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*Full Length Research Paper*

# Influence of Facebook usage on employee productivity: A case of university of cape coast staff

Daniel Edem Adzovie<sup>1\*</sup>, Isaac Eliot Nyieku<sup>2</sup> and Janet Ami Keku<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institutional Advancement Office, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

<sup>2</sup>Directorate of Human Resource University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

<sup>3</sup>Alumni Office, Takoradi Technical University, Ghana.

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The rapidity in the rise of social media is changing how organizations operate and handle their communication. Several organizations are in search of ways to seize advantage in this emerging era marked by greater real time, interactivity and transparency. The new media, of which Facebook is part, is growing so fast that it makes it imperative for employees to embrace the medium in the workplace. Facebook's widespread among workers has given an interest in how Facebook usage is related to the output of workers. The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of Facebook usage on the productivity of employees of University of Cape Coast. A questionnaire purposely designed for the study was used to gather the data from a sample of 100 respondents purposely selected from the staff of the University of Cape Coast, after a pilot study. The time spent and the number of times people visit Facebook has both positive and negative effects on the output of workers. It also emerged that Facebook has become an important part of people's lives. The study showed that the use of Facebook during productive hours has a significant influence on staff productivity. Facebooking by employees affect their skills/ability, knowledge/qualification, and productivity/outcomes.

**Key words:** Facebook, University of Cape Coast, facebooking

## INTRODUCTION

It is nearly impossible for people to go about their everyday lives today without making use of some form of social media. The popularity of social media has grown as a result of the rapid changes in technology as computers are now more mobile, and can be used virtually anywhere.

According to Diercksen et al. (2007) companies are increasingly using social media as a new way to reach customers more effectively, and to spread news of their activities more rapidly. The ubiquitous use of social media has also brought new challenges to today's workplace.

One of these is the apparent addiction that the millennial generation has to Facebook. Social interaction used to take place on a much smaller scale between relatives, friends and associates in households and communities. Presently, the situation has changed considerably and today one rarely finds an organisation that functions without applying Information and Communication Technology in its day-to-day activities. According to Von (2015) within less than ten years since Facebook was founded in 2004, roughly one seventh of all living humans regularly engaged with Facebook, and Facebook's user

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [daniel.adzovie@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:daniel.adzovie@ucc.edu.gh).

base is still growing today, albeit at a slower rate.

The concept of social networking is not new because human interaction inherently promotes the formation of networks through social contact (Tapscott and Williams, 2007). For some years, employers have had to deal with issues concerning employees internet use through organisational ICT infrastructures. In the organisational context, the problems associated with online social networking (OSN) technology as well as the nature of the content on such sites present employers with a dilemma. As with organisations in general, employees at tertiary education institutions have varying computer and internet literacy and skill levels (Ferreira, 2009).

There has been an explosion in the popularity of social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Bebo and LinkedIn in recent years. Their popularity has transcended languages, borders and cultures, and it is probably no exaggeration to say that there is a social media revolution. Facebook alone has over 500 million users, equating to roughly one in every 13 people on this planet. It is estimated that over 50% of these users log on to Facebook every day. By anyone's standards, these are staggering figures and yet they relate only to one social media site (Brown, 2011). Facebook is a social networking site designed to connect users. It allows individuals to create profiles that include personal interests, affiliations, pictures, and anything else a user wants to post (Educause, 2006). According to DMR (2016), Facebook is the largest social network in the world with over a billion and a half monthly active users.

The use of Facebook has become more of a banality in organizations and many have enacted policies regarding their use/misuse at work. The use of Facebook during work hours brings a new set of challenges to employers. It also has some advantages for employees. Facebook is web-based service that allows employee to:

1. Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system
2. Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and
3. View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). The use of Facebook at the workplace during productive hours for personal gratification has become a matter of concern to employers.

The uses and gratification theory suggests that media audiences play an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. The theory interrogates why people actively seek out specific media to fulfill their needs. There are four different activities; diversion, personal relationships, personal identity or individual psychology and surveillance that audiences are assumed to partake in. According to Boer and Brennecke (2003), the uses and gratification theory attempts to explain the uses and functions of the media for

individuals, groups, and society in general. The uses and gratification theory has three main objectives:

1. To explain how individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs. What do people do with the media?
2. To discover underlying motives for individuals' media use.
3. To identify the positive and the negative consequences of individual media use. At the core of uses and gratifications theory is the assumption that audience members actively seek out the mass media to satisfy individual needs.

Early in the history of communications research, an approach was developed to study the gratifications that attract and hold audiences to the kinds of media and the types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs (Cantril, 1942).

### **Facebook usage by organizations**

Facebook can be considered a fantastic resource to the working class. For example, social media have been credited with helping employees think outside the box. Research has shown that employees who utilize social media are nine percent more productive in the workplace.

Valenzuela et al. (2009) found that intensity of Facebook use was related to civic participation, life satisfaction, and social trust. Diercksen et al. (2007) opined that sites such as Pinterest (a site where the user can "pin" the things he/she likes in a particular category to create a "board" to group them all together, for example, future wedding ideas) and Instagram (a site dedicated to taking pictures and allowing them to tell an entire story) allow members to instantly see the creative works of a friend, and can help the user to brainstorm new ideas.

These sites are a valuable resource that can really help spark new and exciting ideas for work. Social media not only help employees to become more productive; they also allow employees to stay current with market trends and issues important to consumers as well as the general public. By staying informed in these areas, employees are also better prepared to troubleshoot potential setbacks and are more likely to create good public relations through the work they are doing. By identifying the trends, they can then tailor their own work to incorporate them, providing consumers with the sense that they are buying from a company who is diligent in staying current.

### **Facebook status updates**

According to Von (2015), Facebook status updates are short textual messages Facebook users can post, and these status updates are permanently displayed on the

user's own profile page and might appear in the automatically curated and personalized social awareness streams.

### Benefits of Facebook usage to the workplace

Social media and for that matter Facebook usage varies from organization to organization. Some people think that social media sites such as Facebook are time-wasters; however, a number of studies have shown just the opposite. Some studies show that employees who use social media sites are nine percent more productive than those who do not (Fahmy, 2009).

