

**Gender Issues in Career Opportunities for People in  
Managerial Positions in 5 Star Hotels in Malta**

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## **Declaration**

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I hereby declare that I am the legitimate author of this dissertation and that it is my original work.

No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institution of learning.

## **Abstract**

Over the last years, the number of women in employment has increased, yet men still dominate top management posts in many organisations. This qualitative study examines the gender opportunities for men and women in managerial positions in 5 star hotels in Malta. It builds upon Joan Acker's Theory of Gendered Organisations (1990) which claims that organisations are not gender neutral but are built around male norms and male values.

As a result many assume that the ideal worker is a male who does not have caring roles. On the other hand, women who often take responsibility of the family duties and unpaid house work do not seem to fit in the ideal worker template.

In order to see if management in five star hotels hold these gendered stereotypes, six interviews were carried out with managers working in Human Resources. Of these four were female and two were males. My interview questions were structured in a way that enabled me to examine whether work in the Tourism Sector, which is considered as a 'greedy industry', disadvantages working mothers who are aspiring to reach the top posts. The results showed that gender stereotypes still prevails and women are still associated with the non-remunerated work at home. This is likely to impact working mothers more negatively than it does to working dads. Hence, in line with Acker's Theory (1990) the results showed that organisations are still not gender neutral.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Having worked in the Hospitality Industry, both locally and abroad, I have noticed the breakdown of employees occupying managerial positions along gender lines. Furthermore, on a personal note, whilst I was working in a hotel in the United Kingdom, I wished to broaden my horizons and extend my skills and knowledge by considering shifting from a receptionist to a night auditor. However, I was told that it was not customary - to have a woman in charge of the hotel at night and so I was not even given the opportunity to apply for the post.

My mother too worked for a number of years in the hospitality sector and she actually managed to secure a managerial post while she was pregnant with my brother. However, I always wondered how she managed to balance her work duties with the responsibilities of being a mother and have often thought how men in managerial positions, often do not carry such burdens. This has led me to focus on the issue of gender and work and more specifically I wanted to look at the differences between men and women in managerial positions in five-star hotels in Malta. In addition, I also wanted to focus on qualities of effective managers and to see if women are disadvantaged in comparison to males from progressing in their careers.

The research will focus on vertical segregation and will ask why the majority of key positions in the hotel industry are dominated by men. Many assume that the Tourism

The research will focus on vertical segregation and ask why the majority of key positions in the hotel industry are dominated by men. Many assume that the Tourism Sector is 'gender neutral.' Yet, invisible barriers, which some describe as the glass ceiling and sticky floors still seem to cripple women from climbing the ladder of success and from attaining the most powerful and prestigious jobs. Hence this research will build on Joan Acker's Theory of Gendered Organisations (1990) in order to analyse this situation in the hospitality industry. .

In her book, "*The Iron Lady*," Campbell (2012) depicts the plight and battle for power that Margaret Thatcher went through in order to become Britain's only female Prime Minister in 1979. During the time, when women got married, they were expected to stay at home and look after the house and children and not enter boardrooms and those working with the Government had to give up their job when they got married. Things may have changed since then and closer to home- Malta presents itself as an equal opportunities state, and legislation that safeguards equality between women and men has long been laid out in Malta's constitution (Camilleri-Cassar, 2005).

However, this doesn't mean that gender stereotypes about women and men's roles have been ignored. In fact, according to Camilleri (2010), a recent Euro barometer survey revealed that the "majority of Maltese believe that a woman's job is to stay at home and raise the family". (Camilleri, 2010 p.1). The European Alliance for Families( 2010), confirms this argument by revealing that Malta's female participation in paid employment is the lowest in the European Union, at an



average of 41% (Eurostat, 2011). This confirms that gender still plays an important part in issues related to family and work.

This long essay is divided into five chapters. The first part of the essay provides the reader with an insight into the area of study and in the literature review I discuss the effects of gender at the place of work. In the third chapter, I give an overview of the Research Methods adopted for this study and in the fourth chapter I discuss and analyse the findings. Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter which includes the recommendations.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter provides a theoretical framework to the existing literature on the topic that I opted to carry out for my long essay; regarding the issues of gender in managerial positions. It expands on Joan Acker's Theory of Gendered Organisations (1990), and resides on, gender impacts on work and personal life in organisations.

### **2.1 The Theory of Gendered Organisations**

#### **2.1.1 What is Gender?**

Gender is a controversial subject and there are various schools of thought that have their own interpretation of this term. Scott (1986) defines gender as an "integral connection between two propositions; gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."

Clegg and Dunkerley (1980) argue that gender is a “basic element in family and kinship” and helps to frame the “underlying relations of other structures,” such as complex work organisations but more importantly they claim that it is the “core assumptions and practices” that make up contemporary work organisations.

On the other hand, the feminist sociologist, Acker (1988) examines gender together with class, as class is “constructed through gender” and that “class relations are always gendered.” She maintains that the lay out of the labour market, relationships in employment and the “control of work process” are all affected by the so called “symbols of gender”, “gender identity” and “inequalities between women and men.”

For some, the discussion about gender is passé and they argue that it’s out of place in today’s post-modern world. This assumption is based on the belief that structural inequalities connoted by gender carry minimal value and the concerns of social variances revolving around gender are thought to be “politically old fashioned” and harmful to individuals career (Oakley, 2006, p.19). However, as discussed by previous researchers, they deny this statement as they argue that genders still does matter.

### **2.1.2 How Gender Impacts on Work and Personal Life**

According to the European Commission, Malta binds itself to develop measures that “promote gender mainstreaming in labour market policies and programmes,

tackle the gender gaps in employment, unemployment and remuneration, and enable women and men to balance work and family life.” (ETC 2003:23) However, it is thought that this is not always the case.

Despite a slight increase of the female participation in the female market from 33.5% in 2004 to 41.1% in 2011, the annual employment figures from the Labour Force Survey showed that it is still significantly lower than that of males. On average, the employment rate among females aged between 15-24 and those aged 25-34, employed women work 35 hours per week, with a total of 6 hours less than males (Eurostat, 2013).

Therefore, in order to further encourage females to work in the labour force and to be able to strike a healthy balance between work and personal life, government has taken a number of initiatives, such as extending maternity leave from 16 to 18 weeks and by introducing a new tax addition, named the ‘Parent Computation.’ This is projected to support parents (male and female) in employment whose children are not gainfully employed up to 18 years of age. Henceforth, parents who may decide to make use of this addition will pay up to around 840 Euros less income tax annually.

Government is also dedicated to invest in more fiscal incentives such as ‘tax holidays’ afforded to mother’s to return to employment. This measure proved to be beneficial, as over 8,600 women returned to the labour market and hence saved an approximate of 10 million euro in tax payments. (Times of Malta, 2012).

When we discuss work life issues we tend to associate these with women or more specifically with the problems that working mothers face when trying to cope with family and paid work. In fact, this trend of having women join the labour force has challenged what was referred to as the 'feminine mystique'- the belief that women's role is to stay at home to care for the children and their husbands, whereby this was thought to be the only way to a "women's fulfilment"(Friedan, 1963).

Social policies started to take place by the introduction of the Women's Movement where they started the battle towards equality, and proved that the 'feminine mystique' was a false myth as Moen and Roehling (2005) coined the term 'career mystique'- full time paid work for both women and men having the chances to progress in their careers.

Nevertheless, although over the year's men have become more involved with sharing outside paid work with house chore duties; however, we still tend tie family responsibilities with women. As a result, men are often disregarded from discussion on work-life issues. However, recent research is showing that men too are struggling to find a balance between work and life. Some men argue that work-life programmes primarily favour the needs of women (Linkow, Civien, 2011). As a consequence, men often get stressed in having to juggle the two together. In fact, Linkow and Civien (2011) assert that "financial stress" and trying to "find time with the family" are two of their main challenges.

### **2.1.3 Qualities of Effective Managers**

When discussing the desired attributes of efficient and effective managers it makes sense to ask yourself, what makes the ideal worker and moreover who do we think is the right manager? Typically women are linked to stereotypical assumptions relating to caring, kindness and relationship-orientated traits. On the other hand, male traits are typically described as being rough, forceful and achievement orientated. Therefore, if women apply for positions that require 'male characteristics' they are typically perceived as being unfit for the job and that they will not perform as well as men do(Heilman, 1983). For example, having a woman as head of security in hotels does not fit in well in this 'profile' and employees would expect a man to occupy such a post. This happens with most managerial jobs which are automatically linked to males who conform to social expectations about authority and control (Schein and Mueller, 1992).

Although the presence of women in top management in organisations is increasing, they still seem to be under presented when compared to men (Lyness, 2002). One of the reasons for this difference is due to performance appraisals. Some argue that the performance of women in management is evaluated on harsher and stricter grounds when compared to a male manager.

