

## **An Analysis of Qualifications and Personal Characteristics of Successful Marina Manager\***

**Senka Šekularac Ivošević, Dragana Milošević**

**Abstract:** As a modern industry based on meeting the high-demanding customers who prefer vacation and recreation at sea, nautical tourism requires professional staff with renowned qualifications and personalities developed. Marina managers especially should reach this imperative of industry mentioned. The methodology in this paper is inherent in the methodology of social sciences. The primary research includes surveys and in-depth interviews examining the attitudes of marina managers in Montenegro about professional requirements and personal attributes that describe successful careers. The research results confirm previous findings in the literature and shape the position of marina managers based on the necessary education, experience, technical and leadership skills, and personalities. Implications of this paper refer to improving study plans and programs in maritime education, which is the first step in developing high-quality management staff in the marina business.

**Keywords:** Marina, Management, Professional requirements, Personality development.

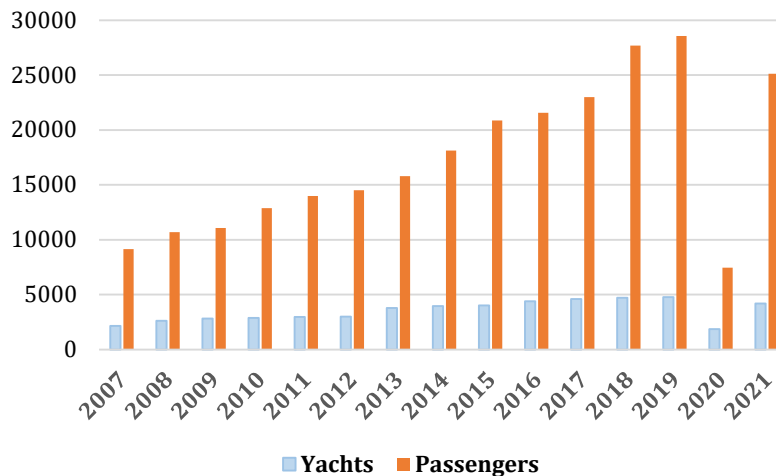
### **1. Introduction**

Tourism is an activity that achieves continuous expansion on a global level, excluding the period of the pandemic crisis when there was a significant decline in activity, primarily in air and maritime, road, and rail transport. Before the pandemic, all projections indicated that the tourism sector was expected to grow by 3 to 4% in 2020. As one of the most visited destinations in the world, the Mediterranean region recorded an increase in the share of tourism in the GDP of 75% from 1995 to 2020 [1; 2]. Nautical tourism is rated as the most promising selective type of tourism globally and in Montenegro. It records annual growth of approximately 2-3% [3; 4; 5; 6]. Projections before the COVID 19 pandemic indicated that the global size of the marina market would reach \$ 51.37 billion by 2025, with an average growth rate of 4.3% over the period 2019-2025 year [7].

---

\*An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> Kotor International Maritime Conference – KIMC 2021, Kotor, Montenegro.

According to Montenegrin official statistical reports there was a permanent increase in the turnover of nautical vessels and passengers from 2007 to 2019, as illustrated in Fig. 1. In 2020 the traffic of nautical vessels decreased by 61.1%, and the passenger traffic by 73.9%, compared to 2019. Preliminary data from 2021 indicate the revitalization of nautical tourism with an increase in vessel traffic by 124.76% and passenger traffic by 236.86%, compared to 2020 [6].



**Fig. 1** - The traffic of nautical vessels and passengers 2007-2021 [6]

Along the 294 km of the Montenegrin coast there are 11 marinas with about 4,000 berths. Significant foreign investments have contributed to the development of marine infrastructure on the Montenegrin coast, which has created the need for managerial staff in modern marinas.

Many studies implemented the concept of a systematic review approach to explore the literature that has been conducted in human resources in the maritime industry, especially in shipping, where it has been proven that human error was the cause of 80% of accidents [8]. Some of these errors are crew management errors, as preoccupation with minor technical problems, failure to delegate tasks and responsibilities, failure to set priorities, inadequate monitoring, failure to utilize available data, inability to communicate intent and plans, etc [9].

In particular, leadership, teamwork, communication, situation awareness, decision making, ethics, and environmental awareness are explored as essential elements of maritime management onboard. Generally, in the maritime industry, a lot of research is dealing with the question: *Who are the maritime managers of the future* [10; 11; 12]? In this paper, the aim is to answer this question with application in the marina business.

