University of Stavanger

Managers' Perceptions of Age Diversity Within the Hospitality Industry

MASTER THESIS WRITTEN BY
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A Dissertation Submitted to
the Norwegian School of Hotel Management
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree
of International Hospitality Management

University of Stavanger
June 2019

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Universitetet i Stavanger

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT

MASTER'S THESIS

STUDY PROGRAM:	THESIS IS WRITTEN IN THE FOLLOWING SPECIALIZATION/SUBJECT:
International Hospitality Management	Diversity management/age diversity
	IS THE ASSIGNMENT CONFIDENTIAL?
	No

TITLE:

Managers perceptions of age diversity within the hospitality industry

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Abstract

This study outlines managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry. Ten personal semi-structured interviews have been conducted with managers in hotels in the region of Stavanger, and a latent content analysis inspired by Graneheim & Lundman (2004) has been conducted to analyze the data. Results show that in the different stages of employment, including recruitment, training, development and promotion, the informants overall perceived personal characteristics as more important than the employees' age. These results are seemingly influenced by the human resource perspective (policies etc.) of the organization where the informants are employed. Further, the perceived characteristics of younger and older employees showed that these age groups are viewed in different manners by the managers in the industry. These perceptions were considered to be dominated by the informants own personal perceptions of others, rather than the human resource policies of the organization. Some elements of ageism and age discrimination were discovered in the managers' perception of respectively younger and older employees. Results from the analysis shows that the informants are somewhat divided in their perception of whether the hospitality industry would be more diverse considering age in the future. Some state that this is unrealistic due to e.g. unfavorable working hours. Others state that due to e.g. better health and increased life expectancy, it is more appropriate for older employees now than it was before in the industry. Today, the older employees are an underrepresented age group in the industry. The majority of informants, however, desire a larger proportion of older employees in the workforce.

key words: diversity, diversity management, age diversity

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Acknowledgements

This dissertation documents the end of the journey of my master's degree in International Hospitality Management at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Professor Trude Furunes at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management. Thank you for your valuable guidance and encouragement throughout the whole process. Additionally, I would like to thank the fellow members in our research group for great discussions.

I would also express gratitude to all of the informants that took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the study. Thank you!

Further I would like to thank my fellow students and the academic staff at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management for two great years together. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family for all of the support and the encouraging words that I have received throughout the process of writing my dissertation.

Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal

Stavanger, June 16 2019

1.0 Introduction

This study is written within the field of diversity and diversity management, and the purpose of the study is to outline managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry. Studying managers' perception of age diversity could be considered as being a sensitive topic, due to the fact that the study is striving to outline perceptions that employers has towards their employees. The line from perceived negative attitudes of the employees to it being perceived age discrimination could be considered as margin. The Working Environment Act, section §13-1 prohibition against discrimination, states that e.g. direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of age is prohibited (Working Environment Act, 2018, §13-1). It is therefore contiguous to believe that managers would be somewhat conscientious in their statements, especially considering younger and older perceived work performance and their given opportunities in the workforce. To be able to outline the most accurate perceptions that managers have towards employees in the industry, this study focus on two different manners that the managers perception could be influence by. These involves the managers own personal perceptions, and perceptions influenced by the human resource policies of the organization that the managers are employed in, hereafter addressed as the human resource perspectives. These manners of what affects our perceptions would be explained more detailed in chapter 2.2.

It is presumed that managers' perception would be influenced by the human resource perspectives when discussing recruitment, training, development, promotion and turnover/retention. When outlining managers perceived characteristics of younger and older employees it is presumed that these would be dominated by the managers own personal perceptions. This is also assumed when discussing the current workforce in the industry. When the prospects of the future is being discussed it is assumed that these perceptions would

be incorporated by both personal perceptions and human resource perspectives of the organization. The results that will be presented are based on the informants' own individual judgment of what they themselves perceive as older and younger employees. No specific age descriptions were utilized when discussing respectively younger and older employees in the interviews.

1.1 Diversity

According Yukl (2013, p. 363) diversity can take many forms, including differences in race, ethnic identity, age, gender, education, physical appearance, socio-economic level and sexual orientation. Throughout the recent years diversity has been granted a greater focus in the workforce, and the range of women in the workforce, as well as representatives from different ethnicities, religions and races have expanded. In addition, the number of older workers has increased compared to earlier (Yukl, 2013, p. 363). Mor Barak (2017, p. 115) defines diversity this way: "diversity is about belonging to groups that are visibly or invisibly different from whatever is considered "mainstream" in society". In the context of employment, it can be defined as belonging to a specific social group that puts you either on the inside or outside of the workforce.

According to Mor Barak (2017, p. 5) one of the most significant problems facing today's diverse workforce is exclusion. This exclusion is present in both the overt practice in formal or informal policies, as well as in the individual perception that employers and employees have regardless of the organizations policies. Diversity groupings differ from cultures and countries, but the common factor is the experience of social exclusion, which is particularly relevant in the workplace. Exclusion in the workplace could lead to, either implicitly or explicitly, exclusion from job opportunities, information networks, team membership, human

resource investments or in the decision-making process based on their actual or perceived membership in a disfavored identity group (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 5). Billing and Sundin (2006, p. 103) state that even though people make an effort to integrate and somewhat give up their identity, exclusion can still happen. On the opposite side, inclusion in the workplace has been linked to receiving better job opportunities and career advancement in the organization (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 5-6). According to Daft (2011, p. 12) bringing diversity into the organization is the best way to attract talent and to make the organization mindset broad enough to succeed in a multinational world.

1.2 Diversity management

A crucial element for reducing the potential exclusion in the workplace is if the organization is focusing on diversity management. Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 57) state that diversity management is related to antidiscrimination and optimal utilization of available workforce. Antidiscrimination involves laws, regulations and agreements, while optimal utilization of available workforce is linked to the human resource policies within the organization. Diversity management is defined as; "…the voluntary organizational actions that are designed to create greater inclusion of employees from various backgrounds into the formal and informal organizational structures through deliberate policies and programs" (Mor Barak, 2015, p. 209).

Yukl (2013, p. 363) state that managing diversity is an important, but difficult, responsibility for managers in the twenty-first century. If the management is able to successfully embrace the diversity within the organization, potential outcomes are increased creativity and effective use of employees to fill important jobs. However, if unsuccessfully managed it could result in distrust, conflict, lower satisfaction and higher turnover. Therefore, it is of importance to

create an environment where employees not just identify themselves with their subgroup, but rather with all employees within the organization (Yukl, 2013, p. 363).

According to Yukl (2013, p. 22) there is a continuing discussion concerning the difference between the terms leadership and management. The author states that one can be a leader without being a manager and vice versa. This meaning that e.g. a person can be a manager without having any subordinates. However, Daft (2011, p. 15) states that managers and leaders are not inherently different types of people, and that both terms are essential in organizations and must be implemented in order to achieve great organizational performance. Leadership is defined as: "…the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl, 2013, 23). Whilst, management is defined as: "the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling organizational resources" (Daft, 2011, p. 15).

It is of importance for the outcome that managers in a diverse workforce encourage tolerance and appreciation, and discourage intolerance and discrimination. Mangers could implement diversity training within the organization in order to encourage tolerance and appreciation. One way of doing this is to increase the understanding of diversity problems by giving the employees self-awareness of their stereotypes and intolerance. Another part of the diversity training is to educate the employees about diversity, and how to respond to the differences that occur within the organization. It is important that the differences of the employees in the organization are seen as an advantage rather than a liability, and this is an essential part of the managers' responsibilities (Yukl, 2013, p. 363).

1.3 Age diversity

Antonlin & Suyker (2001) have stated that Norway will experience a significant ageing of its population, and the reason for this are mainly low fertility rates and higher life expectancy. As a consequence, there will be a growth in elderly workers and a decrease of the younger workforce (Antolin & Suyker, 2001, p. 6). Mor Barak (2017, p. 87) stated that aging is a demographic trend that exists in both the developing and the developed countries around the world, and is due to mortality improvements and longer life expectancies. According to Lucas (1993, p. 35) the hospitality industry seem to favor younger employees in the workforce, and older employees are outnumbered by their younger colleagues. Current statistics confirms this, stating that in the Norwegian hospitality industry as many as 1/3 are under the age of 24 years (NHO Reiseliv, 2018). In developed countries, such as Norway, pension schemes tend to allow or even encourage early retirement. However, the government in developed countries now worries about the sustainability of the pension systems, as the postemployment life has increased (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 87). This gives reasons to assume that there will be changes in the future that are more facilitated to the older employees in the workforces.

1.4 Background of the study

Age diversity is interesting for many reasons, one being that the prospects of the future state that there will be a need for e.g. employees to work longer before retirement in order for the Norwegian Government to be able to uphold the current welfare program (Furunes, 2016, p. 127). Various statistics imply that the hospitality industry is a relatively "young" labor force, and it is therefore interesting to find out what perceptions managers in the industry have towards respectively the younger and the older employees. By studying this, characteristics of these two age group will be outlined, including perceived differences that could explain why the hospitality industry is such a relatively young labor force.

Especially interesting in published research was the fact that younger and older employees were described in such a different manner. It was of interest to find out whether these perceptions where personal social perceptions or perceptions that were influenced by the organizations rules and restrictions. As age is considered to be a sensitive subject within employment, there are reasons to believe that organizations have a set of rules and restrictions that are to be followed. Therefore, it was assumed that some of the statements that were made while interviewing the informants could be influenced by the organizations rules and restrictions. Therefore, the study strives to explain both factors where the results most likely would be depend on the managers own social perceptions, as well as factors such as e.g. recruitment and promotion, where there are likely that the statements by the informants were somewhat influenced by the organizational view as to where they were employed.

Further, it was of interest to see whether there were any visible differences in the perceptions made as to whether the managers themselves were considered as younger or older in the industry. Therefore, the sample in the study involved both what literature defines as younger and older employees and employers. To explore managers' perception can outline the fortunate and less fortunate perceptions that managers in the industry bear. An insight in this could be of importance in the sense that managers can be aware of the perceptions that are being outlined for both younger and older employees. Further, it could be helpful for employees to be aware of the perceived perceptions that managers hold to their respective age group, in order to avoid being based upon attributes that do not describe one as a person.

1.5 Aim and research questions

This study has an aim to outline managers' perception of age diversity in the hospitality industry. By conducting ten personal interviews with managers in the hospitality industry in Stavanger, the study is striving to outline the managers' perceptions of the phenomenon in the workforce. The following research questions will be answered throughout the study:

RQ1: What are the managers' perceptions of the current age distribution in the hospitality industry?

RQ2: What are managers' perceptions of younger and older employees in the different aspects of employment, and are these generated by the organizations human resource policies?

RQ3: What are managers' perceived characteristics and challenges with respectively the younger and older employees in the workforce?

RQ4: What are managers' perceptions of the aging workforce, and to what extent are they planning to utilize this growing manpower?

RQ5: What are the managers' prospects of the future concerning the age diversity in the hospitality industry?

1.6 Structure of the study

The study follows a natural and continuous prescription. Throughout chapter 1.0, the phenomenon of diversity, diversity management and age diversity were presented. This is the overall theme of the thesis. Further, the background of the study was explained, and lastly, the aim of the study and the research questions were presented.

Chapter 2.0 presents the literature review. Here, previous findings are introduced. The study does not operate with any specific age constructs, as the informants themselves are stating their perception based on the terms younger employees and older employees. However, these definitions are discussed in order to get an insight into how the terms are utilized in literature. Further, literature of what affects our perspectives is included. Here, both the personal perceptions and the human resource perspectives are presented. It is adjacent to believe that the managers' perceptions are affected by social perceptions as well as perceptions associated to the organizations human resource policies. The chapter includes literature on different processes of employment, including recruitment, training, development, promotion and turnover/retention. Further, characteristics of younger and older employees are presented. Subsequently, literature on ageism and age discrimination mentioned. Lastly, the chapter includes literature concerning the prospects of the future in the hospitality industry.

In chapter 3.0, the contexts of the study are presented. This involves statistics and literature concerning the Norwegian welfare state, the current pension age in Norway and the current age distribution in the hospitality industry in Norway. Further, the Working Environment Act and The IA-agreement is presented. Lastly, a forecast concerning the dependency ratio is mentioned, which gives the reader an insight to the prospects of the future considering age.

In chapter 4.0, the methodology is presented with the course of procedure of the study. The study is designed qualitative, and semi-structured interviews have been conducted with ten managers in the hospitality industry in the region of Stavanger. This chapter strives to explain the approach of the study, from the decision of choosing an appropriate research design to the conducted analysis. Additionally, the strengths and limitations of the research, as well as the reflections from the process are presented.

In chapter 5.0, the results from the analysis are presented. The content of the chapter includes results that are relevant for giving answering to the research questions of the study that were presented in chapter 1.5. The result includes the correct and objective transcripts of what was being discussed in the interviews with the informants.

Throughout chapter 6.0, the results from the analysis are being discussed with the literature, statistics and forecast that was presented throughout chapter 1.0-3.0. Here, the reader will find answers to which results were similar, and what differed from previous research. Each of the presented research questions in 1.5 is answered individually. Lastly, the chapter includes implications and recommendations for further research. The study concludes in chapter 7.0. In chapter 8.0 all utilized references are listed, whilst chapter 9.0 include the appendixes relevant for the study.

2.0 Literature review

Up to this point, the study has presented the overall phenomenon that is being studied. In this chapter, previous research of topics related to age diversity will be presented, alongside with statistics and forecast on various implications that is related to the study.

2.1 Definitions of younger and older employees in literature

Few definitions of younger employees are present in literature, however, organizations have used different ages to separate age groups in statistics. NHO Reiseliv (2018) utilizes the age 24 years old or less to define a younger employee in their yearly-presented statistics of workers in the Norwegian tourism- and hospitality industry. These are often known as generation Z, which indicates all youths born in 1995 and later (Terjesen & Salomon, 2015, p. 42). Scandic Hotels and Thon Hotels use the age up to 30 years old to separate the younger part of the workforce from the resisting age groups (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55; Olav Thon Group, 2017, p. 23-24).

While the there is a lack of definition for younger employees in literature, there is, however, a range of different definitions of what is considered as older employees in the workforce. Ilmarinen (2001) states that the term "aging workers" is often used when referring to those between 45-50 years (Ilmarinen, 2001, p. 546). According to Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 42) these are a part of the baby-boomers generations (born between 1946 and 1964) and generation X (born between 1965-1979). Tikkanen (2006) state that the common terminology used in Nordic countries of an older worker is someone that is 45 years old or older (Tikkanen, 2006, p. 10). These definitions differs tremendously from statistics presented by Ipsos for Senter for seniorpolitikk (SSP), where it is stated that employers estimate an

employee as old when reaching 56,3 years (average results), whilst the employees themselves consider an older workers as 59,4 year in average (Ipsos, 2018, p. 4).

