another as that conflict hinders the work performance. Being right is in the second place here, for the shipowner, the main concern is the ship and she has to sail.*

HR-04: *We have the internal safety manuals of the company and the employment agreements of the seafarers are drawn up according to the TMLC art.14.*

CM-02: *The biggest conflict situation we encountered was between two senior officers. Chief officer and the first engineering officer got in a fight over a small matter and it escalated in to a knife fight. Nobody got injured thankfully but we had a personnel who attempted to harm the other, the case is still ongoing, the master used his right of termination and sent the personnel in question off board. The case is in Turkish court, being tried in accordance with the TMLC. For international matters MLC is the dominant regulation for foreign flagged ships.*

CM-01: *Interpersonal conflict are not transferred to courts that easily as there are no evidence of these situations, bar the big ones with injuries or fatalities. Employment agreements have regulations regarding these matters also we have internal safety managements in our company which are verbally declared and confirmed in writing by the seafarers.*

HR-03: *The conflict situations do not come to us that often as the master deals with them without it escalates all the way up to the office. Of course there are times that they cannot reach a resolution, in that case we follow the rules of TMLC and MLC and act accordingly.*

As for intergroup conflict situations, the responses of the participant were in parallel with the interpersonal ones. Below quotes show each participants view on the matter:

HR-02: *For intergroup matters, it is the same as the interpersonal one, employment agreements are used in these type of conflict as well.*

HR-04: *In addition, (to the interpersonal ones) we have company procedures against grouping, along with serious sanctions.*

CM-02: *as I stated on interpersonal level, employment agreements are used. As we fly Maltese flag, we use International Transport Workers' Federation' s (ITF) contracts, and those are also based on MLC.*

CM-01: *If there is no injury or fatality, the process goes on over employment agreements.*

HR-01: *I mean, yes there are legal regulations on this matter, (the same ones on interpersonal level) however for us shipowners, the important thing is the job getting done. You are right but the job is not done, we cannot tolerate that, we cannot pander anyone's whims. We have to do whatever we can so the ship can continue its voyage.*

When it comes to interorganizational conflict, the consensus was that the contracts among parties were the binding regulations in conflict situations. The most common contract between shipowners and charterers were stated to be the charterparties. This issue was voiced by HR-01 and agreed upon by the rest of the participants with no additional comments:



HR-01: *The binding legal document here is the charterparty. You have to act in accordance with what you agreed upon on that contract. Once we tried to prove to a port that the crane on board our ship is indeed working on the agreed upon duration per movement for three straight days, as they claimed it was working slower than it was stated in the charterparty.*

#### **4.5.5. Expected Competencies from the Seafarers Regarding Conflict Management**

The last research question of this thesis was “What are the competencies required for seafarers regarding conflict management?”. Accordingly, participants of the focus group study were inquired on what kind of competencies they expect from the seafarers they employ on board the ships they own or manage. Their responses on the subject matter will be provided in form of quotes as follows:

CM-02: *We carry out psychometric tests before hiring a seafarer in order to have an idea on the type of personality he has. However, how helpful these tests are, that is up to discussion. We expect the seafarers to reach a resolution before dragging the situation out, they must be solution-oriented, with developed communication skills.*

HR-01: *There is not much that we expect from them, our sole expectation is that they do not drag it out, let things get in the way of the ship’s operations. Our biggest expectations are they reach resolution quickly and they maintain a continuous communication with the office.*

HR-04: *We also carry out psychometric tests, along with personality inventory test and personal competency tests however the use we get out of them are questionable. I think every HR manager had this experience where a guy comes in to an interview, where he acts very well-behaved, passes the tests with flying colors just to board the ship and act in an opposite manner, like something comes out of him, a side you have never seen before. We started online competency courses for our personnel. Our courses include “being a parent in 21<sup>st</sup> century”, targeted for older personnel working with younger ones, “the art of dealing with difficult people” and “how to use body language”. I think these are all important issues that seafarers must be competent in.*

