

Vocal Health Within The Cruise Ship Entertainment Industry

*“ I THINK MINIMUM STANDARDS
COULD BE INTRODUCED”
(PARTICIPANT 1)*



Context and Justification

▶ Context

- ▶ 17 years experience at sea
- ▶ Personal struggles with voice
- ▶ What I am witnessing with colleagues

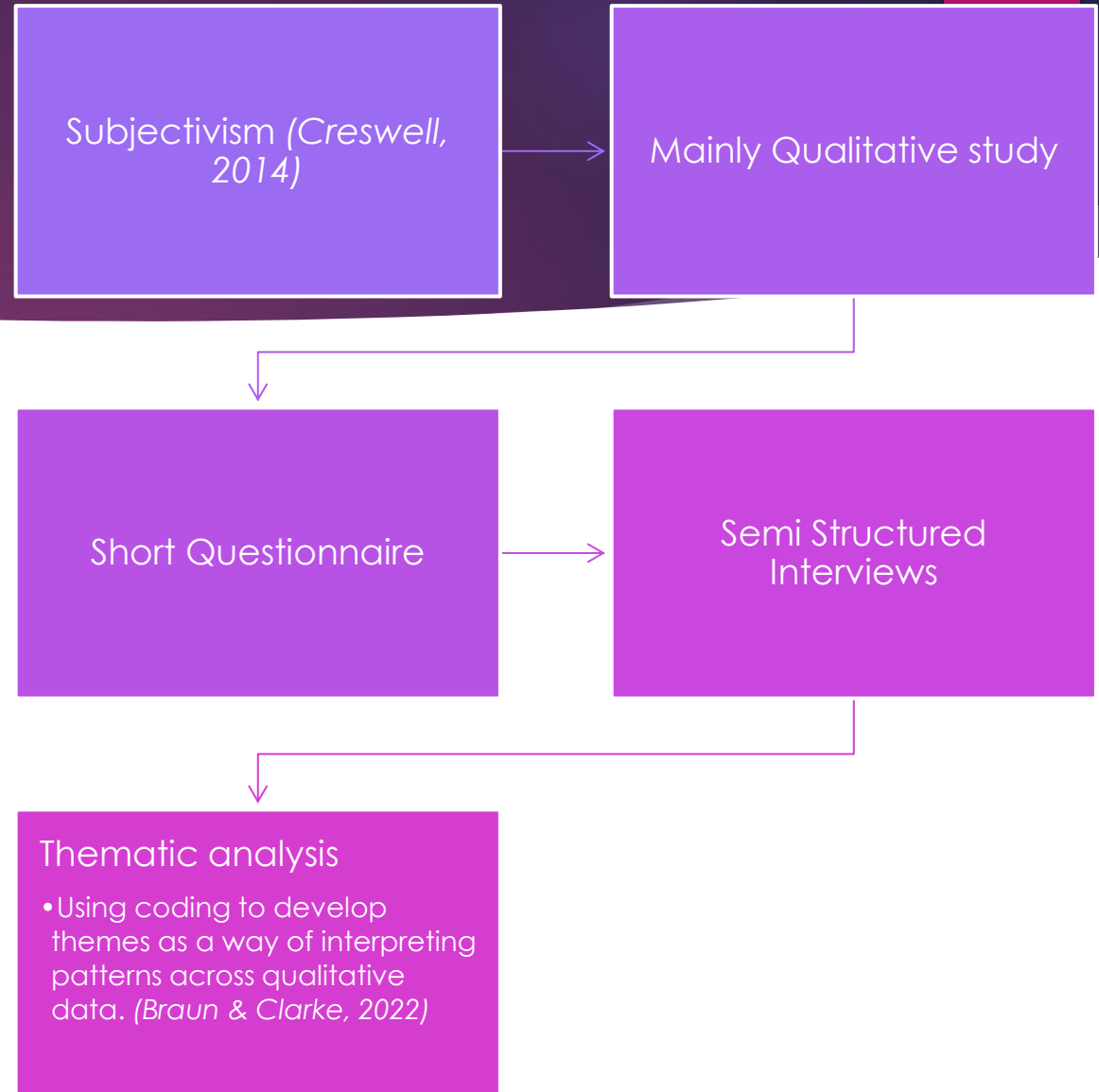
▶ Justification

- ▶ There is extensive literature on vocal health and vocal health management (Satoloff,2017), but what about the cruise ship entertainment culture and environment?

