GENDER RESEARCH IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT: TIME TO
CHANGE THE GUARD

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Abstract

Purpose – The article's purpose is to explain the problem with how gender is positioned in
hospitality and tourism management studies. It recommends specific contemporary theories
to effectively analyse how gender is reflected in organisational processes.

Design/methodology/approach – Firstly, hospitality and tourism management studies are
compared to the general management literature. Secondly, the article explains contemporary
gender theories. Thirdly, a critical agenda for researching gender is proposed and justified.

Findings – The article explains the gendered subtext in sectoral studies that female
leadership is 'different' and, thus, a disruption to the default system of male leadership.
Traditional theoretical framings and positivist orthodoxies have stifled the development of
critical research designs in hospitality and tourism.

Research limitations – While the article is influenced by the work of post-colonial feminist
researchers, it has not fully engaged with challenging the Western-centric academic
discourse.

Practical implications – The article suggests how hegemonic structures in the hospitality,
tourism and events academies must become more gender diverse to lead the required change
in how gender is researched, and to provide direction to industry on best practices in gender
equality.

Social implications – Well-designed gender studies will assist educators to better design
curricula that protect and promote the interests of all students, including those who self-
identify as non-binary and or gender diverse studying a hospitality, tourism or events degree.
Well designed and targeted gender studies will lead to more productive industry partnerships
that provide equal career opportunities in the sector for all genders.

Originality/value – The article challenges the gendered status quo in hospitality and tourism
management research. Its key contribution is to reveal the advantages that a critical gender
perspective can bring to researchers and academy leaders.

1. Introduction

There is a problem with how gender, focused on 'women as subordinate', is positioned in hospitality and tourism management studies. The key contribution of this article is to reveal the advantages of a social science approach, incorporating critical perspectives, for the sector's researchers. Its aim will be achieved through three objectives:

- firstly, to compare the sector's gender research with other disciplines;
- secondly, to illuminate contemporary gender theories; and
- thirdly, to propose a gender research agenda for emancipatory change in the academy, in order to provide strategic direction for gender equality initiatives for employers and practitioners.

The article was prompted by evidence of gendered privilege for men, and penalty for women, in the hospitality and tourism academy. Dominant ideologies which suggest women's subordination are demonstrated in the framing of gender in hospitality and tourism management conference calls, where the great majority of keynote speakers are men (Walters, 2018). Additionally, recent analyses of the poor state of hospitality and tourism diversity research (see Kalargyrou and Costen, 2017; Madera *et al.*, 2017) ask for more contemporary theoretical models, innovative methods and multi-level research designs in neglected areas, such as gender. The article is structured as follows: the introduction presents the problematic nature of the phrase 'female leadership in hospitality'. Section two reviews the separate thematic areas of hospitality & management research, comparing them to best practice gender studies in other disciplines. Section three explores contemporary critical gender theories, that may benefit hospitality and tourism researchers, and section four builds on the preceding points to propose a gender research agenda. Finally, the conclusion closes the loop, indicating future research directions as well as limitations of the article.

1.1 The issue of how women are researched

Gender is not just about 'women', it is about how gendered roles for men and women are enacted and perceived. It is problematic how women and the outcomes of women's work, including leadership, are positioned by hospitality and tourism researchers. The disadvantages for most women, and men who do not fit prevailing heteronormative ideals, are neglected because sectoral management researchers have failed to properly explore the structural factors, contextual influences and intergroup differences that profoundly change

employment experiences for different groups of women and men. In public health research, researcher Bowleg (2012) decries research approaches that imply mutual exclusivity in the descriptor 'women and minorities' as the label does not respond to the ways that intersecting aspects of multiple identities – for example, race, class, gender and socio-economic status – profoundly influence life and health outcomes for individuals. She considers the ways that different groups are researched results in flawed studies, and that:

> The problem with the 'women and minorities' statement or the 'ampersand problem' is the implied mutual exclusivity of both these populations. Missing is the notion that these 2 categories could intersect, as they do in the lives of racial/ethnic minority women. (Bowleg, 2012, p. 22)

In hospitality research, the phrase 'female leadership' used in conference calls and industry panels is equally problematic, as it reproduces the norm of male leadership in hospitality and tourism with negative connotations similar to the "implied mutual exclusivity" expressed by 'women and minorities'. To focus on female leadership denotes that 'women' and 'leadership' do not belong together and a 'female who leads' is, therefore, primarily defined by her biological sex role. Compare the way that leadership (for men) is positioned: that men should form the apex of organisational hierarchies remains the accepted norm, and unworthy of examination – one can imagine how articles or studies focusing on 'male leadership in hospitality' would be dismissed. '*Female* leadership' and '*female* managers' reflect an outdated 'women in management' studies approach that was built on presumed differences between men and women's leadership. Powell (2014, p. 205), after reviewing four decades of research on the linkages between sex, gender and leadership, observed that "establishing general, abstract correlations between sex and leadership may be a misleading or at least a not very informative exercise." Yet, the approach remains pervasive in hospitality research (see Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Koburtay and Syed, 2019) and disadvantages all women who anticipate equality of opportunity and remuneration with male peers. Likewise, the choice of the biological descriptor 'female', rather than 'women', reminds the audience of the centrality of a woman's biological role, i.e. motherhood and caregiving. Thus, the word in the leadership context is loaded and reinforces the patriarchal and subordinate status of women, subliminally reproducing the normative superior positioning of men at the apex of organisational hierarchies (Acker, 2006a).

1.2 Significance of the issue

The article's central argument – that effective gender research is required to win the same opportunities for women as men have – is not merely a philosophical proposition. The academy is responsible for tourism studies and education and charged with providing research-led solutions that will significantly improve the work and career outcomes for women. Change is long overdue as statistics on women's participation in organisations reveal. In the United Kingdom, the *Gender Pay Gap Reporting* (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018) revealed an 8% gap across hospitality and leisure companies. There was significant underrepresentation of women in senior roles, reducing women's access to bonus pay and impacting their decision-making power at strategic and policy level. The analysis notes that "the proportion of men and size of company (in terms of number of employees) does not have a significant impact on the size of the gap" (para. 4), underscoring the ubiquity of the issue. In the United States, the *Restaurant Management Salary Survey Report* (Jennings, 2018) showed that men were paid considerably more than women at all levels:

> For an assistant manager position … women started at $46,746 on average, while men earned $49,586. Female directors of operations started at about $89,500 while their male counterparts starting salary was $97,118. The average starting salary for female corporate executives was $63,000, compared with $78,546 for men. (paras. 5–7)

Occupational segregation was visible, women dominated as catering, sales and event managers, and men held executive chef, sous-chef and general manager roles. At the lowest entry levels of hourly-paid work in 2018, women earned less than men: $12.53 per hour compared to the rate of $13.29 for men. In the pay survey of the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) sector, respondents in Convene's annual *Meetings Market Survey* connected lower average pay for women with the disproportionate number of men in the top positions across event organisations (Russel, 2018). Similar historic patterns are recorded across most countries and all tourism subsectors (Baum, 2013; Campos-Soria *et al.*, 2015).

1.3 Responsibility of the academy

The hospitality and tourism academy is complicit in maintaining gender disadvantage as it has failed to critically analyse gender inequalities or proffer realistic solutions (Lugosi *et al.*,

2009; Morgan and Pritchard, 2018). Gender audits of tourism academia such as Figueroa-Domecq *et al.*'s (2015) review show that academic leadership structures, including the Academy of Tourism and many Editor-in-Chief roles, are male dominated. The numerical and positional domination does not reflect the long-standing situation that young women form the majority in university undergraduate hospitality management courses (see Pizam, 2006). The dominant rhetoric of hospitality and tourism researchers is that progression to leadership positions is gender-neutral. Various research hypotheses have been put forward to explain, or debunk, the gender pay gap such as the argument that women may work less hours to prioritise childcare (Cleveland *et al.*, 2007) or that women's under-representation at executive levels (with higher pay) is due to their reluctance to play the promotional game as assertively as men (Boone *et al.* 2013). However, critical studies paint a more complex, multifaceted picture indicating that the barriers to women's equality exist at structural, organisational and individual levels across institutions and organisations (Anderson *et al.*, 2010; Khoo-Lattimore *et al.*, 2019).