HR-02: *We expect the senior officers to be competent in management and have managerial qualities. Risk management, de-escalation, ability to manage impulse decisions, and empathy are among the qualities we expect from them. As for the ratings, we expect them to be respectful to their superiors and carry out the duties that are assigned to them or included in their job description.*

HR-03: *We expect the master to be competent in mediating the conflict situations among personnel, to be able to exercise empathy, not just report every single issue to the office. We also carry out personality tests but as HR-04 stated, someone who is very well-behaved in an interview can act differently on board. As you know a Turkish master was recently stabbed and killed on board. We want to keep people like the assailant in that case away.*

CM-01: *I agree with CM-02, apart from that we do not expect much from them, the only thing we want is that they do not wear each other out and let it escalate out of its original context before we, as the office, intervene with the matter.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The issue of workplace conflict has long been discussed by scholars. While it is considered to have benefits for the organization as a whole, it is also evident that employees who are part of workplace conflict can suffer from depression, burnout and somatic complaints. When the workplace is a confined piece of metal that is in the middle of the ocean for months on end, the situation becomes all the direr. Lack of research regarding conflict and conflict management seafarers' workplace was the driving force behind this thesis. Especially considering the workplace itself is a contributor to most of the reasons for conflict among seafarers.

Accordingly, the objective of this thesis has been the identification of the reasons for conflict on board ships, through the perspectives of both seafarers that work on said ships and the decision makers that employ those seafarers. In addition, it was also aimed to find out what competencies were expected from the seafarers regarding conflict management by said decision makers. The findings suggest a considerable gap between seafarers and decision makers on what can be considered as reason for conflict and the focus is on commercial performance rather than conflict management when it comes to the decision makers. Following section will provide a detailed look through the findings.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The first step through the research was carrying out semi-structured interviews with seafarers who are actively working on board ships. Through this interview process, a total of 29 reasons for conflict emerged. The relationship of these reasons were analyzed on three predetermined codes from the literature (interpersonal, intergroup, interorganizational) that represent levels of conflict. First important output of the analysis of the relationship of the emerging codes and the predetermined codes is the fact that these reasons can ignite conflict situations on more than one level. In fact, 13 of the emerging codes were found to be a reason on two levels of conflict. Out of these 13 codes, "hierarchy", "culture-ethnicity-religion", "working hours", "food", "communication", "distributive justice", "personal traits", "ego", "age-generation

gap”, “mobbing-grudge”, “gender”, and “alcohol-smoking” were found to be reasons for conflict on both interpersonal level and intergroup level. “Commercial concerns” were the only code that was linked with both interpersonal and interorganizational conflict. However, it was only linked with interpersonal conflict situations once, compared with the nine times it was stated as a reason for interorganizational conflict, which can be an indicator that it is predominantly a reason for interorganizational conflict.

While these codes presented themselves on more than one level, there are some codes that were exclusively stated as a reason for one level of conflict. Codes such as “job allocation”, “education”, “stress” with its sub codes “stress of being away” and “stress of long contracts”, “idleness”, “wages”, and “exhaustion-burnout” were found to be solely reasons for interpersonal conflict. As for intergroup conflict, exclusive codes include “alumni favoritism” and “role ambiguity”. When it comes to the interorganizational level, “dissatisfaction of the ships’ demands” was the sole exclusive code, however as previously stated, “commercial concerns” was also found to be a dominant code that was heavily linked with interorganizational conflict exclusively, bar one participant. Here, it should also be noted that, while interpersonal and intergroup conflicts were experienced and given a reason by all participants, interorganizational conflict was stated by only 11 of the participants. When the profile information of these participants are analyzed, it can be seen that 10 of those 11 seafarers are working as senior officers (ship master, chief officer, chief engineer) who are tasked with managerial roles and have to have relations with other parties related to the ship. This could be interpreted as interorganizational conflict might not be felt by all those on board ships.