Fahmy found that 70% of employees who use internet for personal surfing result in sharpened employee's concentration. Alguenza et al. (2012) posit that using social media sites may actually increase employee productivity. Alguenza et al. (2012) further state that employees who are more social by nature and are connected to other people through social media sites are better persons in the workplace, which means they are skilled at interacting with others and solving problems, and that it is assumed that by taking short breathers, the brain will be refreshed and renewed.

The positive impact of social media and for that matter Facebook cannot be overemphasized as espoused by Avalos (2011) and cited in Ashraf and Javed (2014) that people no longer ask for mail addresses or mobile numbers instead of that people ask each other for their social network identities for carrying on long term contacts. This means that once a person's Facebook identity (real name or any name used on Facebook), is known, that person can easily be located and a conversation initiated. Other details such as phone numbers and email addresses could be obtained through Facebook.

Flynn (2011) is of the opinion that Facebook usage by employees can become strength for organizations when it is used to build good relationship with employees, and that it can be used to collect information about employee behavior as well as to train them. Flynn (2011) concludes that social networking affects employee's performance positively by increasing their knowledge, abilities, motivational level and close association with organization.

### Implications for human resource management

There used to be a belief that human resource professionals often are slow in embracing change when it comes to anything technology related, however, the popularity and possibilities that Social Media have brought are causing human resource professionals to take notice (Total HR, 2014). Total HR (2014) outlines four areas of effects that social media can have on human resource management and these are;

**1. Using social media to expand networks and increase access:** Regardless of the human resource profession, it is a common knowledge that using social media allows professionals to expand their networks on several different levels. Human resource practitioners can expand their networks, thereby increasing access to the latest information and cutting edge tools.

**2. Quantify the productivity and value of social media:** Organizations are convinced that employees would spend all day surfing and not getting any work done. Human resources departments are still fighting this battle with social media. Human resource practitioners must understand which social media tools and strategies will give them a greater positive result. While using social media tools can provide convenience, establishing appropriate metrics to measure results is essential. Simply having a Facebook account is not enough.

**3. Never truly disconnected as expectations evolve:** Before Facebook and iPhones, it was understood that people were not available all the time. Even though companies now try to encourage "disconnect" time, it has become essential for organizations to set expectations and manage those expectations where using social media is concerned. To understand customer demographics and needs, social media can be used to find business solutions faster and from a wider variety of sources. It also means that a business can respond to the needs of their customer faster as well.

**4. Do not be afraid — Support innovation:** There is tremendous potential in social media for collaboration and the sharing of real-time ideas or solutions with team members. The application of private enterprise tools can be used for internal conferences or team development and meetings. Facebook and blogging tools can be used to collaborate and inform employees and clients about practices and methodologies of businesses. So many positive applications can still be discovered and harnessed to improve both productivity and profitability. The more these tools are used, the more people will grow in their roles.

Human resource practitioners can learn about the social media tools that are available, and how they can be leveraged in the workplace. Many of the rules regarding what works have yet to be written or tested (Total HR, 2014).

### Statement of the problem

The popularity of social media and their increasing use in the workplace present some concerns for employers. There are indications that employers cannot completely prevent the use of social media during work hours. A state of uncertainty arises where employees tend to spend more time on social media such as Facebook engaging in non-work related activities such as creating



**Table 1.** Frequency of Facebook visit in a day.

Response	Percentage (%)
Very often	18.0
Always	14.0
Not too often	32.0
Occasionally	36.0
Total	100.0

**Table 2.** Number of hours spent on Facebook in a day during office hours.

Response	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 h a day	67.0
1 to 3 h a day	22.0
4 to 6 h a day	6.0
7 to 14 h a day	1.0
Total	100.0

personal networks, checking on family and friends, streaming and downloading music and video, checking sports scores, following social bookmarks, chatting with friends, reading and commenting on people's statuses, perusing people's gallery of photos and looking for friends.

According to Munene and Nyaribo (2013), organizations on a global scale have been faced with a multitude of challenges and are looking for different ways to remain afloat. The development of social media policies and internet use policies by most employers is at an early stage as most employers do not have proper policies, although practice has dictated use of arbitrary control and restriction. One of the challenges of this business age is how to enhance productivity of the workforce in order to increase profits and avoid wastage of applications based on participation and feedback that encourages free access and exchange of valuable information.

Social media and for that matter Facebook has made access to information as well as exchange of vital information on time very easy and cost effective, especially on real time basis. With the underlying assumption that Facebook usage has effect on employees' productivity, the present study is deemed necessary. The study intends to assess the time spent by employees of University of Cape Coast on Facebook, and how this affects their productivity. University of Cape Coast has three main categories of employees; senior members, comprising lecturers and registrars, senior staff, comprising administrative staff and research assistants and junior staff, comprising messengers, cleaners and clerks.

Most of the employees who fall under the senior staff category have access to computers in their offices, and most of these computers are connected to the internet.

**Table 3.** Frequency of Facebook status updates.

Response	Percentage (%)
1 to 3 times daily	60.0
4 to 6 times daily	16.0
7 to 9 times daily	5.0
Total	100.0

Some also have smart phones that are constantly connected to the internet.

### Research questions

The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. How frequent do staff of UCC use Facebook?
2. What is the perception of UCC staff on the use of Facebook?
3. What is the opinion of UCC staff on the influence of Facebook usage on work productivity?

### METHODOLOGY

The study made use of descriptive survey. One hundred (100) respondents were selected using the purposive sampling method. By the use of purposive sampling, we (the researchers) specially looked for administrative staff of UCC who use Facebook and administered the questionnaire to them to fill. The research instrument used was a questionnaire purposely designed for this study. The overall reliability coefficient after the pilot testing was 0.75 using the Chronbach Alpha reliability coefficient. The set of questionnaire was hand-delivered to the respondents. The respondents were briefed about the study, and also given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify issues they did not understand. The set of questionnaire was collected after they were duly completed.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the analysis of data from the respondents. The research questions were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The number of respondents was 100.