The article's perspective may be considered polemic and controversial; however, that academic institutions should advance gender equality is no longer an abstract ideal: equality for women and girls is enshrined in United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 5 (United Nations Sustainable Development, 2018). In 2019, the Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking system stipulated that universities provide tangible evidence of their commitment to gender equality:

> This ranking focuses on universities' research on the study of gender, their policies on gender equality and their commitment to recruiting and promoting women. The SDG itself [Goal 5] phrases this explicitly as supporting women. We cannot hope to develop the world sustainably if the needs of more than half its population are not addressed. ("THE University Impact Rankings 2019 by SDG," 2019, para. 1)

A critical research-led approach is required to address the goal of gender equality. When seeking to understand the subordinate positioning of women in the hospitality and tourism academy (Figueroa-Domecq *et al.*, 2015), it is necessary to examine the underlying systems of power and inequality that limit women's participation at senior management levels. While the marginalisation of women is reflected in other professions, the conceptual and methodological advances which have illuminated management and organisational studies (Broadbridge and Mavin, 2016; Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011), such as critical race theory

(Crenshaw, 2011), social role theory (Simpson *et al.*, 2012) or deconstructions of organisational systems of discrimination (Bendl and Schmidt, 2010; Pringle and Booysen, 2018), have failed to gain traction in hospitality and tourism research. Guenther *et al.* (2018) underscore the crucial importance of gender theory in research design:

> in the field of business and management … it is important to apply a more sophisticated understanding of gender that resonates with contemporary gender theory. This entails taking the social construction of gender and its implications for research into consideration. Seeing gender as a social construct means that the perception of "women" and "men," of "femininity/ties" and "masculinity/ties," is the outcome of an embodied social practice. (Guenther *et al.*, 2018, para. 1)

The sociological theories adopted by critical management and organisational scholars are used to define gender in this article; men and women are perceived to play different roles in society and the workplace (Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011), setting expectations of how each 'should behave' and determining how they are treated.

2. Research areas framing women in hospitality and tourism management

A sequential or chronological approach has not been adopted to explore how gender is researched in hospitality and tourism studies. Instead, a 'discursive lens' (Paludi *et al.*, 2014, p. 54) frames the literature review. Its advantage over the traditional approach is the ways in which it enables interdisciplinary links to emerge, rather than be lost, when separate bodies of knowledge are corralled into thematic silos (Chambers, 2018). Several overlapping subfields inform conceptualisations about management and gender in the sector:

1. career and workforce research;
2. strategic human resources management studies (SHRM), including talent management research;
3. management and leadership research; and
4. diversity management research and 'gender studies' across these fields.

Throughout this article, studies other than those within hospitality and tourism journals will be termed 'general management' studies. Generally, critical hospitality and tourism gender research tended to be published outside the higher-ranked hospitality and tourism journals. An exception is *Annals of Tourism Research* (*ATR*), although arguably its focus has been sociological tourism studies, rather than management. Highly cited studies in hospitality

contexts from other disciplines, for example, economic geographer McDowell and co-authors' work on hotel and service workers' identities (McDowell, 2011; McDowell *et al.*, 2007, 2009), are considered 'general management' as they were published outside mainstream sectoral journals.

2.1 Career and workforce studies

Career theory gives useful insights into how hospitality and tourism employment paths are constructed, allowing patterns to be detected within specific sectors. Sullivan and Baruch (2009) describe a career as "an individual's work related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organisations, that form a unique pattern over the individual's life span" (p. 1543). Traditional approaches to careers have long recognised the links between careers and personal aspirations. Desirable workers are seen as those who are passionate and fully committed, encapsulated in Randall's (1987) enduring metaphor of the 'organisational man'. Workplace norms continue to penalise those who are not considered to prioritise paid work over personal commitments (Acker, 2006a; Martin, 2003, Costa *et al.* 2017), and women were omitted by foundational career theorists such as Super (1957) and Levinson (1978). Pringle and Mallon's (2003, p. 842) historic overview shows systemic exclusion, as "career theory has tended to construct women … as the other, as deviations from a dominant pattern." Relational rather than linear models evolved to describe how women juggle caregiving and career orientations, for example, the Kaleidoscope career (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005). To design meaningful studies, Gunz and Mayrhofer (2011) argue that researchers should adopt a "more contextualized view" and consider social boundaries and "embeddedness in time, i.e. past experience" (p. 254), when studying effects such as gender on careers.

Rather than adopting a contextual approach, most hospitality career studies follow a traditional orientation. The studies track career success as the achievement of technical competencies across varied locations. In the hospitality & tourism sector, there is a career norm of vocational mobility, and the ability to be geographically mobile to increase success features in a number of studies, for example, in Australia (McCabe and Savery, 2007) and in Japan (Yamashita and Uenoyama, 2006). How global hospitality organisational systems facilitate development has been a focus (Deery and Jago, 2015). More recently, Kong *et al.*'s (2012) China-based and Y.-F. Wang's (2013) Taiwanese career studies have examined how

the self-construction of networking and career planning competencies links with career success.

Gender is a significant factor in hospitality and tourism management careers. The expectations for hospitality managers to be highly visible, even in non-guest-contact roles, creates a career norm across hospitality of overwork and after-hours socialisation (Burke *et al.*, 2011). Women experience the greater share of the domestic burden and Cha (2013) argues that women who work in excess of 50 hours a week (routine in the 24/7 hospitality industry; see Cleveland et al., 2007) find it difficult to manage work and family commitments, especially in Asia, where women are responsible for elder care (Li and Wang Leung, 2001). Although women enter hospitality jobs because of the flexible work arrangements (Mooney *et al.*, 2017), they may later refuse promotion because of the unpredictable hours. Additionally, widespread assumptions about women's domestic burdens means that they may be considered unsuitable for senior roles. However, surveys will not always reveal the ways that exclusion influences women's career decisions compared to the rich data provided by qualitative study. Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão *et al.* (2017) used feminist economics, gender and tourism labour theorising in a mixed methods study to find that women in Portuguese tourism organisations were considered less flexible than men (due to gendered assumptions about maternal caregiving commitments) for the extended sales trips associated with executive roles. Also in the Portugal tourism sector, Carvalho *et al.*'s (2018) further interpretative study used a narrative inquiry approach and thematic analysis to explore how women expressed their career agency. They discovered that many interviewees left corporate hotel careers and become entrepreneurs to regain control of their advancement and work/personal interface. Despite the long hours and effort involved, they expressed a sense of reward and fulfilment.

2.1.1 Employment and workforce studies

Workforce studies across a broad remit have included gender, for example, the research by economic geographers Ioannides and Zampoukos (2018). There is growing interest in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) related to tourism workforce interests (Scheyvens, 2018): SDG 5 – to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – is inextricably linked with SDG 8 – full and productive employment and decent work. Equality cannot occur if women cannot access the same employment and financial opportunities as men. Philosopher and social scientist Bourdieu (2001) theorised that the historic restriction of

career opportunities for women is due to the lack of value placed on their 'hearth based' activities, in either the home or the workplace. Despite some progress, globally the historical pattern of occupational horizontal and vertical segregation endures. Kalargyrou and Costen's (2017) analysis of diversity research in hospitality & tourism showed that there was a "white rage, male backlash" (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000, cited p. 81) against diversity polices that supported women's advancement in the United States. Critical studies help to uncover the assumptions and processes underpinning gender inequality in organisations.

In the United Kingdom context, McDowell *et al.* (2007, p. 4) consider that:

> social attributes such as … gender … are both the basis for, and are maintained and reconstructed by, labour market practices, both in general and at individual workplaces through legislative frameworks, hiring and firing practices, differential treatment, unequal pay and daily social relations.

McIntosh and Harris (2012) explain that the pervasive nature of women's subordinate status and the lack of value ascribed to skills viewed as femininized, such as housekeeping, is because they are not classed as professional competencies, rather as an extension of women's domestic duties. The effects have long been visible in the United States, where Woods and Viehland (2000) referred to 'pink ghettos' – female-dominated departments such as conference co-ordinator where women's careers plateaued. That many lower level jobs are perceived as 'feminised' jobs subliminally reinforces the notion that women managers represent a disruption of masculine managerial norms perpetuated by academics. Thus, women are 'invisibilized' in Houran *et al.*'s (2013) analysis of the 'career paths of hospitality executives' in the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*. The authors' choice of Randall's (1987) 'organisational man' metaphor to categorise hospitality executives in the 21st century is a powerful symbol of women's enduring exclusion. More contemporary methodologies give rich insights into how power is reproduced though institutional and organisational processes and who it benefits. Kensbock *et al.* (2013) designed a qualitative, constructionist grounded theory study to explore hotel hierarchies in Australia. The socialist-feminist lens revealed that their 'lesser' social identity made women room attendants the target of male managerial oppression. By taking an original multi-level approach, Williamson and Harris's (2019) historical study revealed the processes through which trade unions systematically excluded

women from service workers unions in New Zealand, denying them the legal protection and entitlements granted the male members.