Further analysis of the codes on each level will start with interpersonal conflicts. “Hierarchy” is found to be a dominant reason for interpersonal conflict on both challenge of authority from subordinates to superiors and abuse of authority by the superiors towards the subordinates. However, its presence both as a first line of defense against conflict and a nautical custom was deemed necessary by the participants. “Job allocation” is found to be an issue that can raise eyebrows when carried out without diligence, participants stated the allocation of work and duties must fit the recipient and Turkish seafarers tend to complain more when compared with

foreign personnel. “Education” or lack of it, is found to be a problem that officers complain about regarding the ratings. The fact that officers nowadays are almost always graduates of higher education institutes, creates an education gap between them and the ratings. It was stated by the officers that the lack of education on ratings part cause problems in work, social life on board and in situations where foreign language is required. “Stress”, along with its sub codes “stress of being away” and “stress of long contracts” combine for the most repeated reason for conflict on interpersonal level. “Stress” on its own was linked with busy and high paced operations. “Stress of long contracts” was linked with burnout and stated as the initiator of minor agreement that escalate to conflict situations. It was also stated that combined with other stressors, “stress of being away” from land, family and friends causes lack of tolerance and can initiate conflict situations.

“Culture-ethnicity-religion” is found to be a dominant code in multi-cultural setting such as the ship. Issues such as religious rituals, cultural tendencies, and sexual orientation can cause tension between people of different nations and cultures. However, it was stated that even in single-nation crew settings, culture, approach to religion and hometown region can be a reason for conflict. “Working conditions” is found to be stated with its sub code “food” almost exclusively. “Food” being such an important issue is a phenomenon that cannot be seen in ordinary workplaces. The reasoning provided by the participants on food being such a crucial matter was that it was considered as one of the very few “get-away” activities that can be enjoyed on board ships.

The inclusion of “working hours” as a reason for interpersonal conflict must not come as a surprise since it is a matter that is regulated by various legal documents. However, in cases where internal justice on working hours cannot be served, it can leave a leeway to interpersonal conflicts. As an important part of every relationship, the role of “communication” on interpersonal conflicts is no surprise. On this matter, lack of communication or problems in communication were linked with interpersonal conflict situations. “Distributive justice” is found to be an issue that bears similarities with “job allocation” and “working hours” where perception of justice comes into play. The assignment of duties on board shall be carried out with justice in mind, otherwise

it can lead to people arguing over their workload. “Personal traits” as the name suggests, plays an important role in interpersonal conflict situations.

Participants state issues such as personality and mental state are important determinants of conflict initiation. Similarly, “ego” was another code that was commonly stated, it was also said to be in relation with other reasons such as “age-generation gap”. The effect of “ego” is mostly observed from top to down with respect to the hierarchical structure. As it is the case for most workplaces, “meritocracy” is found to be a reason for interpersonal conflict when overlooked. Employment of seafarers on every rating proved to be an issue if they do not possess the required merit for that position. “Age-generation gap” manifest itself through older personnel disregarding the younger ones without concern for their ranks in the hierarchical structure. The issue was also linked with “ego” and “communication”. “Idleness” was a code that was stated solely by seafarers that are working on bulk ships. In correlation, seafarers working on ships with busier operations such as tankers and container ships stated that lack of idle time sometimes prevents conflict situations from happening or escalating. “Gender” is another issue that can be considered specific to shipping when compared with ordinary workplaces. While it is in decrease, two out of four female participants of the interview process stated they faced prejudice towards their work solely because of their gender. “Exhaustion-burnout” was stated to be a consequence of “stress”, however, on its own, it can be still considered as a reason for lower tolerance and cause interpersonal conflicts. Issues such as “wages” and “alcohol-smoking” were also considered as reasons for conflict by seafarers on interpersonal level as being behind on payments is a strong reason to be upset about and alcohol and smoking can cause problems on multitude of reasons from religion to arguments and fights.