2.2 What affects our perceptions?

As the purpose of the study is to outline managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry, it is of importance to be aware of what actually affects our perception. It is therefore a need to explain different approaches as to how we perceive both others and ourselves. As mentioned, it is contiguous to believe that the managers statements would be connected to both their personal ways of perceiving others, as well as perceptions that are based on the organizational human resource perspectives.

2.2.1 Personal/social perceptions

In the work life, as in the general social life, we desire to perceive others and ourselves in the most correct way possible. Perceptions often give us reliable information of our inner and utter environment. However, one should be careful not to simplify reality (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, p. 153). As managers were asked to discuss their perception of matters related to age diversity, the informants utilized their social perceptions in order to give their opinions. This is related to social identity theory, as we explain and reflect on how we view ourselves as well as how we view others. Social identity theory is related to both personal identity and social identity. Personal identity is the subjective perspective of who and how you are as a person. Very often people describe themselves or others based on e.g. personal characteristics and values (Kaufmann, 2003, p. 153-154).

The social identity is the identity you describe yourself or others by, based on references to the social group(s) one is a part of. It is in human nature to focus on the differences between

others and ourselves and between our own social group(s) and others social group(s). In this process you, often, minimalize the differences that range within a specific social group and therefore maximize the difference you feel towards one group that you do not feel a belonging to. Even though these perspectives often are overstatements and unreliable, humans tend to hold on to them (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, pp. 153-154).

2.2.2 Stereotypes and prejudice

According to Mor Barak (2017, p. 130) all humans holds stereotypical views of groups that differs from ourselves, and sometimes also about those that are similar to ourselves or those that are identical how we identify ourselves. This could of course also be relevant for the managers that are participating in the study. As previously mentioned, perceptions are often overstatements and unreliable, however, humans tend to hold on to these. When holding stereotypes about others you minimize the individual differences that exist within a group, and rather judge all members alike (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, pp. 154-155). Prejudice is about people's attitudes to others that are members of different group(s) that yourself, and how you expect certain thing from them based on the perceptions you hold (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 138). Stereotypes do to a large extent evaluate a person's perception of others, and the distance between bearing negative attitudes towards others, to it being perceived as discrimination towards other are not necessarily large.

2.2.3 The Human Resource Paradigm in Diversity Management

One of the prominent approaches related to diversity management in the organization is The Human Resource Paradigm. According to Mor Barak (2017, p. 214), HR managers have recognized the need to adopt effective diversity management practices. The importance of overcoming barriers for diversity and to acquire rewards of a diverse workforce have had an

increased focus in the recent decades. As mentioned, it is contiguous to believe that the

perceived perceptions would be influenced by the human resource of the organization that the

informants are employed in. The table below is presented in Mor Barak (2017, p. 214) and are

developed by Kossek, Lobel and Brown (2006). This table makes connections between HR

management practices, workforce diversity, and individual, group and organizational

outcomes (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 214).

Human Resource Approach	Goal	Strategy	Assumptions
Diversity enlargement	Change organizational culture through changing the composition of the workforce	Recruit employees from diverse backgrounds	New hires will change the culture by their mere presence – no need for additional intervention.
Diversity sensitivity	Overcome adversity and promote productive communication and collaboration	Train to increase sensitivity and improve communication	Increased sensitivity to differences will affect performance.
Cultural audit	Identify obstacles faced by employees of diversity backgrounds and modify company practices accordingly	Audit current practices through surveys and focus groups and generate changes to address these deficiencies	Problems are caused by the dominant cultural group in the organization and need to be addressed by that group.
Strategy for achieving organizational outcomes	Achieve organizational goals through diversity management	Integrate diversity management with HR policy areas and other company strategic choices	Diversity management practices have to be linked to desired individual and organizational outcomes.

Table 1. *The Human Resource Approach to Diversity Management* (Mor Barak, 2017, p.

214).

The first approach in table 1, diversity enlargement, focus on increasing the representation of

employees with different background into the organization. The goal is to change the culture

within the organization by including a range of diverse employees. However, this approach is

also perceived to focus on the perception of political correctness from the public, rather than having the intention to actually embrace diversity in the workplace (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 214). The second approach in table 1, diversity sensitivity, recognize the potential difficulties with a diverse workforce, and are focusing on diversity training to reduce stereotyping and discrimination among the employees. However, a potential consequence if not successfully implemented is that these differences could enlarge the differences between the employees rather than improving it (Mor Barak, 2017, pp. 214-215). The third approach in table 1, cultural audit, aims to identify the limitations that are being perceived by the diverse employees within an organization. This approach only focus on the impression that the problems are caused by the dominant demographic group, and should also be addressed by that group (Mor Barak, 2017, pp. 215-216). The last approach in table 1, strategy for achieving organizational outcomes, focus on the managers' role to identify the link between diversity management and the individual and the organizational desired outcomes (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 216).

2.3 Recruitment

Mykletun (2005, p. 224) state that in the tourism and hospitality industry, there is a young workforce with a lot of part-time positions, and where the majority of employees are under the age of 35 years old. According to Lucas (1993, p.35) there is human resource trends in the hospitality industry that seems to be in favor for the younger workforce, and as a result younger workers outnumbers older workers. This is supported with current statistics presented by two of the major hotel chains in Norway. The statistics show that 43,7% of the employees in Scandic Hotels and 39% of the employees in Thon Hotels are under 30 years old. Additionally, only 11,9% and 12% of the employees in the respective hotel chains are over 50 years old (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55; Olav Thon Group, 2017, p. 23-24).

The question of what influences interviewers hiring decisions has been discussed in literature for several decades (Garcia, Posthuma, & Colella, 2008, p. 173). The authors state that, typically, individuals are attracted to organizations that appear to have similar values as themselves, both concerning the employees and the overall organization values. In turn, organizations tend to hire applicants that are similar to the organizations existing employees as this type of hiring is considered as a comfortable choice (Garcia et al., 2008, pp. 184-186). This was also discussed in chapter 2.2.3, where four human resources approaches to diversity management were presented. Human resource managers have recognized the need to adopt effective diversity management practices. The focus to overcoming barriers for diversity and to acquire rewards of a diverse workforce have had an increased importance throughout the recent decades (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 214).

According to a study by Furunes & Mykletun (2005, p. 122) age were of less importance and the applicants' personality was of greater importance in the process of hiring new employees. In that study, the informants stated that regarding effectiveness, there were no differences between younger and older workers. Factors like personality, individual work preference and efficiency were seen as more important than the age of the employees (Furunes & Mykletun, 2005, p. 126). However, Furunes & Mykletun (2005, p. 122) state that even though age seemed to be a less important factor for the informants, age is often connected to the "right" competence that is searched for in the recruitment. It was addressed that in the recruitment process few managers planned to actively recruit older workers (Furunes & Mykletun, 2005, p. 116).

Furunes & Mykletun (2005) state that there is a different recruitment process for full-time and

part-time jobs. For part-time employees very often recruitments happen through friends or an announcement at the local educational institutions. Full-time jobs are often announced on the Internet or employees are recruited internally in the hotel chains (Furunes & Mykletun, 2005, pp. 121-122). Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 72) state that most employees have limited options concerning their careers when reaching a certain age, and that this is something that both the employees and the employers are aware off. According to Senter for seniorpolitikk (SSP), leaders would hesitate to invite qualified applicants that had reached the average age of 58,6 years, and that this age has increased compared to previous years. The statistics also shows, as mentioned, that employers estimate an employee as old when reaching 56,3 years (average results) whilst the employees themselves consider an older workers as 59,4 year in average (Ipsos, 2018, pp. 4-5). Another approach considering age and recruitment state that more organizations now see elderly employees as valuable, and have therefore actively recruited elderly more frequently over the years (Magd, 2003, p. 395).

2.4 Training

Elderly employees are often presented as less adaptable than their younger employees, and with less of a competence on newer innovations (Schøne, 2005, p. 55). Results from SSP show that as much as 6 of 10 managers confirm that younger employees are being preferred when new technology or work methods are to be implemented in the organization (Ipsos, 2018, p. 17). Within training, it is mentioned that good-practice training is necessary to ensure that elderly workers are given the same learning opportunities throughout their working life and that they are not neglected (Furunes & Mykletun, 2005, p. 120). According to Mykletun (2005, p. 229) older workers have experienced limited access to courses and that the organization favored younger employees when they were introducing new technology and ways of working. Results from Solem (2016, p. 166) shows that 62% of managers and 54% of

the employers in his study have experienced that younger workers are preferred when new technology are being introduced in the workplace. These results shows that managers does to a larger extent feel that older are being neglected with technology then what the employees themselves perceive. Results from SSP shows that fewer managers today experience that older employee more seldom gets the opportunity to attend course or other training in the work place than for 15 years ago (Ipsos, 2018, p. 18).

In the published statistics distributed for SSP, managers were asked to state whether the organization had experienced (during the last two years) that older workers were less competent, but however, still had intentions to continue in their work. Here the current upper age limit (72 years old) was utilized. Results showed that most managers experienced no such thing, and this was only accurate for 1/10 of the respondents. Further, the report from SSP shows that few organizations have resigned employees, showing respectively 3% (private sector) and 7% (public sector) resigned someone in this period (Ipsos, 2018, p. 13).

2.5 Development

In 1997, Ilmarinen, Tuomi and Klockars published a longitudinal study where active employees working in the same occupation was studied over a period of 11 years (between 1981-1992). Results showed that the employees work ability significantly decreased for those who continued working in the same profession over the whole period. It was strong associations between age and work content, and especially the period after turning 51 years was found to be critical (Ilmarinen, Tuomi, & Klockars, 1997, p. 54). It was suggests that employees with jobs that contained heavy physical demands should no later than when reaching the age of 47 to 51 years change to a position that were less physically demanding. This suggestion was based on the results that showed that work ability was dependent on the

content of the work, and physical demanding jobs also had the greatest decline in work ability as the participants aged. Further, results also stated that about 40% of the participants in the study had a good or excellent rating, whilst 20% had poor rating in work ability after reaching the age of 55 years (Ilmarinen et al., 1997, p. 55). However, it was stated that employees decline in work ability could not be defined by the participants age alone. The position, job assignment and industry played a significant role, alongside with the participants' health and lifestyle (Ilmarinen et al., 1997, p. 55).

Furunes & Mykletun (2010, p. 24) state that some case studies show that older employees are indirectly discriminated in their workplace. This because they often are "spared the trouble" of taking part in the change processes in the organizations. Solem (2016, p. 166) states that the learning abilities for older workers seems to be less trusted, and that these are to a less extent challenged compared to younger employees learning abilities. Results shows that 32% of those over the age of 50 years feels that older workers are passed over for appointments and internal recruitments, while 20% of those under the age of 50 perceive the same (2016, p. 167).

According to Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 41) there is an ongoing discussion between the government and several employers- and employees organizations of when you should be allowed to resign an employee. The government has increased the age limit from 70 to 72 years, and are discussing to increasing it further up to 75 years. However, the employers- and employees organizations want this limit to be no more than 70 years. This is based on employers fear of being left with less competent employees without having the possibility to resign without the potential following legal problems. For the employees organizations the main reason is that employees would have to work longer than they want or longer than they

are capable of. All parts does build upon the assumptions that older workers are less capable than younger workers (Terjesen & Salomon, 2015, p. 41). Results from Solem (2016, p. 168) shows that 31% of those over 50 years and 21% of those less than 50 years old means that there should be a mandatory retirement age. From the managers' perspective, statistics from SSP shows that young managers are less positive to an upper age limit to resign employees, than what the older managers are. 18% of managers below 30 years are positive to an age limit, while 42% of older managers (here presented as those over 50 years old) shares the same perception (Ipsos, 2018, p. 11).

2.6 Promotion

Nadiri and Tanova (2010) state that organizations in the hospitality industry works towards increasing the competiveness by looking at the recruiting, retaining and managing resources. This is a helpful tool and, according to the authors, especially human resources play a central role in the service sector. Organizations see the benefits of increasing employees' job satisfaction and motivation, and that this could lead to an increased competitiveness and further a better future performance for the organization (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010, p. 33). According to Mykletun (2005, p. 229) older workers felt discriminated in promotions and intern recruitment. However, according to statistics distributed for SSP, there are fewer managers that perceive that older employees are being bypassed in promotion or intern recruitment in the workforce today, than 15 years ago (Ipsos, 2018, p. 18).

2.7 Turnover/retention

According to Brown, Thomas and Bosselman (2015, p. 130) employee turnover is a continuous challenge within the hospitality industry. In their study, it was stated that common reasons for leaving the hospitality industry were long hours and compensation. For younger

workers, the requirement set by the managers often did not fit the perception of the work, and especially the long hour mentality were stated as a discrepancy between the young workers and their respective managers. Employees turnover are presented in literature to be relatively high among younger workers in the hospitality industry. This could be supported with statistics from Scandic Hotels, showing that 44,4% of the employees' turnover where from employees under the age of 30 years. On the other side, employees over the age of 50 years had a drastically lower turnover being responsible for 8,2% of the turnover the same year (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55).

The generational differences mentioned above could explain the high turnover of young workers in the hospitality industry. The results from the study states that young workers who enter the workforce have an unrealistic view of their career in the hospitality industry, further, the study indicate that there is a need to present a more realistic view of the industry in the educational institutions. Through e.g. guest lectures, internships, part-time jobs and field trips, young workers could earlier be aware of the compensation, work-life balance and working conditions in the hospitality industry (Brown et al., 2015, pp. 135-136). Furunes & Mykletun (2005) have studied how managers direct issues of an ageing workforce, and whether this had implications for the hospitality industry. Results showed that managers in the hospitality industry had more positive than negative experience with having a balance of younger and older workers in the workforce (Furunes & Mykletun, 2005, p. 116).

2.8 Assumptions of younger and older employees

It is important to state that the following are assumptions of younger and older employees, and does not describe everyone that is belonging within the described generations or age group. Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 46) state that each generation is diverse and that no

description can generalize the whole generation. Here, generation Z and generation Y are describing the younger employees, while generation X and the Baby-boomers generation describes the older employees in the workforce. It is important that readers are aware that what age involves with the different generations differs in the published literature, however, in this study), the descriptions Terjesen & Salomon (2005) of younger and older employees are presented.

2.8.1 Younger employees: Generation Z & Generation Y

Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 45) state that youths born in 1995 and later are a part of what generation Z. In 2015, the majority of this generation was still studying. However, the authors have collected assumptions of this generation, which involves great skills in IT and that they, compared to other generations, will be done studying earlier. Further, Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 45) state that the generation consists of people with a considerably higher dropout percentage from upper secondary school and that the lack of motivation to school could be a potential problem in the work life. Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 45) raise questions whether this will implicate the work environment or if the generation Z will adapt to the work ethics of their older colleagues.

Managers often see younger employees as a better investment for the future, as they have a more up to date education, new methods of working and new impulses that can vitalize the working environment and keep the organization updated on cultural changes and values that are engaging the youngster. Overall younger employees are described more positive than their older colleagues (Mykletun, 2005, p. 227). According to Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 44) characteristics of generation Y involve being more diverse in interests and that the generation have greater ethnic diversity than previous generations. The most talented within this

generation are independent and innovative that appreciates taking responsibilities in the workplace. Generation Y is described as creative, and acknowledges freedom and flexibility in their work. According to the authors, there is a longing to avoid detailed management, however there is a desire for distinct guidelines and management support. These somewhat conflicting desires makes it challenging for both the managers and the older employees to accommodate their needs (Terjesen & Salomon, 2015, p. 44).