The preceding sections show that class and gender intersections are visible in how hospitality careers are positioned and who is researched. Little appears to have changed from Baum's (2007) assertion that in hospitality and tourism, only pilot and luxury hotel general manager roles (generally male typed) are considered high status, although contemporary culture has added another high-profile masculine career to the list, the celebrity chef (Robinson and Baum, 2019). A fundamental research design problem is that many sectoral studies position 'gender' as synonymous with 'women', as if men have no gender (Özbilgin *et al.*, 2010). In most hospitality and tourism career studies, gender is a demographic descriptor in data analysis. The problem when gender is relegated to a biological classification is that studies become 'gender-blind'. Few hospitality career studies consider the wider societal contexts or the time-bound aspects of career development, even though life-stage is a pivotal factor in women's careers (Cha, 2013). The type of research approach important. Nearly all sectoral career studies use quantitative approaches and Jameson (2019) explains the limitations of survey data when seeking to understand hospitality and tourism career motivations. However, even qualitative studies such as Yamashita and Uenoyama's (2006) research into hotels' organisational culture and career mobility did not, even in passing, note gender.

2.1.2 Limitations of career and workforce study designs
A myriad of sectoral studies fail to reflect gender meaningfully in study design although it yields valuable insights. Rydzik *et al.*'s (2012) research into central European women migrants showed that hospitality work both encouraged and restricted their mobilities. Global career theorists David *et al.* (2019) observe that institutional discrimination limits women's access to expatriate opportunities, as stereotyping of women as disinterested in overseas assignments means they fall outside the informal and subjective recruitment and mentoring processes that regulate transfers. Neither Kong *et al.*'s (2011) or Wang's (2013) models of hospitality career competencies commented on gendered aspects. It is commendable Cassel *et al.* (2018) in their study of career progression in Swedish hotels recognised that mobility norms penalised women, however, they did not discuss the gendered implications of the "importance of high mobility" (p. 36) in their findings. Some time ago, Adib and Guerrier (2003) observed that researchers gave little attention to how individual aspects of gender, ethnicity or class affect individuals' work experiences in the hospitality and tourism sector.

minimum threshold would be for current researchers to be 'gender-sensitive' in hospitality and tourism career studies. To accurately see the way a person's gender influences their promotional opportunities, it is necessary to adopt the career theories used in other disciplines, which explain how different groups of people succeed, or not, in organisations. Organisational psychologists highlight that gender cannot be explored in isolation from other environmental factors (Hyde, 2005), supporting career theorists Gunz and Mayrhofer's (2011) recommendation to design for context and time-boundness in career analyses. To illustrate, the hospitality career experiences of women vary according to where they are located, even within the same country. In Turkey, women working in city-centre hotels are more educated and express greater satisfaction with their working conditions than their counterparts who work in isolated resort areas (Okumus *et al.*, 2010).

2.2   *Human resource management (HRM)/strategic HRM (SHRM)*

In the highly labour intensive sector, human resource management (HRM) research remains a significant research area, and strategic HRM (SHRM) is the dominant paradigm. According to foundational scholar Boxall (2018), SHRM research should focus on "the enterprise level" (p. 22). He contests widespread criticism that SHRM neglects workers' interests in its drive for profitability. Critical management scholars Broadbridge and Simpson (2011) argue that the economic orientation typifies dominant masculine norms of the unencumbered ideal worker. Cleveland *et al.* (2017) observe HRM processes were historically designed and

> built by and for a narrow segment of the workforce – usually male, usually White, usually involved in family arrangements that are supportive of a stereotypically masculine work culture that features long work hours, high levels of commitment to the organization and a low likelihood that the nonwork life sphere will interfere with work. (p. 392)

2.2.1 Talent management

Talent management plays a significant role in strategic HRM; however, there is no unanimous classification of 'talent'. Thunnissen *et al.*'s (2013) definition that "talent management practices and activities serve to manage (recruit, develop and retain) talents so that the goals of the organization are met" is widely accepted; but they also recognise the considerable debate on whether the talent management approach should be 'inclusive' or 'exclusive' and on what basis 'talent' is recognised (p. 1754). The inclusive approach

assumes that everyone is worthy of talent management, while the opposing view argues that talent management policies and practices should solely target individuals who demonstrate excellent potential for development (Christensen Hughes and Murray, 2018).

As international reach characterises many tourism and hospitality organisations, globally agile mobile senior executives are essential. The SHRM approach facilitates the identification of global candidates by selection for cross-cultural fit and training in cultural competencies; however, structured organisation support is crucial to retain them. David *et al.*'s (2019) research into expatriate women executives suggests that increased retention of women was linked to their positive perceptions of organisations' family support policies (which also had a positive influence on male executives, albeit to a lesser extent). Caligiuri and Bonache (2016) caution that "given the strategic demands for culturally competent professionals, organizations will need to become more effective in leveraging expatriates' competencies or finding those who already possess these competencies" (p. 136), noting that repatriates leave organisations where their career opportunities do not reward their cross-cultural experience. Researchers should recognise that although 'merit' is widely held to be an objective indication of capability and talent, subjective and informal human resources management practices determine a candidate's suitability for coveted expatriate positions (David *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, Simpson and Kumra's (2016) theorising on gendered aspects of 'merit' as defined and assessed though organisational processes offers useful insights.

2.2.2 Limitations of human resource research designs

Given male dominated senior management structures in industry, gender in talent management processes in hospitality and tourism should be a fruitful field of study; however, a gender-blind approach prevails in sectoral talent management research, which Christensen Hughes and Murray (2018) believe reflects "deeply embedded industry norms" (p. 179). For example, although both individuals and organisations view expatriate assignments as development opportunities, few sectoral studies reflect Caligiuri and Bonache's (2016) recommendation to integrate global mobility, global talent management and leadership development perspectives in study design. Kichuk *et al.*'s (2019) U.K. hotel study on talent pool exclusion acknowledged that gender was an important factor; however, they did not track gendered aspects. In contrast, Williamson and Harris's (2019) research specifically highlighted gender as an influential factor in the effectiveness of talent management approaches. Madera *et al.* (2017) criticise the research focus on the 'attitudes' of supervisor/middle management rather than executive leadership strategies at enterprise level

and recommend contemporary conceptual models capable of tracking gender and diversity commonly found in targeted general management studies. Christensen Hughes and Murray (2018) also ask for multi-stakeholder studies that track gender and diversity aspects of sectoral talent management processes.

2.3   Leadership studies

A primary objective of talent management programmes is to produce leaders. Leadership, a 'hot topic' in management research encompasses both leadership models and leadership development studies. Mumford and Fried (2014) query the newer values-based models which "attempt to describe the ideal behaviours of leaders" (p. 626) that are increasingly promoted, including 'authentic' leadership, 'servant' leadership and 'ethical' leadership. They express significant methodological reservations about the validity of newer leadership theories – including common source bias; the fact that results can be skewed by "leader liking", which is generally not controlled for (p. 624); and that followers' reports are inaccurate – suggesting the studies, or the theories they support, lack credibility. Marta *et al.* (2005) highlighted how ideological models focus on one group of stakeholders only – followers – and that this core participant group are not always able to see all their leader's behaviours, which may be deliberately concealed. As ethics and morality are strongly correlated to "positive prosocial exchanges between leaders and followers" (ibid, p. 626), the interests of other stakeholders (such as minorities) may be neglected. Likewise, they note in transformational leadership models, leaders succeed in 'transforming' organisations through autocratic behaviours when they encounter resistance, negating the premise of shared power between employees and leaders on which the theories are based.