The groups on board ships that was stated by the participants are deck and engine departments, officers and ratings, nation and religion based groups, and alumni groups. Among these groups, the deck department versus the engine department was stated by almost all participants and can be considered as the most observed intergroup conflict. for the most part, codes that are present on interpersonal level, can be found on intergroup level as well, with the addition of “alumni favoritism” and “role ambiguity” which are exclusive to intergroup level.

It was stated by the participants that while it is in decrease, “alumni favoritism” is present and people are still lenient towards working with people they studied with. “Role ambiguity” is a term that can be found in most workplaces, however, in a hierarchical workplace with a clear structure it is surprising to see. Then again it can be seen on one position only and it is the role of the fitter, which is technically in the engine department, but as most of the time there is only one fitter employed on ships, the master can ask him to do whatever necessary on deck department as well. This naturally ends with two department heads arguing over the use of the fitter and it transfers to their departments.

The role of “hierarchy” in intergroup conflicts is very similar. When one department head oversteps the boundary and meddles with the other departments personnel, once again the disagreement among them transfers to their respective departments. “Culture-ethnicity-religion” is found to be more dominant on intergroup level than it was on interpersonal level. It was stated by the participants that people tend to group up depending on their nation or religion. Similarly, the issue of “working hours” is found to be present on both interpersonal and intergroup levels and more dominant on the intergroup level. The difference in the working hours of deck and engine departments seems to be a breaking point among them. The continuous work of deck department versus the 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. work schedule of engine department while sailing is one of the main issues that causes jealousy among groups. “Communication” in parallel with “hierarchy” is about the two department heads being able to get along. The lack of communication among them once again pits the two departments against each other.

“Distributive justice” presents itself on intergroup level among officers and ratings. It stems from the interpersonal conflicts that are experienced when distributing duties and later the situation becomes “officer versus rating”. “Personal traits” and “ego” are both linked to the department heads, who are responsible for the management of people. Personal qualities and their tendency to abuse their authority can lead to intergroup conflict situations. “Age-generation gap” can be witnessed on two levels regarding intergroup conflicts. One being among officers and the other being among officers and ratings. The latter is caused by the age difference and the

older group being subordinates, and the first is caused by generation gap among two groups of people, doing the same job, albeit differently.

On interorganizational level, two matters were stated but the consensus was reached on them. First of those issues is “commercial concerns”, which stands for the pressure put on the seafarers by the company or the charterer, with commercial concerns in mind. These pressures can range from rushing some jobs to sailing at bad weather, which can put the life of the seafarers and the ship and its cargo at risk. The second issue is the “dissatisfaction of the ships’ needs”. As ships are dependent to the company on shore for their social and work related needs, the satisfaction of their demands are crucial for the performance, morale, and safety and security of the ship as a whole. Demands of the ship include spare parts, food supplies, change of personnel and issues related with wages.

The second step was the conduction of a focus group study. Participants of the study include HR and crew managers of shipowner, ship management, and manning companies. A total of 18 reasons for conflict emerged from the focus group meeting. Similar to interview process, the findings were analyzed with regards to their relation on the predetermined codes. 6 of said codes were found to be present on more than one level of conflict. “Communication” and “stress” were found to be present on every level. “Hierarchy” and “job allocation” were found to be the codes that are effective regarding interpersonal and intergroup levels. Whereas “ego” and “meritocracy” were stated to cause conflict situations on interpersonal and interorganizational levels.

“Age-generation gap” was stated as a reason exclusive to the interpersonal level of conflict. but it should be noted that this code was stated and agreed upon by all of the participants. Similarly, “newcomers” was stated by all but one of the participants and solely linked to the interpersonal level. Other reasons for conflict that are linked to only interpersonal level include “distributive justice”, “working hours”, “idleness”, “exhaustion-burnout”, “organizational culture”, “stress of being away”, and “education”. As for intergroup level of conflict, exclusive codes include “role ambiguity” and “food”. Lastly, for interorganizational level of conflict, the only exclusive code was found to be “commercial concerns”.