#### Research question 1 –How frequent do staff of UCC use Facebook?

Some questions on the instrument sought to find the frequency of Facebook usage among UCC staff. Tables 1, 2, and 3 present the results.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 all provide information on the frequency of Facebook usage by the respondents. From Table 1, 36% of the respondents expressed the view that they occasionally visited Facebook in a day, while 32%

**Table 4.** Perception of UCC staff on the use of Facebook.

Use of Facebook	Percentage (%)
Networking	20.0
Keeping in touch with friends	46.0
Communicating with classmates and colleagues	17.0
Meeting new people	7.0
Sharing pictures	3.0
Fun	7.0
Total	100.0

revealed that they visited Facebook not too often in a day. 14% of the respondents visited Facebook always while 18 respondents (18%) visited Facebook very often in a day. From Table 2, 67 respondents said they spend less than an hour on Facebook in a day, 22 respondents spend between one and three hours on Facebook in a day, six respondents spend between four and six hours on Facebook in a day, five respondents spend between seven and nine hours on Facebook in a day. From Table 3, 60% of the respondents reported that they updated their Facebook statuses one to three times a day while 16% updated their statuses four to six times daily and five respondents said they updated their statuses seven to nine times. These indicate that a great number of the respondents regularly logged onto Facebook and updated their statuses. The results are congruent with Brown (2011) who found that over 50% of people log on to Facebook every day.

### **Research question 2: What is the perception of UCC staff on the use of Facebook?**

This research question sought to find out how staffs of UCC used in this study perceive Facebook use with regard to its relevance or usefulness. Table 4 displays the results. From Table 4, out of the 100 respondents, 90% use Facebook to improve social relationships and interactions with others. This is shown in the sum of respondents who use Facebook for networking, keeping in touch and communicating with old and new friends. 10% use Facebook for entertainment (sharing pictures and having fun). In relation to this, Flynn (2011) opined that Facebook usage by employees can become strength for organizations when it is used to build good relationship with employees, and that it can be used to collect information about employee behaviour as well as to train them.

### **Research question 3: What is the opinion of UCC staff on the influence of Facebook usage on work productivity?**

The focus of this research question is on the impact of

Facebook on work productivity in UCC. We are interested in the perception of respondents on whether Facebook usage has a positive or negative influence on their work productivity. Tables 5 and 6 present the results.

Table 5 indicated that majority of the respondents (79%) reported that Facebook usage does not have a negative impact on their work productivity while 21% said otherwise. The implication is that a great number of the respondents consider Facebook usage to have a positive rather than negative impact on their productivity. In relation to this, Alguenza et al. (2012) posited that using social media sites may actually increase employee productivity. A possible reason for Facebook usage increasing work productivity is indicated by Alguenza et al. (2012) when they stated that employees who are more social by nature and are connected to other people through social media sites are better persons in the workplace, which means they are skilled at interacting with others and solving problems and that it is assumed that by taking short breathers, the brain will be refreshed and renewed.

This supports the results on research question 2 which proved that majority of the respondents reported that Facebook usage has a positive impact on work productivity. In relation to the fact that 21% of the respondents, reported that Facebook usage has a negative influence on productivity, Abdulahi et al. (2014) found that users of social network sites such as Facebook might get addicted to the internet. It is possible that Facebook usage has some negative influence on work productivity because according to Bennett (2012) almost half of UK employees (44%) believe that social media platforms such as Facebook negatively impact office productivity.

From Tables 6, 36 out of 100 respondents solicit ideas from friends through Facebook, especially on how to do certain things related to work. Again, 48 respondents learn a lot from their colleagues through Facebook while 16 respondents said they get advice quickly from their colleagues on Facebook. In relation to this finding, Bridge Consulting (2009) noted that the use of social media tools by organizations were to increase employee engagement, foster employee ideas and innovation, enhance customer relationships and employee productivity. They further noted that online social platforms expand learning options

**Table 5.** Does Facebook usage have a negative effect on work productivity?

Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	21.0
No	79.0
Total	100.0

**Table 6.** Positive influence of Facebook usage on work productivity of UCC staff.

Response	Percentage (%)
I am able to get advice from colleagues very quickly	16.0
I have learned quite a bit about my colleagues from Facebook	48.0
I solicit ideas from friends on Facebook on how to do certain things relating to work	36.0
Total	100.0

because they create collaborative environments for people to share and discuss knowledge informally.

## CONCLUSION

The study validates the fact that the use of Facebook by employees during working hours can be counter-productive if proper measures are not put in place to check its abuse.

From the findings, there is the need to put in some regulations to be sure that time spent on Facebook during productive hours are beneficial to the employer. The analysis revealed that social media usage by employees enhances employee productivity. Organizations encourage the use of social media by employees in order to increase employee involvement, promote the flow of ideas from employees, aid innovation, and increase customer relationships in order to promote employee productivity.

Relationship building is important to the society; hence the use of Facebook by employees to cultivate and improve their relationships must be encouraged. From the discussion, a confirmation of the theoretical framework is realized. Employees use a particular medium, and in this case Facebook, for the gratification that they derive from it. The pervasiveness of Facebook usage among workers in the University of Cape Coast is apparent from the study.

Time spent and the frequency of visit to Facebook can have positive and negative effect on employee output. It is certain that the growth of social media is not going to stop, and Human Resource practitioners must understand it to be a simple reality. The challenge is

integrating a cohesive, relevant and effective strategy at every level of an organization. By supporting innovation and not being afraid of change, one can stay a step ahead of the curve and make social media an ally as opposed to an ignorant enemy.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study contributes to the literature on the use of social media/technologies among workers during working hours in several important ways and provides some significant implications for consumer researchers and human resource practitioners. The study was however, limited by some factors hence some caution must be applied in the revision of its findings. First, the purposive sampling which is a non-probability sampling method was used in selecting respondents for the study; hence, not all staff of the University of Cape Coast who use Facebook had equal chance of being selected. Secondly, the instrument used had closed-ended questions which forced respondents to choose among the options available. These limitations potentially restrict the generalizability of the results.

Future research should address the limitations evident in the current study. Future studies are needed to assess a larger sample size, and test the results in multiple contexts. The use of other social network sites is also recommended for future study.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following

recommendations were made:

1. Higher education administrators can create an opportunity to help staff to use Facebook in ways that are beneficial to their specific duties and, by extension, to their overall employment experience.
2. Given that Facebook continues to be popular, and that universities are interested in increasing productivity and creating a lively working environment, it is important for those working in higher education to familiarize themselves with Facebook (and other such social media platforms) and to design and support interventions that meet staff expectations in order to help them give off their best.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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*Full Length Research Paper*

## All hands on deck: Employee engagement on cruise ships

Aleksandar Radic

Singidunum University, Belgrade; Gornji kono 8, 20000 Dubrovnik, Croatia.