A Google Scholar search of leadership research in hospitality and tourism from 2010 to 2019 produces 31,900 hits ("Leadership in hospitality and tourism," 2019). Many studies centre on 'new' leadership theories – leader-member exchange, for example, fielded 15,900 results. Servant leadership is widely promoted in hospitality management; Brownell (2010) suggests that its principles and practices, where "the leader seeks to support and empower followers" (p. 363), can "bring a renewed sense of community and focus to organizations" (p. 375). There is a divide between sectoral researchers research on leadership models and leadership approaches in the industry (Huang and Lin, 2010). Probert and Turnbull James (2011, p. 139) observe that, despite the considerable critique that competency models "by definition are associated with the individual, [they] still seem to dominate and influence thought in both

leadership and leadership development." Yet researchers rarely challenge the competency approach practiced by large hospitality and tourism organisations (see Tavitiyaman *et al.*, 2014) which compounds the existing research defects of single organisation or one-factor-in-isolation designs (Baum *et al.*, 2016: Madera *et al.,* 2017). With the competency approach, Probert and Turnbull James caution that "effective performance of leadership" is reduced "to a standard set of prescribed behaviours that remain constant regardless of context" (p. 139); overlooking of context *amplifies* "*unconscious notions of leadership* that are exclusive to a particular organisation" (p. 146, emphasis added) or sector.

The 'amplification of unconscious beliefs about leadership' resonates when seeking to understand the enduring nature of male leadership norms. Previous studies suggest that the hospitality and tourism academy is a site of masculinity governed by such ideals (Figueroa-Domecq *et al.,* 2015; Morgan and Pritchard, 2018). Kanter (1977) highlighted the problems faced by women as 'token managers': how men assigned stereotypical attributes to women and, through informal networking and other processes, 'closed ranks' against them. In the United States hospitality sector, Clevenger and Singh's (2013) research indicated that structural factors and organisational level practices and policies, rather than women's individual characteristics, prevented women from attaining leadership positions. Yet sectoral norms convey that men are more suitable for leadership due to stereotypes of male assertiveness and women's 'emotional' states (Costa, Bakas, Breda and Durão, 2017).

Earlier 'women in hotel management' studies identified that it was difficult for women to gain leadership positions. Brownell (1994) advised that women play golf to access male promotional networks. Subsequently, critical and feminist sociological studies by hospitality researchers, mostly published outside the hospitality academy, significantly advanced knowledge about the how gendered micro processes systematically discriminated against women managers. Adib and Guerrier (2003) in a much-cited foundational article in *Gender, Work and Organization* examined hotels' gendered and racialised employment norms; ethnic minority women were unlikely to be placed in hotel guest contact positions. Adler and Adler's (2004) sociological study into the hiring and promotional processes of Hawai'ian hotels and resorts revealed gendered ghettoization and stratification of ethnic groups into specific departments and ranks, with "women and people of colour filling the lower positions while the better paying jobs with privilege and power went to white men" (p. 215). Examining the recent literature on "women as managers in the tourism sector", Carvalho

(2017, p. 124) finds that "it is remarkable that, of the studies [examining women's careers in tourism]… only one makes use of feminist theory."

2.3.1 Limitations of leadership study designs

Much hospitality and tourism leadership research, counter to the contemporary general management research approach, examines biological differences between the sexes. Gender may be researched as a variable that influences men's and women's leadership styles. For example, P. Wang *et al.*'s (2017) leader–member exchange study posits that "women and men are different in the ways they make decisions" (p. 129) when examining gender as a moderator variable for leader–member effects in employee turnover. Gröschl and Arcot's (2014) article on "female hospitality executives and their effects on firm performance" (p. 143) uses 'gender differences' to justify that women leaders add value to executive leadership teams. Their empirical findings suggest that women leaders differ from the male norm, and, albeit well-meaning, the article reinforces social constructions of women's otherness in a male management world. Likewise, Koburtay and Syed's (2019) study of "elements of congruity in female-leader role stereotypes which reduces prejudicial evaluations against female leaders" (p. 52) incorporates generalisations about 'masculine' and 'feminine' styles of leadership. The study design used the 1974 Bem Sex-Role inventory as a survey instrument, an index historically criticised (Wilcox and Francis, 1997) for its items' lack of validity across different cultural or generational contexts.

2.4 Diversity management

Whether researching leadership or diversity management, the importance of a rigorous theoretical framework is underscored by Guenther *et al.*'s (2018) entry on gender research in the *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia*, which explains that gender is deeply embedded in business and management dealings. They establish that "gender research is more than just adding sex as a variable in a study", observing that "well-grounded gender theory allows more nuanced empirical insights into the complexity of social life within business and management" (p. 20). The category 'gender' encompasses both men and women, masculinity and feminist studies, and Özbilgin *et al.*'s (2010) diversity research agenda underscores the dangers of assuming heterosexual perspectives to be the only prevailing reality in research design. For example, work-life balance is judged of crucial importance in talent retention in hospitality and tourism (see Deery and Jago, 2015); however, Özbilgin *et al.* suggest that

focusing on the caregiving responsibilities of middle-class White women neglects the experiences of all other groups. The previous sections illustrated how sex-typed occupational segregation reinforces homosocial and homophilic behaviours in hospitality and tourism (for example, Clevenger and Singh, 2013; Mooney *et al.*, 2017). Critical race and gender theory can help to explore the manifestations of the 'old boys' network' in organisations (Oakley, 2000) that enables men to favour the company of other men and exclude women and men judged not to exemplify (their own) desired characteristics, such as specific racial origins (Atewologun and Singh, 2010) or heterosexual orientation (Pringle, 2008).

When seeking to understand women's and men's gendered experiences in hospitality workplaces, most sectoral gender studies fall into the 'diversity' category. Kalargyrou and Costen's (2017) extended critical review of hospitality and tourism diversity management, past, present and future, painted a picture of omission and superficiality. A systematic diversity literature review by Manoharan and Singal (2017) concluded that most hospitality studies were United States-centric, descriptive and failed to reproduce contemporary theoretical framings, with 55% using a quantitative approach (versus 15% qualitative). They found most diversity studies focused on gender; however, the term 'gender' was generally used to *only* denote women, supporting Tatli and Özbilgin's (2012) insight that men are not 'gendered' in research as women are. However, Manoharan and Singal's (2017) suggestion that the focus on 'females' in hospitality diversity research derives from "the challenges faced by women employees due to the long hours of work, demanding working conditions and the dominance of male employees" (p. 79) is problematic. Despite noting the limitations of their discipline's approach to diversity research, Manoharan and Singal reproduce stereotypes about women's lack of flexibility and weakness when 'coping' with hospitality work compared to men, stereotypes challenged by contemporary conceptualisations of decent work in tourism (Winchenbach *et al.*, 2019).

2.4.1 Limitations of diversity management study designs

Kalargyrou and Costen's (2017) review concludes:

> The hospitality and tourism literature seems to be somewhat atheoretical in
> that the articles provide strong literature reviews of the relevant material for
> the study at hand, but many of the studies are not grounded in specific
> theories, theoretical frameworks and paradigm. (p. 108)

Echoing Madera *et al.*'s (2017) critique that hospitality and tourism researchers fail to record or monitor the effectiveness of diversity initiatives, Kalargyrou and Costen (2007, p. 102) cite an example of excellent general management diversity research by Kalev *et al.* (2006). That study detailed what happened in American firms after affirmative action plans were introduced. Kalev *et al.*'s findings showed the chances of African-American men becoming managers increased by 4% but decreased for White men by 8%. However, what was remarkable was that, for women, not just gender but race intersecting with gender made a significant difference. While African-American women showed no career advances, White women saw their likelihood of becoming managers increase by 9%. It is the next stage of Kalev *et al.*'s study which should encourage hospitality and tourism researchers to treat the *context* of a study as a primary consideration in research design: the results were startlingly different in the service sector. Here, affirmative action plans (including development programmes) had positive outcomes for African-American women. Thus, Kalargyrou and Costen argue, unless organisational processes are analysed in meticulous detail, effective initiatives to combat bias and inequality cannot be designed or implemented. Their conclusion shows the importance of well-designed gender studies for driving gender equality in industry.