2.8.2 Older employees: The baby-boomers and generation X

The Baby-boomers are described to emphasize work ethics, respect and values. There has been a strong wanting to be seen as individuals for this generation, and they are described as competitive since they have been many competing for the same positions. In addition, the strong orientation to gain a long-term employment and characteristics such as being process oriented is mentioned (Terjesen & Salomon, 2015, p. 43). Magd (2003, p. 365) state that elderly workers overall are more loyal and committed employees.

Characteristics of the generation X include that they feel less of a commitment and less loyalty to the work place, compared to the Baby-boomers generation. Further, they are higher educated and with better IT-skills than their older colleagues. In addition, the generation X wishes continuously feedback and acknowledgement on their work. As the Baby-boomers, the generations X also emphasize work ethics (Terjesen & Salomon, 2015, p. 44).

In 2013, Poulston and Jenkins published a study where the purpose was to examine hotel employers' views of older workers, as these may influence older workers ability to access hotel employment. Some of the findings from Poulston and Jenkins (2013) included that 45% of the respondents view an older person as someone that was over the age of 55 years old.

The respondents were both what is considered as young employees and older employees.

Further, results showed that respondents' perception was that older workers were considered

best suited to accounting, administrative and maintenance roles. Least suitable work for older

workers was stated to be physical work such as housekeeping and portering. Older workers

were also perceived as having good people and communication skills, and with less of a

competence in technology. However, the perception of less competence with technology for

older workers did not have impact on older workers being more suitable for work in

accounting, administrative and maintenance roles (Poulston & Jenkins, 2013, p. 13).

According to Mykletun (2005) older workers are dismissed concerning both promotions and

in the recruitment process. On one side, older workers are described as a valuable resource

due to their long experience, stability, work moral and with great social skills. In addition, the

author states that there are a lower turnover and absence among the older workers, and that

they in general shows great signs of loyalty. On the other side, older workers are often

perceived as resigned, less flexible, both physical and mentally reduced and with a reduced

competence in IT (Mykletun, 2005, p. 227). According to Mykletun (2005) stereotypes does

to a large extent evaluate managers and employees' impression of older workers, and the

distance between negative attitudes to age discrimination is margin. These stereotypes

emphasizes older workers stated resistance towards change and new knowledge, the reduced

potential for self-development and lower productivity (Mykletun, 2005, pp. 227-229).

2.9 Ageism and age discrimination

At the end of 2006, all EU countries were obligated to implement legislations to protect from

discrimination on the basis of nationality, gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age

or sexual orientation. However, already in 1995 did Lucas (1995, p. 234) state that

the issue of age in employment was not a new phenomenon. According to March & Sahin-Dikmen (2003, p. 7) age was the most-reported reason for discrimination experience for EU citizens in the early 2000s. Poulston & Jenkins (2013, p. 1) state that it is possible that older workers are not attracted to working in the hospitality industry, however, it is also possible that employers discriminatory attitudes limit the ability of older job seekers to secure hotel employment (Poulston & Jenkins, 2013, p. 1).

In 2002, Markeds- og mediainstituttet (MMI) investigated discrimination in the workforce, and the results showed that there were more people that felt discriminated due to their age rather than their gender. As much as 52% stated that they had experienced age discrimination in the workplace. Older workers felt discriminated in promotions and intern recruitment, experienced limited access to courses and that the organization favored younger employees when they were introducing new technology and ways of working (Mykletun, 2005, p. 229). Results from a study conducted by Solem (2016, p. 166) shows that 25% of older workers, whilst 15% of the younger workers in the sample had experienced age discrimination in the workplace.

Results from a field experiment on age discrimination in the Swedish labor market showed that older applicants searching for a job got fewer invitations for interviews and job offers than younger applications. The fictitious applicants in the study were a 31-year-old male and a 46-year-old-male with matching applications searching for jobs as restaurant workers and sales assistants (Ahmed, Andersson, & Hammarstedt, 2012, p. 403). The fictitious applicants had the same exact work experience in restaurant and sales, and the only difference between them was an age gap of 15 years. Results showed that the younger applicant were three times more likely to receive an invitation for a interview or a job offer than the older applicant

(Ahmed et al., 2012, pp. 404-405) According to Ahmed et al. (2012, p. 405) there were found strong evidence of ageism in the first stages of the hiring process. The results are especially interesting as Sweden has a law that prohibits discrimination of age in the workforce, similar to the Working Environment Act, section §13-1 that are functional in Norway. Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 25) state that leaders should be aware of the mechanisms that occurs from ageism, in order to be able to control it before it becomes age discrimination. Bratt, Abrams, Swift, Vauclair & Marques (2018, p. 175) published a study where the purpose was to investigate the perceived age discrimination with data collected in 29 countries in the ESS (European Social Survey). Results showed that younger people reported to have experienced the highest levels of age discrimination. Only in Czech Republic, Russia, Ukraine, Cyprus and Greece did the older employees experience more discrimination than other age groups. This shows that age discrimination is also present against the younger part of the workforce.

Stypinska & Turek (2017, p. 55-59) studied the perceived age discrimination in employment among older workers in Poland. The study focused on two types of age discrimination, respectively called hard and soft age discrimination. Results showed that 15,7% had experienced hard discrimination concerning age, meaning things that were directly prohibited and that could legally be challenged in court. Further, 28,6% had experienced soft discrimination, such as ageist jokes or comments. This are factors that are not directly enshrined in legislations and could not lead to legal actions, however, it is something that is perceived as negatively towards older employees in the Polish workforce.

SSP (Senter for seniorpolitikk) state that an important goal is to reduce the discrimination of employees based on their age. Further, the organization state that older employees are vulnerable in the both the recruitment process and in the downsize situations that occurs.

However, both managers and the employees were also asked to give respond to discrimination as a general term in the workplace. Results showed that 19% of the employers had experienced discrimination sometimes, often or very often, whilst the 14% of the managers themselves had experienced this (Ipsos, 2018, p. 16). Results from a study by Solem (2016, p. 166) shows that the proportion of those that reported to have experienced age discrimination occasionally was 18% of the employees and 14% of the managers from the study. It is therefore a small difference between the employees and the managers. Further, with these relatively low results, the author state that it is reasonable to assure that age discrimination were not a problem that happen frequent in the respondents' workplaces.

2.10 Prospects of the future

Antonlin & Suyker (2001) have stated that Norway will experience a significant ageing of its population, and the reason for this are mainly low fertility rates and higher life expectancy. The authors state the Norwegian population will continue ageing and the proportion of those 65 years or older will increase from around 15 per cent to 23 per cent of the population by 2040 (Antolin & Suyker, 2001, p. 6). This states that the elderly will represent almost a quarter of the population within the next 20 years. This is supported by SSB, as a forecast shows that the proportion of elderly people in the Norwegian population is steadily growing. Numbers shows that the proportion of the population aged 70 and over increases from the current 12 per cent to 21 per cent in 2060 (SSB, 2018). Further, Mor Barak (2017) states that longer life expectancies expand the population of older people, and that it worldwide is little realization of the mortality improvements that has lead to a growth in the population worldwide. That the population is growing older is something that can be seen in all regions in the world, both the developed, including Norway, and also in the less-developed countries (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 87).

3. Context of the study

This chapter includes the context of the elements as to why age diversity in the workforce is an interesting phenomenon to study. The statistics and forecasts that are being presented are relevant to outline the current situation in the hospitality industry, as well as to the phenomenon of age in general, in the workforce.

3.1 The Norwegian welfare state

As Norway is a welfare state, everyone is entitled the same rights and opportunities concerning healthcare, education etc. To uphold this welfare it is necessarily that as many as possible that are able to work, are working (Furunes, 2016, p. 127). The Norwegian welfare model is considered to have a quite generous arrangement for those that are un-able to work, and in order to uphold it, it is of importance that the majority are working (Schøne, 2005, p. 81). As birthrates are decreasing and the life expectancy is increasing, there is a need for a higher employment rate in order to uphold the welfare. It is also a need for employees to work for a longer time before retiring. Results from SSP shows that only 33% of organizations in the private sector have strategies to keep and further train their older workers, whilst in the public sector this number shows 71% (Ipsos, 2018, p. 29).

3.2 The current pension age in Norway

Furunes (2016, p. 128) state that the pension reform that started in 2011 was established with the intention to extent the employment by doing it less attractive to get an early retirement. Today, the retirement age is voluntarily when reaching the age of 62-75 years old, however, the pension reform have made it more profitable to retire if you are willing to work longer before retirement (Furunes, 2016, p. 128). Even though Norway has the highest employment ratio for elderly workers in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

(OECD), the rates particularly fall when aged 62 years. Antonlin & Suyker (2001, p. 6) state that the official age of retirement is 67 years, however, only a third of people aged 64 are still working (Antolin & Suyker, 2001, p. 6). Furunes (2016, p. 168) state that the pension age per date has been closer to retirement at 62-63 years, even though the official age is 67 years.

3.3 The current age distribution in the hospitality industry in Norway

There are a majority of young employees that dominate the age distribution in hotels in Norway. Numbers from NHO Reiseliv shows that on a national basis, 32 % of those that are working in the hospitality industry are under the age of 24 years. This meaning that approximately 1/3 of the employees in the tourism and hospitality industry are under 24 years. In comparison to other industries, the average of employers under 24 years is 12 % (NHO Reiseliv, 2018). The hospitality industry is therefore a relatively "young" labor force, which also is visible in reports from some of the largest hotel chains in the country. Unfortunately, not all of the major hotel chains in Norway distribute this statistics. However, it is worth mentioning that in Scandic Hotels 43,7% of the employees are under 30 years, while in Thon Hotels 39% of the employees are under the age of 30 (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55; Olav Thon Group, 2017, p. 23-24). This is a relatively large part of the labor force in the organization. Further the rapports show that only 11,9% of the employees in Scandic hotels are over 50 years old and that 12% of the employees from Thon hotels are over 50 years old (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55; Olav Thon Group, 2017, p. 23-24). The statistics shows that there is a modest part of employees within the hospitality industry that are over 50 years old.

3.4 The Working Environment Act

In Norway, the Working Environment Act, section §13-1**.** Prohibition against discrimination, states that; "(1) Direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of political views, membership of a trade union, or age is prohibited" (Working Environment Act, 2018, §13-1). The purpose of the Working Environment Act is to ensure equal treatment among all workers, as well as safe working conditions. The overall purpose of the Working Environment Act is to be a contribution for a more including workforce in Norway (Regjeringen, 2018a).

3.5 The IA-agreement

The first IA-agreement was signed in 2001, and was established with the intent to create more inclusive workplace in all companies in Norway and is a memorandum of understanding between the government, employer and the employees. The Norwegian Government presented the new IA-agreement for 2019-2022 in December 2018 (Regjeringen, 2018b). The background for the agreement is that there is a need for a greater labor force and also to save costs by decreasing the amount of non-workers. In addition, it emphasizes that being in working is health promoting. The agreement is formed so that each part individually and collectively can achieve their goals (Terjesen & Salomon, 2015, pp. 30-31). One of the national goals for this period (2019-2022) is that as all working place should facilitate their companies with the necessary resources so that all employees have the possibility to work as much as they want, for as long as they want (Regjeringen, 2018b). According to statistics distributed by Senter for seniorpolitikk (SSP) less than 4 of 10 managers states that the organization have created and signed an IA-agreement. This is a reduction from earlier years. It is a visible difference between the public sector, where 97% of the organizations have

signed an IA-agreement, and the private sector, where only 24% of the organization has signed the IA-agreement (Ipsos, 2018, p. 31).

3.6 The dependency ratio

SSB presents the inverse dependency ratio, which is an indication of how many people are of working age relative to the number of elderly and/or children and adolescents. The number of elderly is defined by SSB as those that are 65 years or more, while the children and adolescents are defined as those that are between 0-19 years old. Today, the ration is more than 3:1, but by 2060 the ratio will fall to 2:1 (SSB, 2018). The increase of the dependency ratio means that it will be a greater burden to support the beneficiary population, as there in 2060 only will be two people of working age, in contrast to three as the rate is per date, to support those the elderly and/or children and adolescents. In the forecast from SSB, it is stated that in approximately 15 years, there will be more elderly people than children and adolescents in Norway (SSB, 2018). Statistics from the United Nations Association of Norway shows that the fertility rate in Norway today is 1,9 children per woman. Further, it is stated that to uphold the population, it is necessary with a fertility rate of 2,1 per woman in Norway. When looking at the forecast until 2095, no changes occur and todays fertility rate is expected to remain stable (FN-Sambandet, 2019). However, the forecast from SSB (2018) shows that the fertility rate will drop to just below 1,6 short-term, before gradually increase to 1,76 in the long-term. Additionally, life expectancy is expected to rise from the current 81 years for men and 84 years for women, to 88 and 90 respectively in 2060, and as a consequence of this, the pension age also have to be increased (Leknes, Løkken, Syse, & Tønnessen, 2018, p. 7).

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Research design

A qualitative descriptive study was applied in order to outline managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry. This design was considered to be the most appropriate method in order to find results in accordance to the aim of the study. In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research studies words rather than presenting numbers. Interviews were considered to be the most efficient way of getting information of the managers' perception of age diversity. This because an interview setting gives the researcher the opportunity to ask the questions and to potentially ask follow-up questions. Semi-structured interviews were found to be more flexible than a structured interview. In semi-structured interviews some questions are pre-defined in order to compare the informants and themes to get more information of the phenomenon. However, it can deviate from the planned interview guide and discuss themes that can falls out but still be useful for the problem statement (Mehmetoglu, 2004, pp. 69-70). With the following approach the study was able to focus on certain themes and with some suggested questions, and in many of the interviews, other related themes and issues were brought up and discussed. This way of interviewing were found to be highly appropriate, and the semi-structured approach were found to be enriching for the data collection and the further analysis.

Ten personal semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers in the hospitality industry in the area of Stavanger. All interviews were conducted in person at the informants' respective work places. The ten personal interviews together form the unit of analysis. The interviews were transcribed in detail, and the audio recording and written texts together constituted the material for the analysis. A latent content analysis in line with Graneheim and

Lundman (2004) was utilized to find answers to the presented research questions in chapter 1.5. The results from the analysis are presented in chapter 5.

4.2 Sampling

A majority of managers in hotels in the area of Stavanger was invited to participate in the study. The most important criteria for participating were that the informant was an experienced manager in the hospitality industry. Another criteria that were found important were that the managers were in daily contact with the subordinates. In the process of interviewing, the snowball-method was utilized as some informants suggested other managers that could be interested in taking part in the project. The invitation to participate in a personal interview was sent by e-mail to the informants. In order to not get fabricated answers, little information of the study was mentioned. The invitation that was sent out to the informants can be seen in appendix 1. The theme of the study was described to be diversity management, and no specified information about age diversity was mentioned. This was a specified act to avoid, to the extent that was possible, fabricated and politically correct formulated answers. In the invitation to participate in the project, it was stated that the interview would be audio recorded and later transcribed. In addition, it was clearly stated that all data would be made anonymous and that the information could not be traced back to the informants.

