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**MARÍLIA SOFIA
FERREIRA DURÃO**

**GESTÃO DE CARREIRAS, QUALIDADE DE VIDA NO
TRABALHO E RETENÇÃO DE RH QUALIFICADOS
NO SETOR DO TURISMO E DA HOTELARIA EM
PORTUGAL**

**MANAGING RETENTION, CAREERS AND QUALITY
OF WORKING LIFE OF QUALIFIED HR IN TOURISM
AND HOSPITALITY: THE CASE OF PORTUGAL**



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Tese apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Turismo, realizada sob a orientação científica do Doutor Carlos Manuel Martins da Costa, Professor Catedrático do Departamento de Economia, Gestão, Engenharia Industrial e Turismo da Universidade de Aveiro, da Professora Doutora Maria João Aibéo Carneiro, Professora Auxiliar do Departamento de Economia, Gestão, Engenharia Industrial e Turismo da Universidade de Aveiro, e da Professora Doutora Mónica Segovia-Pérez, Professora Contratada da Universidade Rey Juan Carlos.

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I dedicate this thesis to my family, for their wholehearted support.

o júri

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palavras-chave

Turismo e Hotelaria, gestão de Recursos Humanos, carreiras, qualidade de vida no trabalho, retenção, rotatividade de pessoal.

resumo

As relações laborais nas organizações contemporâneas têm vindo a sofrer mudanças substanciais, das quais resultam implicações complexas para a atração, motivação, retenção e desempenho de profissionais altamente qualificados. A indústria do T&H, conotada por elevadas taxas de rotatividade e condições de trabalho precárias, tem vindo cada vez mais a exigir competências de nível mais elevado aquando dos processos de recrutamento. Tendo-se tornado uma escolha de carreira com previsão de crescimento, surgem questões relativas à capacidade da indústria do T&H contribuir para o desenvolvimento e retenção a longo prazo dos seus profissionais.

Esta investigação tem como objetivo contribuir para uma maior compreensão das experiências de trabalho de indivíduos altamente qualificados no setor Hoteleiro e sobre como estas experiências têm moldado a sua retenção e a longevidade da sua carreira. Este estudo procura, ainda, contribuir com novas perspetivas sobre as dinâmicas de desenvolvimento de carreira na indústria do T&H, com base na capitalização da formação superior dedicada a esta área.

Ao adotar uma abordagem epistemológica construtivista-interpretivista, com uma orientação crítica, este estudo procura destacar a complexidade subjacente à análise dos vários temas abordados. Esta investigação adota, ainda, uma abordagem de investigação qualitativa multi-método (QUAL→qual), baseada em relatos de três grupos de participantes, selecionados com base num método de amostragem intencional: *Employees* (diplomados atualmente empregados na indústria), *Leavers* (diplomados que já não trabalham na indústria), e *Newcomers* (estudantes do Ensino Superior em T&H), perfazendo um total de 56 entrevistas. As entrevistas ofereceram diferentes pontos de vista sobre as suas experiências e decisões de carreira, sentimentos e perceções sobre a indústria do T&H. Com o objetivo de aprofundar a interpretação destes dados foi desenvolvida uma componente suplementar, que envolveu a consulta de um conjunto de peritos e atores-chave na indústria.

Ao estender a investigação existente sobre o desenvolvimento das carreiras, intenções de saída e qualidade de vida no trabalho no setor da Hotelaria, este estudo contribui de forma relevante para a compreensão da perspetiva dos trabalhadores sobre a forma como as carreiras no setor se desenrolam. Os resultados do estudo traduzem a natureza multifacetada e complexa das decisões e trajetórias de carreira. É dada especial ênfase ao conceito de qualidade de vida no trabalho, um tópico ainda pouco explorado em T&H, destacando a forma como as pessoas dão sentido e valorizam as suas experiências de trabalho/carreira. Os resultados revelam que a interação de vários fatores influencia a relação entre as perceções dos trabalhadores qualificados e a avaliação que estes fazem das suas experiências de trabalho e das suas intenções relativamente à permanência ou à mudança de emprego/carreira. Ao discutir a capacidade da indústria do T&H para se manter competitiva como uma escolha de carreira a longo prazo, este estudo procura fazer contribuições teóricas e práticas que podem ter implicações mais vastas para uma maior valorização das profissões e das carreiras na indústria do T&H.

keywords

Tourism and Hospitality, Human Resources management, careers, quality of working life, retention, voluntary turnover.

abstract

The employment relationship in contemporary organisations is undergoing fundamental changes which have complex implications for the attraction, motivation, retention, and performance of highly qualified employees. Despite its reputation of precarious working conditions and high turnover rates, the T&H industry is changing, and higher-level skills are being required. Having become a growing career choice, questions arise regarding the industry's ability to contribute to long-term growth and retention of T&H professionals.

The purpose of this research is to contribute to a deeper understanding of work experiences of highly educated individuals in the hotel sector, and on how these experiences have been shaping retention and career longevity. This study attempts to contribute to offer new insights and nuanced, critical understanding of career dynamics in the T&H industry, grounded on the capitalisation of dedicated T&H tertiary education.