In hospitality and tourism diversity management research, there are still missing voices; for example, few studies address non-heterosexual perspectives. Pringle (2008) broke new empirical ground for the accountancy profession by revealing that management discourses on managing gender in the workplace were founded on heterosexual assumptions and excluded sexual identities viewed as alternative to the dominant norm, such as lesbian experiences. Hospitality and tourism management studies have failed to reflect non-heterosexual perspectives, except briefly in passing. The unexplored aspects of sexual identity are of enormous importance in hospitality organisations. Specific departments such as kitchens embody hypermasculinity and chefs regard scars and burns as signifiers of dedication; sexual abuse and discrimination (Young and Corsun, 2010) is used to deter women chefs, as their very presence disrupts the image of heroic masculinity found masculine-typed occupations (Simpson, 2014).

2.5 Summary

There are several conclusions to be drawn from a 'gender' audit of the four fields of hospitality and tourism management research:

- Firstly, most career study designs are gender blind. Those few that focus on women show that being a woman is a career disadvantage.

- Secondly, although employment and workforce studies reveal a gender pay gap with women dominating in lower-paid jobs, few studies are designed to track and develop targeted initiatives to combat inequality.

- Thirdly, in SHRM/talent management studies, gender tends to be ignored as a significant variable. Researchers perpetuate stereotypes of women's perceived lack of flexibility rather that proposing and empirically testing management solutions for structural issues.

- Fourthly, in leadership and management research, 'women in management studies' provide historic evidence of discriminatory organisational processes that are still embedded in current organisational processes. In contrast to general management approaches, sectoral researchers retained the perspective of biological sex differences – i.e. that women are different – rather than examining the effectiveness of specific types of development programs.

- Fifthly, diversity research in hospitality and tourism lacks maturity: study designs fail to incorporate critical framings, such as race or feminist theory; and conceptualisations of 'gender' centre on the category 'female', generally studied as one homogeneous group. How masculinity plays out in hospitality workplaces remains relatively unexplored as studies are based on hetero-gender norms; few researchers explore the experiences of LGTBQ employees.

Overall, there is a widespread lack of theorisation about the underlying mechanisms that maintain unequal gender relations and little interest in studies that interrogate power and women's agency. Considering these challenges, the gender framings and models more prevalent in the general management literature and the advantages they can bring to hospitality and tourism research will be examined next.

3. Gender theory

3.1 Theorising biological sex and gender

The introduction explained that conceptualising gender as socially constructed is in line with relevant and contemporary research framings in organisational and management studies. However, the notion of gender has proven a contested construct as evidenced by decades of debate and re-theorising (Acker, 2012; Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011; Guenther *et al.*, 2018). To assist understanding, renowned gender theorists Calás *et al.* (2014) identified two principal meta theoretical approaches to gender: as either biologically based; or socially constructed.

The first perspective takes a "naturalistic, common-sensical approach, where sex is viewed as 'biological characteristics'" and gender is viewed as the "social or cultural categorization usually associated with a person's sex" (Calás *et al.*, 2014, p. 19); sex and gender are assumed to be unchanging roles. The binary distinctions seen in masculinity/femininity descriptors are often placed in opposition in an assumed gender-neutral organisational environment. Femininity is expressed in terms of departure from the 'male norm' and this research framing reproduces the belief that men and women are 'different'. Calás *et al.* (2014, p.22) associate Eagly's work in the 1990s using social role theory on men's and women's differences (at the individual level) with the 'gender in organisations approach'. It is significant that Eagly's more recent research (see Eagly *et al.*, 2014) has evolved and now acknowledges that women's "leadership advantage" was "oversimplified" (p. 154). Eagly *et al.* conclude that "as long as leadership remains culturally masculine, the context of leadership is different for women than men" (p. 154). They argue that organisations must redress cultural stereotyping of women, where women are evaluated differently to men even when their behaviour is the same. In hospitality and tourism research, the binary approach underpins conceptualisations that gender research is about women (see Manoharan and Singal, 2017), neglecting theoretical advances. The 'women are different' approach is expressed in Gröschl and Arcot's (2014) study on whether 'female leaders' can improve firm performance. Thus, a focus on femininity positions women in relation to (and subordinate to) the dominant masculine norm. Even when researchers' intentions are to expose gender bias, the binary positioning reproduces beliefs about women as unnatural and 'othered' (Kristeva, 1991) in 'natural' male environments.

Calás *et al.*'s (2014) second perspective positions "gender as a social institution which is socially accomplished through gendered relations" (p. 20). Societal norms are mirrored in the workplace with overt and subliminal expectations that men and women will play specific roles (Lewis and Simpson, 2010). To challenge inequitable processes, it is essential to examine how, exactly, these organisational processes work. Martin (2003) analysed the continuous reinforcement of the social hierarchal order in the workplace through the supportive conversations that took place between junior and senior men. Observation of their interactions with women conveyed the clear expectation that women should naturally assume a subordinate position. Martin concluded that the *dual forces* of 'gendering practices' and the 'practicing of gender' at work needed to be highlighted in organisational analyses, because "theories and research that ignore gendering practices and the practicing of gender at work mischaracterise workplaces and workers experiences, leaving their presence and effects unchallenged" (p. 361). It is the detailing of gendered practices at a microscopic level, made possible through the application of gender theory, that is missing in mainstream hospitality and tourism research. Critical race and gender scholar Joan Acker (2006a, 2006b, 2012) remains one of the most influential theorists on how gender, race and class is reflected in organisational hierarchies and operating practices. Her empirical research in European financial institutions revealed that gender and other categories of differences are enshrined in organisational processes and confer privileges to dominant groups. In hospitality, Carvalho *et al.* (2019) used Acker's framework of gendering processes to examine the presumed gender-neutral status of promotional practices for women managers.

Over time, gender theory has progressed from focusing on individual identity to a 'gendering organisations' lens: the notion that gendered identities are grounded in gendered systems in the workplace. The advantage of this approach is that, instead of gender being an identifier of individuals, it is viewed as "an outcome or co-production of organisational processes" (Calás *et al.*, 2014, p. 20). A 'gendering organisations' approach allows researchers to observe reflexively "how gender/sex inequality is *ingrained in the reproduction* of a hierarchical power relations system [in] organisations" (Calás *et al.*, 2014, p. 29, emphasis in original). Incorporating a gendering organisation lens can also expose the power effects of classed and racialised performance norms in hospitality at micro, macro and meso levels in tourism, as recommended by Baum *et al.* (2016). When tracking gendered penalty and privilege in organisations, metaphors, symbols and stories help researchers to describe barriers. Different metaphors illustrate the visible and invisible processes that make it difficult for women to

gain senior leadership positions (Bendl and Schmidt, 2010). Over time, they have ranged from the familiar *glass ceiling* metaphor to Ashcraft's (2013) *glass slipper* symbol, which shows how work (and leadership) is constructed vis-à-vis the embodied special masculine identities associated with it.

3.2 The glass ceiling

The glass ceiling is a familiar construct signifying an impermeable barrier that prevents women from advancing in organisations. Clevenger and Singh's (2013) quantitative survey of 500 hospitality and tourism alumni (men and women) found that 36% of respondents believed their organisation had a glass ceiling; 39% indicated that there were fewer senior women managers than men; and 31% believed that women were not being promoted at the same rate as men. They concluded that research was required to specifically examine the recruitment and promotional processes of organisations in order to see where the barriers formed – evidence of supporting a gendering organisations approach. Another survey-based 'glass ceiling' study demonstrates some of the limitations associated with binary gender research design: Boone *et al.* (2013) surveyed 'differences' in how men and women viewed 'self-imposed barriers' to women's leadership progression (most convenience-sample respondents were United States based). The researchers' traditional focus on a women's 'domestic responsibilities' perhaps explains their troubling conclusion that "cumulative findings challenge the thinking that barriers to advancement are mostly outside personal influence or control" (p. 236). Their opinion that women and men have equal chances of advancing in organisations flies in the face of empirical evidence illustrating the opposite:

> success stories like those of … Sheryl Sandberg show that those [women] with professional ambition and talent can shun what may well be the excuse of a glass ceiling and instead successfully navigate the invisible obstacle course that faces any- one advancing to the C-suite. (p. 237)

A further limitation is that Boone *et al.*'s (2013) survey did not apply any gender theorisation and lacked awareness of the general management studies that indicate the contribution made by inhospitable work environments to women's decisions to leave organisations (Anderson *et al.*, 2010; Botelho and Abraham, 2017).