It is a great responsibility to run the activities of marina managers. In the long run, the management staff in marinas is responsible for the market position and represents one of the foundations of marina success [12]. The success of a marina manager is measured by how well he/she can ensure the efficiency and profitability of the marina's operations and manage the entire marina's assets. Marina manager working through personal example and collaborating with subordinate supervisors aims to maximize the development of all facility's potential. The leading task of marina managers is to manage the marina to implement and maintain systems and processes that effectively provide all marina customers, tenants, and contractors with the highest level of professionalism and customer service. This leading task can be divided into several ones as management of technical processes in the marina, marina business management and activities, financial and strategic planning of the marina, communication and coordination with external (partners, guests) and internal (employees) stakeholders, protection of the sea and environment, improving the knowledge in maritime law and other relevant regulations [13]. Previous research shows that the goal of marina managers is to achieve the best possible differentiation of marine services and provide marketing positioning based on the high quality and unique service offers using modern technology [14].

Searching numerous web platforms that could help marina managers get jobs (Indeed Job Search, Glassdoor Jobs, LinkedIn, Google for Jobs), the authors of this paper systematized that fundamental duties and responsibilities of the candidates are in the domain of:

- Management of marina facilities in a way that ensures all property and assets are maintained, monitored, and presented in a manner that is in keeping with the marina standards,
- Business Planning & Finance,
- Sales & Marketing,
- Marina Operations,
- Law & Legislations,
- Standards & Regulations,
- Customer care, and
- Management of all employees effectively and following all HR policies established.

Previous research has shown that marina managers are not prone to decentralization. Middle and senior managers are responsible for operational and repetitive activities but less for strategic and tactical ones while avoiding

business risks. The main factors that influence the decision-making of marina managers are professionalism in the preparation of decisions and availability of accurate information [11].

In addition to essential duties and responsibilities, it is imperative to explore the qualifications of the candidates for the position of marina manager: education, experience, language skills, computer skills, physical demands.

This paper aims to propose qualifications and personal characteristics needed for the position of marina manager. Furthermore, the paper seeks to encourage maritime education and training institutions to improve subjects such as Maritime Management, Maritime Marketing, Finance and Human Resources Management in Maritime Affairs to meet the demand of the growing marina labor market in Montenegro.

## **2. Methodology**

In this paper, the authors used a qualitative method to examine employees' attitudes on managerial positions in Montenegrin marinas. The survey method is suitable for collecting primary data, including facts, opinions, attitudes, intentions, and motives of respondents.

For the first part of the research related to the business qualifications of marina managers, a survey questionnaire was created in Google Drive form. The questionnaire was forwarded to the target respondents via email addresses available on the official websites of the marinas. Online data collection through online surveys in academic research has numerous advantages over traditional ones, in terms of wide geographical dispersion, time and cost efficiency, functionality, flexibility, and the aesthetic moment [15; 16]. The structure of the online questionnaire consists of topics related to gender and age structure, functional position of marina manager, level and field of education qualifications, and previous work experience in the marina business.

For the second part of the research related to the personality of marina managers, an in-depth interview as a popular questioning technique was used. The two questions were:

1. What are the moral character, integrity, and sincerity of a person's commitment to marina management as a profession? and
2. Describe an ability of a person to become a marina manager.

The questions are formulated based on a prestigious reference for the position of marina manager issued by Global Marina Institute, i.e., CMM certificate - Certified Marina Manager.

The sample consists of sixteen (16) managers in Montenegrin marinas: Marina Bar, Marina Kotor, Luštica Bay, Porto Montenegro, D-Marin Portonovi, and Lazure Marina. The sample size is considered respectable given the smaller population of marinas in Montenegro.

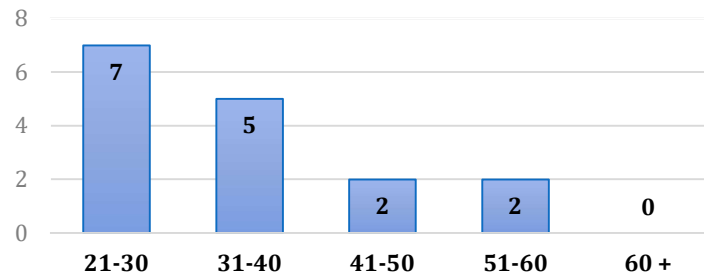
### 3. Results

The results obtained based on questionnaires (qualifications of managers) and in-depth interviews (personal characteristics of managers) are presented in the following sections.