4.3 Informants

The informants experience in working in the hospitality industry ranged from 6 to 34 years, while the informants' age ranged from 26 to 55 years old. There were an equal distribution of men and women participating in the study. Below is a table describing each of the informants. Striving to uphold the confidentiality that was reassured, the informants' sensitive information is coded. As one can see, the informants worked in a total of six different organizations and

operated in three different managerial levels, respectively general managers, hotel managers and department managers. The sampling resulted in a selection of six different organizations, and this is found to be enriching for the analysis. The age of the informants are grouped into categories of five years gap, while their experience are grouped into three different categories ranging with a ten year gap.

Informant	Organization	Position	Work experience	Age
Informant 1	A	II	1-10	31-35
Informant 2	B	III	11-20	26-30
Informant 3	C	I	21-30	41-45
Informant 4	D	II	11-20	31-35
Informant 5	A	II	1-10	26-30
Informant 6	B	II	31-40	46-50
Informant 7	A	I	11-20	31-35
Informant 8	E	III	1-10	26-30
Informant 9	F	II	1-10	26-30
Informant 10	D	I	31-40	51-55

Table 2. *Informants.* Note: I: general manager; II: hotel manager; III: department manager

4.4 Interview guide

As mentioned, semi-structured interviews was conducted with ten experienced managers in the hospitality industry in the area of Stavanger. The interview guide consisted of questions related to the literature presented in chapter 2. The interview guide was discussed and approved by the supervisor of the study before the interview process started. The interview guide is presented in its whole in appendix 2.

To start with, it was of interest to get knowledge of the informants experience in the hospitality industry. The questions in the interview guide were structured to be as open as

possible, this so the informants would talk as free as possible about the themes that were included, and also possible about other themes that they found to be relevant to what was being discussed. The informants were asked to describe the workforce at their work place. Further it was of interest to get knowledge of the informants' impression of the age distribution of employees in the industry, and also specifically the age distribution in their work place. This so their perceptions could be compared to the current situation in the hospitality industry.

Different themes were mentioned in the interview guide, such as questions regarding managers' perception of age in the recruitment process, in training, development, and promotion. Further, it was of interest to outline the managers' perception of the relatively high, as mentioned in the chapter 2.7, turnover in the industry. It was of interest to outline the managers' perceptions of both younger and older employees by asking about their perception of these, along side with possible characteristics or challenges by having these as employees. As mentioned in the chapter 3.1, the population is continuously aging and it was therefore of interest to outline managers' perception of the elderly possibilities to find work in the hospitality industry. Lastly, it was of interest to get knowledge of the informants' thoughts of how the age distribution in the hospitality industry would be in the future. All of the informants were asked if they had anything to add before the interview ended, and several informants stated additional information that they wanted to share related to the theme before the interview ended.

4.5 Data collection

The interviews was conducted in the period between February 27th and April 1st. Before the interviews, I conducted a test-interview to make sure that all questions were interpreted the

way it was intended to be. As mentioned, a total of 10 experienced managers in the hospitality industry in the area of Stavanger participated in the study. After the tenth interview, the data was rich enough for the analysis that was planned, and therefore that the level of saturation were perceived to be reached. The questions felt to be clearly answered, and the retrieved information from the informants gave comprehensive data for the further analysis. The dependability of the study is assured as the same person has collected all data.

The majority of the interviews were conducted in Norwegian. The translated version of the statements that is presented in the analysis have been discussed with fellow students to assure that the translation is translated in the most correct and objective way possible. Some informants felt more comfortable conducting the interview in English, and therefore this was also done. In this way, it was assured that as much information as possible would be mentioned, and there were no language barriers that limited the purchased information retrieved in the interviews. The informants had a variety of positions, but common for all informants were that they had managerial responsibilities in their workplace. The majority of informants were hotel managers, and in addition informants held positions as general managers and department managers. A notification here is that the responsibilities and work tasks involved in their position differed as to where they were employed, however, all of the managers had daily contact with their employees.

4.6 Ethical considerations

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 62) ethical questions arise in all stages of the research and should be taken into consideration throughout the whole process. As the interview was audio recorded it was necessary to inform the Norwegian Centre for Data Research (NSD) and apply for approval. The project was approved February 25th 2019, and

holds the reference number 574376 at NSD. The approval stated that there was a low level of

the project being a disadvantage for the participants when it came to their privacy being

violated. The approval from NSD can be seen in appendix 3.

The informed consent was given for the informants to sign at the beginning of the interview.

The researcher explained the information in the document and the participants were given the

opportunity to ask questions. It was described that the data would be processes confidentially

and in accordance with the data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation

and Personal Data Act). It was specified that the participant would not be recognizable in the

publication, and that they would only be addressed in codes in the final version of the project.

Further, the informants were also given the possibility to keep a copy of the consent form. All

informants signed the consent form without asking any additional questions of the content and

none of the informants have taken contact since the interviews. The informed consent can be

seen in its whole in appendix 4.

4.7 Analysis

A latent content analysis was conducted on the transcribed interviews. The transcribed

interviews holds correct transcriptions of the conversations with the informants. The analysis

is inspired by Graneheim & Lundman (2004).

The process of analyzing the data from the interviews started with reading through the

transcribed interviews several times. As previously mentioned, the interviews are the unit of

analysis, and it was of importance to get a greater knowledge of the data in a proper way

before further analyzing. After the data was read through multiple times, the data was coded.

There were found many codes in the process of analysis, and examples of this can be shown

in table 3. As it was, in the interview guide, stated the different themes that were going to be discussed, these were used as main themes in the analysis. In addition, some more themes emerged as the semi-structured interviews that were conducted also evolved into conversations about different themes related to the problem statement.

On the next page is an example of meaning unit, the condensed meaning unit in description, code, the sub-theme and theme. Meaning unit refers to the constellation of the original statement from the informants. It was often necessary to divide the statements into several meaning units, as the statements had several arguments within. In this way the meaning units presented in table 3 have only one central meaning. The condensed meaning unit is a shorter more simplified version with the same core as the original statement (meaning unit). The table is inspired by Graneheim & Lundman (2004, p. 108). Additionally, the utilized code in the analysis is included in the table. The presented example is within the theme of *managers perceptions of older employees*. The perceptions were evoked by asking: *How do you perceive an older employees?*. Additionally the informants were asked to elaborate when being asked about specific characteristics or challenges that characterized older employees in the hospitality industry. Table 3 exemplifies how the process of structuring the data from the analysis was preceded. Within this particular theme, there were also several other codes and sub-themes that emerged that are not included in table 3.

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit: description	Code	Sub-theme	Theme
Older are more stable…	Older employees are more stable than younger employees	Stability.	Older employees are a stable labor force	
They are extremely stable…	Older employees are extremely stable	Stability.		
They are not as flexible on change… It takes much more time to explain why we do the changes we do.	Older employees are less flexible as it takes more time to present changes to them	Less flexible.	Older employees are less flexible than younger employees	Managers perceptions of older employees
They could have set themselves one way of seeing things, almost like a tunnel vision…	Older employees are stubborn and less flexible	Less flexible.		
My impression is that they are structured…maybe to a larger extent than the younger.	Older employees more structured than younger employees	Structured.	Older employees are structured	

Table 3. *Example of meaning units, condensed meaning units, codes, sub-themes and themes from content analysis of managers perceptions of older employees.*

Striving for credibility in the findings, the results have been discussed with a fellow student that has no connection to the study. This was done mainly to avoid becoming "blind" on the data, and to make sure that the data were interpreted the correct way. As for the confirmability of the results, direct and repeated information and quotations from the data are present in the results from the analysis in chapter 5. As mentioned earlier, the data is translated from Norwegian to English, and fellow students have approved the translation of the material included in the analysis. In chapter 6, the data from the analysis is discussed with previous literature. The findings shares similarities with previous research, which demonstrate that transferability is present in the study.

4.8 Strengths and limitations

The results outlines managers' perception of respectively younger and older employees in the hospitality industry. As the topic could be considered as a sensitive topic, certain precautions had to be made to assure that the data would be as sincere as possible. It is perceived as nearly impossible to be able to address the full and reliable truth when discussing such a sensitive topic, but with the precautions that were made beforehand, the results is anticipated to be able to give detailed and comprehensive data. This is found to be to a strength of the study.

The data provided by the sample population are not generalizable for the population at large. As it is perceptions that are being studied, it is not possible to generalize these. Additionally, in certain questions in the interviews, it would have been advantageous to dig deeper in order to get more in-depth information of what was being discussed. Further, as the study strives to uphold the anonymity of the informants, some relevant information could not be included in the study since it would have been revealing to the informants identity.

4.9 Reflexivity

This study has given insight to the phenomenon of age diversity and the managers' perceptions of both younger and older employees in the hospitality industry. As a hospitality management student, it has been of great interest to be able to analyze the results of the managers' perceptions of employees in the workforce. As I am now graduating and entering this studied workforce full-time, I value the conversations and discussions that I had with managers. Working with this dissertation has increased my knowledge of age diversity, and diversity in general. It has been interesting to outline the perceptions that was perceived for respectively younger and older employees, and to compare these to my own personal

characteristics. As I desire to become a manager in the hospitality industry in the future, it has been interesting to look at the perceptions that managers have today. Lastly, working with this dissertation have made me more aware of the perceptions and stereotypes that I perceive towards others. The study have reminded me that people belong to many different social groups, and that the belongingness to social group(s) cannot define a person. As one major finding in the analysis state, personal characteristics are often more important.

5.0 Results

In this chapter the findings from the latent content analysis are presented. The analysis is, as mentioned, inspired by Graneheim & Lundman (2004). As it is managers' perceptions of the age diversity in the hospitality industry that have been analyzed, there is once again important to mention the different factors that can affect our perceptions. As addressed in chapter 2.2, this includes personal/social perceptions related to the social identity theory, stereotypes and prejudice and perceptions affected by human resource perspectives. In the introduction it was presented that it was assumed that turnover would be affected by human resource perspectives, however, this did not seem to be the case when analyzing the data. The prospects of the future were assumed to be influenced by both of the two aspects, however, in the analysis it was clear that it was the managers' personal perceptions that dominated this. In table 4, an overview of what the managers' perceptions in the analysis were seemingly dominated by is presented. The table inform which chapters throughout the analysis that are dominated mainly by personal perceptions' or by human resource perspectives.

Personal perceptions	Human resource perspectives
5.1 Managers perception of the age distribution in the hospitality industry	5.2.1 Recruitment
5.3 Turnover	5.2.2 Training
5.4 Characteristics of younger and older employees	5.2.3 Development
5.5 Managers perceptions of the aging workforce	5.2.4 Promotion
5.6 Managers prospects of the age diversity within the hospitality industry	

Table 4: *Chapters in the analysis seemingly perceived by the personal perceptions or the human resource perspectives.*

Further, the analysis strives to find out whether there are any potential differences in the statements from the managers based on whether the informants themselves are younger or older managers in the industry. This would also be mentioned throughout this chapter.

5.1 Managers perception of the age distribution in the hospitality industry

Regarding the first research question, what are the managers' perceptions of the age distribution in the hospitality industry, the informant stated various perceptions of the thematic. Several of the informants stated that the age distribution was different in the established hotels compared to in the hotels that were more recent opened:

> It is a very young industry. Especially in the new hotels, there are a lot of young people. (Informant 5)

This approach was mentioned by many of the informants, implying that this could be a common allegation among the managers in the hospitality industry. A manager working in a well-established hotel in Stavanger made the following statement:

> I believe we have a higher average age than what you find in other hotels. …This hotel is over 30 years old, so this hotel has been around for a long time, and some employees have been here from the start. I haven't calculated the average age, but we are, I believe, more on the older side of the scale than on the younger, if we look on the total work force. (Informant 7)

Several informants naturally drew parallels between employees that had worked there for a

long time to those that were considered as older employees in the industry:

> We have a very large age gap, from those that are in the start of their careers to those that have been here for several years. The oldest employee had worked here for 30 years last year, so that makes it 31 years now in mid-March. It ranges from those in their 20s to those in their 60s. (Informant 5)

Further, it can be seen that the age distribution differs based on the magnitude of the hotel. The participants in the study all had managerial responsibilities in hotels that differed from relatively small hotels to some of the largest hotels in the region. When being asked about the age distribution in the informants' respective workplace, a difference based on the magnitude of the hotel was visible. Here is a statement from a manager working in a relatively small hotel in Stavanger:

> Everyone that works here is under 35 years old. The four of us that are in the management group are between 26 and 35 years. Those that work part-time are between 21 and 27 years old. (Informant 8)

This seems to be common among several of the smaller hotels in the region, while the opposite perceptions were made by informants that worked at larger hotels. Here is a statement from one manager working in one of the largest hotels in the region:

> I would say, and I do not have the statistics to prove this, but I would say that age here is not below 30, its probably more to the other side, we have at least 20-25 over 55-60 years. (Informant 3)

The quotations above and below are both made by what would be considered as older managers. A visible difference from the interviews with the informants was that the hotels that were managed by older managers also seemed to have a broader age distribution among its employees:

> We have employees that are 17-18 years old and up to, in our company we have retirement age of 70, but I also have employees that are over 70 years old. So we have a large gap, and I think that is positive. (Informant 7)

Another finding concerning managers perception of age distribution in the hospitality industry was that this seem to differed as to whether the hotel was located in the city centre or in the area outside downtown Stavanger:

> I think it depends on where you are. In the hotels located in the center of Stavanger it is a lot of students. (Informant 10)

The mentioning of it being many students working in hotels in the city centre implies that there is a young work force in these types of hotels. Lastly, the majority of informants mentioned that the age distribution in the hospitality industry was in fact very young, and many expressed a desire for it to be increase. This informant described the current situation in the following way:

> Here it is mostly younger employees. I am among the oldest, and I am 33 years old. That says it all. There are maybe two employees that are older than me. (Informant 1)

The results from the analysis regarding managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry imply that there are some factors that are influencing the age distribution in hotels in the region of Stavanger. These factors are presented in fig. 1.
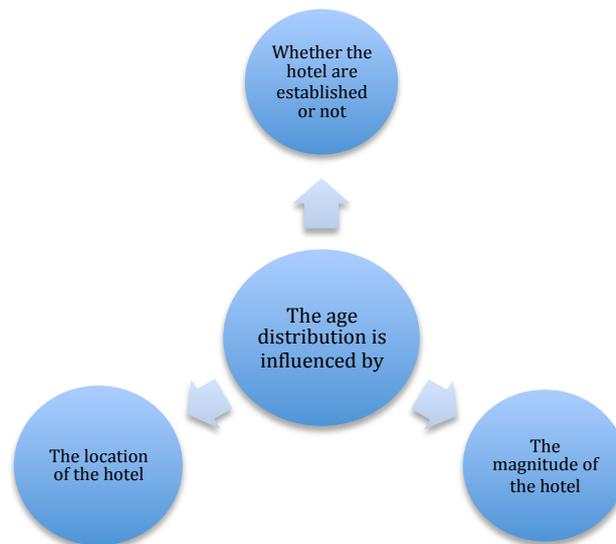
Fig. 1. *Factors that influence the age distribution in the hospitality industry.*

5.2 Perceptions dominated by the human resource policies of the organizations

Next to be presented is managers' perception of age diversity within the recruitment, training, development and promotion. In these areas the analysis show that it is contiguous to believe that the human resources of the organization have in some way influenced the managers' perception. The statements presented are seemingly influenced more by the organizations human resource policies than the managers' personal perceptions. The overall findings in this chapter suggest that personal characteristics are of greater importance than the age of the employees. As mentioned, studying age in employment could be considered to be sensitive, and it is contiguous that the perceived data presented is discussed with the human resource

policies of the organization in the informants back heads. It was observed that the informants continuously throughout these segments of the interview would "excuse" their perceptions by afterwards stating phrases like "…but it does depend on the person of course" or "…it is of course not relevant for all".