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The present in-situ study examined employee engagement of a cruise ship workforce. 246 crew members and officers in different department's on-board a contemporary market cruise ship filled in a questionnaire during their voyages. Exploratory factor analysis has been applied to test factors of engagement and findings indicated that a four-factor solution (Communication and progress, Capacity to engage, Engaged behaviour, Trust and feeling of freedom) is the best explanation. Furthermore an IPA matrix outlined areas for improvement. The study has found that there is an opportunity for cruise organisations to increase the engagement of their employees by improving factors related to Communication and progress, Capacity to engage and Engaged behaviour. These findings have important implications for cruise tourism theory and practice.

**Key words:** Employee engagement on cruise ship, cruise tourism, principal components analysis, importance-performance analysis.

### INTRODUCTION

CLIA (2016) reports that in 2015 the cruise industry represented 956,600 jobs, which resulted in approximately \$38 billion (US) in wages and salaries. Forecasts for 2017 through 2026 have **over 80** new cruise ships launching into the market, with a total capacity of 230,800 berths per day. With its insatiable demand for talent, the industry is growing at exponential rates. Today, it seems that the need for an agile and highly motivated workforce is a logical thing and, by itself, a common thing; **so it** is hard to imagine that our beliefs about the workforce were very different not so long ago (The Disney Institute and Kinni, 2011:57). In 1914 Henry Ford enraged the capitalists when he almost doubled the wages of his workers. However, he was among the first to notice that

“the average person will not fulfil the daily norm unless he is caught and cannot escape” (Ford, 1931). Many years later today's understanding of employees' engagement has life energy and all the colours of the rainbow, in complete contrast to Ford's grey mechanistic understanding of the workforce. Thus, by now, everyone knows that sustainable competitiveness can only be achieved through the workforce. That is, people within the organisation and, therefore, to get the most out of employees, during which they go a step further for the organisation, it is essential that they are engaged (Bhattacharya, 2014). In order to maintain long term competitiveness in the cruise industry, it will be of utmost importance for all companies to have an highly motivated

E-mail: [aleradic@gmail.com](mailto:aleradic@gmail.com).

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and agile workforce.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### The concept of employee engagement on cruise ships

Engagement was, for the first time, conceptualised by Kahn (1990), who examined, through two qualitative studies, the work conditions in which employees felt connected or separated concerning the work they do. Based on the results of studies, Kahn (1990) came to the conclusion that engagement is a state in which the members of the organisation physically, cognitively and emotionally, positively express themselves in the context of their working roles. However, to come to a position where the work environment contributes positively to the emotional well-being of an individual, the context of the work should be challenging (Layard, 2005), meaningful (Ryff and Singer, 2003) and does not need to contain only the potential for socialisation (Helliwel, 2003; Layard, 2005) but should also include the potential for a deep connection and empathy among the participants in the working environment (Lyubomirsky et al., 2003; McGowan, 2006).

The accepted opinion is that engaged employees are more productive; however, Gallup (2013) points in their report to the fact that in 142 countries around the world, only 13% of employees are engaged in their work role. The cruise industry is peculiar, because private life and the job cannot be separated clearly during the stay of employees on cruise ships. Cruise ships are the physically isolated environment in which employees stay on average more than five months and employees experience what Weaver (2005:169) calls 'total institution'. The main characteristic being encapsulation of an individual. During their stay on a cruise ship, employees are exposed to various operational challenges such as long working days (on average 11 h per day), inability to take time off during their stay on board, low wages and emotional exploitation (Klein, 2002; Lee-Ross, 2005). Employees on cruise ships also have to comply with strict rules with a pronounced hierarchy based on a paramilitary system.

In regard to cruise tourism, at the present time no study has dealt with the involvement of employees on cruise ships and factors that influence engagement of employees on cruise ships. However, there are studies that have dealt with: Motivation and personal experiences of employees who work on the frontline of providing service on a cruise ship (Sehkaran and Sevcikova, 2011), organisational socialisation and making sense of their own work (Matuszewski and Blenkinsopp, 2011), the effectiveness of online recruitment in the hotel sector of cruise ships (Gibson and Swift, 2011) and challenges in the recruitment and management of trained manpower in

a multicultural and globalised environment (Gibson, 2008). The study of Sehkaran and Sevcikova (2011) brought to light of day that special attention must be directed toward understanding the motivation of employees on cruise ships, since it is of great importance for providing high-quality services. However, to achieve motivation of employees on cruise ships it must be understood, as Matuszewski and Blenkinsopp (2011) noticed, the specific nature of the social community between employees on a cruise ship that is an extremely challenging environment for all new employees, primarily because of no separation of the private and working parts of life in the isolated environment of cruise ships.

### Factors of employee engagement on cruise ships

Working on cruise ships is tough and may be best described by Jacksparrow057 (2009) according to whom: "From immemorial, sailing has the status of God's punishment... those who sail are only those who have no luck or brains to find their own bread on the land... from Polynesia to Murmansk to live on the ship as a sailor or a fisherman is to be an economic gladiator who sweetens his marine captivity with the hope that he will one day buy freedom on the land and watch the sea through the outer eyelid of the window of his home on the solid ground." Considering the previously mentioned, it is seen that the engagement of employees on cruise ships is an extremely demanding but achievable task. Macey et al. (2009) noted that the involvement of employees is necessary to achieve the capacity to engage, engaged behaviour, trust and a feeling of freedom. The ability to engage is the positive energy that is created by the employees when they have individual strength, the necessary resources to fulfil their tasks and social support of colleagues and leaders (Lyman and Adler, 2012; Burchell and Robin, 2011; Macey et al., 2009; Thomas, 2009). Indeed, in describing the conditions of employment that lead to employee engagement, Burchell and Robin (2011) point out the capacity to engage needing: Social support, equality, a sense of pride among employees and the credibility of leaders. Organisational culture in which open communication between leaders and employees is encouraged (Thomas, 2009; Lipp, 2013), as well as the progress that was achieved during the work, are recognised as crucial factors in engagement (Marciano, 2010). In further sub-sections will be described the building elements that have a direct positive impact on engagement: *Communication and progress, Capacity to engage, Engaged behaviour and Trust and feeling of freedom.*

### Capacities to engage

Before proceeding to a further description of engagement,

it must be noted that engagement is not a synonym for motivation (Marciano, 2010:40). Which means we can agree with Deci and Ryan (2000) according to whom, engagement arises from the desire for autonomy and expertise, while Macey et al. (2009:16) point out that in engaged individuals there is the flow of energy between a feeling of competence and self-sufficiency. Therefore, engagement refers to the essential and deep-seated commitment, pride and loyalty that do not change easily; while on the contrary, the level of motivation can be influenced by external factors. Particularly when there are expectations that some efforts that were made will produce valuable rewards, usually financial (Marciano, 2010:40).