3.3 From glass ceiling to 'junior partner' and 'inequality regime'

Metaphors indicate women's place in the economy as well as in organisations. Acker (2006a) identified that in Western societies women are positioned as junior partners, expected to assume supporting roles in both the workplace and in the home. Her research into financial institutions' HRM policies found systemic workplace discriminatory practices against women (and minorities), which she identified as inequality regimes (Acker, 2006b). The organising class hierarchies that reproduce inequalities are imbedded in:

- "recruitment and hiring;
- wage setting and supervisory practices; [and]
- informal interactions while doing the work" (pp. 449–451).

Empirical studies reveal that hiring and promotional policies work in tandem with how work is organised to privilege men. Many sectoral organisations could be classified as inequality regimes, given the vertical and horizontal segregation that maintains women in the lowest quality jobs (see Santero-Sanchez *et al.*, 2015). Mooney and Ryan's (2009) study used the inequality regime framing to explain how hotel managerial policies and procedures presumed to be merit-based, in practice disadvantaged women in hiring, performance evaluation and promotional decisions.

3.4 Beyond the glass ceiling

It is specifically in the field of social role performance that hospitality and tourism researchers appear to be divorced from, or even unaware of, the critical race and feminist theorising that delivered new insights on the penalties for women leaders. Advances in gender theorisation have unpacked the entrenched systems that protect the interests of dominant groups and exclude most women and some men. Introducing the special issue of *Gender in Management* 'Beyond the glass ceiling and metaphors', editors Broadbridge and Mavin (2016) regretted that despite "widespread public commitment to equal opportunity and arguments for the commercial benefits of diverse leadership, a quarter of a century later, the comment from Davidson and Cooper remains largely true" (p. 502):

> … despite the introduction of sex discrimination and equal pay legislation, the majority of women are still concentrated in low pay, low status, gender segregated jobs. (Davidson and Cooper, 1992, as cited in Broadbridge and Mavin, 2016, p. 502)

Traditional research perspectives (for example, Boone *et al.*, 2013) held that women were incapable of negotiating promotions as assertively as men. However, Botelho and Abraham's (2017) study indicates that women's reluctance is based on previous experiences of being evaluated negatively. Underlying reasons for women's poor outcomes are provided by Simpson and Kumra's (2016) 'Teflon effect' metaphor, which rejects the positivist stance that 'merit' measurements are objective. They observe that a man's performance, once evaluated as effective, will continue to be evaluated as good (frequently regardless of contrary evidence), unlike women leaders, who are judged on their last performance. The Teflon effect explains that perceptions of merit are influenced by the fit between desired embodied social identities (for example, a masculine managerial identity) and perceived characteristics and features of the job.

Simpson and Kumra (2016) suggest that poor outcomes for women leaders result from implicit bias in hiring and promotional policies that use male-typed behaviours as markers of managerial ability. Gherardi (2014) observes that 'like me-ism' applies because most managers are male and, as such, their symbolic attributes, such as a deep voice, are associated with the leadership identity. Thus, in Western organisations, the ways that individuals are recognised, performance managed and judged meritorious means that merit may fail to 'stick' to the bodies of women in management and leadership roles. To overcome implicit bias, Simpson and Kumra (2016) contend that professionals must look beyond 'objective' measures of merit in performance reviews and/or in recruitment and promotion decisions and reflect on the significance of merit's subjective 'performed' dimensions. The notion of embodiment is important when examining how leadership is 'performed' in hospitality and tourism. Masculinity (being in control) is expressed through traditional business attire (Simpson, 2014). The gendered identity of masculine managerial bodies is signified by hotel managers' formal comportment and dark suits, a sex-typed uniform regulated for women also.

3.5 Symbolic gendered orders

It is impossible to give visibility to all theoretical approaches that have developed over the last few years; however, some sociology theories such as symbolism are particularly useful in the highly social hospitality and tourism context. Symbols represent the meanings behind organisational perceptions of performance, as well as communicating gendered behavioural

norms and expectations (Acker, 2006; Winker and Degele, 2011). In the symbolic gendered orders schema, Gherardi (2014) explains how 'symbolic representations' regulate organisational life: gender is enacted in 'ceremonial work' and 'remedial work' (p. 84).

Evidence of 'ceremonial work' is seen in the ways that gender differences are enshrined in organisational processes; for example, the expectation that a woman will answer the office telephone if it rings in the presence of men and women (Martin, 2003). The courtesy system underpins the gendered social order and is couched in caring terms (which remind onlookers of women's weakness compared to men); for example, a man holding the door open for a woman, delivers the message that women need men for safe passage. Gherardi (2014) explains that not following the rules positions "an adult male as socially incompetent, but it establishes an asymmetric relationship in which the male is in one-up position" (p. 89). In contrast to the rituals maintaining gender differences, ratification rituals "are performed towards somebody who has changed his or her status in some way, and they function as reassurance displays" (p. 90). Welcoming gestures, invitations and jocular teasing are all acceptable ways of affirming the new positioning. Not being welcomed or left out of workplace social events is a visible and 'symbolic representation' of exclusion. Gherardi's theory is a significant advance as it makes clear how accepted social cues regulate the inclusion and exclusion of men and women in the workplace, symbolically and systematically, reinforcing women's subordinate positioning. In Mooney and Ryan's (2009) hotel study, the newly appointed and sole woman general manager described the absence of the usual congratulatory ratification rituals that greet general managers arriving to assume positions in a new city. At the first regional senior executives meeting, the gendered subtext behind the jocular query from a male colleague on whether her pen was an 'eyebrow pencil' was that women did not belong in the masculine environment; thus the pen became a symbol of exclusion.

Gherardi (2014) notes that in symbolic gendered orders, when masculine norms are overt and demonstrated by senior executives or in male-dominated environments such as kitchens, the more overt the resistance to principles of gender equality and inclusion. Sexual orientation is another aspect of organisational performance, and heterosexual workplace norms express the 'obvious' societal order (Winker and Degele, 2011, p. 55). In ceremonial work, when a woman achieves high status it "becomes legitimate to suspect or to insinuate that she's lost out on femininity" (Gherardi, 2014, p. 89) by suggesting that she is not heterosexual. In a

study of sexual discrimination in UK hospitality workplaces, women and young men who did not embody 'masculine-typed behaviour' were sexually harassed (Ineson *et al.*, 2013; Young and Corsun, 2010). The examples illustrate how gender theories are useful because they show how discriminatory practices at micro-level are reinforced by the dominant group to preserve their privileged status-quo. Critical gender research paradigms could track links between the acute global shortage of chefs and the hegemonic masculine roots of abuse embedded in hierarchical organisational structures (see Burrow *et al.*, 2015).

3.6 Approaches used to investigate gender alongside other aspects of difference

Gender can be researched in isolation; however, increasingly, researchers find themselves investigating the ways that gender combines with more than one other dimension of identity to produce different outcome for individuals. In hospitality and tourism research, a significant failure to reflect the adoption of new theorisation in public health research, social science and organisational studies is its neglect of intersectional framings. Crenshaw (2011) coined the term 'intersectionality' in the 60s to explain the separate, but differing, effects of combinations of identity categories, such as gender and race, on individuals belonging to specific groups. For Black women, the intersecting identities of race and gender closed them out of the American job market, because janitorial jobs in organisations were reserved for Black men and clerical jobs for White women. However, legally, women could not prove either racial discrimination, as Black men had jobs, or gender discrimination, as White women had jobs. Consequently, intersectionality was used to describe discrimination that arose from simultaneously belonging to more than one category of socially ascribed identity. It has since evolved into a critical paradigm or tool that is capable of tracking intra and intergroup differences in what are commonly presumed to be homogeneous groups within organisations (McBride *et al.*, 2015). Multiple intersections of an individual's identity, for example, the interactions of age/ageing, gender and socio-economic status, can affect individual workers' agency within the power structures of organisational and societal systems (Choo and Ferree, 2010).

3.7 The importance of intersectional multi-level analyses

The call by workforce researchers to connect macro/meso/micro levels is echoed by intersectional researchers. Choo and Ferree (2010) and Winker and Degele (2011) advise a multi-level approach centring on organisational processes when studying diverse groups. Holvino (2010) explains that the effects of gender, class and race are inseparable and thus

need to be investigated 'simultaneously' as in a matrix. Therefore, intersectionality is important because, if researchers do not link separate but competing aspects of identity to the outcomes of separate groups of people differentiated by gender or/and other dimensions, they are unable to realistically evaluate the effectiveness of targeted diversity actions.