Aims and objectives

- ▶ Gain understanding of environmental factors a cruise ship contain which could affect the voice
- ▶ Gain insight of working conditions
- ▶ Gain knowledge of strategies put in place by individuals/management/medical professionals onboard, if any
- ▶ Open the door to possible more exploration of the field of research

Methodology and Methods



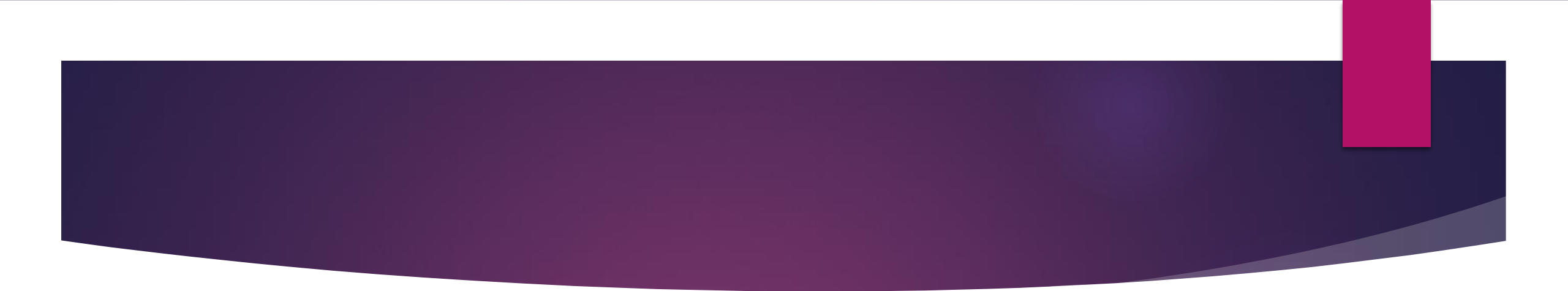
Ethical Considerations

- ▶ Informed consent (allowed to dip out at any time)
- ▶ Anonymised participants data
- ▶ I have status as an insider researcher
 - ▶ Benefits: access to participants, prior understanding of the working environment
 - ▶ Limitations: Potential for leading questions (bias) used open questions to avoid bias.

Findings

QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS



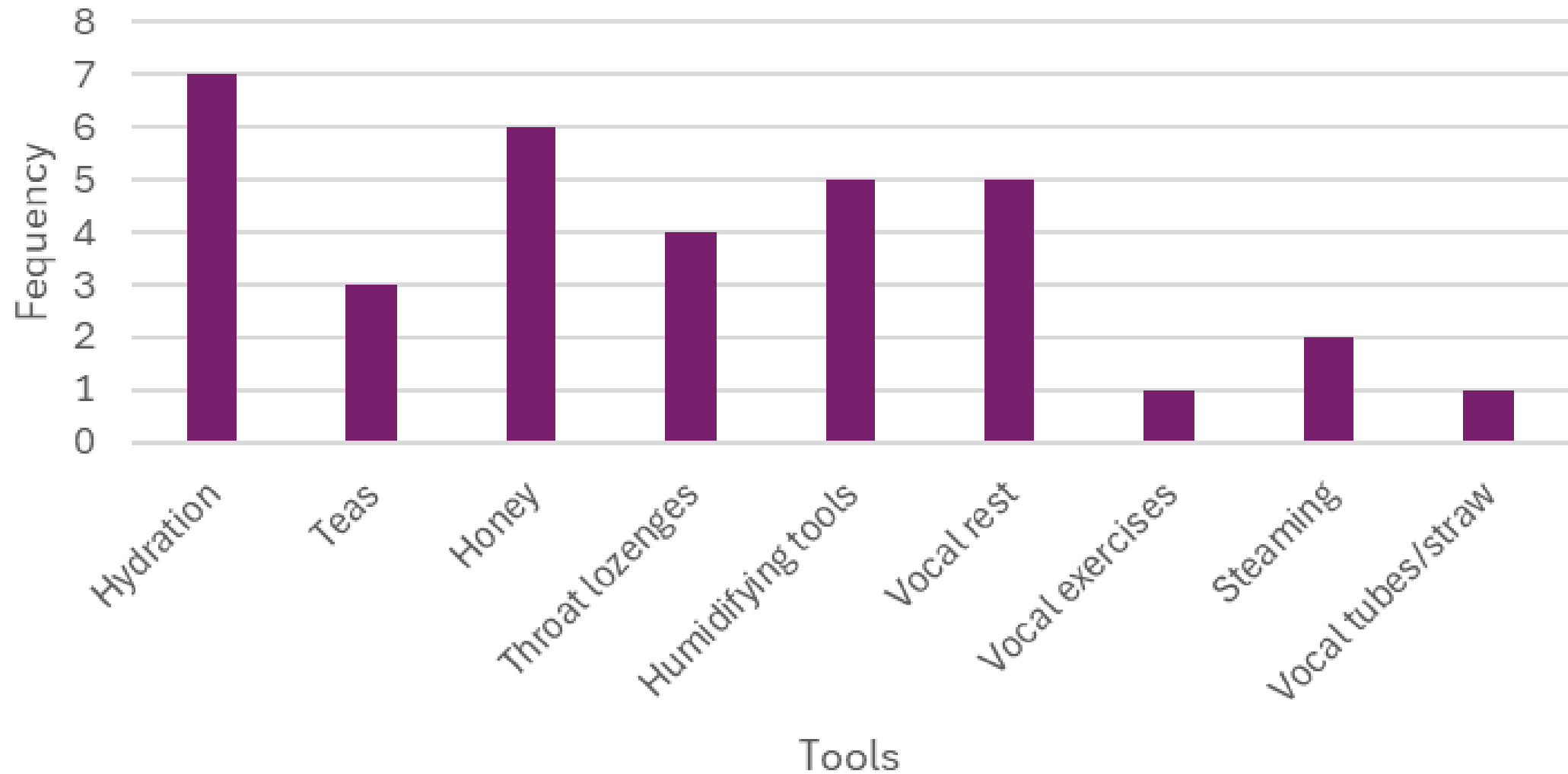


Questionnaire

9 participants experience

- ▶ Only one participant has not experienced vocal issues onboard
- ▶ 5 participants noticed more vocal issues onboard than on land
- ▶ 8 participants answered no to having any professional training in how the cruise ship environment could affect your voice