5.2.1 Recruitment

When being asked if age was something that was of importance in the recruitment process, there were different approaches. The general findings were that the informants were more interested in the applicants' attitudes and their engagements, rather than their age. This informant stated the criteria's for being recruited to the department managed by the informant:

> …It is rather important how you are as a person, and the first impression that I get, if you are an ambulatory extrovert person. That is the most important for me. (Informant 2)

The same perception was mentioned by another informant, where the informant implied that this was also accurate for him/her. The informant stated that the relatively young age that the informant holds, are a good example of why age is irrelevant in the recruitment process:

> No, not really. … Each month we announce the employee of the month, and on one side, the last winner was older and the winner before that was young. So you can say, and I would be the first to say this, that age is not what matters and I can say that because I sit here myself. (Informant 5)

One informant mentioned that age should not be included in applications and CV, and that this could be a disadvantage for the older applicants. Based on own personal experience and past perceptions, the informants stated that an older applicant could face challenges due to age in the recruitment process:

> When I was younger I made the mistake, and I say mistake, that I read through the CV and if there was an applicant that had passed 50 years old, I thought they were a bit to old for our industry. Now, it's opposite, because it is of importance to have routines and wisdom. So I think differently than before. There is a lot to gain there, and many think wrong and are only looking for the younger generation because that is "right". There is no secret that those that have become 50 and 55+ often has to struggle more to get a job that those that are maybe 25 years old. (Informant 7)

Another informant also mentioned that putting your age on the CV would be a disadvantage for older applicants. This informant implied that the age of the applicant could be a hinder for getting the job offer, however, it would not be unreasonable that it would be covered up with another excuse:

> I am very much a found of not to put the age there (in the CV), because I am sure if a applicant is turning 60 years, and officially I am sure no one will tell you this, that they are not inviting you back because of the age, however, they will cover it with another reason. (Informant 3)

Another finding was that the age of the applicant was of bigger importance in some positions than in others. Especially housekeeping was mentioned when being asked if age had

something to say in the recruitment process:

> Yes, it has. If its in housekeeping, there is heavy lifting, so we try to avoid to hire a 60 years old that has already worked for many years, and that don't have the body anymore for "up and down, and back and forth", so it depends on where the applicant is going to work. (Informant 6)

Some informants mentioned that the company had signed the IA-agreement, stating that the age was a factor that was of high relevancy in the signed agreement. Some informants described more what that involved and what role that played in the recruitment process. The informants stated that they had as a goal to recruit employees that were older and maybe near the end of their career. The informants raised awareness of it being important to give someone some great last years before retiring.

When being asked of whether there were any differences in the development in the work performed by younger and older employees the overall impression seem to be that there were personal characteristics that seems to preponderate more than the age of the employees. However, some differences were found. There seems to be a difference between the younger and the older informants of what should weight in in the recruitment process. The younger managers are focusing on personal characteristics and justifies this with their own experiences of becoming young managers. The older informants reflected on past decisions made concerning recruitment and concludes that age is a less of an important factor in the process.

5.2.2 Training

Most informants mentioned that there was little difference between younger and older

employee in the training. However, working with technology was outlined as a challenge by

many of the informants, and was something that seemed to be in favor to the younger

employees. This was expressed by both the younger and the older managers in the study:

> You can see that the younger generation, when it comes to computers and
>
> applications, that this is something they are more used to, and they catch this faster.
>
> (Informant 7)

As stated, this was a common perspective from both younger and older manager. Here, a

younger manager explains that in their organization there has occurred situations where it is

visible that there is a difference in working with technology for younger and older employees:

> Yes, there is, for example we can see this with those that are working with systems.
>
> The data system, for example in the reception or in sales, they use more time to teach
>
> the system if they are older than someone that is 25 years, and we have seen this.
>
> (Informant 2)

Informant 2 further stated that how its easier to train a younger person that someone that are

older than the majority of the employees at the hotel, implying that a 35 year old could be

someone that is considered as older in their respective hotel:

> It is much easier to train a 19 year old than a 35 year old that has lived longer than

myself and most of the other employees at the hotel. (Informant 2)

A part from the technological perspective, that most informants mentioned were beneficial towards the younger employees, there were no other specific factors that separated the perceptions of younger and older employees in the training process. Human resource perspectives were visible to affect their statement, as many of the informants would state determent that younger were better with technology for then to state that it was also dependent of the person. There were no noticeable differences as for the results concerning whether perceptions were stated by the younger or the older informants.

5.2.3 Development

When being asked about younger and older concerning their development in their position it was not outlined any differences. Instead, informants mentioned that this was something that was based on personal characteristics rather than the employees' age. No other information than the technological perspective that was in favor of the younger employees (as mentioned in chapter 5.2.2) was crucial for the development in their work. Several informants highlighted the fact that age was not a crucial factor for development:

> It is not like if your young you are automatically better, faster or learn quicker than those that are older. I don't perceive it that way. (Informant 7)

Several of the informant mentioned that older employees develop on an equal line as the younger in their work, and this could imply that there were some unstated perception related to younger and older employees developing differently. Several statements like the following were made:

There will be a difference, but this depends on the person, how much you want to develop. We have a management group where there are people in their 20s to the end of their 50s. And here the oldest is the most engaged and eager to learn new things. So it is depending on the person. (Informant 10)

Here, a manager that would be perceived as an older manager in literature is explaining with a real life situation from the workplace. Overall, it again, seems to be that personal characteristics are of greater importance than the age of the employee. The general impression in the statements from the informants shows no specific differences to whether it comes from an older or a younger manager.

5.2.4 Promotion

Also concerning promotion, personal characteristics were mentioned by many informants as a more important factor than the employees' age. In addition, their motivation and engagement were considered to be more crucial for the possibility to be promoted in the workplace. However, motivation seems to be a factor that is perceived as more relevant to the younger employees than the older. The following were expressed by an older manager:

I think it all depends on what they want. We are doing two times a year these employment talks, most of the time, it always depends, but the ambition of becoming a hotel manager for someone over 60 is rarely. They are happy they have their work life balance, so maybe more for younger people who are eager to make a career and more willing to sacrifice and take a job like that in the industry. (Informant 3)

However, another informant, which were a young manager, mentioned that being promoted were more likely to happen if you were older. The explanation for this were based older employees having more experience from the work life:

> The way that I have experienced it, age has something to say for whether you get promoted to a position with more responsibility, and that it is the older that gets this opportunity first. I don't think this is because they are older, but because they have the most experience. So it's easier for those that are older today, than the younger, to get a promotion. (Informant 8)

Overall, there seems to be little difference between the younger and older informants impression concerning age and promotion. Anyhow, there was a misconception to whether younger or older employees were those that were considered to be favored in promotion, but this was stated by only a few. Overall, personal characteristics seem to be of biggest importance of whether an employee gets the opportunity to be promoted in the workplace.

5.3 Turnover/retention

The informants were asked to give their opinion on the turnover in the industry. Before starting the analysis, it was assumed that the informants' statements concerning turnover/retention would be influenced mostly by the human resource policies within the organizations. However, when analyzing the data it became clear that this was to a larger extent decided by personal perceptions. Several informants mentioned that turnover were more likely to happen by the younger employees than the older employees. Those informants that were working for the more established hotels mentioned that turnover were not such a huge problem in their work place. However, others outlined that the industry faces challenges

that needs to be changed:

> It is a challenge in our industry, no doubt about it. It is a high turnover, and people are generally too short time at each work place. So that is something that has to be worked further with. (Informant 5)

There was also mentioned a different perception on younger and older employees regarding the turnover. This seem to favor the older employees:

> What we experience concerning the turnover is that those that have been here for a long time continues and wants the stability that follows with it, while the younger are more restless and wants to challenge themselves and don't get stuck. That is something we see clearly between the two different generations in the workforce now. (Informant 5)

Other mentioned that even though the turnover is costly, it could also be a positive thing:

> In many cases it could be necessary and desirable. …Turnover is a cost for the hotel, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it always have to be that bad anyways. In many positions you are "finished" after certain years, and wants to take a step further. We cannot always offer that here, so then we have to support them in finding new challenges somewhere else. (Informant 1)

There was a clear impression among the informants that younger employees more often change jobs compared to the older employees. In the established hotels, turnover were

mentioned to not be such a major problem. This could be explained by managers' in established hotels also have mentioned that the age distribution is wider. In other hotels, managers stated that turnover had some natural causes, e.g. not being able to give the employees opportunities to grow. Many mentioned that turnover is costly for the hotels, however, in some scenarios it could also be healthy.

5.4 Characteristics of younger and older employees

In this section, managers were asked to give their perceptions of younger and older employees. The informants were also asked to state their perception of characteristics and challenges with respectively younger and older employees. The overall impressions of the following statements seem to be managers' personal perceptions. It is contiguous to believe that this is not perceived to be as sensitive as discussing someone's work performance and given opportunities in the different stages of employment. The results from this analysis were based on the overall impression of an age group, and were not put into a specific context such as e.g. the previous asked question concerning recruitment etc. This could be the reason why these results are seemingly influenced by the managers' personal perceptions.

A range of different perceptions was outlined to the questions asked. Some informants stated that the generation that we perceive as younger employees today have other characteristics than what previous generations held:

> How the younger people look at the work place and the employer, and how they deal with their work place has absolutely changed compared to previous generations. They now care more about "what's in it for me" and "why should I chose this work place", and not the other way around of why the employer should hire them. It is

different, and I think its good and that they get a more realistic view of how it is to work if you dare to ask these kind of questions, and not just take a job at whatever cost. (Informant 4)

Another informant mentioned that the younger generations earlier gets responsibility in the workplace now than before. This impression support the previous statement by stating that younger takes more responsibility in their workplace:

The younger generation is far more mature now then when I grew up. They have more responsibilities and they get this responsibility earlier. Their background is broader, maybe they are more travelled than us and they appropriate much more that what we did growing up. (Informant 7)

However, informants also perceived the younger employees to be a less stable workforce than the older employees. This due to many younger peoples desire to explore the world, which above was mentioned as a positive thing because it was perceived to making the younger generation more responsible. However, the need to travel and explore also leads to an impression of less stability for the younger generation compared to the older employees in the workplace:

I think that the generation that is growing up now are not as dependent of stability as the generation that are in the middle or in the end of their work life. We see this, as the barricade of not entering the stable, but rather travel to other places of the world, are shorter for the younger generation. (Informant 5)

Where there was an impression of lack of stability in the work life for younger employees, older employees were perceived as a stable workforce:

> They are extremely stable, you know what you get and that is a huge security that they deliver there. They have long work experience, and know what the work life is about and it is extremely important to have a fraction of these in order to get that stability in the work place. (Informant 5)

This was a common impression stated by several of the informants, and the following statement comes from a younger manager:

> Older are more stable, and does to larger degree than the younger let us know if there is something they think is not alright or if it is a problem. (Informant 9)

This perception that older to a larger degree than the younger let the managers know if there is a problem was also highlighted later in the interview with informant 9, when parallels were drawn between the younger and the older employees:

> When you are younger you may think its unfortunate to voice your opinion about something, and that you instead think that it (the problem) is something that probably will better with time. (Informant 9)

Further, older employees were perceived as taking their job with greater seriousness than the younger employees:

My impression is that they are structured and takes the job seriously, maybe to a larger extent than the younger. (Informant 1)

This was outlined by several of the informants, as it was stated that younger employees more often could e.g. takes sudden days. However, the older were not perceived to do that:

They (the older) are much more continuously for us, because they don't go party on Fridays and Saturdays and call in sick, they have a completely different work ethics and work attitude. (Informant 3)

The impression that younger employees were more spontaneous than their older colleagues were also an impression that was mentioned by several of the informants:

What I think, is that the younger does not adjust their life to their job as much as the older generation, that it is easier for them to ask for a day off, and that they do this more often than the older generation. (Informant 9)

Informant 9 explained this further when stating:

I think that the understanding for what a manager does, e.g. with the roster, is not the same for the younger generation as it is for the older generation. The understanding that it is not possible to "conduct magic" when you want a day off, when its not that many employees to ask to cover someone's shift. (Informant 9)

Further, older workers were outlined to be less flexible than the younger employees:

> They are generally more critical than the younger, and a reason for this could be that they have more experience and have more previous work places to compare things with. Also, the way that things are being done, they ask questions around "the why" if there is a change, and changes does in general take longer time to implement for those that are 50-60 years compared to those in their 20s. (Informant 4)

This were mentioned by the majority of the informants, and therefore seem to be a common impression of older employees in the industry. This informant stated the fact that older employees were less flexible made it harder to implement new procedures in the work place:

> They could have set themselves one way of seeing this, almost like a tunnel vision, and refers only to their own framework, and that they, sometimes, are not acceptant to other views and procedures. (Informant 7)

Some informants mentioned that experience were something that differed between the younger and older employees, referring to older employees having certain characteristics that followed due to having more experience with working:

> Those with more experience also have more life wisdom, knowledge and routines. (Informant 7)

Further, there were found differences related to work ethics. Here, it seems to be that the informants appreciate the older employees work ethics and that this is related to their experience. Here one informant describes characteristics of an older employee:

Work ethics and the "stayer-head". I experience that the older have a different stayer-head than the younger. They are able to bear larger burdens. Not in the sense that they should have an unreasonable workload, but I think, they have a different mind-set. (Informant 10)

This impression was mutual for several informants, and the following statement exemplified the work ethics and describes how older employees are proud of their work place:

Our oldest have so much more passion, commitment and are very proud of it (the work place). Since we have recently renovated the hotel, they are so happy to see it. They have new cutlery and china, because they have worked for so long with the old stuff, they are so happy about it. There is much more responsibilities from the employees side. They really feel like they belong here. (Informant 3)

Another challenge that once again was brought up was technology. The statements of older employees challenges with technology were an on-going theme throughout several of the interviews, and was explained more detailed in chapter 5.2.2. The majority of informants stated opinions as the following about a challenge with having older employees in the workplace:

A challenge is that there is a lot of technology to learn and that this can be challenging for an older employee. (Informant 1)

Throughout chapter 5.3 different perceptions from the informants of younger and older employees have been presented. As mentioned, these seem to be based on personal social perceptions that the informants have on respectively younger and older employees in the work force. Overall, there were no distinguished differences in the perceptions from the younger and older informants. All of the informants shared both their positive and less fortunate perceptions of younger and older employees. Many of the same perceptions was mentioned by several of the informants, implying that there are similar characteristics and challenges that are perceived by many of managers in the hospitality industry in the region of Stavanger.