A constructivist-interpretivist stance with a critical orientation is taken, seeking to highlight the underlying complexity of analysing the various themes involved in this study. This research adopts a multi-method qualitative (QUAL→*qual*) research design. The research approach relies on in-depth, first-hand accounts of three groups of purposefully selected participants at different career stages: *Employees* (graduates currently employed in the industry), *Leavers* (graduates no longer working in the industry), and *Newcomers* to the labour market (students majoring in T&H-related degrees). The core component of the study is based on in-depth interviews with a total of 56 informants nationwide, with different job positions in the hotel sector. The three groups offered different viewpoints of career experiences and decisions, feelings and perceptions on T&H. A supplementary component, aimed at providing deeper explanations within the context of the core component, involved the consultation of a set of key actors in the T&H industry and experts from different disciplines.

By extending existing research on Hospitality careers, turnover intention, and quality of working life, this study makes a relevant contribution to understanding the employee perspective on how Hospitality careers unfold. The study findings encapsulate the multi-faceted and complex nature of career decisions and trajectories. Special emphasis is given to the cognition of *quality of working life*, a largely untapped topic in the existing T&H literature, informing the way people give meaning to work/career experiences. Findings reveal that an interplay of factors influence the relationship between graduates' perceptions and evaluation of work experiences and their intentions regarding on job-occupational permanence or change. By discussing the T&H industry ability to remain competitive as a long-term career choice, this study thus seeks to make theoretical and practical contributions which may have wider implications for a higher valuation of T&H jobs and careers.

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Part I

INTRODUCTION



1. Introduction

1.1 Interest and scope of the research

The Tourism and Hospitality sector (hereafter T&H) is a major contributor to the GDP of several countries, one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy and it is among the top job creating sectors. The sector remained strong and resilient even during the economic downturn and was a fundamental contributor to the creation of jobs during that period and subsequent economic recovery (United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), 2015). In recent years Portugal has positioned itself as one of the best tourist destinations in the world and, as a result, employment in the Tourism sector has increased significantly. In 2019, the Tourism sector grew by 4.2% and contributed 34.6BN Euros to the Portuguese economy, which represents 16.5% of the total economic activity in the country. The sector employed 902.400 people, which corresponds to 18.6% of total employment (World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 2020). Solely the Hotels and Restaurants industry employed 320.000 people. The indicators also show that 58% of tourism workers are women, 9% more than the national average in the total economy (49%) (TravelBI, 2020).

However, despite the wide recognition of its significant multiplier effect on employment, the T&H sector has a reputation of precarious working conditions, namely: low wages, low status, low union density, seasonal and short-term contracts, shift and night work that interferes with family functioning, high labour intensity or employment in small and medium sized organisations, offering fewer opportunities for career development. The nature of T&H work, coupled with the rewards it provides (or lack thereof), poses significant challenges to employee retention, employee membership status, and career longevity (Cho et al., 2009; Deery & Shaw, 1997; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Yang et al., 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that the T&H industry also has a decades-long reputation of very high turnover rates (Stacey, 2015). Bearing this in mind, one should question not only the sector's capability of creating jobs, but the quality of the jobs created, which have significant manifold implications: on the wider labour market, on organisational effectiveness, and on individual well-being. Subjective experiences of quality of working life, as an essential dimension of employee retention and career success, have been gaining visibility within Human Resource (HR) management literature, but studies focusing on T&H employees are still scarce.

Employee turnover is not only a daily concern for the industry practitioners, as it has been intensively researched and well documented for decades. Numerous studies have been dealing both with turnover in general (Lee, Hom, Eberly, Li, & Mitchell, 2017), and more specifically in the T&H industry (Cho, Johanson, & Guchait, 2009; Davidson, Timo, & Wang, 2010; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008; Yang, Wan, & Fu, 2012). A turnover culture is deeply rooted in the industry, and high rates are often normalised and simply accepted (Iverson & Deery, 1997; Kusluvan, 2003). This is of particular relevance if considering that it seems to be generally agreed that a steady supply of skilled, motivated and committed labour force is a persistent issue in any industry, thus retaining valuable employees has become even more important than ever (Andersen & Hjalager, 2001; Scott & Revis, 2008). It also seems to be consensual that providing high service quality to all costumers is vital to the success of any T&H organisation (Burke, 2018) and that high staff turnover negatively influences service quality (Emiroğlu, Akova, & Tanrıverdi, 2015). Human Resources are the main source of value and competitive advantage in contemporary high-contact service organisations, such as hotels, which are highly dependent on people to drive innovation, deliver quality tourism services and keep up with global trends. Virtually, all companies consider that retaining both their internal and external costumers is critical and maintaining a high service quality is paramount. The industry acknowledges the importance of HR, but these are still not taken seriously enough (Cooper & Hall, 2008; Stacey, 2015).

Despite its reputation of precarious working conditions and high turnover rates, the T&H industry has become a growing career choice. Although there is still a core pool of low skilled jobs, the T&H industry is changing and higher-level skills are been required, offering new career opportunities. In Portugal, in 2019, 13% of people employed in Tourism had Higher Education qualifications. Although there was a considerable increase when compared to previous years, this percentage is still very low when in comparison with the economy as a whole (28%), and the country still faces the problem of a shortage of qualified personnel (TravelBI, 2020). In an attempt to address these constraints, the provision of T&H management education at a tertiary level has grown significantly in recent years, yet little is known of the circumstances of the increasing number of graduates from these programmes. The challenge is, therefore, in being able to understand what challenges arise for highly educated individuals with regards to career longevity in the T&H industry.