A research study (Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989) shows that there was more gender bias against women in performance ratings relating to male tasks than there were for men who perform female duties typically tied to women. Such

evaluations typically lead to negative expectations as it is thought that they do not have the right attitudes and behaviour when evaluated for traditionally male jobs.

#### **2.1.4 Career Progression**

So what happens to this performance fit profile when both genders are competing against each other to get promoted? According to Fosci (1992, 1996, 2000), women have to work harder to prove themselves and outperform males. Conversely, most of the time career women adopt a different position than men whereby the former are given jobs with lower status, responsibilities and authority in comparison to males. (Halford et al,1997). Acker's theory aptly called 'Hierarchies, Jobs and Bodies' (1990) also confirm that the 'disembodied' worker in organisations is considered to be male. In the majority of organisations, be it in the field of economics or politics, men prevail in dominating positions of power. It seems as though the world is in a "male enclave"- (Acker, 1990 p 81).

Liff and ward (2001) argue that reconciling work with life sometimes makes it difficult for women to concentrate entirely on the job without being distracted by family problems. As a result some women may opt to work few hours or may consider shifting to part-time basis in order to juggle better between their priorities. When this transformation takes place women feel that their work becomes undervalued, is of lower quality and sense that they are no longer involved in important board meetings decisions (Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2004).

The work-family conflict also affects women in management and doubts are often raised as to whether they are committed to their paid work because of their family responsibilities. Full-time female managers who wish to advance in their career whilst caring for their needs of their family and children may find it difficult to do so. These reservations may stall the career progression of women in management (Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2004).

In addition, female managers who are pregnant may be constrained from applying for a promotion, even more so when one of the requirements entails travelling to other countries. As a consequence, women may feel that their career and options to bettering themselves must take a step backwards (Wilson, 1998).

However, it is important to see if women in management actually do want to progress in their career or whether they are comfortable in the post they currently have and would not like to change their daily chore routine. One of the reasons to this may be due to the lack of desirable role models that in turn may serve as a source of inspiration whereby working women feel that they can reconcile work with life. Nevertheless, this depends on the individuals drive and personal choice (Liff and Ward, 2001).



### **2.1.5 Gender Issues in relation to the Tourism Industry**

The term 'tourism' is a complex word and thereby holds a variety of definitions. Lanfont (1980) states that it is a "combination of services (accommodation, catering, and transport), culture, particular geographical features providing different activity spaces and other intangibles such as hospitality." Whilst, Mathieson and Wall (1982) argue that it is "temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence." Therefore, these definitions permit for social characteristics, such as gender.

The Tourism industry is a service industry which is labour intensive, and which has been described as a greedy industry. The tourism sector is characterised by long working hours, and often workers are expected to work on weekends and public holidays. At times jobs in the tourism sector are of a seasonal nature and many low status jobs do not render high salaries. Moreover, much of the work in certain departments such as reception; require long hours of standing, which may disadvantage particularly women as they are often expected to wear heels. In addition, employees working in restaurants, conferencing and banqueting tend to carry and move around heavy loads up and down stairs. Hence, such repetitive and painful movements result in high levels of stress due to two factorial constraints- time pressure and constant customer contact (Euro found, 2012).

In fact, according to Gabriel (1988), workers who choose to work in hotels are somewhat stigmatised and are considered to be "disadvantaged workers". Many of those who work part-time are mostly women.

Some go a step further and claim that women who work in the tourism sector are “social misfits”, who seek employment in hotels due to their lack of integration in a normal family environment and society. Women in low paid jobs in this sector, tend to be the ones who give up their jobs after pregnancy as they are easily replaced by other casual and transient workers. Additionally, the International Labour Office state that women and female employees form part of the tourism “package” (ILO, 2003).

Couples, who are committed to one another in the world of hospitality, at times are constrained to leave this industry, due to on-going pressure of having to choose between starting a family and employment in this sector.

### **2.1.6 The Situation of Women in the Hospitality Industry**

Hotels, catering and tourism (HCT) is a large and fast-growing service sector, with an average female participation of 55.5% at global level and up to 70% at regional level (ILO, Geneva, 2013). As stated by UNWTO, tourism is a “leading contributor to export earnings” and accounts for 6 per cent of all global exports in services, being the “fourth largest export sector after fuels, chemicals and automotive products”.

However, although women occupy a large percentage of the work force, jobs occupied between men and women are not on the same level. Thus, research

shows that 90% of these women are being employed as waitresses, cleaners, or travel agents sales people- occupying jobs at lower levels with fewer career development opportunities (Vargas,Aguiler,2004). This is termed as vertical segregation. Moreover, it is often a common factor that women working within the hospitality industry earn less than men for work with equal value and one of the main reasons is the way in which women's competencies are valued when compared to men. For example, most of the time room attendants in hotels are female and they earn rather less than male kitchen porters whose work also demands physical efforts, but are nonetheless on the same comparable skills level.

In addition, performance appraisals conducted by departmental managers to employees around every six months can thereby lead to an increase in pay that may be followed by career progression may also be biased in favour of men. For instance, where men and women have the same qualification, it is often assumed that more value is devoted to responsibility for capital over that for people. (European Commission, 2012)

On the other hand, males are more likely to be employed as managers, shouldering more responsibilities and hence taking actions in order to solve problems. (Vargas, Aguilar, 2004). Purcell (1996) asserts this argument as she stated that the more senior and well-paid the job, the higher the chances are that is filled by a man, despite women's numerical predominance in the industry. Furthermore, according to the research done by Haslam and Ryan(2008) showed that when an organization is successful they tend to choose a male candidate, however, when it is failing women were more often chosen.

The Tourism Industry is extremely dynamic, as competition is always on the rise due to the increased range of services that various five- star hoteliers can offer. Therefore, reasons behind this phenomenon could be as to why there has been such demand for an increasingly professional management. In fact, this is reflected in the proliferation of degree and diploma level courses in Hospitality Management. In 1964, the first degree level course was introduced in the United Kingdom and by 1994 there were 40 higher educational institutes opening its doors to students to study Hospitality. (Purcell,1996). Interesting to note is that over two-thirds of students attending these courses are women.

However, research carried out in 1993, concluded that a study of 712 degree and Higher National Diploma students who successfully completed their courses in hotel and catering management at 30 UK educational institutions in 1989 showed that women were less likely than men to have been given the opportunity to develop managerial skills or other suitable employment, to obtain post experience qualifications, to acquire promotions and experience dissatisfaction as part of their industrial placements. (Purcell,1996).

Nevertheless, the harsher form of gender inequalities lied in the differences in rewards system, where the average age of a highly- qualified woman working within this sector after more than three years after graduation stood at 11,562 English pounds, whereas their male colleagues was 14, 816. Men were also more entitled than women to obtain 'fringe benefits, in the form of using the hotel company's car and being given discounts on the hotel's products. Also, Rubery and Fagan(1993) stated that women managers in hotels and catering earn below

the average age for women in total, that is significantly below that earned to the average managers wages.

## **2.2 Organisational Barriers**

This section examines the barriers which are often referred to as the glass ceiling or sticky floors that hamper women from getting the top jobs in organisations and which perpetuate gender inequality. I shall also discuss how lack of networking with men may hamper the advancement of women in organisations.

### **2.2.1 The Glass Ceiling and Sticky Floors**

In the 1980's, the term glass ceiling was popularised. This refers to an invisible barrier in organisations that makes it difficult or almost impossible for women to rise in ranks. The word 'glass' is used as it is transparent, signifying that women may not be conscious of its existence until they 'hit' the barrier (Brannon, 2002). While, on the other hand, men are more likely to be encouraged into managerial roles by means of the 'glass escalator'- even in female dominated jobs (Williams,1992). This means that men do not only progress faster than women organisations that have an equal balance of both sexes, but also get promoted much quicker in organisations that are female dominated.

Other studies show that glass ceiling is not solely an issue of hierarchal position of men over women but also includes 'hunger' for authority, prestige and income (Britton and Williams,2000). This phenomenon is linked with the term called 'sticky floors'- a set of internal belief systems that women hold along their career path in organisations that are based on preconceived notions that hampers them from achieving new level of leadership and higher positions (Shambough, 2008). Therefore, in order to eliminate this women are encouraged to make their words counts by speaking in a level of confidence and by truly believing in what they say.

Another form of restriction that cripples women from attaining self-actualisation, as indicated in Maslow Hierarchy of Needs, is this "new wave of subtle sexism", referred to as the 'glass cliff'. This can be seen as a modern form of discrimination in organisations. Haslam and Ryan, 2008 claim that when women manage to surpass the problems of glass ceilings, they can also face the challenges of the 'glass cliff.' This happens when they are given top positions when the organisations are facing problems and is going through a difficult time. Such posts are less secure and hence are more likely to fail. If on the other hand, the organisation is more successful a male candidate is likely to be chosen (Haslam and Ryan,2008).