The very nature of cruise ships is reflected in their particular environment that is physically isolated and encapsulated, where this kind of working environment is significantly different from many other industries and organisations in which employees perform their tasks (Dennett et al., 2013:3). Accordingly, to create a working environment on the cruise ships in which employees feel engaged during the execution of their tasks, cruise companies must provide them with some capacity in the form of necessary resources, social support and psychological capital. This follows that it is the duty of the organisations to contribute to creating an atmosphere in which employees have all the necessary information to perform their work. Employees are provided with opportunities for learning and mastering challenges to develop their self-esteem and are supported in their efforts to restore their energy. This is achieved by balancing between work and their private lives (Macey et al., 2009: 10).

### ***Engaged behaviour***

Engagement is a united feeling filled with positive energy that occurs in employees during their work as a product of a sense of urgency, focus, intensity and enthusiasm (Macey et al., 2009:27). Lyman and Adler (2012:41) noted that the engagement of employees occurs more often in organisations with a huge variety of networks in continuous development; where employees are looking for ways to connect with each other, tearing down in front of them all barriers, whether real or imaginary. Accordingly, the engagement can be seen in the form of a specific behaviour that is painted with four imperative characteristics: (1) sense of emergency; (2) sense of focus; (3) sense of intensity; (4) sense of enthusiasm (Macey et al., 2009: 20). Combining these four elements, engagement appears significantly different compared to some similar concepts while maintaining its specific feature of the extremely powerful source of personal fulfilment of employees (Macey et al., 2009:20). The essence of engagement is very vividly brought by Lord Currie as: "You can smell it, can't you, that engagement of people as people. What goes on in

meetings, how people talk to each other. You can capture the feeling of energy, engagement, commitment, faith in what the organisation stands for" (MacLeod and Brady, 2008). Thus, the engaged workers do not feel only compaction with energy, but also a sense of competence. It is this sense of competency that emerges to the surface from the personal experience of workers and the general conditions of work that companies construct (Macey et al., 2009:27). The engaged behaviour of employees is vital for the simple reason that, as Haudan (2008:169) sees it, "business success is not decided by visionary insights and the speed of learning by the brightest few, but through the understanding and the speed of execution of the most of the slowest majority."

### ***Trust and feeling of freedom***

Some of the main benefits of engagement are self-initiative and proactivity of employees. However, to create a specific environment in which employees are engaged in their work roles, demonstrating at the same time self-initiative and proactivity, it is essential that employees have absolute freedom in their operation without any fear that they will be punished if they use that freedom. Therefore, we come to the conclusion, as Macey et al. (2009:12) noted, that in the absence of freedom in the process of engagement, it is impossible to achieve a connection between the strategy of the organisation and the individuals action. The reason being that, psychologically speaking, in such circumstances there is no moment when a person feels safe enough while working. In some case, where employees do not feel safe, their fear directs their operations during the interaction. So, it follows that in organisations where there is no freedom of choice in action, employees are restrained, cautious and limited; with a focus on retaining a sense of security (Haudan, 2008:47) and not on self-initiative proactivity.

Covey (2006) claims that, based on his research, 51% of employees believe in their senior managers, 36% of employees believe their leaders are honest, 27% of people believe in governments and 12% of people believe in large companies. On this basis, we can conclude that trust is an extremely rare, but valuable resource and that it is, as Covey (2006) considers, the strongest form of engagement and inspiration in organisations. When people trust each other, there is open sharing of information and resources. While in a culture of distrust, people accumulate resources for fear that someone else could use them to their advantage (Marciano, 2010:184).

### ***Communication and progress***

People around the world mostly come to work on cruise ships because of the higher wages they receive in

comparison to the wage they would get for the similarly performed job on land in the countries of their origin. However, for employees on cruise ships to get engaged during the performance of their duties, it is necessary that, as Macey et al. (2009:69) noticed, their work makes sense that employees work for managers who are experts, managers who have a positive influence on the development of employees and managers who are impartial in interaction with employees. Therefore, the task of a leader on a cruise ship is to use, as claimed by Lyman and Adler (2012:92), a set of instruments to create a far-reaching two-way communication. Where leaders also provide information to employees and provide a variety of ways in which an employee can effectively use the same information. Effective communication on cruise ships is a very challenging task since the official language is mostly English. Which, for the majority of employees on a cruise ship is their second language. Therefore, during the communication with employees on a cruise ship, in addition to spoken words, leaders must pay special attention to non-verbal communication; where non-verbal communication can be understood, as described by Matsumoto et al. (2013a:4), as communicating and messaging in any and every modality, where words are not used.

The importance of verbal and non-verbal communication was noticed by Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 - 1821) who claimed that "you have to (...) appeal to the soul of man to electrify it." (Clayton, 2015). Indeed, leaders of cruise ships who want to create an environment where employees behave in an engaged way, must daily provide employees with positive and constructive feedback that educates, motivates and inspires the employees. Starting from the assumption that success produces success, in circumstances where employees recognise that their efforts contribute to positive organisational outcomes; their confidence grows and flows with increasingly important energy (Macey et al., 2009:124). That is why it is crucial to recognise and celebrate business milestones since this does not only celebrate progress but also, in a highly visible way, shows the movement toward a higher sense that makes tangible progress for the employees (Thomas, 2009: 123).

## METHOD

The problem of this research is related to the understanding of employee engagement on cruise ships; more precisely, finding methodological procedures to examine and measure the factors that influence engagement. To achieve continuous evolution of tourism research it is necessary to implement all five Echnert and Jamal's (1997) dimensions: Gathering a theoretical body of knowledge, using diverse methodological approaches, clarifying theory and methodology, achieving interdisciplinary focus and enabling a holistic, integrated, research. To assess the validity of the used scale that was used in evaluating engagement of employees on the cruise ships. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed based on the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and Cronbach's Alpha by SPSS 21. PCA is the

most commonly used method of factor analysis since, although it is descriptive, it provides valuable insights into the latent structures of data that can be used for further analysis (Turner and Vu, 2012:184). The purpose of PCA in this part of the research is, as Turner and Vu (2012:185) explain, to reduce the number of original variables to a smaller group of components that describe the hidden structures within the set of data so that only the components with several variables and high simple structures of load are separated. Looking at the reliability of measurement scales, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the most commonly used and therefore, as Churchill (1979) recommended, it is an excellent analysis formula for assessing the quality of the measuring instrument. Analysis of the alpha coefficient assumes that the variables were randomly sampled from a large group of variables to test the reliability of created factors (Turner and Vu, 2012:186).

