



Potential safety outcomes of communication difficulties in mixed nationality crews: A study of Greek and Norwegian vessels

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Abstract

The study examines potential safety outcomes of communication difficulties in mixed nationality crews on Greek and Norwegian cargo and passenger vessels. The aims are to examine the prevalence of unsafe situations due to language misunderstandings on vessels with different degrees of mixed nationality crews, and the factors influencing this. The study is based on quantitative survey data (n=367) and qualitative interviews (n=15) with seafarers on different types of Greek and Norwegian vessels with different degrees of mixed nationality crews. The survey indicates that respondents on board mixed-nationality vessels experience more unsafe situations because of language misunderstandings between different nationalities on board. Work pressure are also among the influencing factors. The qualitative data provide illustrations of such situations, including cultural differences on board.

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Keywords

maritime safety; mixed nationality crews; unsafe situations; communication difficulties



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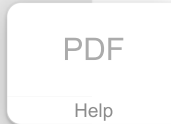
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1. Introduction

Alderton & Winchester (2002) suggest that the maritime industry is not only central to world trade, it is also the only example of a fully globalized industry. In 2005 it was reported that 50 % of the total crew of 35,000 on board Norwegian-registered vessels were foreign citizens, mostly from the Philippines, India, Poland or Russia (Håvold, 2005). While nationally flagged vessels are required to follow national wage and working condition rules, and are thus generally manned by domestic seafarers, vessels flying flags of convenience (FOC) generally offer lower wages

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