#### 3.1. Analysis of Qualifications of Marina Managers

For equations Analysis of the answers obtained through the online questionnaire shows that the sample of 16 managers employed in Montenegrin marinas is characterized by gender equality. When it comes to the functional position of manager in the marina, most responses were received by the operations managers (44%), followed by marketing and communications managers (19%), CEOs (18%), and others (19%).

According to age, the participation of respondents in the sample is on average the highest between 21-30 years (7 managers - 44%) and 31-40 years (5-31%), followed by 41-50 (2 managers, 12,5%) and 51-60 years (2 managers, 12, 5%). The survey did not detect marina managers over 60 years old (see Fig. 2).

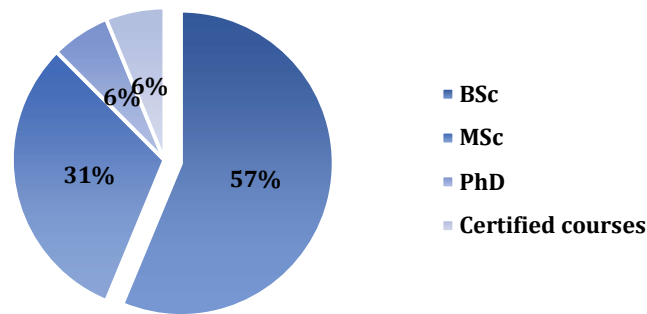


**Fig. 2** - *The age structure of marina managers in Montenegro [Authors]*

According to the age structure, it can be noticed that there is a difference between the managerial staff in Montenegrin marinas compared to neighboring Croatia, for example. Namely, in 2004, the dominant age structure of Croatian marina managers was between 41 and 50, and 51 to 60 in 2014 [11;12;17].

According to the level of educational qualifications, on average more than half of managers (57%) have a Bachelor's degree, and 31% have a Master's degree (see Fig. 3). Two respondents pointed out that they completed a CMM - Certified Marina Manager course in addition to formal education.

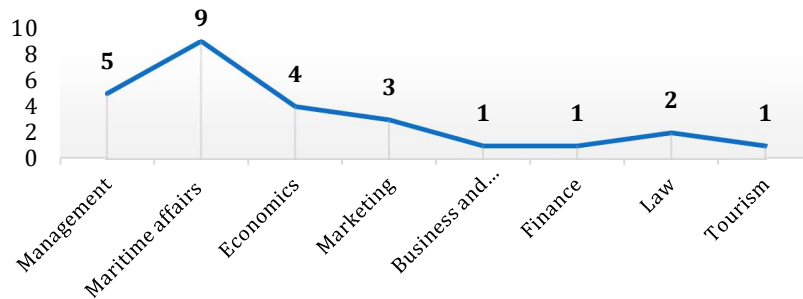
These results align with previous research that confirms that marina managers' dominant level of education is higher [11;12].



**Fig. 3 - Level of educational qualifications that managers hold in Montenegrin marinas [Authors]**

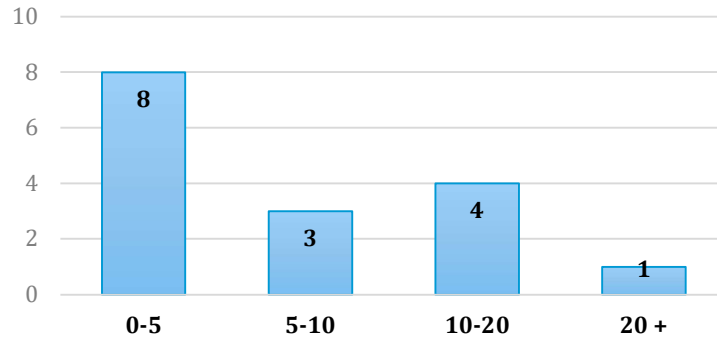
It is complex to define the best educational background for marina managers. However, it is considered that maritime and economic educational experience has an advantage, given the group of jobs in marinas that most correspond to these areas [18].

The field of education of managers employed in Montenegrin marinas mainly corresponds to maritime affairs, management, and economics (see Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4 - Field of education of marina managers in Montenegro [Authors]**

According to Fig. 5, respondents, on average, have up to 5 years of work experience in the role of marina managers (8 managers, i.e., 50%). They are followed by managers with 10-20 years of work experience (4 managers, i.e., 25%). Finally, three marina managers (19%) have 5-10 years of work experience.



**Fig. 5 - Work experience of managers in Montenegrin marinas [Authors]**

The majority of managers gained work experience in a particular marina, which is in line with the respondents' age structure and work experience. Senior managers state that they have worked in two to four marinas so far.