The relationship between talent management and careers in the T&H industry need further considerations and discussion, so as to extend beyond the simple notion that the loss of efficient staff represents a significant problem. This undoubtedly calls for talent management transcending the HR practices that serve merely organisational goals, and allowing individuals to develop and manage their own careers instead (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017).

Although the concept of career is central in HR management, there is still a great need for a deeper understanding of how individuals' careers develop in such a fragmented industry as T&H. Previous studies confirm that the T&H sector offers few structured career opportunities (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017; Ladkin & Riley, 1996; McCabe & Savery, 2007). As it is difficult to find structured careers in which workers are given genuine prospects of career development, it is not surprising when qualified and talented employees leave (Kusluvan, 2003). This seems paramount in an industry that continues to operate in an environment that is often unpredictable and characterised by rapid seasonal change and has both quantity and quality labour shortages.

These issues must be put into context in face of the highly volatile and unstable organisational environment in which contemporary careers unfold (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 2002; Sullivan, 1999). Traditional career patterns have been challenged and although *boundaryless* and *protean* careers have aroused substantial interest, there is still few empirical research on these new career patterns, especially in the T&H field (being Mooney and Jameson (2018) one of the exceptions found). The management of 'new organisational career' is now based on a shared-responsibility between the employee and the employer and these new patterns of employment relationships led to alterations in psychological contracts. The emphasis is on individual agency, self-fulfilment, orientation towards mobility and on the development of skills and competencies which are employability and labour market-oriented (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Baruch, 2004; Briscoe & Hall, 2006). With continuous learning and marketability underlying the exchange agreement in the new, transactional contracts, individuals are expected to engage in ongoing cycles of job search activities which can increase the likelihood of voluntary turnover. New career paradigms present, therefore, new challenges for both individuals and organisations.

Considering all the above-mentioned assumptions, this study aims to contribute to the debate surrounding the ability, or willingness, of the T&H industry to retain HR with dedicated T&H high-level qualifications. Following Wilkinson, Redman, Snell and Bacon's (2009) view on the two different components of HR Management – the *Human* component (focused on managing employer-employee relationships) and the *Resource* component (focused on organisational practices for managing human capital) – this study is built upon a *Human* dimension. Developed based on a qualitative approach, this research gives voice to a group of individuals at different stages of their careers within the hotel sector. In common, they have the fact of having chosen to pursue a Higher Education degree and a career in T&H. By telling their career stories and experiences in their own words, following their own cognitive constructs and placing special emphasis on gendered constructions, this study investigates how these experiences came to shape their understanding of quality of working life and permanence in this industry. The role of tertiary-level education in expectations' formation, in career development, and in the decision to leave or to remain in the industry is contemplated.

Besides the researcher's interests and her own professional and personal experiences, one of the main reasons that, at a very incipient stage, led to the choice of this topic were the apparent contradictions visible in Portuguese press reports that, on the one hand, praise the employment-creating potential of the tourism industry while, on the other hand, voice the employers concerns with (qualified) labour shortages, as well as employees' dissatisfaction with the poor conditions offered by such a booming industry. At the same time, a proliferation of opinion pieces about the value of HR for the success of any tourism business and the importance of retaining qualified workers (discussing various issues such as motivation, satisfaction, recognition, engagement, commitment or happiness at work) was also being observed; which did not seem congruent with the detrimental reports from the people the researcher knew working in the industry. Therefore, the researcher was largely driven by the interest of understanding how T&H professionals feel about their careers, in light of the decision and subsequent investment of pursuing a T&H degree. This study was also extensively inspired by the work of Mooney (2017), Ladkin and Kichuk (2017), and Blomme, Tromp and van Rheede (Blomme, Tromp, & van Rheede, 2008; Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp, 2009).

1.2 Research problem and objectives

Anchored in a combination of theoretical and philosophical perspectives, and based on complementary qualitative methods of inquiry, the purpose of this research is to contribute to a deeper understanding of work experiences of highly educated individuals in the hotel sector, and on how these experiences have been shaping retention and career longevity. This study attempts to contribute to offer new insights and nuanced, critical understanding of career dynamics in the T&H industry, grounded on the capitalisation of dedicated T&H tertiary education. The research approach relies on in-depth, individual, first-hand accounts of career experiences and decisions, feelings and perceptions, of three groups of purposefully selected participants offering three different viewpoints of career development and longevity in T&H. Special emphasis is given to the cognition of *quality of work life* informing the way people give meaning to these work-/career-related experiences.

Literature review points out to interconnectedness and a certain complexity of an array of concepts and theories related to career choice, career development and work adjustment of highly qualified T&H industry employees. This cognition has led to adoption of a more holistic research of how individuals perceive, experience, and respond to their career development in the sector. Despite the predominantly inductive-driven approach that was employed in this investigation, literature review was central not only in catching up with the relevant body of theory and research, but also in outlining the various themes that had been identified as important to address the research problem, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

For clarification, the term ‘highly educated’ is used in this study to refer to individuals who hold a university T&H-related degree (i.e., dedicated qualifications, such as, for example, Hospitality Management, Tourism, Travel and Tourism, etc. degrees), at undergraduate and/or post-graduate level, relying on the assumption that the decision to choose a T&H university degree is linked to the intention to pursue a career in this industry. In this study, these individuals are also referred to as *graduates*.