The findings of well-designed diversity studies, such as Kalev *et al.*'s (2006) study into the efficacy of affirmative initiatives, support the case for researchers to use intersectional approaches. McBride *et al.* (2015) assert that positioning 'women' as one homogeneous group is a flawed research strategy. They recommend an 'intersectionally sensitive' approach to uncover 'intergroup' differences. Frequently, studies assume all women are the same and many gender studies focus on women managers, who form only a small proportion of the hospitality and tourism workforce. Rarely are intersecting aspects such as race or occupational class teased out in the discussions. In contrast, Healy *et al.*'s (2011) intersectionality sensitive study on public sector workers in the UK, differentiated between the organisational processes for women who belonged to different ethnic groups, Bangladeshi (B), Caribbean (C) and Pakistani (P), rather than classifying participants as one group. Their findings showed that when women resisted discriminatory actions, the racial or cultural stereotyping in addition to gendered stereotyping might position Caribbean women's responses as aggressive, whereas Bangladeshi or Pakistani women's reactions would be deemed 'passive'. The effect for individuals from all three groups was to tolerate racial and gendered harassment by internally rationalising and complying. Simultaneously, they suffered from being invisible as an individual rather than a racial caricature, yet "frozen into being marked as other, deviant in relation to the dominant norm" (Young, cited in Healy *et al.*, 2011, p. 484). In hotels, Adib and Guerrier's (2003) intersectional hotel study showed that the 'double whammy' of gender and precarious visa status made male managers target migrant women for sexual harassment.

Additionally, age and life-stage significantly influence women's career choices but are rarely investigated as separate aspects of diversity. Studies may describe that when a woman has children, her employment options decrease but such effects are under-theorised in terms of recording patterns to identify actions to change the situation. Wildes' (2008) study on the 'stigma of working in food service' (a highly gendered occupation) provides valuable information on the motivations of different age groups of workers. The youngest group and the oldest group were most motivated by 'fun', and the middle-aged group of workers were

motivated by more leisure time. The study would have benefited from tracking how gender and life stage intersected with age to influence the participants motivations. Would a 20-year-old parent still value 'fun' more than flexible working hours compared to a single person enjoying a party lifestyle?

Researchers who recognise the limitations of using only identity category (e.g. class) to investigate the intragroup differences of a group previously considered homogenous (e.g. women), has informed employment relations study designs. Tapia *et al.*'s (2017) study into union organisation in the low-wage US restaurant industry used a two-case approach to examine how 'supra-unions' gained unpreceded economic and legal gains for a superficially unlikely coalition of groups with separate interests. The union campaigns were successful because, rather than focusing solely on class, union organisers fostered intersectional alliances between diverse identity groups regarded as incompatible. Unionists targeted the common interests of women, migrants, religious and other minorities, winning universal concessions that benefited all workers, including paid absences for visa processing or legal matters. The authors explained the advantage of adopting the 'important' intersectional theoretical lens for workforce researchers:

> the ability to fully understand the success or failure of contemporary campaigns for labor justice are likely to require a framework [in this case intersectionality] that better reflects and accounts for organising occurring *at the place where workers' identities intersect* and labor market discrimination compounds. (p. 504, emphasis added)

If the phrase 'organisational processes' replaced 'labour market discrimination', the choice of an intersectional research design would serve an equally important function to explore the effect of specific HRM strategies on diverse groups of women in hospitality and tourism organisations, where discrete categories of identity such as age, race, and class intersect with gender to vary individual outcomes (Clevenger and Singh, 2013; Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão *et al.*, 2017; Kensbock *et al.*, 2013).

4. Research agenda for change

The preceding discussion highlighted the paucity of critical methodologies used to research gender in hospitality and tourism management. Contemporary gender theorising and

innovative research approaches that reflect organisational and sectoral complexities are required to achieve gender equality and the norm of male leadership will continue. Building on the preceding review of sectoral management research and advances in gender theory, five actions for change are proposed:

1. Challenge constructions of male leadership in the academy.
2. Deconstruct hegemonic academic systems that reproduce inequality.
3. Design gender studies using contemporary theories.
4. Reflect the significance of context in study design.
5. Move away from the quantitative–qualitative dichotomy.

4.1 Challenge constructions of male leadership in the academy

As hospitality and tourism researchers, we have failed to play an agentic role in gender equality. Carvahlo *et al.*'s (2019) believe the "the tourism sector still seems to be reinforcing gender inequalities rather than challenging them" (p. 90). The charge can equally be levelled at the hospitality and tourism academy. Eagly *et al.* (2014) suggest a cultural shift must occur to combat gender bias: to lead change in the industry, we must first hold the mirror to ourselves as academics, researchers and educational leaders and influencers of societal and public policy change. Gendered processes that privilege men are recorded in tourism studies (Khoo-Lattimore *et al.*, 2019), hospitality research (Morgan and Pritchard, 2018) and events studies (Thomas, 2017). Figueroa-Domecq *et al.* (2015) observed that although gender bias derives from many complex interrelated factors, it originates from the leadership structures of the hospitality and tourism academy: editorships, academic institutions and industry organisations are dominated by men who maintain the status quo of masculine advantage. Because the leadership concept is based on a set of cultural assumptions (Probert and Turnbull James, 2011), gendered norms in the academy must shift from what Probert and Turnbull James identify as changing the individual to "*cultural change* about leadership idealisation" (p. 147, emphasis added) – here, the idealisation of male leaders in the academy.

4.2 Deconstruct hegemonic academic systems that reproduce gender bias

Given the numerical superiority of men on hospitality and tourism academic and editorial boards, there may be conscious or unconscious bias against women researchers and women using critical or qualitative methods. Studies using qualitative feminist or critical approaches are less likely to be published. Manoharan and Singal's (2017) analysis of diversity articles published in 35 hospitality and tourism management, marketing and HRM journals, showed

that 55% of published diversity articles were quantitative versus 15% qualitative but did not comment on trends over time. In contrast, *Annals of Tourism Research* (*ATR*) publishes more articles based on qualitative methodologies and is ranked third in the most impactful tourism, leisure and hospitality management journals (https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?category=1409 accessed 6 February 2020). Nunkoo *et al.*'s (2017) historical analysis of *ATR*'s publication rates by author gender states "while the proportion of male authors with respect to total authors was as high as 80% in 1990, it fell to around 70% and 50% in 2000 and 2015 respectively" (p. 207). They attribute the rise in female authorship to *ATR*'s social science orientation and the significant rise in the number of published "articles based on qualitative methodologies" (p. 209). However, they failed to mention whether women were primary or secondary authors, a significant influence on academic career success.

The hospitality and tourism academy reflects male privilege structures evidenced in other disciplines. In science, men are more likely to be invited to collaborate on research projects, grants applications and publications. Male authored publications "are associated with greater scientific quality … collaboration interest was highest for male authors working on male-typed topics" (Knobloch-Westerwick *et al.*, 2013, p. 603). Women-only teams are disadvantaged as women's work is judged of higher quality when they collaborate with men (Sarsons, 2017). In economics, Hengel (2017) analysed publication statistics: women economists were subject to more rigorous peer review, adding, on average, six months to the time it took to be published. Anticipating more critical reviews, they took longer to write 'better' articles, and correspondingly longer to respond to reviewers' more detailed critiques. This reduced women researchers' productivity, leading to fewer new research projects over time, and consequent devaluation of their abilities, fewer promotions and lower pay than male colleagues. It is worth noting that the economics focused *Journal of Travel Research* is the highest rated journal for impact factor in hospitality and tourism management (https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?category=1409 accessed 6 February 2020). "Tougher standards reduce women's output [but] ignoring them undervalues female labor and may account for general instances of lagging female productivity and wages" (Elmes, 2017).

Knobloch-Westerwick *et al.*'s (2013) examination of academic gender bias was based on role-congruity theory; the finding that men prefer to work with men on male-typed topics

may explain why hospitality and tourism academic leadership structures are masculine and homophilic (Morgan and Pritchard, 2018). The exclusionary signifier is biological sex; however, it is the socially constructed understandings that stereotype women researchers. The logical assumption based on the evidence is that a woman (especially a critical, qualitative gender researcher) will be less productive if seeking to publish in the field of hospitality management, where most sectoral management studies appear. Women's subordinate positioning translates to reduced visibility compared to men in most academy forums; for example, only four of the 25 expert academics featured in the Academy of Tourism's 2019 instructional videos are women (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTVNGWa7OS_R4mVjRkFEwEA accessed 6 February 2020).