## Questionnaire development

Tourism significantly relies on all types of data, as well as on quantitative processing of data and information collected in various ways during the decisive efforts of scientists and practitioners (Baggio and Klobas, 2011:xxii). Quantitative research is associated with the etic approach, whereby the etic approach is objectively placed and framed as research conducted from a neutral point of view, or from the perspective of an outsider (Jennings, 2012:309). The questionnaire is a popular technique that is often used in tourism research, since, as noted by Babbie (2007:270), the questionnaire is suitable for descriptive research conducted on a large target population, where collected data is suitable for providing adequate explanations.

In this research the questionnaire is formulated to examine the engagement of employees on a cruise ship. The questionnaire consisted of three parts, whereby the first and second part of the questionnaire aimed at assessing the attributes of engagement while the third part of the questionnaire was of general nature and referred to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The individual attributes of engagement were separated and grouped into appropriate factors (*Communication and progress, Capacity to engage, Engaged behaviour and Trust and feeling of freedom*) as taken from scientific literature. For the evaluation of the perception of employee engagement on a cruise ship, answers to the questions in the questionnaire were measured by Likert's scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). While for the evaluation of significance of attributes of engagement also used Likert's scale from 1 (It is not important to me) to 5 (It is extremely important to me).

## Sample design and data collection

The collection of quantitative data to examine the factors of engagement of employees on cruise ships took place on the Disney Magic cruise ship in the period between 30.05.2016 and 18.7.2016. The very process of data collection was based on the self-completion of a questionnaire. After each employee completed their questionnaire, the author checked whether the respondents answered all the questions in order to reduce the number of missing values. Interviewing of the employees was conducted in the evening hours, usually between 19:00 and 22:00. Respondents were interested in participating in the research and author encountered a general acceptance every time he approached the employees and asked them if they would like to take part in the research. Out of the 1,007 employees, who stayed on the Disney Magic cruise ship during the research, the author managed to collect 249 completed questionnaires. So the total number of respondents was 249.



**Table 1.** Sociodemographic profile of sample.

<b>Demographic variable</b>	<b>(n)</b>	<b>Valid (%)</b>
<b>Years of service at the current cruise company</b>		
1-2 years	94	37.8
3-5 years	99	39.7
6+ years	56	22.5
<b>Department on a cruise ship</b>		
Hotel	139	55.8
Marine and technical	47	18.9
Entertainment	63	25.3
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	146	58.6
Female	103	41.4
<b>Age group</b>		
20-29	99	39.8
30-40	114	45.8
41-50	33	13.3
51-60	2	0.8
60+	1	0.4
<b>Highest education level</b>		
High school (secondary school)	51	20.5
Associate degree	71	28.5
Bachelor's degree	108	43.4
Master's degree and Doctoral degrees	19	7.6
<b>Place of residence</b>		
North and Central America	72	28.9
Europe	78	31.3
Asia	67	26.9
South America	19	7.6
Africa	9	3.6
Australia	4	1.6

N=249.

## FINDINGS

### Sociodemographic profile of sample

Descriptive statistics of employees on cruise ships included the demographic profile of the respondents to years of service at the current cruise company, department on a cruise ship, gender, age, level of education and place of residence (Table 1).

### Factor analysis

To separate hidden factors that influence engagement of employees on the cruise ship, 17 questions in the questionnaire were analysed by using analysis of

Principal Components with Varimax rotation. There were retained all factors whose characteristic value were greater than 1, and the percentage of explained variance of indicator greater than 0.5. Observing all four components (factors) of employee engagement on cruise ships, the author decided to retain the fourth component as well since, even though its characteristic value is 0.98, it still significantly contributes to increasing the total explained variation in responses. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the identified factors varies between 0.564 and 0.847. Taking into account that the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the fourth factor (*Trust and feeling of freedom*) is below 0.6, this factor cannot be considered reliable, although it is acceptable (greater than 0.5). The values of coefficients for other factors are above the limit of 0.6 and can be regarded as reliable.

**Table 2.** The factor analysis.

Factor	Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% Variance explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Communication and progress	Manner in which business milestones are recognized	0.855	6.960	19.525	0.847
	Manner in which successfully accomplished milestones are recognized	0.849			
	Recognition from Your leader for task successfully completed	0.764			
	Communication and feedback from Your leader	0.548			
	Leaders support when expressing guest dissatisfaction	0.538			
Capacity to engage	Suitability of Your on job training in achieving work responsibilities	0.777	1.684	18.813	0.809
	Clarity and quality of information that helps you to perform Your role in a good quality	0.776			
	Necessary resources, challenges and leader support that you and your working group are receiving during achieving of goals	0.599			
	Cooperation during achieving of goals of your working group	0.590			
Engage behaviour	Freedom of expressing Your thoughts	0.729	1.113	15.199	0.772
	Your working group while solving small issues before they become big problems	0.689			
	Time passing by while working	0.576			
	The way Your colleagues enhance the productivity of work	0.564			
	Meaning and contribution of Your individual work within Your working group and company	0.528			
Trust and feeling of freedom	My own knowledge and confidence in achieving working goals	0.807	0.979	9.614	0.564
	Easiness of staying focused during my work	0.652			

Results of factor analysis suggest a solution with four factors explaining 63% of the variance. Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of the adequacy of the sample is 0.897, while Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). The results of the factor analysis after rotation produced a clear structure factors with a relatively high percentage of explanations of variance of indicators and minimal overlap between items, indicating the independence of factors. Table 2 summarises the results of the factor analysis.

The factor of *Communication and progress* explains 19.52% of the variance and has a reliability coefficient of 0.85. It is followed by *Capacity to engage* factor that explains 18.81% of

the variance and has a reliability coefficient of 0.81, the next in the series is a factor of *Engaged behaviour* that explains 15.20% of variance and has a reliability coefficient of 0.77 to finally come to factor of *Trust and feeling of freedom* that explains 9.61% of the variance with a coefficient of reliability of 0.56.