The overall impression of younger employees was that they were more mature and responsible than previous generations that had entered the workforce. However, they were perceived as to not being such a stable workforce, as many highlighted that younger employees had a need to travel and explore the world. It was stated that younger employees were more spontaneous, and could more easily ask for a sudden day off. This was explained to the younger employees not having the same perception as the older as to what managers have to do with the logistics of e.g. the roasters. Further, it was stated that younger employees does to a less extent raise their opinion if there is a problem in the work place. Younger employees were characterized as employees that were willing and eager to learn, and that were easily able to adjust to new changes in the work place.

Characteristics of younger and older employees	
Younger employees:	**Older employees:**
Takes more responsibility in the work place than previous generations have done before	Considered as a stable workforce
Perceived as mature for their age	Holds valuable life wisdom
Have a need to travel and explore the world	Shows great work ethics and work attitude
Spontaneous	Holds valuable experience
Think its unfortunate to voice their opinion	Let managers know if there is a problem
Have less of an understanding of what a manager does	Have a great understanding of what a managers does
Changes are met with excitement and positivity	Changes takes longer time to accept and implement
High competence with technology	Less competence with technology
Does not adjust their life to their job	Takes their job extremely serious

Table 5. *Characteristics of younger and older employees.*

On the other side, older employees were perceived as a stable work force that had much experience and life wisdom. However, older employees were also considered to not being as accepting on changes in the workforce and were described to be more critical than their younger colleagues in the industry. Several of the informants stated that older employees often asks around "the why" when changes are being implemented. Older employees were described as taking their job serious, and performed great work ethics and attitudes. There was a challenge related to technology, as some stated that it could be time consuming to understand technology for the older employees. According to the informants, older employees more often let the managers know if there was a problem in the work place compared to their younger colleagues. Older were also characterized as having great knowledge and routines in their work.

5.5 Managers perception of the aging workforce

Concerning managers perception of the aging workforce there were different approaches. The informants were asked to share their perception of the aging workforce, and to explain to what extent this aging workforce could implemented in the hospitality industry. No difference concerning whether the perception was stated by younger or older managers were present. Further, the overall impression where that the statements are based on personal perceptions, however, some informants did present their statement in a way that implied to be partly influenced on human resource perspectives. One informant stated that the change of work tasks could make it more suitable for the older employees to work longer in the industry:

> I absolutely believe that there will be job opportunities. As far as we know there will be a change in development, as the traditional work tasks will go over to being ruled by the technology. We can compare it to how it has developed in airports, in hotels you can now do the travel with your smartphone: booking, check-in, open doors and chat with the reception. So I believe that is what the hospitality role should be for us, to get the employees off the traditional things and rather meet the guests, and this is something that absolutely fits for the older generation as well. (Informant 5)

One informant stated that if was of importance to discuss among the employees before hiring someone that was considerably older than the rest of the workforce. This because it would have changed the dynamic in the work place:

> It is clear that this would have done something with the dynamic here and it is something that should be up for a discussion among the employees. We wouldn't have wanted that the older person did not fit in based on their age. (Informant 1)

Others were more negative than opportunistic of the possible to increase the proportion of older workers in the hospitality industry, stating that it was not considered as suitable for older employees:

> I think it depends on the work tasks. In general, I do not believe that we are an industry for the eldest, we aren't. I was about to say that it speaks for it self, but it doesn't. Those that know the hospitality industry know that it is very hectic. (Informant 6)

5.6 Managers prospects of the age diversity within the hospitality industry

The informants' perception concerning the prospects in the hospitality industry ranged from those saying that the age distribution and diversity would change to those stating that it would remain the same or even become an even younger industry. Overall, the younger informants were perceived to be less opportunists considering it being an increased proportion of older employees in the hospitality industry in the future. Many were opportunistic and stated that the age distribution should increase, but that it would be difficult to implement in practice. These perceptions were overall based on the managers' personal perceptions.

One informant came with possible solutions on how the age distribution in the hospitality industry could be increased in the future, and how to do this in practice:

> It has to be mixed because more people have to work until they are 70 years old. The next generations will receive less attractive conditions and therefore have to work longer, and I think that this is something we have to facilitate. Maybe not everyone

can work full-time, but I think its better that you can be in work, maybe in reduced

work, if the load is too much or get a day off during the week. (Informant 10)

Some perceived the age distribution to increase due to an increasingly better health and that

education is more prioritized now than it was earlier:

I believe that it will increase. People are in better shape, people prioritize education

and exercise, which means that they have the knowledge and are healthy. People do

not want to get an earlier retirement, and it is important to be in work. (Informant 6)

One informant rhetorically stated that age does not necessarily have any impact on ones

health, and implied that age could be irrelevant for the performance of the employees:

There are health 20 year olds, but there could also health 70 year olds. Do you get my

reasoning? (Informant 1)

Other stated that it would remain the same or even that the age distribution would decrease,

and the reason for this were the unchangeable factor such as unfavorable working hours:

I think that, and especially since the working hours are unfavorable compared to other

industries, that there will be an overrepresentation of younger in the hospitality

industry based on e.g. life situation. (Informant 8)

Some informants stated that the hospitality industry would become an even younger labor

force. One argued this with stating that employees get managerial responsibilities earlier now

than what they did before:

> The trend suggests that it will be younger and younger. I got managerial
>
> responsibilities in my 20s, and my colleagues are also getting younger and younger.
>
> When the millennial generation takes over, I believe that the average age would be
>
> around 25 to 30-40 years. (Informant 9)

This were also mentioned in chapter 5.4, where informants stated that younger today get
responsibilities earlier in their career. However, most of the informants expressed a desire for
the age distribution to be increase:

> I believe that it would be many young employees, but I also hope that it will be
>
> supplied with a base of those that have long experience, wisdom and knowledge.
>
> (Informant 7)

6.0 Discussion

Different approaches related the phenomenon of age diversity has been presented throughout the study. In chapter 1.0-3.0 a variety of literature and the contexts of the study was explained, and in chapter 5 the results from the analysis were presented. As addressed in chapter 1.5, this study have an aim to outline managers' perception of age diversity in the hospitality industry. Throughout this chapter, the research questions presented in chapter 1.5 will be answered. Each research question will individually be addressed, and further discussed as to how the findings from the analysis are in line with the literature, statistics and forecasts presented throughout chapter 1.0-3.0. It will also be discussed whether the findings are related to the expectations that was discussed in the introduction. Additionally, the discussion will answer whether there were found traces of ageism and/or age discrimination in the study. Lastly, the implications of the study is presented, alongside with recommended research for further studies.

The analysis strived to present differences in the perception between the younger and the older informants that participated in the study. Anyhow, results showed that there were only minor differences to be found in their perceptions. Differences were found concerning the managers perception in recruitment. The younger informants justified their perceptions with their own experience of becoming young managers, whilst the older employees reflected on past perceptions and experience in the industry while arguing that age in recruitment was not important. Further, there was perceived to be a misconception regarding promotion. Some of the younger informants stated that promotion were more likely to happen to those with experience (implying to older employees), while the older informants stated that promotion was more likely to happen if the employees were young. Lastly, a difference was visible when discussing the prospects of the future in the hospitality industry. The results imply that the

younger informants were less opportunistic to the possibility of the hospitality industry becoming a more diverse workforce considering age.

6.1 What are the managers' perception of the current age distribution in the hospitality industry? (RQ1)

According to Lucas (1993, p. 35) there are human resource trends in the hospitality industry that seems to be in favor for the younger workforce, and as a result of this, younger workers outnumbers older workers in the industry. Current statistics confirms this, stating that in the Norwegian hospitality industry, as many as 1/3 of the employees are under the age of 24 years (NHO Reiseliv, 2018). When comparing this statistics with other industries, it is confirmed that the hospitality industry does hold a relatively young labor force. Statistics from Scandic Hotels show that 43,7% of the workforce in the hotel chain are under the age of 30 years, whilst in Thon Hotels, 39% of the employees are under the age of 30 (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55; Olav Thon Group, 2017, p. 23-24). This confirms the relatively perceived young labor force in the hospitality industry. Further the rapports show that only 11,9% of the employees in Scandic hotels are over 50 years old and that 12% of the employees from Thon hotels are over 50 years old (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55; Olav Thon Group, 2017, p. 23-24). The statistics confirms that there is a modest part of older employees in the industry.

The results show that the presented perceptions are based on the personal perceptions from the managers, confirmed that the age distribution in the hospitality industry were considered to be young. Several informants' stated that the industry was a very young industry. However, there were perceived some differences to the age distribution within the hospitality industry. Results show that the age distribution in the samples respectively work places were

influenced on mainly three factors. These were presented in fig. 1, and included that the age distribution influenced on whether the hotels were established hotels or if the hotels were perceived as newer, the magnitude of the hotel and the location of the hotel. The hotels that had been around for a longer time also held a higher age distribution on their employees, and this perception was commonly perceived, regardless of whether the informant where employed in an established or a newer hotel. Further, the magnitude of the hotel was seen as an influencing factor on the age distribution. The informants worked in hotels that ranged from relatively small hotels to some of the largest hotels in the region. The age distribution in the smaller hotels was more equal distributed with a relatively low age on its employees, while, in the larger hotels, it was also perceived to be a wider age distribution. Lastly, the location of the hotel seems to be a influencing factor to the age distribution in the hotels in the region. The results imply that the hotels that are located in the center of Stavanger have more students in their workforce, and hold a relatively lower average age with more young employees than the hotels located outside of downtown Stavanger.

6.2 What are managers' perceptions of younger and older employees in the different aspects of employment, and are these generated by the organizations human resource policies? (RQ2)

The different aspects of employment are seemingly dominated by the human resource perspective in the respective organizations studied. As stated in the introduction, this was also perceived to be the results from the analysis. However, one aspect distinguishes from the assumptions. Before the analysis it was assumed that managers would be affected by the HR policies of their respective organizations when talking about their perceptions of turnover/retention. However, in the analysis of the results, it was concluded that turnover/retention were mainly affected by the managers own personal perceptions of others.

The Human Resource Approach to Diversity Management (table 1) was presented in chapter 2.2.3. The table presented four approaches that made connections between HR management practices, workforce diversity, and individual, group and organizational outcomes (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 214). One could say when analyzing the results that managers that have been studied and their respective organizations are influenced by some of these human resource approaches. The second approach in table 1, diversity sensitivity, recognized the potential difficulties with a diverse workforce, and were focusing on diversity training to reduce stereotyping and discrimination among the employees (Mor Barak, 2017, pp. 214-215). This seemed to lay near what the managers expressed in their perceptions. The majority of informants mentioned throughout their interviews that personal characteristics were seen as more relevant than the age of their employees. Several informants stated that one should be careful to judge all alike as all employees are unique and bears own individual attributes.

Further, the last approach in table 1, strategy for achieving organizational outcomes, focused on the managers' role to identify the link between diversity management and the individual and the organizational desired outcomes (Mor Barak, 2017, p. 216). This approach was also seemingly visible when analyzing the data, as the perception made by the informant seemed to be integrated with the human resource policies from the informants' workplace. Again, the statements that all employees were different and that there were always exceptions whenever discussing something was frequently stated by the informants throughout the interviews.

6.2.1 Recruitment

In a study by Furunes & Mykletun (2005, p. 122) results show that the applicants' personality, individual work preference and efficiency was seen of greater importance in the recruitment

process than the applicants' age. However, it was addressed that few managers planned to actively recruit older workers. The findings from the analysis shows similarities to this, as the overall results imply that the managers were more interested in the applicants attitudes and engagement rather than the applicants age.

It is of course possible that the hospitality industry is not an attractive industry for older employees. However, according to Poulston & Jenkins (2013, p. 1) it is also possible that employers' discriminatory attitudes limit the ability of older job seekers to secure hotel employment. In the interviews, informants stated that there was a call for the older applicants' to avoid putting their age on the CV, as this could be a disadvantage in the recruitment process. Here, one informant stated that age could be a distinctive factor for not being invited to job interview, and further stated that it would, however, be covered with another reason.

Statistics from Senter for Seniorpolitikk (SSP) shows that leaders would hesitate to invite qualified applicants that had reached the average age of 56,8 years. The statistics further shows that employers estimate an older worker as someone that has reached the age of 56,3 years, whilst the employees themselves views an older worker as someone that have reached 59,4 years (Ipsos, 2018, pp. 4-5). No results confirming or denying this was found in the analysis, as personal characteristics were stated to be of greater importance. Some informants mentioned the IA-agreement in their interviews. The informants mentioned that the organization had a goal to also recruit employees that were considered as older, and that the goal was to give them a few great last years of their work life.

6.2.2 Training

Elderly employees are often presented as less adaptable than their younger employees, and with less of a competence on newer innovations (Schøne, 2005, p. 55). This is supported by Poulston & Jenkins (2013, p. 13) who stated that older workers have been perceived to have less of a competence in technology. Results from SSP show that 6 of 10 managers confirm that younger employees are being preferred when new technology or work methods are to be implemented in the organization (Ipsos, 2018, p. 17). According to Mykletun (2005, p. 229) older workers had experienced limited access to courses, and that organizations favored younger employees when they were introduced to new technology and new ways of working. In line with this, the results from the analysis showed that working with technology was outlined by several of the informants as something that was disadvantageous for the older employees in the industry. Several informants stated that it was easier for the younger employees to learn new technology, and that it also was easier for the managers to train the younger employees when it came to technology or other new innovations in the workforce. Except from the technological perspective, there were no other findings that indicated differences of younger and older employees in the training. Similar to previous literature, the results when asking if there were any differences between younger and older employees in training, focused on the technological perspective.

6.2.3 Development

In 1997, Ilmarinen et al. published a longitudinal study where active employees working in the same occupation was studied over a period of 11 years. Results showed that it was a strong association between age and work content, and especially the period after turning 51 years was found to be critical (Ilmarinen et al., 1997, p. 54). Results from the analysis showed

that several of the informants mentioned that certain types of jobs, such as housekeeping, were less suited for older employees. This was due to the physical assignments that followed with the job description. Except that, no other differences were found when asking the informants if there are any differences in the development in the work for younger and older employees. The informants stated that once again, the performance in developing in their work were dependent on personal characteristics rather than the employees' age. This is in line with findings from Ilmarinen et al. (1007, p. 55) where it was stated that employees decline in work ability could not be defined by the participants age alone. The position, job assignment and industry played a significant role, alongside with the participants' health and lifestyle. Similar to the findings from chapter 6.2.2, the only difference between younger and older employees in the development in their job was the technological perspective that seemed to be disfavoring for the older employees.