### **2.2.2 Networking**

Studies have shown that in order to encourage women to advance in their careers and look out for more opportunities and means of prospering in an 'old boy network', where male dominance prevails, women are making use of networking.

This is a “mechanism for social exchange”, whereby trust and relationships are constructed around “social obligations to exchange favours” (Blau,1967). Networking is fundamental for sharing important knowledge, making professional contacts and to obtain career advice and support.

Line ham(2001) states that lack of advancements in females to becoming managers and moreover to continue advancing in their careers is partly due to the lack of internal networks being available to them.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This section gives an outline of the approach adopted for this long essay. Hence, it shows the research design and tools, the choice of participants and the procedure implemented.

#### **3.1 Methodological Choice**

Qualitative research rather than quantitative was intentionally chosen for my research study. This is because I wanted to give “insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important (Bryman, 2012) and furthermore it enabled to attain detailed answers to real life situations. Whereas, on the other hand, quantitative doesn’t allow for such practises and is more based on statistics and percentages, without giving the researcher room to probe any additional questions.



## **3.2 Procedure and Research Tool**

After rereading my literature review, I formulated an interview guide. Bryman suggests that when preparing for qualitative interviews it is good to ask yourself “just what about this research is puzzling me?” Hence, through this research I was seeking to discover the different perceptions that male and female managers have towards gender issues in the Tourism sector. Thereby, I constructed eleven questions to serve as a framework for my interview guide and these were eventually grouped in two themes as to enhance the flow structure. The first set of questions dealt with work-life issues and the second part focused on career progression.

The questions were all open-ended, in order to avoid ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers and hence to gain the “interviewees’ own perspectives” (Bryman, 2012, p .470). This allows the interviewee to “ramble off” at different tangents, allowing the researcher to gain a better insight into the interviewee views and can also stimulate the researcher to ask an alternative question that is not necessarily listed in the interview guide. Henceforth, this element of flexibility makes it seem as though the researcher is engaged in conversation, thus, eliminating generalisations.

In my study, qualitative interviewing included face-to-face interviews with participants in order to gain a better understanding of their thoughts. The interviews were held at respective five star hotels in Malta and around half an hour was allocated for each interview. These were conducted in a quiet area, most often in their personal offices, as to avoid noise coming from the surrounding area. Having

done so, this gave me the opportunity to interview my participants face-to-face, whereby I could see their gestures and at times assist in further explaining questions when needed.

I chose to take a recording device with me for all interviews as this helps “to correct the natural limitations of our memories” and allows “more thorough examinations of what people say” (Bryman, 2012, p. 482).

### **3.3 Sample Selection**

I primarily chose to interview three men and three women occupying managerial positions within the Human Resources department in the selected five-star hotels in Malta. This is because I wanted to gain different insights from both sexes and not to be biased in my findings. However, seeing that male managers are in the minority in this field, I had no other option than to interview another woman, leaving me with four female participants and two men. Their names were changed in order to maintain their confidentiality and fictitious names were used in the findings.

### **3.4 Ethical Issues**

My primary concern was to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the data gathered from the interviewees. There were times when I was told, prior to the

interview, to keep the information confidential as to prevent information from leaching out and falling in the hands of executive management. I was to assure them that the recording will be heard by me and my tutor if requested.

I also explained to my participants that I will be transcribing every question according to what they said and that no alterations would be made. They were also told that they may withdraw from the interview any time and hence refrain from answering questions if they felt that they were too personal and private to reveal.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Upon, completing my six interviews, I immediately transcribed my recordings and then opted for Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clark,2006) to analyse the data captured. One of the advantages of using thematic analysis over grounded theory is that it allows for a more “flexible approach to analysing qualitative data” through “theoretical freedom” such as allowing to create unexpected insights that in turn help to offer a “rich and detailed data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In addition, it helps to point out the main similarities and differences of the data set.

To begin with, I started to familiarise myself with the transcriptions by reading them over and over again. After completing this ‘in-depth’ and ‘repeated reading’ I began to take code my work. During this process I was careful not to lose any of the

context (Bryman, 2001). Hence, I created a 'mind-map' to help sort out my work. Finally, after completing this exercise I presented my findings and analysed the results as shown in the next chapter.

### **3.6 Limitations of the Study**

The most pronounced problematic factor would be that all the interviews were conducted in local five star hotels and hence I was not able to make comparisons with the perceptions of managers working abroad for the same hotel chains, who most probably come from different cultural backgrounds. Also, had the interviews been done more than once, I would have been able to detect and monitor any changing trends that may have followed in the coming months or years. In addition, I may have been able to give a constructive criticism of my findings.

Unlike quantitative research, the nature of qualitative does not comprise a large number of participants; however, it is more focused on the quality as to give an in depth understanding of the subject matter. Hence this means, that my findings cannot be generalised but are useful to gain a better understanding of the subject matter.

### 3.7 Table of Information- Informants of Interviews

The following table depicts a detailed background of the six participants showing their age, status, occupation and if they have children. As stated in the sample selection, the participant's names are changed as to retain confidentiality.

**Table 1**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Children</b>
Anna	26	Married	HR Manager	No
Petra	34	Married	HR Director	1 son
Angela	58	Married	HR Senior	1 daughter
Francesca	36	Married	HR Manager	Expecting a child
Jonathan	27	Married	HR executive	No
Matthew	30	Married	HR Manager	No

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings and Analysis**

This chapter depicts and examines the results of this long essay. The findings are divided into three main themes consisting of setting the context, gender issues and career progression and finally the ideal worker.

#### **4.1 Themes**

The following table shows the selected topics retrieved from the interview transcriptions which are then grouped under the three main themes. Furthermore, these themes are examined in-depth throughout this chapter.

**Table 2****Themes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Topics that fall under the same theme</b>
Setting the Context	The nature of Work in the Tourism Sector
Gender Issues and Career Progression	Family Responsibilities, Promotions, Gender Stereotypes, Travelling. Importance of flexibility and child care
The Ideal Worker	Effective Manager, traits of good leaders

#### **. 4.2 Setting the Context to the Study- Work in the Tourism Sector**

Some theorists claim that the Tourism Sector is a greedy industry because of the long working hours, working when people are on holiday, serving others at the best of their capabilities and yet earning low salaries. In fact, four of the participants conform to the statement that the Tourism Sector is a greedy industry.

Moreover, they agree with Gabriel (1988) that employees employed in this sector are “disadvantaged workers”. In fact, Matthew who thirty years old, is married and has been working in this sector for nine years argues that:

“There is a lot of truth...when you start working in hotels; people tell you that you are not going to get rich. Maltese employers expect a lot out of Maltese employees...another greedy part.

The normal forty working hours are unrealistic ... for instance if we talk about chefs, receptionist, sales team....they have a managerial contract, but they work much more” (Matthew,30)

Anna who is also married and very close to age as Matthew, being that she is 28, also has years of experience in this sector and so she also agrees that the Tourism Sector is greedy as:

“The hours are long...especially if you work in operations in a 5 star hotel of our size and standard. We have a front office agent who finishes her shift at 11.30pm and does the night shift too..... grave yards shift. The hours are not friendly” (Anna)

“It is extremely demanding...the time it takes out of you is much more than any other job I have had. The clients are always there....it is obviously 24/7” (Francesca)



Jonathan, the other male candidate, who is also married, states that:

“It is a fact... it shows the ugly part of a person working in this industry... you must work on those days when for most people they are off days”

Analysing his statement through the gender lens raises a number of questions regarding the unrealistic hours that workers in the Tourism sector often work- Would that have the same impact on men and women? Furthermore, considering that his wife also works in this industry they probably need to sort out more problems, like organising child care when the children are still young.

On the other hand, Petra who is also married and has occupied the role of director for Human Resources for the past five and half years in a renowned five star hotel thinks that “greedy is too much of a harsh statement” as:

“The industry serves people who are on leisure, so by default, you need to work when people are on leisure” (Petra)

Petra’s reasoning may stem from the fact that at the moment she only has one son and has a lot of support. For example, she has a “full time child carer at home” because both she her and her husband are in a “professional job” and work full time. In fact, she is honest in saying that she “does not do any house work and

cleaning.” Moreover, she does not cook, her mum does and if not she “just gets a takeout...pizza”. Therefore, this suggests that once she arrives home all she wants to do is “stay with her son and play with him”. Hence, because of the support she receives she may be in a better position to combine work and family than some other people do.