### **3.2. Analysis of Personal Characteristics of Marina Managers**

The results of an in-depth interview realized to discover the personal characteristics of the respondents led to the findings explained in the continuation of the paper. After survey realization, firstly, the authors detected moral character, integrity, and sincerity of commitment of the person for being marina manager. Secondly, the ability of a person to become a marina manager is defined.

Firstly, marina managers in Montenegro emphasized the crucial attributes of the manager's personality. Awareness that staff is the essential resource a marina has is the basis for good HR management practice. A professional manager shows good qualities to direct people, avoiding favoring employees. It is crucial to have personal integrity built on honesty to represent a model of good behavior for other employees in marinas. When it comes to management styles, the autocratic style where the manager has a dominant attitude of a "closed mind" is avoided by marina managers in Montenegro. The respondents believe that they will not retain high-quality staff in this way for a long time. They think that managers should use different leadership styles according to the situation and work ethic.

Secondly, one of the most critical qualifications for a marina manager is knowledge of the industry, which was confirmed by the respondents interviewed in this paper. Namely, they emphasized the importance of good business results that managers previously achieved by operating in the marinas and other companies during their careers. In other words, the reputation that managers enjoy in the professional and social community is a highly ranked ability (e.g., how socially responsible the manager is).

Top managers show an active commitment to duties and tasks, constantly developing knowledge and skills and following the market and yachting industry trends. Managers emphasized the importance of communication skills, especially in delegating tasks to employees with different intellectual abilities. In that sense, managers must communicate effectively with employees, customers, and other partners. In addition, active listening is crucial in daily communication with employees and assessing the work done, as well as patience and mentoring skills to use the strengths and reduce the weaknesses of the marina team members.

Furthermore, the managers highly ranked good decision-making and problem-solving skills. For the marina manager, process management, i.e., control and monitoring of financial operations, is a challenging task given the large number of companies involved in the marina business. To manage the current situation, marina managers must control the profit centers independently and individually and identify checkpoints [19;20]. Additionally, marina managers pointed out that they developed the ability to face challenges of this type by obtaining certified courses.

A wide range of courses covering various subjects is highly recommended for future marina managers. Some of them are financial management, sales and marketing management, regulatory obligations of the marina business, successful bottom line management principles, fundamentals of high character and ethics standards, supervision and managing people [21].

#### **4. Conclusion**

This research is motivated by the fact that marina management is a complex activity. Among other elements, the complexity in running a marina business is reflected in the provision of luxury services, the satisfaction of exquisite customer taste, high safety, and environmental standards. Starting from the above mentioned, the authors investigated the qualifications and personal characteristics of marina managers in Montenegro. Modest sources dealing with the profile of managers in the marina business have been found in the scientific literature.

The findings show that the managers surveyed have the necessary work experience and higher education qualifications in maritime affairs, management, and economics. In addition, the educational qualifications are upgraded with certified courses relevant for the position of marina manager.

Regarding personal characteristics, morality and ethics in relations with staff and clients, orientation towards socially responsible behavior, leadership and communication skills, decision-making and problem-solving skills, and the financial skills of marina managers are highly emphasized.



It was concluded that many maritime faculties offer courses in management, marketing, human resource management, and finance in maritime affairs. However, there is a need to connect experts from practice with academic staff to innovate the curricula according to the modern requirements of the marina market. This kind of cooperation would provide a solid foundation for creating better human potentials for managerial positions in marinas.

## References

- [1] Eco-union. The future of Mediterranean tourism in a (post) covid world back to mass tourism or leapfrog towards sustainability. 2021, available at: [https://www.ecounion.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Nota\\_Thefuture\\_mediterranean\\_tourism\\_03.pdf](https://www.ecounion.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Nota_Thefuture_mediterranean_tourism_03.pdf) [accessed: 10/10/2021].
- [2] Statista Research Department. International tourist arrival growth in European countries 2020. 2021, available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/543713/european-countries-international-tourist-growth/> [accessed: 12/10/2021].
- [3] European Commission. Study on specific challenges for a sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism in Europe – Final report. 2016, available at: [http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/ab0bfa73-9ad1-11e6-868c-01aa75ed71a1.0001.01/DOC\\_1](http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/ab0bfa73-9ad1-11e6-868c-01aa75ed71a1.0001.01/DOC_1), [accessed 12/10/2021].
- [4] The Superyacht Annual Report. Marinas & migration. 2017, available at: <https://shop.thesuperyachtgroup.com>, [available at: 04/10/2021].
- [5] Risposte Turismo. Adriatic sea tourism report 2019 edition – execute summary. 2019, available at: <http://www.adriaticseaforum.com> [accessed: 14/10/2021].
- [6] MONSTAT. Nautical tourism – releases. 2021, available at: <https://www.monstat.org/eng/page.php?id=499&pageid=43> [accessed: 14/10/2021].
- [7] Atehnologymarket. Marinas market by new market opportunities production cost analysis market development and market dynamics forces 2019-2025. 2019, available at: <https://atechnology-market.com/marinas-market-by-new-market-opportunities-production-cost-analysis-market-development-and-market-dynamics-forces-2019-2025/> [accessed: 15/10/2021].
- [8] J. Sánchez-Beaskoetxea, I. Basterretxea-Iribar, I. Sotés and M. de las Mercedes Maruri Machado, “Human error in marine accidents: Is the crew normally to blame?,” *Maritime Transport Research*, 2, pp. 1-16, February 2021.