6.2.4 Promotion

Nadiri and Tanova (2010) state that organizations in the hospitality industry see the benefits of increasing employees' job satisfaction and motivation, and that this could lead to an increased competitiveness and further a better future performance for the organization (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010, p. 33). The findings from this study imply that motivation is a factor that is perceived as being more relevant to the younger employees than for the older employees. One informant stated that the ambition of e.g. becoming a hotel manager for someone over 60 years old were rarely. The informant stated that older employees are more concerned of having a clear balance between their work and personal life. This can be related to many of the informants' perception of older being a more stable workforce, which is discussed further in chapter 6.3.2. The informant described the younger employees as more eager to make a career, and therefore more willing to sacrifice their personal life in order to get a promotion.

According to Mykletun (2005, p. 229) older workers felt discriminated in promotions and intern recruitment. Today, statistics from SSP shows that there are fewer managers that perceive that older employees are being bypassed in promotion or intern recruitment in the workforce today, than 15 years ago (Ipsos, 2018, p. 18). It is, however, important to state that this is the perception that managers perceive, and not the employees themselves. Results from the analysis imply that it is not necessarily only the younger employees that are presumed to be preferred in a potential promotion. One informant stated that promotion was more likely to happen to those that are older and bear more experience in the industry. This is in line with research conducted by Bratt et al. (2018, p. 175). This study investigated the perceived age discrimination with data collected in 29 countries in the ESS (European Social Survey), and the results showed that younger people reported to have experienced the highest levels of age discrimination. One can therefore not state with absolute agreement that younger employees are being preferred in situations concerning promotion. However, the overall impression from the findings indicates that personal characteristics were considered the main reason for a possible promotion, regardless of the employees' age.

6.2.5 Turnover/retention

As mentioned, turnover/retention differed from the other aspects of employment as these perceptions were seemingly influenced by the managers' personal perception rather than the human resource perspectives. According to Brown et al. (2015, p. 130) employee turnover is a continuous challenge within the hospitality industry. In their study, it was stated that common reasons for leaving the hospitality industry were long hours and compensation. Results from the analysis shows that turnover were considered by many of the informants to be a problem in the hospitality industry. Some informants mentioned that turnover were costly for the hotel.

However, it was also stated that even though it was a cost, it could in some cases be both necessary and healthy. This due to then being able to get new impulses and implement changes in the workforce. Some reasons for turnover also had natural explanation, e.g. that the hotel was no able to give employees the same opportunity to grow as they are offered somewhere else. Many stated that even though there is a high turnover in the industry, some of the informants also stated that many employees are further recruited internally to other positions within the hotel chain.

For younger workers, Brown et al. (2015, p. 130) stated that the requirement set by the managers did often not fit the perception of the work, and especially the long hour mentality were stated as a discrepancy between the young workers and their respective managers. This could be supported with statistics from Scandic Hotels, showing that 44,4% of the employees' turnover where from employees under the age of 30 years (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55). There was mentioned a difference between younger and older employees in the result, as informants stated that younger employees to a larger degree were more restless, and were described as having a desire to challenge themselves and to not get stuck in the same position. This was stated as a visible difference between younger and older employees.

In the statistics from Scandic Hotels it was further stated that employees over the age of 50 years were responsible for 8,2% of the turnover in the hotel chain (Scandic Hotels Group, 2017, p. 54-55). In the interviews with the informants, older employees were described with a desire to have stability, and were therefore perceived as not having the desire to change jobs as frequent as the younger employees were perceived to do. This is also connected to the results from chapter 6.3.2, where it was stated that older employees to a larger degree were

satisfied with having a clear balance between their work life and their personal life, and where not to the same extent seeking new opportunities in the workforce.

6.3 What are managers' perceived characteristics and challenges with respectively the younger and older employees in the workforce? (RQ3)

These perceptions was considered to be influenced by the managers' personal perception of respectively younger and older employees in the industry. As the stated perceptions are based on giving their perceived characteristics and challenges of specific age groups, it was assumed that the managers found this more effortless. This because they were not asked to give implications of an age groups e.g. work performance and given opportunities in the industry.

6.3.1 Younger employees

Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 45) state that younger employees have qualifications that involves great IT-skills. Results from the study indicates that this was also perceived by the majority of the informants. Younger employees were characterized as highly qualified on technology, and several informants highlighted that this was something that the younger generations quickly learned and mastered. Further, Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 45) stated that the younger generation had a considerably higher drop out percentage from upper secondary school, and speculated whether this lack of motivation would be a potential problem in the work life. Results from the analysis show that younger employees were perceived to be less of a stable labor force, as they more often changed their job. The perception of turnover being a problem that was more relevant to the younger employees in the industry, could be explained by the stated characteristic. However, no such indications of lack of motivation was discovered in the analysis. The younger employees were perceived by the informants to be motivated and eager to learn.

According to Mykletun (2005, p. 227) managers often see younger employees as a better investment for the future, as they are described to have an more up to date education, new methods of working, new impulses that can vitalize the working environment and to keep the organization updated on cultural changes and values. Further, Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 44) describes the generations as independent and innovative that appreciate taking on responsibilities in their workplace. Flexibility and freedom in the workplace are other described characteristics of younger employees, alongside with being creative. The results from the study indicate that younger employees are perceived as not being as dependent of stability, which could confirm the characteristics stated in Terjesen & Salomon (2005). In the results from the analysis, there was perceived a barricade for not entering the stable, but rather travel and explore other places of the world. This was perceived as opposite to the older employees, where it was stated that these had a desire for stability. Younger was perceived as more flexible and spontaneous. Many informants mentioned that it was easier to present and implement changes for the younger employees and their mentality were described to be positive when new changes where being implemented in the work place.

According to Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 44) the younger generations are longing to avoid detailed management, however there is a desire for distinct guidelines and management support. The authors stated that these somewhat conflicting desires make it challenging for both the managers and the older employees to accommodate their needs. This was confirmed by the informants in the sense as to where it was shown that there was a different approach for e.g. ask for a sudden day off between the younger and older employees. This was perceived to happen much more frequently for the younger employees, and the informants discussed that the reason for this could be the understanding of what managers does with e.g. the roasters.

There was perceived a different mentality towards the managers' responsibilities between younger and older employees.

6.3.2 Older employees

Poulston & Jenkins (2013, p. 13) stated that older workers were best suited for accounting, administrative and maintenance roles. Least suitable work for older employees was stated to be physical work such as housekeeping and portering. This was also perceived by the informants, which stated that housekeeping was a job that required heavy lifting and was seen as a physical demanding job, and not particularly suited for older employees. Further, Mykletun (2005, p. 227-229) state that older workers are often perceived as resigned, less flexible and both physical and mentally reduced. Informants differed in their sayings about this, as some mentioned some of the elements to be accurate, whilst other denied this.

Older employees are perceived as resistance towards changes and new knowledge. In addition, they are perceived as having reduced potential for self-development and lower productivity (Mykletun, 2005, p. 227-229). The perception of older employees being less flexible was confirmed by many of the informants. Several stated that it was much harder to implement new procedures and changes in the work place without hesitations from the older employees. However, the informants mentioned no such things as performing less productivity being a challenge for older employees in the industry. Further, Poulston & Jenkins (2013, p. 13) stated that older employees were perceived as having less competence with technology. Mykletun (2005, p. 227) confirms, stating that older employees are perceived to have less competence with this. This was also confirmed by the informants in the study, as the majority stated that technology was a larger challenge for the older employees than for the younger. Some stated that data systems took longer time for the older employees

to learn and utilize in an effective way.

Mykletun (2005, p. 227) stated that older workers are described as a valuable resource due to their long experience, stability, work moral and with great social skills. Additionally, they are in general seldom absence for their work and have low turnover. Furthermore, they show great signs of loyalty. Most of these characteristics were also found in the results from the analysis with the informants. The informants valued the experience that the older employees held, and stated that in an environment where younger workers dominate the workforce, it was presumed to be of importance to have a fraction of older employees to reassure stability in the work place. Stability was a characteristic that most of the informants stated that suited older employees. Further, it was stated that older employees does to a larger extent let the manager know if there is a problem, in contrast to younger, who were perceived as having a mindset that these potential problem will overcome with time. According to Terjesen & Salomon (2015, p. 43) older employees emphasize work ethics, respect and values. The work ethics and work attitude that the older were perceived to hold, were highly appreciated by the informants. Informants stated that older employees had more passion, commitment and expressed a different way of proudness to their workplace. This proudness was described as the older employees held a feeling of belonging to the organization. They were described as being able to bear larger burden and where perceived as continuously, in the sense that there were less absence from their workplace than younger employees.

6.4 What are managers' perception of the aging workforce, and to what extent are they planning to utilize this growing manpower? (RQ4)

In a forecast presented by SSB, it was stated that in approximately 15 years, there will be more elderly people than children and adolescents in Norway (SSB, 2018). According to

Antolin & Suyker (2001) the Norwegian population will continue ageing and the proportion of those 65 years or older will increase from around 15 per cent to 23 per cent of the population by 2040 (Antolin & Suyker, 2001, p. 6). This states that the elderly will represent almost a quarter of the population within the next 20 years. This is supported by SSB, as a forecast shows that the proportion of elderly people in the Norwegian population is steadily growing. Numbers shows that the proportion of the population aged 70 and over will increase from the current 12 per cent to 21 per cent in 2060 (SSB, 2018). One informant stated that the offered services in the hospitality industry will change, and compared this to how it has changed in airports. The informant stated that it will be a change of roles in the positions in the hospitality industry. As already booking is mainly done by the guest via the internet, many hotels also offered self-service check in and applications that gives the guest the possibility to have the room-key connected to their smart phone as well as offering chat functions with the receptionists. Therefore, the informant predicted that the hospitality role would be more about meeting the guests in a different setting than before. This was considered to not having any restrictions as to whether the employees were young or older, assuming that the hospitality role in the future would go beyond just the technological perspective.

Results from SSP shows that only 33% of organizations in the private sector have strategies to keep and further train their older workers, whilst in the public sector this number shows 71% (Ipsos, 2018, p. 29). Several of the informants were more negative than opportunistic of the possibility to increase the proportion of older workers in the hospitality industry, stating that the hospitality industry is hectic and implied that different factors of the job description made it unrealistic for older employees to be able to, in an efficient way, work in the hospitality industry. Other informants stated that opposite, informants mentioned that the fact that people prioritize education and exercise more than before, and further argued that due to this the

employees were able to perform more knowledge and having a better health for a longer time. In this way, some of the informants did not see any hinders of older employees not being able to take a bigger part in the future. The managers' perception of the aging workforce was seemingly based on their personal perceptions of aging employees in the industry.

6.6 What are the managers' prospects of the future concerning the age diversity in the hospitality industry? (RQ5)

The perceptions discussed in this chapter is seemingly based on the personal perceptions that the managers have of the prospects in the hospitality industry. Beforehand, it was assumed that the perceptions would be influenced by both the personal and the human resource of the organization. SSB have presented the inverse dependency ratio, which is an indication of how many people are of working age relative to the number of elderly and/or children and adolescents. Today, the ration is more than 3:1, but by 2060 the ratio is indicated to fall to 2:1. The decrease of the dependency ratio means that it will be a greater burden to support the beneficiary population, as there in 2060 only will be two active workers, in contrast to three active workers per date, to support the elderly and/or children and adolescents (SSB, 2018). When being asked about the managers' prospects of the future, different views were enlightened. Some informants stated that they believed it would increase, while others stated that it would remain the same or become even a younger industry in the future. However, the majority of the informants was opportunistic and desired the age distribution to be increased. The informants suggested that the organizations could be better to facilitate in order for employees to stay longer in the workforce. Informants perceived that offering reduced positions or to ease the workload in different positions could facilitate this. However, many also stated that it would be difficult to do in an effective and economically beneficial way. In addition, unchangeable factor such as unfavorable working hours were used to argue in the

perceived possibility for the age distribution to be increased in a realistic manor.

Antonlin & Suyker (2001, p. 6) stated that the official age of retirement is 67 years, however, only a third of people aged 64 are still working (Antolin & Suyker, 2001, p. 6). Furunes (2016, p. 168) state that the pension age per date has been closer to retirement at 62-63 years, even though the official age is 67 years. The Norwegian welfare model is considered to have a quite generous arrangement for those that are un-able to work, and in order to uphold this arrangement, it is of importance that the majority are working (Schøne, 2005, p. 81).. Overall, there was a perception of a desire for the age distribution to be increased as several informants stated that it would be beneficial to supply the relatively young labor force in the hospitality industry with a base of older employees. This because they were described to have long experience, wisdom and knowledge.

6.6 Ageism and/or age discrimination in the study

According to Lucas (1995, p. 234) the issue of age in employment is not a new phenomenon. Poulston & Jenkins (2013, p. 1) state that it is possible that older workers are not attracted to working in the hospitality industry, however, it is also possible that employers discriminatory attitudes limit the ability of older job seekers to secure hotel employment. As no questions regarding ageism and age discrimination was being discussed in the interviews with the informants, the informants did neither get the opportunity to discuss whether their perceptions included ageism and/or age discrimination and to explain themselves. However, throughout the interviews most of the informants stated that personal characteristics were of greater importance than someones age after stating something that could be perceived as ageism and/or age discrimination. It is important to state before further discussions, that However, it is important to state before the further discussion that the majority of informants stated that it

was challenging to generalize a whole age group as personal characteristics were of greater importance.

March & Sahin-Dikmen (2003, p. 7) stated that age was the most-reported reason for discrimination experience for EU citizens in the early 2000s. Results from Mykletun (2005), Ahmed et al. (2012), Solem (2016) and Stypinska & Turek (2017) showed that older employees, in contrast to younger employees, more often felt discriminated in their workplace because of their age. However, in a study from Bratt et al. (2018, p. 175) results showed that younger employees reported to have experienced the highest level of age discrimination. A perception that was mentioned througout the interviews with the informants were that younger employees were better than their older colleagues regarding technology. This was a perception made by most of the informants, and could be cosidered to be ageism as it is a negative attribute that are not representative towards all older employees. When discussing recruitment, some mentioned that they previously had focused on age when reading the applicants CV. However, this was not something they still pursued, which shows a great sign of development concerning age discrimination. Housekeeping was considered to be not suitable for older employees, due to the physical demanding job assignments. Again, one can not judge all alike, and it is as one informant later stated that health is not necessarily just dependent on someones age. When discussing development in their job, many informants felt the need to implicilty state that an older age was not what was depending ones performance in their job. However, none of the informants mentioned this the other way around, so aspects of hidden ageism in their own perceptions could possibly be present.