Angela, the only mature woman, who is fifty-eight years old, argues that:

“Everybody has deadlines...it has nothing to do with the greed of the tourist industry...you have got to deliver” (Angela)

This could be due to the fact that her daughter has grown up and is married now. Hence, she is at a different stage of life when compared to the other candidates and since she had been working in the hospitality industry for a long time she seems to have accepted the long hours as part of her normal routine

### **4.3 Career Progression affected by Family Responsibilities**

All the women interviewed are married, two of them have children, one is expecting and the other candidate is in the process of starting a family. Therefore, they all agreed that having family responsibilities can affect your career progress as priorities can change in order to accommodate their children.

Two of the female respondents firmly states without a doubt that:

“If you have children there is an impact. Your priorities have to change”(Petra)

“When you have children you start looking at things differently”(Angela)

However, Petra also argued that now once she has a son she would think twice about staying at work at night:

“when you have a child you want be with your child... when it is five o'clock and I am still at work I'am sad.”

Moreover, she feels that motherhood has helped her balance out her life better and not concentrate entirely on work:

“When having my son.. ..I feel I' am more balanced.....as before I was work only and now work and have my son.”

Matthew, who is presently thinking of starting a family, in fact says that is one of the reasons why he decided to get married after living with his girlfriend for twelve

years. Nonetheless, he anticipates that their lives will change and is willing to embrace it. He argues that:

“Definitely it is going to affect both of us as we both have demanding jobs...

Let’s say in the first year my wife will not work”

The fact that he is already assuming that his wife will not work, shows gendered values. It probably does not cross his mind to stop working when they have a child.

However, he is very positive about this change and is very much willing to become a father and see what is at stake for him. Part of this reasoning is because his wife is a nurse who is employed by the government and “so they have a longer maternity leave...unlike in the hospitality industry”. Therefore, it seems that his mind is at rest and is confident that they can work things out once children come along. He states that:

“We are lucky in Malta...it is a small island so I can easily drive the children to our family or friends. We are blessed here”

On the other hand, Jonathan, who is also married, argues that having children will definitely be a turning point in his life as he describes this to be “a significant factor”

as he totally loves what he does and moreover his wife also works in the Tourism sector. In fact, in a pensive tone he argues that:

“in the future, unfortunately, we may need to change our careers as to dedicate most of our time to the children”.

It is interesting to see that he is envisaging the need to change their careers, but in reality when the time comes, who is likely to adjust his/her career to dedicate more time to the children?

#### **4.4 Career Progression affected by Gender Stereotypes and Promotions**

In general, competition in the hotel industry is extremely intense, particularly within management in 5 star hotels. It is often the case that managers work round the clock in order to keep customers happy and moreover to maintain the 5 star product and service standards.

Petra asserts that she was lucky enough to work for a hotel where there is no gender inequality at her place of work and when she was asked if men are given more opportunities than women or vice versa she “categorically denied this”. She continued to say that:

“If you are good and really try hard, you get there....irrelevant of your gender. You can be a hopeless female or male or else an exceptional female or male.”

Moreover, Petra does not conform to Fosci’s (1992, 1996, 2000) findings that women have to work harder to prove themselves and outperform males as she argues that:

“our executive team, which are a top five people are two males and three females. This I think speaks enough for itself. “

“We do not have any gender issues here...we are both in the same line and they never promoted a person over the other because he is a man or else because she is a female.” (Anna)

However, having said this Anna states that when taking a closer look at the “executive team...they are males” yet the majority of heads of department are female. Thus, this may suggest that higher job positions are more available to men possibly because they shoulder fewer family responsibilities and thus they can take on more – dominating power prestigious jobs in line with Acker’s (1990) assertion that top posts are likely to be filled by men. Moreover, Anna also sustained that it “depends on the culture of the workplace” and whether “they are open for change”.

On the other hand, Angela states that it is “normally men” who get promoted over women and that “there is a very valid reason for this”. In line with Hoque and Kirkpatrick (2004) she claims that having children tend to hamper women from advancing in their career because “mothers put their children first....at least in my generation”. However, she sustains that women who are not pregnant are not disadvantaged.

When I asked Matthew the same question about who typically gets promoted, he did not reply in light of it being a gender issue, but took a different approach in his answer. He maintained that those people who are “loyal to the company,” “passionate about their job” and those who “drive results” are more likely to get promoted. Thus, this implies that he believes in the personality of individuals, irrespective whether they are male or female.

Moreover, Jonathan and Matthew hold similar opinions towards career progression and Jonathan argues that this is “open for discussion” as there are certain departments in hotels that are more “women focused” and others that are “more adaptable for men”. For example, management in “food and beverage, finance and the kitchen brigade” are almost always dominated by men, whereas “housekeeping and rooms division are more attributed to women”. Likewise, Matthew agrees with Jonathan and moreover goes a step forward by stating that that “it is even better to have a mix of both in managerial positions.....like at reception one is the assistant and the other is the front office manager....irrespective of their gender.”

Furthermore, Matthew believes that in order to encourage women to reach top positions, they must completely remove the stereotype of saying that “ I’ am not going to progress because of my gender”.

What struck me the most are Petra’s words as she argues that:

“Women themselves need to want to reach top positions”

This may imply that women who have a family may not want to take up a top position if they think that this conflicts with the roles of mothers.

Three of the participants: Petra, Matthew and Jonathan stated that they never refused a promotion; however, Matthew did refuse to work with a particular market as he felt that he was not confident and strong enough in that particular field hence, he decided not to go for it. Nonetheless, he did not refuse this promotion for family reasons as women may do, but because he felt he was not competent enough to compete.

Childcare centres are necessary for both mothers and fathers who want to work after they have children. In fact, Francesca argues that:



“The ideal scenario would be to have a child care centre at the hotel”

“Work reduced hours with the possibility of taking children in the future to child care centres” ( Anna)

#### **4.5 Career Progression affected by Travelling**

Work related travelling helps individuals expand their knowledge in training and expertise, whilst giving the chance to create professional contacts. Line ham (2001) states that this is one of the advantages of networking with others abroad. However, two of the female participants, Angela and Francesca, conform to Wilson (1998) in that they had to refuse the opportunity of travelling as:

“Being pregnant has limited my current progression....I missed out on a travelling opportunity.....projects which are starting now and I can't take on because I 'am going to be on maternity leave shortly”( Francesca)

“I refused a couple of promotions as they involved travelling... and I did not have the will to leave my daughter unattended” (Angela)

Both women in these cases are experiencing family-work conflicts and whilst at face value everything seems fine, such remarks show that women and men take different decisions and gender plays a very important role in the whole process. Such decisions which are not gender neutral may put women at a competitive disadvantage when compared to men and may stall women from climbing the career ladder.

#### **4.6 The Ideal Worker- traits of Effective Managers**

The hotel industry is a service industry and so it is people orientated. Thus, as Matthew asserts, in order to be an affective manager you must definitely be a “people’s person” in possession of good social and communication skills. Hospitality is all about meeting and greeting people, hence service with a smile is expected by all members of staff, even when working under pressure.

Both Anna and Jonathan expressed that good leadership skills are a desirable trait for those aspiring to become managers. Moreover, Jonathan continued to say that a manager in every department must be “exemplary to staff” and “show full dedication”. Hence, the manager must be present at the workplace, particularly during “busy periods”. In fact, these periods usually coincide with the children’s’ holidays and hence parents may have more pressure in trying to solve the work and family challenges

Angela and Petra strongly believe that teamwork, where employees help and support one another, especially in stressful times. They argue that teamwork is essential in order to maintain an excellent service, whereby management cooperate amongst each other. When working in human resources, most particularly, Angela states that:

“you must empathise and listen to the needs of employees”

As Matthew argues “motivation by setting standards” encourages employees to work harder as they know that they have a target to reach. In line with Matthew, Petra also agrees that motivation, by being the first one there and showing what needs to be done would boost employee’s morale. This claim shows that parents with young children should act as role-models, just like effective managers do, and thereby show endless encouragement and intrinsic motivation towards their children.

However, what struck me most is what Petra said, that to make a good manager you must be a “good leader”. She argues that this is somebody who is:

“Inspirational, serves as a role model and can create a positive atmosphere”

This applies to both genders and does not make a difference whether you are male or female.

## **4.7 Overview of the Findings and Analysis**

Most of the participants interviewed agreed that they work in a very demanding sector that is often described as being a 'greedy' industry. Because women often carry a heavier work load at home and tend to do more unpaid work, they face more difficulties in reaching top posts within the industry. The findings also suggest that when the parents both work in the tourism industry and they would like to start a family, one of the partners (more typically the mother) may consider leaving the tourism industry in order to look out for the children, particularly in their early ages.

By and large, this research suggests that it is women who are mostly impacted when they have children. This means that they may not be considered for promotions due to their motherhood roles and this may stall their career. Moreover, pregnant women may avoid travelling to other countries to ensure the safety and protection of their unborn child and this too may affect their chances for getting promoted. Whilst some hotels sustain that they are gender neutral, such occurrences are not likely to be ignored and men, because they do not get pregnant, face less barriers. This may be one of the reasons why the majority of managers in the executive team are men.