#### IPA method

The original model of importance-performance (The Importance-Performance Analysis, abbreviated IPA) was first proposed by Martilla and James (1977) who believed that satisfaction

is a function of the consumer perception of the performance and significance of attributes. Given that the IPA method, as noted by Oh (2001:617), proved to be very successful in many researches in the field of tourism, quality of service, education and marketing and, based on the similarities with previous research, the author decided to use the IPA model during research of employee engagement on cruise ships. Therefore, job satisfaction, which is ultimately reflected in employee engagement on cruise ships, can be seen as a function of the perception of the performance of employees and the level of significance of a certain attribute in the context of the work that employees do. Just as Martilla and

**Table 3.** IPA results for the factors of engagement and their importance.

Factors and items	Importance		Performance	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Communication and progress</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>0.960</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>0.847</b>
Manner in which business milestones are recognized?	3.66	0.911	4.09	0.841
Manner in which successfully accomplished milestones are recognized?	3.56	0.919	4.12	0.813
Recognition from Your leader for task successfully completed?	3.59	1.088	4.27	0.900
Communication and feedback from Your leader?	3.75	0.938	4.43	0.841
Leaders support when expressing guest dissatisfaction?	3.87	0.906	4.40	0.783
<b>Capacity to engage</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.798</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>0.736</b>
Suitability of Your on job training in achieving work responsibilities?	4.05	0.796	4.29	0.714
Clarity and quality of information that helps you to perform Your role in a good quality?	4.04	0.742	4.38	0.654
Necessary resources, challenges and leader support that You and Your working group are receiving during achieving of goals?	3.80	0.865	4.29	0.831
Cooperation during achieving of goals of Your working group?	3.91	0.761	4.34	0.736
<b>Engaged behaviour</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>0.912</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>0.829</b>
Freedom of expressing Your thoughts?	3.48	1.021	4.23	0.894
Your working group while solving small issues before they become big problems?	3.89	0.885	4.42	0.733
Time passing by while working?	3.84	0.900	3.85	0.975
The way Your colleagues enhance the productivity of work?	3.74	0.862	4.26	0.725
Meaning and contribution of Your individual work within Your working group and company?	3.91	0.819	4.27	0.678
<b>Trust and feeling of freedom</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>0.772</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>0.740</b>
My own knowledge and confidence in achieving working goals?	4.37	0.656	4.51	0.640
Easiness of staying focused during my work?	3.98	0.828	4.15	0.789

James (1977) pointed out, easiness of implementation and attractiveness of methods when displaying data and strategic proposals are two of the reasons that contributed to the prevalence of technique. Table 3 shows the arithmetic mean of the factors of engagement and the importance that employees on cruise ships give to them.

In Figure 1, we see how on the X-axis shows

the level of satisfaction of employees by factors of engagement, while the on Y-axis is shown their perception of the importance of factors of engagement. The average perception of the importance of the engagement factor was 4.27, while the average satisfaction with engagement factors amounted to 3.83. The four quadrants are constructed by average values by factors of engagement, and their importance and

satisfaction level (Figure 1). Figure 1 shows that the three factors (*Communication and progress*, *Capacity to engage* and *Engaged behaviour*) are positioned in the quadrant I, marked with "Concentrate here (high importance and low performance)," while one factor (*Trust and feeling of freedom*) is positioned in quadrant II marked with "Keep up the good work (high importance and high impact)".