In turn, the term ‘career’ is also used here to refer to research participants’ work experiences over time in the hospitality industry (not across the informants’ whole working life, which may include other occupations). In light of this, careers are interpreted as being defined by a given professional occupation (in this case, T&H) to which the acquisition of specific knowledge and expertise within specific professional boundaries (by the means of a Higher Education T&H-related degree) is associated. Hence, when informants are labelled as *Leavers*, this means that these individuals went through occupational/career change.

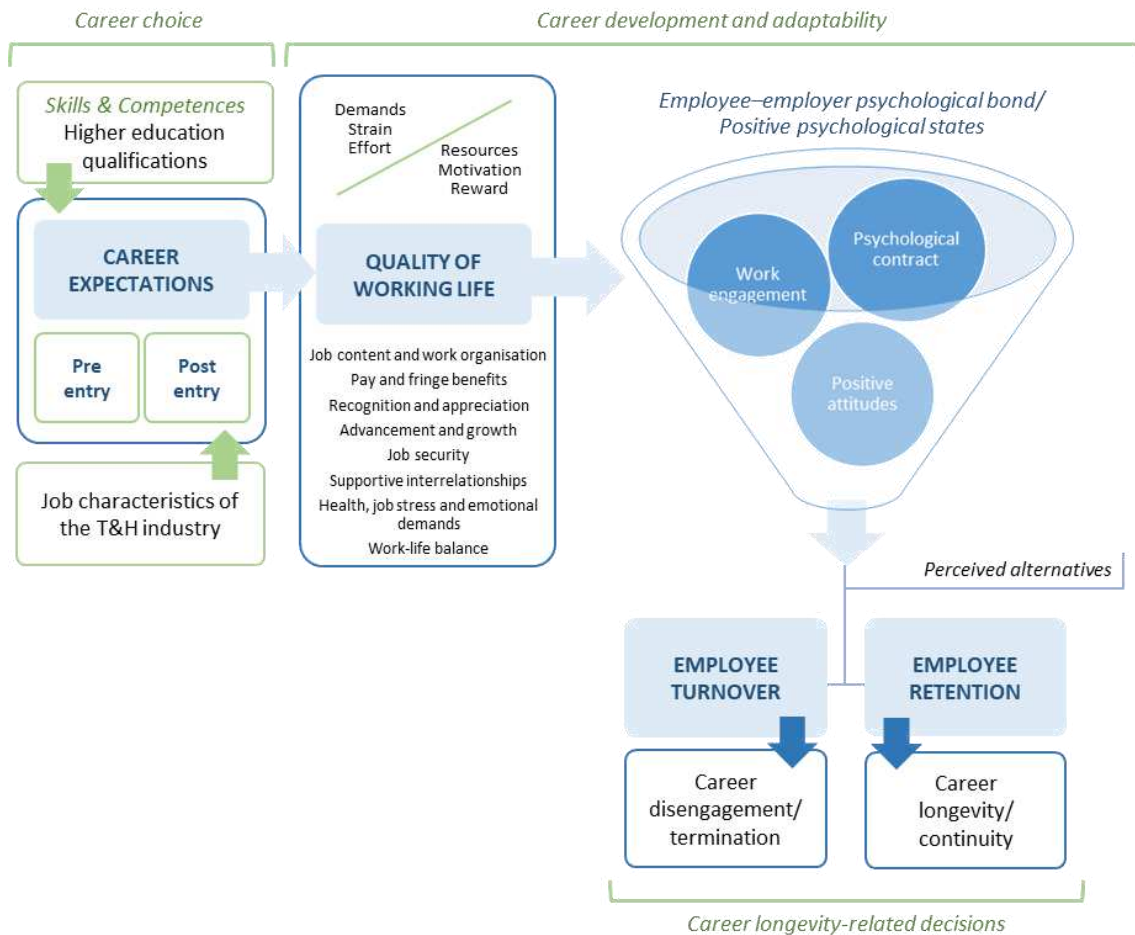


Figure 1.1 | Concept map

Source: Own construction

This study takes as its starting point the following research question: **To what extent is the T&H industry being successful in retaining and capitalising on staff with dedicated T&H high-level qualifications and what implications does it have for individual career development?** In order to answer this question, the following general objectives have been defined, which in turn consist of a more specific set of objectives (presented in section 5.2.1, Table 5.2):

- i. What moves individuals towards a degree and a career in T&H?
- ii. How do highly educated individuals conceive quality of working life in the Hospitality industry?
- iii. In what ways do the experiences of highly educated individuals influence their decisions on job/career permanence or termination?
- iv. How do Hospitality careers unfold for highly educated individuals?

By discussing the T&H industry ability to remaining competitive as a long-term career choice, this study thus seeks to make theoretical and practical contributions which may have wider implications for a higher valuation of T&H jobs and careers.

1.3 Methodology overview

The methodology adopted in this study is described with further detail in Chapter 5, which is entirely dedicated to presenting the rationale for the methodological choices underpinning this empirical investigation. In this section, the methodological approach is just briefly presented. Figure 1.2 offers a general overview of the main decisions informing the research approach adopted in this investigation with the purpose of answering the aforementioned research questions.