It is apparent that Maltese society still holds gender stereotypical beliefs about women being the primary child bearers and those who most adjust their careers around their family. Unfortunately, this is socially constructed and Malta does lag behind in this area when compared to other western countries. Although this is part of our culture, there is always room for change and women must continue their battle towards gender equality.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

This section gives a number of recommendations that can help women and men to operate on a more level playing field when seeking to climb the career ladder.

#### **5.1.1 Child Care Facilities**

Having child care centres within five star hotel premises or nearby the place of work will enable parents to be more flexible and assure themselves that their children are getting professional care whilst they are at work. In addition, these centres should run 24/7 as most managers working in the hospitality industry work very long hours.

#### **5.1.2 Reducing Gender Stereotypes**

There should be more awareness about the importance of gender equality, both at the work place and within the family. As women are now being encouraged to work

full- time and to pursue a career, it becomes fundamental to share the house chores and not continue to consider these as being a woman's job. Moreover, the media plays as essential role in forming individual's perceptions. Hence, social media and promotional campaigns to promote gender equality are necessary in order to reduce gender role stereotyping.

### **5.1.3 Paternal Leave**

Men should be encouraged to consider taking paternal leave. In this way, women are more likely to feel that they are equal to men and both will have the same opportunities for career progression. If only mothers continue to take parental leave, this will continue to hamper their career.

### **5.1.4 Flexible Work Arrangements**

In order to encourage parents to return to employment after the birth of their children, the tourism industry should provide and encourage more use of benefits such as working flexibly to be able to integrate work and life. Telework could be an option for certain times of the day and managers should be able to work by objective, as long as they reach their aims it should not matter at what time of the day they do their work.

### **5.1.5 Study Leave for those who want to further their Career**

For those employees who wish to further their studies with the aim of having a chance to advance in their career, study leave should be given. In doing so, this will benefit both the employer and employee by ensuring effectiveness and efficiency at the workplace.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Although, over the years female participation in the labour market has increased, it is still not on equal basis when compared to men. This may stem from the fact that most women still shoulder the main family and household responsibilities and this in turn may hinder them from career progression.

This research has shown that the main obstacle encountered within management was the stereotypical gendered mind set and assumptions concerning gender roles and how these in turn affect the personal life of respondents and hamper them from advancing further. Moreover, these assumptions become stronger when children are involved as parents must juggle their working lives around them.

Women seem to be hitting the glass ceiling in spite of proving that they are equally capable and responsible to occupy managerial posts.



During the interviews, a few of the respondents stated that career progression depends on individual's stage of life in that it makes a difference whether the woman is single or is married with children. Pregnant women are at a disadvantage when compared to men who are competing for the same post. This is due to the fact that when women managers go on maternity leave they would have to train someone else to replace them.

Therefore, the findings correspond with Joan Acker's Theory of Gendered Organisations (1990) where she claims that organisations are not gender neutral, but built around male norms. Hence, this connotes, that working mother's do not conform to the notion of being an 'ideal worker' as they also have to cope with family responsibilities and carry the biggest burdens on non-remunerated work at home.

What emerges from this study is that men's roles in the family should increase and they should not take it for granted or rely on women to carry out particular tasks, such as the preparation of food and washing of clothes. If men arrive earlier from work or have more flexible hours, then they should also see to the house chores and duties tied to children. In this manner, women and men will be in a better position to compete for managerial jobs on the same footing.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1- Interview Guide**

#### **Personal Information**

1. Can you tell me something about yourself? :

- a. How old are you?
- b. Are you married? Or do you have a partner?
- c. What is his/her line of work?
- d. How long have you been working in this 5 star hotel?
- e. Have you occupied another position before taking on the role as an HR Manager?
- f. Do you have any children? If yes, how many do you have and how old are they?

### **Work-Life Issues**

2. Some argue that the tourism sector is a greedy industry. Do you agree with this statement and how does this affect your personal life?
3. How do you manage to balance your caring and house chores duties between you and your partner?
4. What is the impact of having children on women and men who have a career in the tourism sector?
5. What would help you to reconcile work and life?

### **Career Progression and Gender issues**

6. Who typically gets promoted to the top posts in your hotel?
7. What are the characteristics that make a good manager?
8. Where you ever refused a promotion or did you ever refuse one? Why?
9. In the hotel industry, do you think that men are given more opportunities than women to occupy managerial positions or vice versa?
10. Do you think that women have to work harder than men in order to prove that they are capable of occupying managerial positions? Please Explain?
11. What are your suggestions to enable more women to reach top positions in the tourism sector?

## **Appendix 2- Transcription - Anna**

**Can you tell me something about yourself? How old are you? Are you married?**

I am 28 years old.. I have been married yes.... for the past two years.

**How long have you been working in this 5 star hotel? Have you occupied another position before taking on the role as an HR Manager?**

I have been working at this hotel for the past four and a half years since 2008, I started in HR, moved for 1 year as personal assistant to the GM and then I came back to HR as I am more of an HR person than a personal assistant and I do not regret it. It was my decision, before that I used to work as HR at another hotel. Before that I was in Australia for 1 year as a working holiday and before that I worked in another hotel as a receptionist..... and then University so I was just working part time in Food and Beverage as a waitress.

**Do you have any children?**

No children as yet. Maybe next year...God willing

**Some argue that the tourism sector is a greedy industry. Do you agree with this statement and how does this affect your personal life?**

All right ... I agree with that statement. I do *em...* Hours are long in every area. *Em* if it is administration, if you go across the board our working times are 9 to 6 normal. Mind you with our boss we are quite flexible, so if I want to leave at 5 -5.30 because I have an appointment, you know he does not say anything, and same in other areas. That's HR. Like at the moment for example we are up to here with recruitment, with summer recruitment and we are opening up a new outlet so before 6.30 sometimes 7 we do not leave. *Emm* if you go to finance end of month whether it is in the weekdays, a Sunday, a Public holiday they have to close off. So they have to do it. But that's long days also. Sales as well whether it is a sight inspection or *em* events whether they have an event in house they have to be there it is long hours, that's administration. *Emm* reservations for example they also work on Saturdays so even if you say you know administration is 9 to 5 to 6 it's still tough. Then going to operations, I do not need to tell you. Because operations especially in a 5 start hotel or our size and standard it is long hours. all across I mean ...we have got a Front Office Agent *emm* she finishes at 11.30 some do night shifts as well...the grave yard shifts we call them . Food and beverage we have got 8 outlets most of them are busy during the evenings and weekends mostly and so public holidays, so I agree... I mean hours are not friendly.

How does this affect my personal life *emm* ... I have to do staff on the weekends, and after work I have to go home now and cook...I try to manage with the house chores and the rest I do on the week end in two days weekend , sometime it is tough ...if you need to go to the bank you have to go on Saturday mornings, if you have to go shopping you have to go on Saturday , you want to go to the beach you go on Sunday , when everyone goes, but overall you try to manage that way.

Now I have become accustomed to having the weekend off so I rather have the weekends off than during the week. Especially now, I hate working on Sundays.

My parents both work in the hospitality industry, my dad works in the security department and my mum works in housekeeping.

**How do you manage to balance your caring and house chores duties between you and your partner?**

Our system is after work who arrives first has to cook , who cooks doesn't do the dishes ,so who doesn't cook has to do the dishes...then we do not do anything, we go straight on the sofa , watch TV, sometimes I have a load to do, or I do it in the morning , I turn the washing machine at night and then I wake up early in the morning I do half an hour household , shopping for example either I do it after work, like I just buy milk and bread and continue going home...then in the weekends we clean and sometimes I think about getting a helper to help me out with the cleaning....as the least thing you need in the weekends is to clean the house....but it has to be done....but up till now we do it...as he help outs...luckily my husband helps out...not everyone has this privilege.

**What would help you to recon ciliate work and life?**

Definitely having full time...reduced hours.... with the possibility of taking children in the future to child care centres... maybe not everyday... you would have your in laws or parents to help you out.

**Who typically gets promoted to the top posts in your hotel?**

To be honest with you, not because it is here...but we do not have any gender issues here....we are both in the same line and they never promoted him because he is a man rather than I because I am female... we have never had that. However, having said that when looking at the executive committee they are all males. But then when looking at heads of department emmm...revenue manager she is female, housekeeper she is a female...those I think are females...the rest it is because they happen to be males to be honest not because it was a gender issue. Before we had a lounge manager who was a female, front office managers in the past who are women. I think they just happened to be males... let's put it this way, before we had the director of events who is a female.