Further analysis of the codes emerged on interpersonal level will start with “newcomers” and “lack of organizational culture” as they were not found in the



interview process that was carried out with seafarers. The term “newcomers” is used to describe seafarers that board a ship which has a crew that have been working together for a while. Two problems were stated to be caused by newcomers. First being the defensive stance the existing crew takes against the newcomers and the second being the problems that arise when the officers that are new to the ship act in pursuit of establishing authority. Secondly, it was stated by the participants that “lack of organizational culture” can be problematic as they believe people working together longer, work smoother, with less conflict among them. For this purpose, participants who stated that they value organizational culture, also noted they try to acquire their officers through cadetship.

Another important code on this level is “age-generation gap”. This reason was stated unanimously, and solely for interpersonal level. The main issue regarding this code seems to be the inability of the older officers to understand and communicate with the new generation of seafarers. “hierarchy” was once again present on interpersonal level, however, here the context is a bit different. Decision makers stress the problems that arise among department heads and their officers due to hierarchical structure, on top of the previously stated young officer-older rating conflicts. The issue of “working hours”, and the problems that arise with that was linked with generation gap, which bears a difference to the context of the interview process findings. Reasons such as “ego”, “communication”, “stress”, “meritocracy”, “exhaustion-burnout”, “idleness”, “education”, and “distributive justice” were handled in the same context with the interview findings of the seafarers.

As for the intergroup conflict situations, the entire discussion was on deck department versus engine department. With the exception of “food”, in which the participant stated that when the food is bad, deck and engine departments stand together against the cabin crew. Issues related with “hierarchy” was observed among senior officers, and the respective departments picking sides. “Communication” and “stress” were stated in an either-or manner with respect to intergroup conflicts and was also linked with issues such as age and education. “Role ambiguity” was a concept that was stated to be exclusive to intergroup conflict situations in the interview findings, and the focus group findings are the same. The sharing of the time of the fitter was once again stated as the sole problem on this matter.

Finally, on interorganizational level, the issues stated was wider and included more parties compared with the responses of the seafarers. The parties involved include the ship, charterers, the company and the ports. One common reason that is present in both the interview findings and the focus group study findings is the “commercial concerns”. The issue of “communication” was handled on two dimensions, one being lack of communication of the ship with charterers causing problems, the other is too much communication with the office restraining the masters, causing them to be unable to act without checking with the office first. “Ego” on an interorganizational sense was found to be a problem that was experienced by senior officers and their dealings with third parties, and a threat for them for future employment as it was reported that shipowners do not want to work with such officers. “Stress” was reported to be present on type of ships with busier operations such as tankers and container ships, on interorganizational level. Lastly, acting according to “meritocracy” was deemed important in dealings with inspections and port relations, as unmerited personnel can cause problems regarding these financially costly relations.

When the findings of the interview process and the focus group study are compared, first matter that attracts the attention is the number of reasons for conflict that was stated solely by the seafarers. There are 13 reasons for conflict that was stated by the seafarers which were not mentioned by the decision makers. Whereas the reasons stated solely by the decision makers were limited to 2. This might show that either the problems experienced by the seafarers on board do not reflect properly to the office, or the problems are not deemed important enough by the HR and crew managers.

However, they are issues that showed unanimity over both studies. The lack of free time on tanker and container ships unintentionally serving a conflict prevention role and more conflict situations tend to escalate on other ships due to idleness was stated by both groups of participants. Another issue that was agreed upon was the role ambiguity suffered by the fitter position. Both groups stated that sharing the time and service of the fitter more often than not, causes intergroup conflicts among deck and engine departments.

One other question asked to the decision makers through the focus group study was the legal documents, rules and regulations that have a role in each level of conflict

situations. On interpersonal level, the employment agreements of the seafarers, TMLC and MLC were stated to be used and supplemented by internal safety management manuals of companies. As for intergroup level, participant stated the same rules and regulations apply as the interpersonal level. Lastly, for interorganizational conflict situations, charterparty was named as the go-to document.