A constructivist-interpretivist stance with a critical orientation was adopted in this study, seeking to highlight the underlying complexity of analysing the various themes involved in this study. Hence, it has been considered relevant to use different forms of information collection and analysis, resulting in a somewhat distinctive approach both to qualitative research and to multi/mixed method research. This research adopts a – qualitative, inductive-sequential, complementarity-aimed – multi-method research design, built on multiple data sets. The empirical study is set on a preliminary research (see section 5.5, *Preliminary research*), a *QUAL* data generation phase (the core component of the study; see section 5.5.1) and a *qual* data generation phase (the supplementary component; see section 5.5.2). Interviews were chosen as the primary tool for data collection. Considering the researcher’s reflexivity, data collection is based on an interactive and co-operative researcher–participant relationship (thus often labelled of data construction), which is central in qualitative approaches.

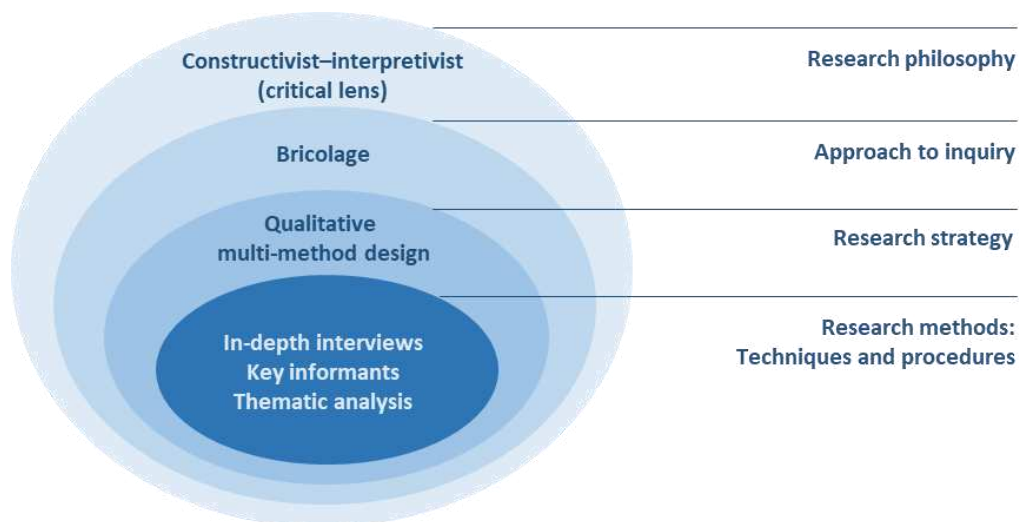


Figure 1.2 | Overall methodological approach

Source: Own construction based on Saunders et al. (2016)

At an initial stage, exploratory interviews and conversations were held with fellow academics and experts, the purpose of which was to gather preliminary data about themes of greater concern and possible barriers that would direct the scope of the later data collection. The core component is based on in-depth interviews with a total of 56 informants nationwide, with

different job positions in the hotel sector, at different career stages: *Employees* (i.e., 'currently' employed in the industry), *Leavers* (i.e., 'former' employees, who left the industry and decided to pursue a different career), and *Newcomers* (i.e., students who had a first contact with hospitality work (e.g. internship) and can become future workers in the industry). Research participants were selected purposively. The main criteria for choosing the participants was the eligibility as *highly educated*, following the definition previously presented. Therefore, all interviewees hold a Higher Education degree in the T&H field or, as in the case of Newcomers, are close to graduation and completion of their degrees. The supplementary component involved the consultation of a *Key-Informant* panel, composed of a set of key actors in the T&H industry and experts from different disciplines. These informants were asked to reflect and comment on the various scenarios emerging from the preliminary analysis of the data collected in previous phases.

Data collection/construction took place between November 2018 and June 2019. Interviews, conducted either in person or by web conferencing, provided an opportunity to explore how participants evaluate their career development, as informed by their personal expectations, experiences and conceptions of quality of working life. Data analysis was carried out alongside data collection and an interim analysis informed adaptation of the topic guide and on-going sampling. The point of which data saturation/informational redundancy – where no new insights emerge from the analysis of an additional case (Given, 2008; Sandelowski, 1995) – was achieved, has decided the final sample size. An adapted thematic analysis, combined with narrative elements, was used to offer new or deeper explanations about the phenomenon that is being studied. Qualitative data were analysed with the assistance of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12. Coding was both deductive, based on themes commonly used in the literature, and on new themes which were identified from the data.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised in five parts and nine chapters, which are divided into several sections each. In this introductory chapter, corresponding to the first part, the theme, interest and scope of this study is presented. The objectives of the research, the research process and methodology, and the concept map informing the empirical research, are also summarily presented.

The second part of this thesis refers to the literature review, which sets the context for and constitutes the theoretical background of this study. Chapter 2 is devoted to the understanding of career development in T&H. The literature review in this chapter is focused on the main career theories and concepts of career development, the nature of T&H employment, the motivations to choose a T&H career, and the importance of a graduate level skilled workforce in a context marked by significant changes in employment relations.

Quality of working life (QWL) is the object of Chapter 3. In this chapter, the relevance and conceptualisation of QWL are analysed, reviewing main theorisations and related studies relevant for the research. Based on the extant literature, the dimensions and factors of analysis of the QWL concept are identified and described.

In Chapter 4, literature on expectations and psychological contract is analysed and discussed. An extensive review focused on employee turnover as a potential negative outcome of unmet expectations and psychological contract breach is presented, describing the main theories and foundational models of employee turnover. An opposite view, focused on positive outcomes of met expectations and psychological contract fulfilment, is also highlighted, namely in the form of positive job experiences such as employee engagement.