**What are the characteristics that make a good manager?**

In general, I believe qualifications, that at least they would have completed, talking in the tourism industry they would have been to ITS and university, coupled with experience because if you haven't been there and done that you can't manage...plus the attitude. Actually let me rephrase, I would go attitude, qualifications and experience. We have had managers in the past, who have graduated from ITS..erm they have had ample experience in good five star hotels, but the attitude wasn't there, so they didn't make good managers. So I would go for attitude as in leadership skills...etc.

**Where you ever refused a promotion or did you ever refuse one?**

No

**In the hotel industry, do you think that men are given more opportunities than women to occupy managerial positions or vice versa?**

No. I would say depending on their qualifications and experience... I do not think that gender will be an issue... at least here... we do not have.

**Do you think that women have to work harder than men in order to prove that they are capable of occupying managerial positions? Please Explain?**

Emm... it is a very good question. It depends on the culture of the workplace. Like here, the general manager is 42 years old....so average age of the executive committee is 35-38 so they are open for change. For example, our revenue manager has started off as a receptionist and now she is the revenue manager. She had stopped in 2011, as she had a baby, seven months after we called her back and we told her if she would consider working flexi time or reduced hours and she accepted, so she is back with us. The reservations manager worked throughout her pregnancy had a baby, the baby is now 2 and a half, she is going out on maternity leave end of June I think...and she plans to come back. I mean i am giving you examples, because it is not in this work place, but across the board. Maybe in some places yes women do need to work harder.

**What are your suggestions to enable more women to reach top positions in the tourism sector?**

My suggestion...emm not really suggestions more the mentality...listen if you want a top position you have to work for it and if you have got a family you have to prioritise, get help or be ready to have children being take care of something

else...you really must be confident in multi-tasking because it is not easy....as young children depend on their mother, especially in the beginning, you do not give up , you have got your maternity leave, you have got 4 to 6 months if you want. If you have got the potential and the qualifications, why give it away to stay at home. I don't agree in staying at home. I think it is all about the upbringing, maybe your mother worked and so you are used to it. I think it takes courage which stems from your culture.



## **Appendix 3- Transcription- Angela**

### **Can you tell me something about yourself?**

I am 58 years old. I'm married. I have a daughter who is also married herself now. Basically we are back to where we started when I and my husband got married. I have a lot of free time to dedicate for my work and hobbies.

### **Does your daughter have any children?**

Yes, she has a baby girl of nine months and she is now on maternity leave herself because she is a working mum.

### **Some argue that the tourism sector is a greedy industry. Do you agree with this statement and how does this affect your personal life?**

Well, I wouldn't say that the tourist industry is a greedy industry. I would think that each and every industry has its own ... you know busy periods..... For example the tourism industry is very busy on holidays, summer time in Malta, but everybody has deadlines. Like when you are in a company, where you are producing, like I use to work in another company before this job where I was in finance, and then it was a production company so fortunately or unfortunately we have to deal with them as they come along. It is nothing to do with the greed of the tourist industry, you make hale while the sun shines and you have got busy periods and you have got to deliver.

**How do you manage to balance your caring and house chores duties between you and your partner?**

Umm.. that is a good question which deserves a good answer. Basically, I would say that maybe in today's society we are prepared to share work life responsibilities, whereas were in my case being 58 years old it was not the thing for a woman to keep on working once you start a family. In my case, my husband always worked outside the house, but again I used the word 'helped', because again even in my mentality if he was doing any chores in the house he was helping me out. The house was my responsibility or is still my responsibility I would say and my husband works out, both of us hold full time jobs, so we try to do our best and I think coming to your direct question, well...emm you get into a routine and know that you have set hours at work. Somehow I feel that I am less organised when I am not working, I am definitely more organised when I' am working, when I have my working day including my home schedule. On my off day, it is a totally off day.

**What is the impact of having children on women and men who have a career in the tourism sector?**

I can give my opinion, from my point of view, form that of a woman. Because we are probably made different than men, because when you have children you start looking at things differently. All of us want to progress in our careers, and we give as much as men do in our careers. But when children come along, I think they have different priorities, least in my case. I look at it different completely; having children does make a big difference in the path. Progression of your career, you would want to give time to your job and obviously when you get caught up on the

job, but obviously there is also the issue of leaving my child with a child minder for longer hours, what about school age children, they need help with their homework, so yes there are a little bit of constraints there I would say.

**What would help you to recon ciliate work and life?**

I understand that it is not always the case, but definitely flexi time helps. Some work you can take home, especially with a growing family, if it could be done. But I do not blame any hotel for wanting the workforce to be hands on in the offices at the premises. But yes if some of the work can be taken home today at this day and age, with computers and staff like that, it can be taken and dome at home, yes, I think that will be of great help, especially to a woman with again, with young children.

**Who typically gets promoted to the top posts in your hotel?**

Normally it is men and there is a very valid reason for that. I think that it is not a question of women being not ambitious.... but they put other people first, in this case child. If you have women who have no children then it is a different story as they will progress faster. Mothers put their children before their careers, as least for my generation.

**What are the characteristics that make a good manager?**

In HR, it is definitely to empathise, listen to the needs of the employees, and yes obviously finally take a decision. It is very important that you are not a bulldozer,

but just sit down, listen, evaluate and then decide. HR is all about people, you need to listen to people, and move from there. I strongly believe in teamwork, in which ever department you are. It is important that you are a team and one urges and helps the other. There are stressful times and there are less stressful times, but if you are a team and one joins hands and you can work together, then motivation is very important. At the end of the day, you know that you have delivered as you have done your job. I think that this is a good feeling for each employee.

**Where you ever refused a promotion or did you ever refuse one? Why?**

Emmm....refused a promotion no, it was more a case of that I didn't apply and again I refused a couple of promotions as it involved travelling abroad when they were on offer and again I didn't have the will to leave my daughter unattended. The responsibility towards my daughter just kept me from applying for these posts.

**In the hotel industry, do you think that men are given more opportunities than women to occupy managerial positions or vice versa?**

Again, yes and again I do not blame management. Women have a different perspectives of life, until they are mothers they are very ambitious and they want to progress in their careers, but when it comes to the family, women by age, again here I must state that I' am 58 years old. Women have always put the family first, but in today's generation maybe they can juggle better than us, it wasn't our mentality that you go back to work after you have children, but basically you have to understand that the management, who are giving the promotions to males, are males themselves, therefore it is a vicious circle. Being an HR manager myself, if I'

am sitting down and If I have 2 choices, a man or a woman, and I get a 7 month pregnant woman, I know this is discrimination, and I know I shouldn't be saying this, and a 33 year old man, who shall I go for? I am not discriminating but I know that this woman in a couple of months will take maternity leave, and have a child and she will go out on 16 weeks of maternity leave, so at the end of the day I will choose the male. Life is all about choices, and unfortunately, we shouldn't be saying this but yes men are freer to progress faster in their careers.

**Do you think that women have to work harder than men in order to prove that they are capable of occupying managerial positions? Please Explain?**

It depends on the situation of the woman. If you are a childless person and you do not intend to have children, then opportunities are there for both men and female. But the problem stands not from only the management, but from the woman themselves. As I said I don't think most women will present themselves for jobs that can take 24/7. Most women will think twice before applying for a job like that so obviously at face value it will look like as if management are going for men or prefer men. Mostly, it is a question of the woman just sitting back and letting men take the positions. But then again if I were to be in a position to give a promotion it all depends on the situation, being it a male or female.

**What are your suggestions to enable more women to reach top positions in the tourism sector?**

Education, first and foremost. You must have a good level of education em... work very hard and can deliver on your job. Hard work is always appreciated, always so

whenever you are delivering even if the hotel knows you have restrictions because you have a family and that you have delivered so they know that having to work fewer hours. Knowing that you have commitments towards your family you will also know that once you are on your job you are going to deliver and yes they will definitely also consider giving the woman the promotion. So I think work hard, do your best at whatever you are doing, whether at home or with family or on your job. I frankly believe that management will give promotions to women also because they know that you have worked hard.

## **Appendix 4- Transcript Francesca**

**Can you tell me something about yourself? How old are you?**

I am 36 years old. I work with a five star hotel in HR. I have been working there for the past nine years. I have had a few positions in HR, so I have quite a lot of different experiences.

**Are you married? Do you have any children?**

Yes I am and currently expecting a child.

**What does your husband do?**

He is an engineer.

**Some argue that the tourism sector is a greedy industry. Do you agree with this statement and how does this affect your personal life?**

More than greedy it is extremely demanding on your personal life. I have worked in other industries and the time that the hotel industry takes out of you is much more than any other job I have had. Whether it is within the telecoms industries, pharmaceutical industries, the nature being that it is obviously 24/7, the clients are always there and whether it's an employee relation activity or duty manager, as everyone who is there is always something happening so obviously it demands more. It is definitely not a 9 to 5 job, unless, you are in the union.