Last question of the focus group study was aimed to gather information about what kind of competencies were expected from the seafarers regarding conflict management. Before starting to list the competencies expected from the seafarers, it must be said that the unanimous statement of the decision makers was that they do not want the operations of the ships slowed down due to conflict situations and would not be hesitant to change the personnel causing these problems, which is considered before conflict management and resolution. Hence, the decision makers are aware of the legal framework, which has a strong coverage regarding seafarers' rights. Thus, the expected competencies from the seafarers regarding conflict management include being solution-oriented, having well-developed communication skills, being competent in management, risk management and de-escalation, and lastly being empathetic.

To conclude, seafarers endure numerous problems that can lead to conflict situations in an already hard to work environment. However, people who are responsible of employing them on their workplace are either unaware or ignoring almost half of the problems they go through. On the other hand, seafarers seem to have limited problems regarding interorganizational conflicts when compared with the decision makers. However, no matter the perspective, it can be deduced that conflict situations on board ships do not reach to the point where they are brought to trials, or where legal action needs to be taken, without fatalities or injuries. Regarding conflict management, the expectations are limited to commercial concerns. As long as the ship does not lose time and money, the decision makers seem to be content with the status quo.

This thesis contributes to the literature by identifying the reasons for conflict that are experienced by the Turkish officers and the decision makers that employ those officers, in their workplace. In addition, the differences among those groups' perception of what constitutes a reason for conflict were also identified. Lastly,

expectations of the decision makers regarding the conflict management skill of a seafarer were inquired.

### **Implications for Managers and Seafarers**

Findings of this thesis could provide a number of implications for both managers and seafarers. Even though the qualitative nature of the study that was carried out and the sample size prevents the findings to be generalized, it is believed to provide valuable insights in form of actual experiences from seafarers and decision makers that go through all these struggles daily. The managerial implications could be listed as follows:

- A conflict mediator could be employed for the management of conflict situations that escalates above the ship.
- Through the recruitment and interview process, an adapted version of the ROCI-II questionnaire could be implemented to identify the conflict management styles of the prospect employees, which can help the company choosing a candidate that fits their policy.
- Stress caused by long contracts, was found to be dominant reason for conflict.
- Change of personnel is a costly matter and thus, it is cheaper to keep a seafarer that is already on board but it is mostly done at the expense of said seafarer. Accordingly, finding an optimal solution that works for both the company and the seafarer can prove beneficial for both parties.
- The role ambiguity of the fitter can be resolved by employing one for each deck and engine departments. Several other frequently mentioned issues can be improved by in-house education and training. Personal traits, meritocracy, education, and communication can be improved to some extent by appropriate training.
- Performance pressure towards the ship stemming from commercial concerns is an issue that should be addressed as the ship and the seafarers on board are obligated to follow strict international rules and regulations, along with ensuring the safety and security of both life and cargo. Any concession on this front has the potential to result in a serious harm to all related parties.

- Lastly, the managers could learn what are the reasons for conflict from the seafarers' perspective, and analyze and think over which reasons that lead to conflict situations stated by the seafarers can be eliminated or managed.

Implication for seafarers are listed as follows:

- Seafarers shall look for improving or acquiring the competencies stated to be expected of them regarding conflict management
- Seafarers could identify the differences regarding reasons for conflict provided by their fellow colleagues and the decision makers and look for ways to improve how to get their voice through to the office better.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The main limitation of this study is that it only focuses on Turkish seafarers and decision makers regarding said seafarers. Along with the limited sample size due to the qualitative nature of the research, findings might lack external validity. In this line, similar studies can be carried out with other nations' seafarers or quantitative studies can be carried out in order to enhance the sample size and improved generalizability.

Furthermore, the relationship of the emerging reasons with each other can be analyzed in depth in proper settings. There are some codes that already stated to be linked with each other, thus, investigating the extend of said reasons for conflict and their relationship can prove useful to the literature.

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