In Chapter 5, the methodology followed in research is explained, describing and discussing the philosophical position underlying the research, as well as the research strategy, methods and techniques concerning the collection/construction and analysis of data. At the end of this chapter, a critical assessment of the methodological process is also made, considering issues of credibility of the results, the researcher's positionality, ethics, and limitations.

The third part of the thesis is dedicated to the presentation, analysis and discussion of the results obtained from data collection/construction. Chapter 6 characterises the processes of career decision-making and antecedents of career decisions, focusing on T&H as a career choice. The education-to-work transition process, with a special emphasis on the impact of active learning experiences, is also analysed.

In turn, Chapter 7 focuses on the research participants' subjective experiences of QWL, as an essential dimension of employee retention and career success, and as a multidimensional construct. Six major dimensions are explored and the dimensions that most impact individuals' work experiences and retention, hence underpinning career longevity in the T&H industry, are identified.

Chapter 8 reports on research participants' career development, following their trajectories and decisions, particularly with regards to withdrawal and permanence, both in their jobs/organisations and in a T&H career, and to their attitudes at work. Emphasis is also placed in research participants' perceptions on employee turnover and retention and on the image of the T&H as a valuable career. The role of T&H dedicated Higher Education in the construction and development of T&H careers is also addressed in this final chapter of findings.

Finally, and according to the defined objectives, Chapter 9 has in the synthesis of the results and findings, the starting point for determining the implications of this research. Reference is also made to limitations of the study and to recommendations which are considered of interest for future research. These concluding remarks seek to summarise the main conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Part II

LITERATURE REVIEW



2. Tourism and Hospitality careers

2.1 Introduction

Retention of valuable and qualified employees has become increasingly challenging in light of labour shortages, workforce demographic shifts, and modern career concepts which are based on increased mobility and short-term transactional relationships between the employer and the employee. The concept of *career* is central in HR management but is somewhat a relatively poorly studied phenomenon in T&H, as there is still few information on how jobs in the industry develop into careers. Chapter 2 contributes therefore to the understanding of career development in T&H.

This chapter is divided in three parts. The first part addresses career theories and concepts of career development. The most relevant careers theories – such as Super’s Self-concept Theory of Career Development, the Social Cognitive Career Theory or the Theory of Vocational Choice and Adjustment – are outlined, and contemporary careers concepts – *Protean*, *Boundaryless*, *Proactive* and *Kaleidoscope* careers – are explored. The applicability of a boundaryless career attitude towards a career in T&H is also discussed, as it is considered relevant for a deeper understanding of how employees perceive and manage their personal career development in this sector.

In the second part, the nature of T&H employment is outlined as a starting point to set the context of careers in T&H. Despite the diversity of activities and occupations within T&H, it is possible to identify a set of employment characteristics that are both transversal and widely mentioned within tourism employment literature. Thus, a list of characteristics that are considered to have an influence on career development and individuals’ career decision-making are highlighted. The motivations to choose a career in T&H are also addressed, with a particular focus on the image and the attractiveness of the industry to potential employees, and the accessibility of jobs. The third part is devoted to the discussion of talent management and human capital issues in T&H organisations. Considering the growing provision of degree-level T&H education, this section briefly addresses the importance of a graduate level skilled workforce and the role of Higher Education Institutions and their curricula in defining students’ career paths. Contemporary career development is also considered to be influenced by significant changes in mainstream employment relations, as well as cultural, social, and demographic changes; these topics are, therefore, addressed in this section.

2.2 Career concepts and theories

The **career concept** is central in HRM and several definitions can be found in the literature, as this concept is dynamic and evolves as individual expectations, organisational practice and social interaction change. Careers reflect the relationships between people and the providers of an official work position, and how these relationships change over time. An established definition is that of Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989, p. 8), who define career as the “evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time”. This description is somewhat simple but highlights two central and more complex themes: that of **work** and how work influences how we experience other people, organisations and society; and that of **time**, as rather than adopting a static view of work arrangements, provides a moving perspective over the course of a person’s life. Collin (2006) defines career as “individual work histories, sequences of and patterns of occupations and work positions, and upward progress in an occupation or in life generally” (p. 60), more far-reaching than ‘just a job’, while for Baruch and Rosenstein (1992, cit. by Baruch, 1996, p. 40), a career is “a process of development by an employee along a path of experience and roles in one or more organisations”.

Careers also represent the coexistence and interdependence of the objective and the subjective, being partly under the control of the individual, and partly under the control of external actors/factors. The subjective view reflects the individual’s own sense and distinctive understanding of his/her career and desired outcomes or achievements, while the objective view focus on more or less tangible indicators (positions, situations, and *landmarks*) that reflect shared social understanding (Arthur et al., 1989; Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005; Collin, 2006). These indicators are interestingly presented by Barley (1989, p. 49 cit. by Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005) as “landmarks for gauging a person’s movement through the social *milieu*”. Hence, career is a socially constructed phenomenon, both personally and socially important, that is constantly up for re-negotiation, or sensemaking (Arthur et al., 1989). The concept of career is therefore two-sided, as all careers have objective and subjective features that together form the basis of an individual’s career.

At the individual level, this series of work-related experiences and activities is central to the definition and growth of the individual identity. A career is ‘property’ of an individual rather of an organisation. Individual careers are “comprised of personal choices, abilities and decision-making processes that occur continuously throughout an individuals’ working life. These individual choices are the driving force behind career progression and development” (Riley, Ladkin, & Szivas, 2002, p. 112).