**How do you manage to balance your caring and house chores duties between you and your partner?**

We both have full time jobs so obviously we both have to work in the house, help in the maintenance of the house, the shopping, cooking. You can't do it on your own. It has to be a dual effort.

**What is the impact of having children on women and men who have a career in the tourism sector?**

It is not easy. You know and I guess it all depends on what I decide to do, obviously, the easiest thing would be to say that you stop work, considering the amount of hours that are involved, however, I know a friend of mine who works in HR as well, she has the top position in HR in another 5 star hotel, she had twins, and she didn't stop working. She still works 40 hours a week, regular hours..emmm.. but one day she works from home and obviously she gets her parents to stay with the twins. The ideal scenario would be that there is an actual child care centre at the hotel, there are some hotels that actually have child care centre for the guests, and you know sort of they give the opportunity to offer childcare to children of employees. So if someone has to continue that is the ideal scenario, why.... Because you are at work, you are not losing out on work, you are getting professional care for your child so if something happens you can go and see to your child. Ehhh but again, it is something that depends on the hotel or not. My view is that I do not want to work 40 hours a week, but reduced hours, so obviously there has to be a discussion between the management between myself and my employer to see what kind of arrangement can be reached. However, there is also a case, recently about a year ago where an employee who was pregnant in



the hospitality industry was fired, asked to leave. She took them to court and she won the case. She was the hotel's lawyer. Obviously, employers see 14 weeks maternity leave as a burden as they have to keep your position and have to pay you your normal salary. That is 14 weeks' pay and then you have 4 weeks which is subsidized by the government. That is 18 weeks, so obviously it is a lot.

### **What would help you to recon ciliate work and life?**

I do not think there is work life balance. I do not believe that it exists because when you are working and you are a parent, there is a very thin line between work and life. I think that in Malta a lot of pressure is being put on the woman to go back to work and there are not many facilities to help this... I am talking about the private industries because obviously within civil sector it is a different story.... very different.

### **Who typically gets promoted to the top posts in your hotel?**

You need to be obviously be very knowledgeable on the job...ehh you need to be ambitious and it has to be one of your top priorities as job, I mean it depends.. There are top executives that are women and have children... and they decide that their career is their main priority and they make arrangements to have the children umm.. taken care of otherwise. My belief is that in any marriage or relationship with a child, one person has to be flexible, you can't have both people that are emmm... majorly full time highly profiles careers, ehh it can be done but you have to get someone full time to take care of them. One parent has to be flexible, sometimes it

is the women and sometimes it is the man. Obviously it depends on who has the most demanding career and the most revenue. With regards to positions, there are certain people that you know can either be transferred from one hotel to another which maybe in not as busy as another hotel so that the burden will be less, because she is a working mother, but it all depends on the availability and the situation at the time.

**What are the characteristics that make a good manager?**

Ambition, professionalism and knowledge on the job and past history.

**Where you ever refused a promotion or did you ever refuse one?**

I did refuse a promotion emmm... what I can say is that being pregnant has obviously limited my progression currently. Basic example, I missed out on a travelling opportunity for the simple reason as I can't travel emm. You know projects which are starting now and I can't take on because I am going to be out on maternity leave shortly.

**In the hotel industry, do you think that men are given more opportunities than women to occupy managerial positions or vice versa?**

It is easier for a man to get promoted than a woman who is starting off a family. It is not going to be blatantly obvious, that we are choosing a man over a woman, especially not to an HR person. Because obviously an HR person knows that there is legislation on equality and staff like that, but it is definitely easier for a man, yes.

**Do you think that women have to work harder than men in order to prove that they are capable of occupying managerial positions? Please Explain?**

With regards to the role in HR, I think some people tend to prefer to have women than men, so maybe in that regards not really. But again it depends on the hotel and the culture of the organisation and who runs it. If it is a Maltese run hotel emm.. it will traditionally have men, if it is foreign run, especially in the Nordic country run, you will have most likely benefits for women, if it is a US run hotel, it is performance driven and it doesn't make a difference whether you are a woman or a man.

**What are your suggestions to enable more women to reach top positions in the tourism sector?**

Child care centres are obviously one of the best options. Ideally that is open to all employees, but obviously either that or the hotel subsidizes child care as it comes at a cost so if there isn't a child care centre present within the hotel or close by and the company subsidizes it at least that is a help. And the truth is that a child care centre is not the driver of a business, in the hotel industry but it might be guests use it for their children. But it is not the top driver unless you are a hotel which caters for families with children. Emm but I guess the best option would be to have child care subsidized as that enhances people to go back to work. I mean as a woman you get tax credits for going back to work, it's a drive from the government.

## **Appendix 5- Transcript – Petra**

### **Can you tell me something about yourself please?**

I am the director for HR. I am 34 years old I have been working for this hotel for the past five and a half years. Previously to that, I was working in an IT company, also as an HR manager and I worked there for seven years, so I have a mixture of industries, both IT and hospitality.

### **Are you married and do you have any children?**

I am married and I have one son who is one year old. That's all. No pets

### **Some argue that the tourism sector is a greedy industry. Do you agree with this statement and how does this affect your personal life?**

You still work five days a week, forty hours a week. The only difference is that instead of working from Monday to Friday. Your day can be any day from Monday to Sunday, which some people like as they have their weekdays free, rather than going shopping when the shops are always full up, as they are loads of people on a Saturday and a Sunday you can go during the week. I think greedy is too much of a harsh statement, I don't agree that the word is greedy obviously the industry serves people who are on leisure, so obviously, by default you need to work when people are on leisure. However, it is nothing different from shops opening on a Sunday, nothing different if you are a doctor or a nurse, nothing different with so many professions nowadays that works seven days a week, the world doesn't stop

basically because it is a Sunday. So I think no that greedy is not the right word. I use to work in the Information Technology industry before and I think that I use to work more than I work now so no it doesn't affect my personal life.

**How do you manage to balance your caring and house chores duties between you and your husband?**

Basically.....umm...both work full time and both are in a profession job so it is not just a job but a career job, so it takes up a lot of our time. He works in IT by the way and he works more than I do. Basically we have a full time child carer at home, then when we get home really... we spend all the time with our son...I must be honest with you.. I do not really cook.. my mother cooks for me and if not we just get a take out.. a pizza. I'am not really into house work and cleaning. When I go home all I want to do is stay with my son and play with him and be with him. And basically whatever there is to do, we share equally. I mean, if for example today I have a meeting till six, he will get home early to get our son. When he has a meeting I go home early, so it is pretty much an issue of sharing equally.

**What is the impact of having children on women and men who have a career in the tourism sector?**

I think that if you have children there is an impact. If you work in Tourism or wherever there is an impact. My personal experience is that, your priorities have to change, whereas before it was ok to get home at ten in the evening, because you felt like staying here, socialising or getting involved in some project which is not directly your work. When you have a child you want to be with your child and I think

that it changes your priorities around. So as much more, it becomes a situation of finding the balance, whereas before there was nothing else in my life to go home too, now if it is five o'clock and I'm still here. I am sad I'm not with my son.

How it impacted me when having my son is basically I am more balanced. Before I was work only, and now I am work and my son.

### **What would help you to reconcile work and life?**

I think it is flexibility and this is what I found here and what I think makes all the difference. So for example, on one night your son doesn't sleep, which I came back to work when he was 5 months old, so there are nights typically when you don't sleep, so if I come late in the morning and leave late in the evening, no one tells me anything. If on one day my son is sick, and I need to reschedule my appointment, and I need to work at home, the company allows that. I think the one factor is that the company needs to manage you by objective, not by when or how you work. So I have a clear delivery bill of what I want to achieve, and pretty much the company doesn't care on how I go about doing it. I mean I see my emails at one in the morning, three in the morning, I work on a Sunday morning when my husband can take care of our son, I need to leave early on a Tuesday because the baby sitter leaves early, but then I can stay late on a Wednesday because my husband goes home early. So it is pretty much a lot of jigsaws and you must move them around as necessary and the company must allow that.

### **Who typically gets promoted to the top posts in your hotel?**

Well our executive team, which is a top five people, are two males' and three females. This I think speaks enough for itself.

### **What are the characteristics that make a good manager?**

I would say a good leader and not a good manager. A good leader is somebody inspirational, somebody with vision, who is in the front line and people are following him/her and not at the back pushing people. Someone who is a role model and who basically walks the talk and not expects people to do things and he/she does not do the same thing. I think it is also someone who can create a right atmosphere, a positive atmosphere, bring a team together who is candid, who can say disagree, and someone who is not only interested in their area. A leader is somebody who can give ideas, suggestions, be open enough to offer suggestions for areas that are not his or her own.