- [9] S. Šekularac-Ivošević. "Seafarers' education and training in the context of improvement leadership and managerial knowledge and skills," In Proceedings TIO 2016, 6th International conference Technics and Informatics in Education - TIO 2016, I. Milićević, Ed. Čačak, Serbia, 28-29<sup>th</sup> 2016, pp. 361-366.
- [10] B. A. B. Fjærli, K. I. Øvergård and T. V. Westerberg. "Maritime managers of the future – What do they think is good leadership?," *TransNav - the International Journal on Marine Navigation and Safety of Sea Transportation*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 107-111, March 2015.
- [11] A. Jugović. "Functioning of the management in ports of nautical tourism of the Republic of Croatia," *Scientific Journal of Maritime Research*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 51-57, June 2016.
- [12] A. Jugović, S. Gorana and S. Donald. "General competence analysis of management in nautical tourism ports in the republic of Croatia," *Interdisciplinary Management Research XIII*, pp. 287-296, 2017.
- [13] M. Slišković, H. Ukić and E. Marušić. "Labor market need analysis as basis for the foundedness of occupational standards in the field of maritime management," *Transactions on Maritime Science*. Vol. 05, No. 01, pp. 29-39, 2016.
- [14] D. Milošević, I. Milić-Beran, and S. Šekularac-Ivošević. "Montenegrin marinas before and during the Covid-19 pandemic: Cost Leadership Strategic Perspective," *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of Maritime Science & Technology "Naše More"*, Maritime Department University of Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik, Croatia, pp. 242-254, 17 – 18 September 2021.
- [15] S. Lefever, M. Dal, and Á. Matthíasdóttir. "Online data collection in academic research: advantages and limitations," *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 38(4), pp. 574–582, 2007.
- [16] J. Lumsden, Online-questionnaire design guidelines. In *Handbook of research on electronic surveys and measurements*, R.A. Reynolds, R. Woods, and J.D. Baker, Eds. Hershey, PA: Idea Group, pp. 44-64, 2007.
- [17] P. Sikavica, F. Bahtijarević-Šiber. *Menadžment, Teorija menadžmenta i veliko empirijsko istraživanje u Hrvatskoj* (Management, theory of management and great empirical research in Croatia; processing data from the questionnaire), Masmedia, Zagreb, 2004.
- [18] T. Luković. "Nautički turizam – definicije i dileme," *Naše more*, Vol. 54, No. 1/2, pp. 22-31, 2007.
- [19] D. Kissman, *Basic marina management: Simply complex*. 2003, available at: <https://marinamanagt.squarespace.com/blog/category/Software>, [accessed 25/10/2021].

- [20] Signal Connected, 8 Traits for marina management. 2018, available at: <https://www.signalconnect.com/blog/8-traits-for-marina-management/>, [accessed 25/10/2021].
- [21] Association of Marina Industries, CMM certification, available at: <https://marinaassociation.org/trainingcmmcertification>, [accessed 28/10/2021].

Submitted: 29/03/2022      Senka Šekularac Ivošević,  
Accepted: 06/04/2022      Assistant Professor,  
University of Montenegro,  
Faculty of Maritime Studies Kotor  
Put I Bokeljske brigade 44, Dobrota,  
Kotor, Montenegro  
Email: [senkas@ucg.ac.me](mailto:senkas@ucg.ac.me)

Dragana Milošević,  
Teaching Assistant,  
University of Montenegro,  
Faculty of Maritime Studies Kotor  
Put I Bokeljske brigade 44, Dobrota,  
Kotor, Montenegro  
Email: [milosevic.d@ucg.ac.me](mailto:milosevic.d@ucg.ac.me)