Within the broad field of career theory, **career development** is an essential component of HRM and is closely aligned with career planning, career choice and career progression (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017; Lent & Brown, 2013). From an organisational perspective, career development is concerned with how individuals manage their careers within/between organisational structures, and how organisations structure the careers of their members. From a personal perspective, career development is concerned with how individuals manage their careers, and how individuals view and direct their own careers based on their goals, values, beliefs, aspirations, etc. This means that there is a shared responsibility for career development, that rest both with the individual and the organisation (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017, p. 72).

Careers are the outcome of structural opportunities available to an individual and these opportunities are not infinite; they are determined by the size and structure of the industry or profession which the individual is qualified for. The structural opportunities in an industry – such as the size of the industry, the size of organisations, the degree of fragmentation, knowledge requirements or technological specificity – provide the framework for any occupation. To a certain extent, internal and external labour markets provide the opportunities from which career decisions can be made (Riley et al., 2002). In turn, individual ability and ambition will determine how people make choices within these structural opportunities. Labour market and structural opportunities are presented by the industry context but it is a range of personal choices, opportunities and constraints that make one person's career different from others (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017).

In earlier studies, the existence and social legitimacy of a career was exclusively tied to an organisation or institution (public and private) and those working outside these settings would not have their work trajectories recognised as careers. This was the case of liberal, self-employed professionals, service providers or those with a discontinuous working path, although some have seen their careers recognised as such, due to professional identity (Super, 1957). Even though patriarchal ideas of long-term job security still subsist, institutions are starting to assume more engaged ways to manage their employees' careers. This attitude recognizes that the institution as well as its employees need to work jointly in order to meet each other's requirements (McGuire, 2014). Present-day working styles show that individuals are more prone to frequently change organisations throughout their working lives. This shows it would be favourable for institutions and employees alike to consider their needs and goals as having the same importance (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017).

Certain types of industry frameworks, such as large organisations, promote bureaucratic career structures, whereas fragmented structures, marked by small units, low technologic levels and homogeneous distribution of knowledge, typically engender propensity for mobility. "An analysis of hotel labour markets behaviour suggests that the structure of the hotel industry is of this [latter] type and encourages self-directed mobility" (Ladkin & Riley, 1996, p. 444).

Major theories of career development, choice, and adjustment

As the field of career theory has become quite vast, there are several theories of career choice and career development and it is beyond the scope of this work to cover various types of career theories in depth and detail¹. As far as the most renowned theories are concerned, those pictured in Figure 2.1 merit special mention; for each, a brief overview is provided as follows and in Table 2.1.

¹ For some remarks on possible conceptual revisions to some of these seminal theories considering their continued applicability in a changing work environment, see Sullivan (1999).

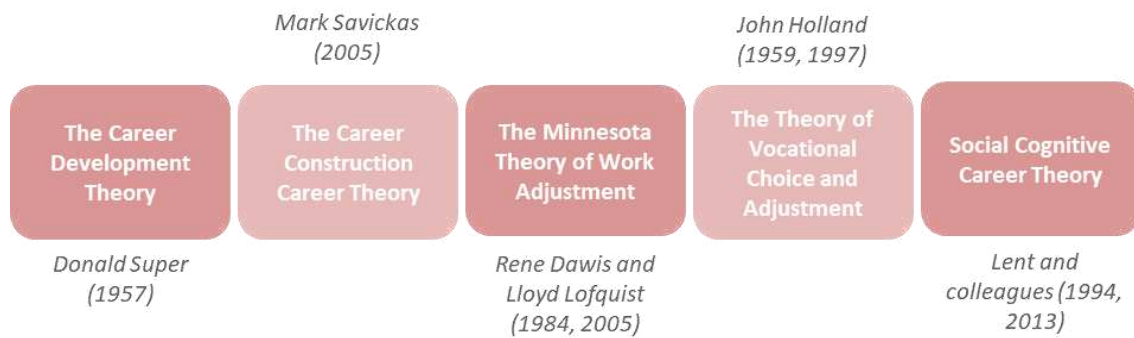


Figure 2.1 | Major theories of career development, choice, and adjustment

Source: Own construction

Super's **Career Development Theory** (Super, 1957; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996) (also referred to as Self-concept Theory of Career Development or Life Space theory), one of the earliest theories of career development using a life-span approach, is based on the premise that individuals move through distinct career stages across the course of their lives. Super also stated that individuals express their self-concept (the understanding of themselves) in vocational choices, which evolves over time, meaning that people will seek work roles in which they can express themselves; work motivation will be related to the degree individuals believe they are implementing and developing their self-concept.