Motivation by being the first one there, and doing it him/herself and showing what needs to be done. For example, this morning we had a bit of a crisis. We have a group in house who are almost taking up all the hotel, we are talking about 410 rooms and this morning at 8 the group organiser came and wanted to deliver these envelopes to every 410 rooms. But it needs to be done in 15 minutes. So... all of a sudden we said what are going to do so leaders from other departments came to my office and I said that we have a problem... I need to fold these letters as they were still in A4 and deliver them to all these rooms. I had 2 options, I could either phone everyone or tell them please I need your staff or else I said we have an issue and I am going to take the lead, so I called in everybody, from reservations, sales, finance and HR. I coordinated them, I divided the list and I was also going round on the floors delivering these letters. Now if I stayed in my office really nice

and pretty, and not getting sweaty this morning, by just delegating, I don't think it would have been very good leadership at that point. So within 15 minutes all the letters were delivered.

**Where you ever refused a promotion or did you ever refuse one? Why?**

No I was never refused and I never refused one. I worked in 2 companies, where I use to work before I started off as an HR executive after I finished my studies in psychology and then my boss the HR manager at the time left, 2 years after I joined, I was really young and had just graduated, there was an external call for application, for the replacement and I know that I was really sad because it was bad timing and I said that I was going to lose my chance, but then they interviewed me as I was like the benchmark as they knew me, and I knew I wanted the role as I was working hard for it and basically then after that was this call for application I got the job, however, it was absolutely not gender related, as at the time I was only 24 years old and the company employed 300 people so.. it was an age discrimination.

**In the hotel industry, do you think that men are given more opportunities than women to occupy managerial positions or vice versa?**

No I don't think so. I categorically deny this. I think that at least in the companies I have been lucky to work for there is absolutely no difference between being a man or a woman. I think that if you are good and really try hard, you get there, so it is irrelevant of your gender. You can be a hopeless female or a hopeless male, or else an exceptional female or an exceptional male. So it is irrelevant.



**Do you think that women have to work harder than men in order to prove that they are capable of occupying managerial positions? Please Explain?**

No. they need to work the same. We both need to work extremely hard off to prove ourselves.

**What are your suggestions to enable more women to reach top positions in the tourism sector?**

I think first of all women themselves need to want to reach top positions, that is a starting point, although, usually you take it for granted. I would like to ask how many women who have a family would like to have a top position or would they prefer to stay at home to take care of the kids. I think this is realistic, now that I have a child I can understand. It is tempting sometimes when I say ahh how I wish I can stay with him, that is one. Secondly, umm... there are other suggestions, like flexibility as I mentioned before and being that you have a baby is not like the end of the world. Life goes on, everybody has a baby nowadays, in all countries. In Malta, there is still this whole fuss of having babies.

Having an understandable husband is very important as you need to be supportive of each other.

## **Appendix 6- Transcription- Matthew**

**Can you tell me something about yourself? How old are you?**

I am going to be 30, in a week's time. I work in HR, in a five star resort. I have been working in the hotel industry for nine years. I went to ITS, but I didn't do my internship, but I worked abroad for 2 years in an HR position.

**Are you married? Do you have any children?**

I have been married for two years, but have been with her for 12 years so I consider myself to be married for 12 years in a way..ermmm and we are planning on having children in the future as it is one of the nicest things of getting married. We use to live together for a long time; we got married because obviously it is nice to have children when you are married. It is something that I wanted to do for a long time, have kids when you are married.

**Some argue that the tourism sector is a greedy industry. Do you agree with this statement and how does this affect your personal life?**

Well.... There is a lot of truth that it is a greedy industry, what I mean is that.... When you first start working in hotels, people will tell you that you are not going to get rich out of working in a hotel. But I think it is an industry which you can move up quickly if you give your 100% and are passionate about it. I would say that maybe you want to make more money but really and truly the greedy part is when all you are doing is improving your career and getting where you want to get it. The

Maltese employers expect a lot out of Maltese employees....another greedy part. The normal forty working hours are unrealistic as you work much more in hotels, especially if you talk about chefs, receptionist, sales department as well, they have a managerial contract but they work much more. It takes up a lot of your time.

Well... it does affect your personal life because if you have been in the same hotel for a long time you tend to become friends, so much so that you even start to go out together. Working late hours, for example, my wife does....she is a nurse... so we tend not to see each other as she is working night and I will be working day when she will be asleep. I used to travel a lot and now I slowed down. It is a bit difficult to see each other when you work different hours. In a hospital, nursing, 24 hours, and hotels, which are the only 2 companies that work 24/7. So yes, it does it take a lot of your time.

**How do you manage to balance your caring and house chores duties between you and your partner?**

It was a bit at the beginning a trial and error kind of thing.. ...we have to see who has to take out the bin. as my wife starts at 7 and I start at 9...as the garbage collector comes at around 7 and I start at 9, then my wife takes it out before she goes to work. So it is a bit of a challenge. Eventually....we sorted it out. Like for example, she hates ironing and I don't mind it, I hate washing the floor, but I like hovering. She washes the clothes as I am not capable of. It is a matter of seeing who can do what. Let us say we do a lot of things at the weekend, me personally, I do a lot of chores as I usually work on weekdays. Housework I do it on the weekend as well or we try to take a day off. But ideally I would not want to take a day off to the house chores or maintenance. We both are like that, so we are quite

the same in that way. She has more time during the day than I do, as she works nights more than days, so during the day she does a lot, so I can say she does most of the housework and paying of the bills. She asks me for the money and she takes care of it.

**What is the impact of having children on women and men who have a career in the tourism sector?**

Definitely it is going to affect both of us as we both have demanding jobs. I think hers is more demanding on time, as she works nights, when we will have kids, luckily in Malta the nurses have longer maternity leave, unlike in the hospitality industry. That is a fact. There is a lack of nurses, so it is easier for her to return to employment and work the same shifts again. In the hospitality industry, there are a lot of people who are willing to take your job, whereas nurse, it is more of a vocation, then a job. I would maybe do a lot of things in the morning before I go to work, sometimes I even go in at 9.30 and I stay later till 7, when she is working night shifts. So I can take our kids to her or my parents, as I am more flexible in the morning.

We do not know yet, but that is how it is going to be... I presume. Let us say the first year she would not work. Then we are lucky in Malta that it is a small island, and I can easily drive the children to our family or friends. We are blessed here.

**Who typically gets promoted to top posts in your hotel?**

Well...I could say from my personal opinion, I do have my ITS certificate but the people who tend to get high positions are those that are loyal to the company, this

is important as there is a turnover in hotels, so those people who remain are obviously very loyal and you wouldn't want them to leave. Now, when other hotels try to poach these employees, this means that he/she is good. Unfortunately in Malta, when this starts to happen that is when they start to negotiate a better deal. The ones who are passionate about the job, drive results are the people who get promoted. I tend to disagree with the fact that if you know someone you get promoted in hotels, as this does not apply to where I am. But.....if you happen to be one of the children of the boss.. then it is a different story. ermhhh For example, the kids of the boss who started to clean rooms and work at reception are now top managers. In hotels, if you worked in all the segments, be it housekeeping, HR, reservations, sales, Front Office, those tend to eventually become general managers. Those employees who are interested and willing to the other things apart from their job and ask questions about how the system works, are the ones that usually get promoted.

### **What are the characteristics that make a good manager?**

Definitely, you must be a people's person. You have to be understanding with the person, but in a way you have to be firm in the hotel industry. Flexibility is important. You have to be a motivator, as I think some people work much better once motivated. Setting standards is also important....

**Where you ever refused a promotion or did you ever refuse one ? Why?**

Actually, it was not refusing a promotion but refusing to work with a particular market. When I use to work in sales, I had refused a particular market as I felt that I was not strong enough. Burt refused a promotion emm.. No I never refused one.

**In the hotel industry, do you think that men are given more opportunities than women to occupy managerial positions or vice versa?**

I think it is equal. Ermm... ok you might say because I am man iam saying that... but No. I think women are better in certain positions and men are better in others. Or it is even better to have a mix of two in managerial positions... like at reception, one is the assistant and the other is the front office manager, irrespective of their gender. In sales, in the local corporate, it is good to have both, as a woman can sell easier to a man, and the man can sell easier to a woman. If one can take a promotion over the other one, I say no it boils down to their skills and understanding of the business.

**Do you think that women have to work harder than men in order to prove that they are capable of occupying managerial positions? Please Explain?**

A bit yes, but not to that extend. But because people still have that mentality men get more promotions, but this is not my belief. I would say that a woman has to give more to convince every single person, as there are still those traditionalists who still exist in hotels.

**What are your suggestions to enable more women to reach top positions in the tourism sector?**

Competiveness in woman is sometimes different to that of a man. She might always have that mentality because I am not going to progress because of my gender. She has to omit this in order to succeed.