4.3 Design gender studies using contemporary theories

Gender theory is not 'just about women' who are to be researched as one biologically defined category. Neither should men be researched as one homogeneous group (Tienari and Koveshnikov, 2014). Why then, Pringle (2008) queries, are non-dominant groups of men rarely researched in management studies? Few hospitality & tourism management studies explore masculinity; therefore, the status quo of male as default leader is reinforced, regardless of ability, class, or ethnicity. Studies which categorise men and women into separate identity groupings deliver superior insights into how organisational processes reinforce privilege for specific groups of men only. Adler and Adler's (2004) sociological study of employees in Hawaiian resorts revealed that while White men were privileged over non-White local men, White male privilege dwindled with age, rendering men in their 50s vulnerable to being made redundant. As observed in section 1, dominant forms of masculinity associated with strategic management are implicated in the promotion of hetero-normativity and the corresponding subordination of feminine attributes and "non-hegemonic masculinities" (Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011, p. 474). Contemporary gender and diversity theorising moves men's positioning from the centre of research (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012), thereby deconstructing gender by identifying how social processes define masculine/feminine roles and preferred workplace behaviours. Linking with the idea of performance discussed earlier, gender is seen as being embodied in doing and performativity. Masculinity studies have shifted 'gender' away from the static "category of the individual" associated with many feminist studies (Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011, p. 474) to the processes that create and

reinforce organisational entitlement and disadvantage, enabling outcomes for specific groups to be linked and compared.

4.4 Reflect the significance of context in study design

To create meaningful research that can identify areas where change is needed, studies must respond to context. Guidelines and submissions systems often state or imply that empirical study 'results' should be generalisable, using descriptive terms denoting positivist research, rather than including alternative qualitative terminology. Different locations or industry settings change how studies are designed and interpreted across disciplines. In career studies, Mayrhofer *et al.* (2007) illustrated the ways that specific contexts, including temporal, spatial and societal aspects, change the study design, the associated concepts and findings or results. Chambers (2018) advises hospitality and tourism researchers to move beyond 'the imitation game' with its focus on small sample and replica studies in tourism research, which dominate conferences in Asia, the United States and parts of Europe. Well-designed contextual studies deliver valuable theoretical and practical implications. In hospitality, Lee-Ross's (2005) comparative study indicated that Western empowerment models created discord for employees accustomed to the patriarchal management style of Mauritian hotels yet were successful in Australia. Multi-level research design can examine the *underlying gendering mechanisms* that maintain unequal power relations in specific sectoral contexts; mechanisms frequently theorised as universal concepts.

4.5 Move away from the quantitative–qualitative dichotomy

In business and management research generally, positivist ideals founded in the natural sciences dominate (Labro and Tuomela, 2003). As critical gender theorisation is uncommon in mainstream hospitality and tourism management journals, studies using non-traditional paradigms may lack visibility if published outside the academy. Foundational organisational studies theorists, Pringle and Booysen (2018) call on researchers investigating diversity, equality and inclusion issues to explicitly use research paradigms as their organising framework to "disrupt [and advance beyond] the simplistic and misleading quantitative–qualitative dichotomy that has permeated many disagreements within research methods at large" (p. 21). Defining a paradigm as "a higher-level conceptual framework for creating order out of a dynamic and often conflicting social reality" (ibid, p. 21), they argue that the worldviews underlying researchers' choice of theory, research design and methods are frequently hidden. The feminist research imperative to explain the researcher's positionality

and reflexive stance to establish methodological rigour would serve the hospitality and tourism academy well.

The academy's preference for quantitative or triangulated/mixed-method studies and generalisable results may have skewed perceptions of what constitutes 'quality research' for researchers and less experienced journal editors and reviewers. The quality of positivist research is measured in how well it meets the established criteria of validity, reliability and generalisability with statistical tests produced as evidence. Pringle and Booysen (2018) observe that establishing the parallel dimension of 'trustworthiness' in qualitative research is complex. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use four measures:

1. *credibility* is how truthfully participants' views are transmitted by the researcher, which is why a more detailed explanation of the research process is required in quantitative articles;
2. *confirmability* is how well the point of arrival at conclusions is explained through the research design and analysis process, often through text analysis (Reinharz, 1992);
3. *dependability* is how consistent the data findings are across differing circumstances; and finally
4. *transferability* is related to how the findings may be transferred to other research settings or contexts.

The level to which these four aspects can be demonstrated in a study varies according to the paradigm and methods used, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to clearly explain the principles underpinning their research design and for editors and associate editors to make clarity of research design a paramount factor when making editorial decisions. The research design should be the first criterion as to whether a paper should go to review. Clear explanations from journals of what qualifies a paper for immediate rejection on methodological grounds may also prove a powerful incentive for change.

5. Conclusion

The preceding discussion examined the problem with the notion of 'female leadership in hospitality', using it as a lightning rod to illustrate what is wrong with gender research in hospitality and tourism management. It explained how the phrase reproduces gendered norms by giving primacy to a women's biological role, conveying that female leadership is 'different' and, thus, a disruption to the default 'natural' system of male leadership. The phrase's usage in the hospitality and tourism management academic context has been linked

to the documented limitations of its gender research. Additionally, examples have been provided of the considerable methodological gaps in extant sectoral gender studies. It has been argued that adherence to traditional theoretical framings and positivist orthodoxies have stifled the development of robust, critical, meaningful gender research in the areas of employment, workforce, careers, management and leadership in hospitality and tourism management.

5.1 Practical implications

It is clear that the academy needs to become more gender diverse. Recent articles using critical or innovative approaches published in mainstream journals, for example, Kalgarou and Costen's (2017) critical diversity management review and Kensbock *et al.*'s (2013) grounded theory hotel study, demonstrate a desire for change in how studies are designed. Empirical evidence shows that affirmative gender quotas although not perfect are effective in increasing the numerical proportion of women in senior leadership teams (Seierstad and Opsahl, 2011). A 'gender audit' of senior leadership teams in the hospitality and tourism academy may be a positive first step in collectively evaluating where the academy sits now in terms of women's participation; 'changing the guard' to become more inclusive of those who do not fit the sectoral cultural norm of male leadership may be necessary. The establishment of gender diverse teams will provide the critical mass of women leaders required to shift a culture over time.

5.2 Industry implications

The review of extant research highlights that the academy's lack of gender diversity is reproduced in the leadership structures of the hospitality and tourism sector. Given the lack of empirical, multi-level, action-oriented and comparative gender studies designed using contemporary theorisation and methods tailored to specific subsectors, groups and contexts, it is beyond the scope of this conceptual article to suggest remedial strategies although some of the empirical articles cited make recommendations to address specific issues. Changes in the current academic structures are required to drive cultural change. A useful second step would be for all academic and research institutions that represent hospitality tourism perspectives to appoint a working group to challenge and rectify the lack of equal representation and participation of women at executive leadership and middle management levels. There have long been professional guidelines circulated on official social media accounts for ensuring

equal gender representation as conference keynotes, academic and industry expert topic panels; however, these are more honoured in the breach than the observance (both WAiT and Trinet feature recent and historic threads on male-dominated hospitality & tourism panels).

Editors of hospitality and tourism journals play an important role for gender equality by appointing more women, especially critical management or feminist/critical race scholars to their senior editorial teams to promote diversity of knowledge paradigms. Intersectional aspects highlighted in the discussion must also be recognised. Indigenous women's voices are crucially important to include on how to achieve a sustainable, gender-equal hospitality and tourism academy.

5.3 Limitations and further research directions

Diversity and intersectional scholars argue that, when gender is researched, it frequently focuses on the experiences of White, educated women. Therefore, a limitation of this article is that while it has been influenced by the work of post-modernism and post-colonial feminist researchers, such as Calás and Smircich (2009) and Holvino (2010), it has not fully engaged with challenging the Western-centric academic discourse about whose knowledge is valued. Future articles will hopefully bridge this lack to create a meaningful legacy for hospitality and tourism researchers. Likewise, it is hoped the review may be the catalyst for future research into changing toxic masculine cultures in specific environments and challenge leadership models that do not further gender equality goals.

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