Strategies for managing voice ($n=9$)



Interviews

CAUSES, EFFECTS & STRATEGIES OF 3 PARTICIPANTS. CREW STAFF, RESIDENT SOLOIST, GUEST ENTERTAINER/AGENT.

Causes

VOCAL HEALTH IN GENERAL WAS MUCH POORER, SHOWING MORE FREQUENT VOCAL SYMPTOMS THAN ON LAND (SIMBERG AND GUSTAFSSON,2015)

Lack Of Rest

- ▶ Time zone changes
- ▶ Long travel days
- ▶ No days off
- ▶ Loud environments (room mates disrupting sleep/ Ventilation system)
- ▶ Late nights & early mornings
- ▶ Signed off by doctor if classed as unwell enough (depending on management and medical staff individual decision)
- ▶ Working soloists harder to save money
- ▶ Made to work through vocal issues

Air Quality

- ▶ Air conditioning
- ▶ No control over airflow or temperature in crew cabins
- ▶ No humidity in the air
- ▶ Not allowed humidifiers
- ▶ Air filtration system not cleaned (triggering allergies and sickness)
- ▶ Crew cabins have poorer air quality than passengers

Hydration

- ▶ Needing more hydration than normal “ *I would need to drink 3 litres of water a day*” (participant 2)
- ▶ Limited bottled water allowance (2x litres a day)
- ▶ Cannot always access water when working (busy bar areas where guests are priority)
- ▶ Non drinkable tap water
- ▶ (Personal experience only for example purposes) Not allowed in crew bar on some lines and passenger bars do not sell large bottles of water.

Workload

- ▶ Multiple performances of speciality performance
- ▶ No days off
- ▶ Up to 5 x hour sets, no days off.
- ▶ Late nights and early mornings
- ▶ Not always able to use microphone for daily activities

Support (or lack of) experienced

- ▶ Doctor giving 1-2 days recovery time for sickness but not vocal issues.
- ▶ Management deciding to work them *“They did not care”* (participant 2)
- ▶ Team guilt tripping- *“they asked- did I have a nice holiday?”*(participant 3)
- ▶ Treatment of entertainers have changed for financial reasons- (Longer travel days/not flown business class anymore, lower standard of cabin allocation)
- ▶ It all depends on who is in charge- (Different management gave more support after loss of voice)

Effects

VOICE AND WELLBEING

Voice And Wellbeing

- ▶ Lost voice halfway through contract
- ▶ Lost voice after contract
- ▶ Chronic sore voice
- ▶ No higher register “maybe I'm slightly immune to that now, it's always a factor it's always something that I'm worried about, I basically have no high register. I basically have no high register.” (Participant 2)
- ▶ Isolating self to protect voice *“I needed rest and feeling so lonely, like calling back home and like bawling and being like- I know I'm surrounded by 4,000 people, but I feel so alone because I feel like I can't go out”* (Participant 3)
- ▶ No mental health support- *“there is no facility for crew members I know specifically on cruise lines there's very little mental health support and this is something that I believe is being addressed within the industry”* (Participant 1)
- ▶ Emotional distress *“And finally, I just said to the doctor, broke down bawling and I was like, I can't sing. So, the doctor got together with the manager, and they discussed it, and they put me two days off.”* Participant 3)
- ▶ Voice felt strained and tight without enough rest or hydration
- ▶ Positive- Vocalists noticed gain in vocal strength through regular singing

Strategies Used

- ▶ Hydration
- ▶ Throat tea
- ▶ Steaming
- ▶ Rest (as much as possible)
- ▶ Before performance routine
- ▶ Humidifying cabin techniques (bowl of water/wet towel by air vent/hiring humidifiers)
- ▶ Song choice/order of songs/lowering keys
- ▶ Fresh air
- ▶ Sound technician requirements

Conclusions

- ▶ Vocal health tools and strategies are being used (but only from on-the-job personal experience)
- ▶ No support in place within the industry (top-down rather than bottom-up)
- ▶ Cruises increasing workload and financial cut decisions affecting vocal health and wellbeing
- ▶ Decisions are due to medical and management discretion
- ▶ More vocal issues than on land
- ▶ More hands-on approach when gathering questionnaire data
- ▶ Opens a door for much more research

References

- ▶ Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide. London, SAGE, 13 Oct. 2022.
- ▶ Manfredi, Claudia. Pan European Voice Conference Abstract Book. Firenze University Press, 2015.
- ▶ Sataloff, Robert Thayer. Vocal Health and Pedagogy : Science, Assessment, and Treatment. San Diego, CA, Plural Publishing, Inc., 2017.