Further, turnover were mentioned as something that was a challenging concerning the younger employees. Younger employees were perceived to often change their jobs, and as not

being as such a stable workforce as what older employees were perceived to be. In addition, younger employees were characterized with negative attributes such as being perceived to take their job less serious and with showing less work ethic and work attitude that their older colleagues. Older employees were characterized with negative attributes such as being critical, less flexible and not as acceptant to changes or different views. These negative characteristics were perceived by the managers, but the majority of informants also stated, as mentioned, that it is difficult to give characteristics for a whole age group. This because the informants stated that every employee bears different personal characteristics that can either confirm or deny their perception of the age group they belong to. Lastly, the results from the analysis showed that many were negative when being asked if more older employees would be present in the hospitality industry in the future. Some stated that e.g. physical challenges would limit this, which again is something that is dependent on health rather than the employees age, and this could be considered as ageism. Others mentioned unchangable factors such as e.g. working hours, which is something that could not be perceived as ageism.

Terjesen and Salomon (2015, p. 25) state that leaders should be aware of the mechanisms that occurs from ageism, in order to be able to control it before it becomes age discrimination. The Working Environment Act, section §13-1**.** Prohibition against discrimination, states that; "(1) Direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of political views, membership of a trade union, or age is prohibited" (Working Environment Act, 2018, §13-1). The purpose of the Working Environment Act is to ensure equal treatment among all workers. The implied aspects of ageism and age discrimination from the results of the analysis shows that ageism and some elements of age discrimination is present in the perceived perception of respectively younger and older employees. This was present in the perceptions stated by both the younger and the older informants in the study.

6.7 Implications and recommendations for further research

This dissertation is a contribution to research within the field of age diversity. The study presents detailed and comprehensive perceptions that managers have towards respectively younger and older employees in the hospitality industry. Further, the study explains whether the presented perceptions are influenced by the managers' personal perceptions or the human resource perspectives from the organization the informants are employed in. It also gives insights to whether there are any differences in the perceptions coming from respectively the younger or the older managers in the sample. This approach contributes to giving a different angle in studying the managers' perceptions of younger and older employees in the hospitality industry than what is present in the current literature. For further studies, it would have been of interest to conduct a similar study with a different sample, in order to compare the results from this study with new findings. By conducting the study on a different sample it is contiguous to believe that the analysis would present results that shares similarities with the presented results, as well as outlining different perceptions that managers have towards younger and older employees in the industry.

7. Conclusion

This study has outline managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry. A variety of perceptions made by the informants have been presented throughout the study. The managers' perceptions of the current age distribution in the hospitality industry were outlined (RQ1). Different stages of employment were studied, including recruitment, training, development, promotion and turnover (RQ2). Further, characteristics that managers had towards respectively younger and older employees were addressed (RQ3). Additionally, managers' perception of the aging workforce, and to what extent managers planned to utilize this growing manpower was presented (RQ4). Lastly, the managers' perceptions of the future concerning age diversity in the hospitality industry were enlightened (RQ5).

Concerning RQ1, there was a common perception that the age distribution in the hospitality industry was young. However, there were outlined three factors that seemed to influence the age distribution in the studied sample. It was perceived that in the hotels that were well established, the age distribution was wider than in the hotels that were considered to be newer. Further, the magnitude of the hotels was seemingly a factor that influenced the age distribution. In the hotels that were considered to be large, the age distribution were larger than in the hotels that were considered to be smaller. Lastly, whether the hotels were located in the city center or outside downtown influenced the managers' perception of the age distribution. In the hotels located outside downtown Stavanger, the age distribution was perceived to be greater.

As age diversity, as diversity in general, is considered to be a sensitive topic to be studying, precautions were initiated to make sure that the informants would answer as sincere as possible. Before conducting the interviews, it was assumed that there would be elements from

the organizations human resource policies present in the informants' statements. Assumptions were made that this would especially be present when discussing perceptions related to the different stages of employment. This due to the fact that what was being discussed could be considered as sensitive, and one could therefore assume that the given answer would be formulated with the problematic of ageism and age discrimination in the back of their mind. This was also considered to be the case, when discussing recruitment, training, development and promotion (RQ2). The informants shared their view, but were also stating throughout the discussions that, however, personal characteristics were considered as more important that the employees' age. However, no such indications were found when discussing turnover. It was a common argument among the informants that younger were responsible for the majority of the turnover in the industry. This finding conforms to previous literature.

Further, characteristics of younger and older employees were outlined (RQ3). The informants stated different characteristics and challenges with respectively younger and older employees. Younger were perceived to take more responsibility in the work place than previous generations have done, and were outlined to be mature of their young age. However, they were perceived as not being a stable workforce compared to their older colleagues. This because they were perceived to have a need to travel and explore the world, and therefore did not necessarily stay in their work for many years before changing occupation or even industry. Further, younger were perceived to not have the same understanding for what managers does, and they were perceived to be more spontaneous in the way that they more often asked for a sudden day off. Older employees were perceived to present great work ethics and work attitude. They were perceived to hold valuable experience and life wisdom that were perceived as beneficial in the workforce. The informants stated that older employees took their job serious and had a great understanding of the responsibilities that the managers

had. Older employees were perceived to be critical, and that it took longer time to implement and accept changes for these employees. Further, the majority of informants mentioned that older employees had less of a competence with technology compared to their younger colleagues.

Concerning RQ4, there were different perceptions as to whether the aging workforce would be present in the hospitality industry. Some perceived that older employees were going to be more present arguing that people prioritize education and health more than before. Others stated that it was unrealistic that the proportion of older employees would increase in the industry due to unchangeable factors such as e.g. unfavorable working hours. These perceptions were also related to RQ5. The results presented split perceptions of whether the hospitality industry would be changing considering age. Some informants perceived the age diversity to be enlarged, whilst other perceived that younger employees would continue to dominate the workforce. However, the majority of informants desired the industry to become more equally distributed concerning age, and found this to be of great importance.

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      Limited.

9.0 Appendix

Appendix 1

Forespørsel om å delta i intervju – masteroppgave ved Norsk Hotellhøyskole

Hei! Mitt navn er Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal, og jeg kontakter deg med forespørsel om å delta i et intervju i forbindelse med min avsluttende masteroppgave ved Norsk Hotellhøyskole. Temaet er knyttet til mangfoldsledelse. På bakgrunn av dine ansvarsområder som leder er det av stor interesse for meg og mitt forskningsprosjekt å få høre om dine erfaringer og tanker gjeldende dette temaet.

Av forskningsmessige grunner blir intervjuet tatt opp på lydopptak, og senere transkribert og slettet. All informasjon som du forteller vil bli anonymisert i oppgaven, og opplysningene vil ikke kunne spores tilbake til deg. Intervjuet vil ta ca. 45 min.

Jeg håper dette er noe du vil ta del i. Jeg er fleksibel på både tid og sted, og venter på å høre fra deg slik at vi eventuelt kan planlegge et møte.

Vennlig hilsen
Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal
Masterstudent ved Norsk Hotellhøyskole

Appendix 2

Intervjuguide

Generell informasjon om informanten
- navn og alder
- stilling, arbeidssted og antall år i hotellnæringen

Informantens arbeidsoppgaver
Hvis du skulle beskrive ansattgruppen hos deg, hva ville du si?

Generelt om aldersmangfold
- Hvilke inntrykk har du av alderssammensetningen på de ansatte i hotellnæringen?

Nåværende arbeidsstyrke
- Hvordan er alderssammensetningen på denne arbeidsplassen?

Rekrutering
- Hvilke kvalifikasjoner legge vekt på i rekrutteringen av nye arbeidstakere?
        - Har alderen til den potensielle arbeidstakeren noe å si?

Opplæring, videreutvikling og forfremmelse
- Er det noen forskjeller mellom yngre og eldre arbeidstakere i
(1) opplæringsprosessen?
(2) utviklingen i arbeidet?
(3) muligheten for forfremmelse?

Turnover / jobbskifte
- Hvordan forholder du deg til den relativt høye andelen turnover i hotellnæringen?

Sammenligning av yngre og eldre arbeidstakere
- Hvordan opplever du generelt en yngre arbeidstaker? Noen karakteristikker? Utfordringer?

- Hvordan opplever du generelt en eldre arbeidstaker? Noen karakteristikker? Utfordringer?

Aldrende arbeidstakere
- Hvilket tanker har du om den aldrende befolkningen mtp. jobbmuligheter i hotellnæringen?
        -Har du planer å benytte deg av den økende andelen av eldre arbeidstakere?

Fremtidsutsikter
- Hvordan tror du alderssammensetningen i hotellnæringen vil være i fremtiden?

Appendix 3

NSD sin vurdering

Prosjekttittel
Mangfoldsledelse

Referansenummer
574376

Registrert
19.02.2019 av Trude Furunes - trude.furunes@uis.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Universitetet i Stavanger / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Norsk hotellhøgskole

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)
Trude Furunes, trude.furunes@uis.no, tlf: 90530053

Type prosjekt
Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student
Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal, elikristinleirdal@gmail.com, tlf: 97732362

Prosjektperiode
01.03.2019 - 31.12.2020

Status
25.02.2019 - Vurdert med vilkår

Vurdering (1)

25.02.2019 - Vurdert med vilkår
FORENKLET VURDERING MED VILKÅR Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i
meldeskjemaet med vedlegg, vurderer vi at prosjektet har lav personvernulempe fordi det ikke
behandler særlige kategorier eller personopplysninger om straffedommer og lovovertredelser,
eller inkluderer sårbare grupper. Prosjektet har rimelig varighet og er basert på samtykke. Vi
gir derfor prosjektet en forenklet vurdering med vilkår. Du har et selvstendig ansvar for å
følge vilkårene og sette deg inn i veiledningen i denne vurderingen. Dersom du følger
vilkårene og prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet, vil
behandlingen av personopplysninger være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen. VILKÅR
Vår vurdering forutsetter: 1. At du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med kravene til informert
samtykke 2. At du ikke innhenter særlige kategorier eller personopplysninger om
straffedommer og lovovertredelser 3. At du følger behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
(institusjonen du studerer/forsker ved) sine retningslinjer for datasikkerhet 4. At du laster opp
revidert(e) informasjonsskriv på utvalgssiden(e) i meldeskjemaet og trykker «bekreft
innsending», slik at du og behandlingsansvarlig institusjon får korrekt dokumentasjon. Dere
kan bruke vår engelske mal:

https://nsd.no/personvernombud/en/help/information_consent/information_requirements.html NSD foretar ikke en ny vurdering av det reviderte informasjonsskrivet. 1. KRAV TIL INFORMERT SAMTYKKE De registrerte skal få skriftlig og/eller muntlig informasjon om prosjektet og samtykke til deltakelse. Du må påse at informasjonen minst omfatter: - Prosjektets formål og hva opplysningene skal brukes til - Hvilken institusjon som er behandlingsansvarlig - Hvilke opplysninger som innhentes og hvordan opplysningene innhentes - At det er frivillig å delta og at man kan trekke seg så lenge studien pågår uten at man må oppgi grunn - Når prosjektet skal avsluttes og hva som skal skje med personopplysningene da: sletting, anonymisering eller videre lagring - At du/dere behandler opplysninger om den registrerte basert på deres samtykke - Retten til å be om innsyn, retting, sletting, begrensning og dataportabilitet (kopi) - Retten til å klage til Datatilsynet - Kontaktopplysninger til prosjektleder (evt. student og veileder) - Kontaktopplysninger til institusjonens personvernombud På nettsidene våre finner du mer informasjon og en veiledende mal for informasjonsskriv: http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvernombud/hjelp/informasjon_samtykke/informere_om.html Det er ditt ansvar at informasjonen du gir i informasjonsskrivet samsvarer med dokumentasjonen i meldeskjemaet. 2. TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 31.12.2020. 3. FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32). Dersom du benytter en databehandler i prosjektet, må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. NSD SIN VURDERING NSDs vurdering av lovlig grunnlag, personvernprinsipper og de registrertes rettigheter følger under, men forutsetter at vilkårene nevnt over følges. LOVLIG GRUNNLAG Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Forutsatt at vilkår 1 og 4 følges, er det NSD sin vurdering at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a. PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER Forutsatt at vilkår 1 til 4 følges, vurderer NSD at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om: - lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen - formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål - dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet - lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19) og dataportabilitet (art. 20). Forutsatt at informasjonen oppfyller kravene i vilkår 1, vurderer NSD at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13. Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned. MELD ENDRINGER Dersom den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. På våre nettsider informerer vi om hvilke endringer som må meldes. Vent på svar før endringer gjennomføres. OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET NSD

vil følge opp underveis (hvert annet år) og ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet/pågår i tråd med den behandlingen som er dokumentert. Lykke til med prosjektet! Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

Are you interested in taking part in the research project "Hotel managers perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to outline hotel managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry. In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of the project is to outline hotel managers' perception of age diversity within the hospitality industry, and data will be collected through personal interviews conducted by research assistant Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal.

The project is the master thesis for graduating master student Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal and planned completion is June, 2019.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Stavanger is the institution responsible for the project. The project leader and supervisor for the project is Associate Professor Trude Furunes, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Social Sciences, Norwegian School of Hotel Management. The Research Assistant is master student Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been approached to participate in this project as you are an experienced manager working in the hospitality industry in Stavanger. As you have managerial responsibilities in your workplace your contribution will be of great value to the project. In total there will be approximately 10 experienced managers from the hospitality industry in Stavanger participating in the project.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you will be participate in a personal interview conducted by Research Assistant Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes. Your answers will be audio recorded and later deleted after the interview is transcribed.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be deleted. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). No data will be identifiable, as we will conduct a pseudonymisation of the data.

You as a participant will not be recognizable in the publication and will only be addressed in codes. No personal information about you will be published. The transcribed interview in its whole will only be available for participants in the research group DiMaRG, consisting of six master students and three supervisors at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management. However, no data will be presented to the DiMaRG-group without it being de-identified. The only person that will have access to the raw data is the Research Assistant Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal. The data will be stored on an encrypted USB-stick. Your contact information will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data in order to ensure that no unauthorized persons are able to access the personal data.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end in June 2019. The audio recordings of the interviews will be deleted at the end of the project. Your contact information will be deleted immediately after the interview is conducted. The de-identified data will be archived for potential future

research for the Associate Professors Trude Furunes, Tone Therese Linge and Åse Helene Bakkevig Dagsland at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management until December 2020. After this, all data will be deleted.

Your rights

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with the University of Stavanger, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- University of Stavanger via
  - project leader and supervisor Trude Furunes by email: (trude.furunes@uis.no) or by telephone: + 47 51 83 37 62.
  - or research assistant Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal, by email: (elikristinleirdal@gmail.com) or by telephone: + 47 97 73 23 62.
- Our Data Protection Officer:
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17. Reference number: 574376

Yours sincerely,

Trude Furunes   Eli Kristin Nytun Leirdal
Project Leader   Research Assistant
(Researcher/supervisor)   Student

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "Hotel managers perceptions of age diversity within the hospitality industry" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

¨to participate in a personal interview with the Research Assistant of the project

I give consent for the data to be processed until the end date of the project and stored by Associate Professor(s) at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management until December 2020.

(Signed by participant, date)