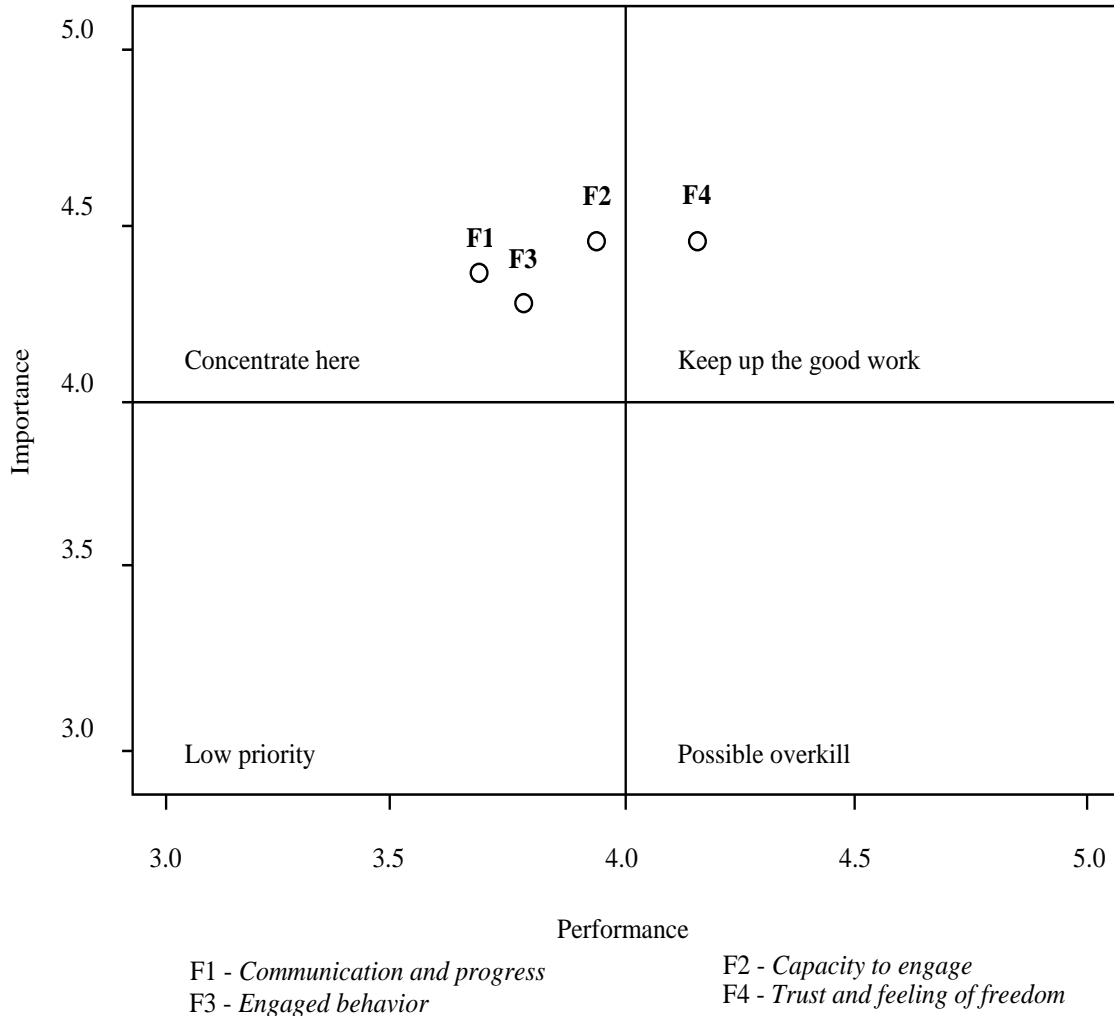


Figure 1. The importance-performance grid.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS**

The aim of the research was to understand the engagement of employees on cruise ships with a special emphasis on finding methodological procedures to examine and measure the factors that influence employee engagement on cruise ships. Observing the employee engagement on a cruise ship, IPA analysis (Figure 1) showed that there is room for improvement of certain factors of engagement. Factors of engagement that required attention were: Communication and progress, Capacity to engage and Trust and feeling of freedom. To improve engagement of employees

On cruise ships it is necessary to pay attention to the factor of *Communication and progress*. Therefore, managers should deal with the instruments of communication, as well as the way of communication. Thus, managers are expected to demonstrate openness during communication with employees in which takes place two-way verbal communication. The setting for this two-way

communication, rather than a group meeting, is where the employees are performing their tasks. In this way, the manager can update on the overall company aims and the successes of their department within those visions. Partly because of the setting, it becomes evident to the employee their part in this achievement; making them feel needed, enthusiastic and fulfilled (Macey et al., 2009:67). This is precisely the right moment when a leader should pay tribute to the employee, because, as Marciano (2010:86) considers, today’s recognitions create tomorrow’s initiatives. In spite of the fact that the warm words and sincere gratitude are of great importance for all employees, managers are recommended to pay tribute to the employees for completed tasks and through tangible forms; such as dinner in exclusive restaurants or excursions in the ports of call. It is of great importance to employees on a cruise ship to be informed about business milestones of the cruise company. So it is expected that managers are sincere during the recognition and close and direct about the successfully

achieved milestones. Employees' loyalty to the company is a valuable and rare resource these days and therefore it is the duty of managers to pay tribute to loyal employees in the form of monetary prizes and celebrations at which good food and drinks are served. However, the most challenging part for managers is certainly the one when there is a conflict between employees on the front line of service and guests. In such moments, managers should not blindly hold to Field's (1905) maxims according to which the guest is always right. Having said that, if managers want to maintain their integrity, they must investigate the whole case and, if necessary, protect their subordinate.

During this study, it was discovered that additional efforts are needed concerning the factor of *Capacity to engage* in improving employee engagement on cruise ships. In addition to the interestingness of work tasks, the availability of the necessary resources to perform the work tasks suggests to employees the existence of support and autonomy in their work. These are all necessary conditions for the cultivation of engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Consequently, managers are expected to, in addition to the necessary resources, provide their employees with working practices that are in line with the trends of the cruise industry. However, managers must pay attention to their attitude and behaviour towards employees during the training, so as not to experience them as trivial. Managers must understand that the information is also a resource; so it is very important to allocate their time and effort when sharing the pieces of information. Of course, English is the official language of most of the cruise ships; however, it is still a second language for most managers and employees. Therefore, the provision of clear and quality information is quite a challenging task. Indeed, just as Lyman and Adler (2012:9) suggest, the flow of information is essential in order to assist employees in their direct impact on the life of the organisation. Nurturing mutual respect and understanding within the working group, and the other working groups on a cruise ship, is the duty of managers which, if successfully executed, brings an opportunity to improve the success of the performance of everyday tasks. Ultimately, the support that each manager provides to his employees is essential. However, such support must be full of devotion; so that the managers experience themselves as leaders who invest their maximum to facilitate the development of their employees.

The final factor in which improvement would lead to the improvement of employee engagement on cruise ships is the factor of *Engaged behaviour*. Freedom to express an opinion is a precious instrument in nurturing the engagement of employees. However, creating an atmosphere where employees feel comfortable when presenting their opinion is a very difficult task for managers. If the manager wants to enjoy the benefits of engagement of employees, it is necessary to possess empathy toward employees, to try to understand the

employees, not to judge them, and to strive for the values that he preaches to others. In circumstances where the manager successfully creates an environment in which freedom of thought is respected, an *Engaged behaviour* as the prerequisite for proactiveness is created. That kind of behaviour is of great value in solving small problems before they develop into major problems. It is thereby desirable for the manager to pay attention to: The size of the working group, ethnicity of employees in the working group and the freedom of choice in solving problems. Regarding of ethnicity of employees on a cruise ship, managers must pay attention to the harmony between the very different cultural heritages of employees. Special efforts must be invested to create a harmonious relationship between individual and collective ethnic groups. In friendly environments, a sense of the flow of time is extremely positive; unfortunately, some factors adversely affect this desirable feeling. Therefore, managers must have an understanding that for employees on cruise ships the passing of time largely depends on the shift in which they work during the day, itineraries of the cruise ship, as well as whether it is a day at sea or in a port of call. Finally, engaged behaviour and productivity of the working group are under the direct influence of managers, where managers are certainly not allowed to favour certain ethnic groups (usually the same ones to which they belong) among employees.

In the end, it is necessary to point out that the author of this scientific research attempted to integrate different theories and models which would assist in clarifying, and then improving, the understanding of the nature of employee engagement on cruise ships. This research, in the author's best knowledge, is a pioneering work. So, further testing and improvement are necessary. To improve employee engagement it would be very useful to conduct an identical study on the employees of other cruise companies. If the repeated study with employees on other cruise-companies provides similar or even better results, it would be interesting to carry out the model of employee engagement on cruise ships and complete the study that would include structural equation modelling.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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A man in a dark suit and tie stands on top of a large white piggy bank. In front of the piggy bank is a stack of several gold coins. The background is a blue gradient with a semi-transparent white band across the middle where the title is located.

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