This process can be summarised in four career stages²: (i) *exploration*, a period of engaging in self-examination and study to define career preferences, defining a vocational goal, and completing appropriate education and training/skill development; (ii) *establishment*, a period of becoming employed in the chosen field of work, striving to secure one's position by performing satisfactorily, and pursuing changes for further advancement; (iii) *maintenance*, a period of continuous adjustment, holding on to one's position, striving to maintain one's achievements, and updating competencies; and (iv) *disengagement*, a period of reduced outputs and transition into retirement (Šverko, 2006). This was also one of the first theories to equate that careers develop within the context of other life domains and life roles; individuals' motivation is controlled by the centrality or importance of work, or of other life roles, in their lives, and different roles are given different levels of priority across one's life. Therefore, work is given different importance by different people (Lent & Brown, 2013). Super's conceptual framework was developed under the assumption that careers are linear, vertical, and develop within a single organisation. The model was later adjusted to integrate a broader spectrum of life experiences and to address social influences³. Super also came to acknowledge that stages may not be chronological, but task-oriented, as some individuals may engage in new careers in their

² There is a fifth life stage, *growth*, which is in fact the first in the life cycle, corresponding to childhood and pre-adolescence, in which the first understandings of the world, including of work, are formed; however, not so central in career development and, therefore, omitted.

³ Super's initial model was developed and tested with white, male, middle-class individuals who represented the dominant culture; thus, generalisation to women and other social classes was somewhat questionable.

middle adulthood, thus going through *exploration* and *establishment* again (Ayres, 2006; Sullivan, 1999; Šverko, 2006).

Still within the context of developmental theories, a collaboration between Super and Savickas (Super et al., 1996) established the grounds for a more flexible approach to career constructions. With social constructionism as its base, rather than viewing careers as *objective*, as a sequence of positions that one occupies across time, Savickas' (2005) **Career Construction Theory (CCT)** looks at careers as *subjective*, as stories that people tell about their working lives, creating a career narrative, built on past memories, present experiences and future aspirations. More than a sum of experiences, this subjective career translates into how people pattern their experiences into a cohesive whole narrative that produces a meaningful story. The author therefore advocates that "careers do not unfold, they are constructed as individuals make choices that express their self-concepts and substantiate their goals in the social reality of work roles" (Savickas, 2005, p. 43). The notion of career stages persists, but there do not have to be necessarily sequential or related to one another.

CCT seeks to explain occupational choice and work adjustment in light of contemporary employment relations, increasingly based on flexibility and mobility, going beyond Person-Environment and vocational development models (which CCT incorporates) that place emphasis on commitment and stability. CCT looks at individuals from three perspectives: differential (focusing on the *what* of vocational behaviour), developmental (the *how*), and dynamic (the *why*), under the labels of *vocational personality types*, *career adaptability*, and *life themes*. From the perspective of individual differences in traits and underpinned in Holland's (1959) RIASEC framework (described further below), CCT examines *what* different people prefer to do, by addressing the myriad of individuals' career-related abilities, needs, values, and interests. From the perspective of developmental tasks and coping strategies, CCT analyses how individuals cope with vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and work trauma. *Career adaptability* addresses the attitudes, competencies, and behaviours that individuals use in fitting themselves to work that suits them. CCT thus focuses on the matching process between the person and the occupational role, viewing career construction as a series of attempts of the individual to validate his/her self-concept. From the perspective of psychodynamic motivations, emerging from Super's (1957) work, CCT adopts a narrative perspective to examine the dynamic processes through which life themes inform subjective meaning on vocational behaviour. As career stories reveal the themes that individuals use to make meaningful choices and adjust to work role, the life theme component focuses on why individuals integrate work into their lives in distinct ways (Savickas, 2005, 2006).

By focusing on the meaning that individuals assign to their vocational behaviour and occupational experiences across the multitude of jobs they occupy during their work life, CCT analyses how individuals use their vocational personalities to adapt to this sequence of job/occupation transitions without losing their sense of self. Therefore, CCT offers three central perspectives on the self, postulating that individuals actively construct their career identities by enacting three different roles: as social *actors*, who delineate an objective story about the sequence of positions occupied from school through retirement, focusing on the incorporation of role models and built reputation; as motivated *agents*, who focus on the strivings and on the positive and negative career-adaptative behaviours; and as autobiographical *authors*, who

portrait their own unique and meaningful career story through reflexivity (i.e., individuals' reflections on their own life stories) (Savickas, 2013).

The **Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA)** (Dawis, 2005; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) belongs to the class of Person-Environment Fit (or Trait-factor) theories, being dedicated to the study of the match or fit between, and interaction of, the individual and the environment; in this case, the work environment or work organisation. Therefore, TWA is aimed at explaining career development and satisfaction in terms of person-environment correspondence and has been widely used by career counselling professionals to assist people in the process of adjustment to their work environments and of making vocational choices.

One of the underlying assumptions of TWA is that people have requirements (needs) which they attempt to meet through the work environment; if these requirements are fulfilled, this will result in *satisfaction* for the employee. Therefore, satisfaction is assumed to be a function of the correspondence between the individual's vocational needs or values and the rewards obtainable from the work environment. In turn, the work environment has also its own requirements, that if fulfilled by the employee's skill set, result in a state of *satisfactoriness*. By incorporating satisfactoriness, TWA also incorporates the employers' perspective, i.e., the extent to which the worker is able to satisfactorily perform job responsibilities, which is hypothesised to be a function of the correspondence between an individual's abilities and the requirements of a particular job. Both factors vary over time and depend on individuals and environmental influences. Consequently, there are four possible and cyclical states in which the employee can find him/herself: satisfied and satisfactory, satisfied but unsatisfactory, dissatisfied but satisfactory, or dissatisfied and unsatisfactory; only the first state conducts to *maintenance behaviour* (i.e., behaviour aimed at maintaining the interaction, which the authors present as *tenure*), whereas the other three, that evidence different combinations of dis-satisfaction and dis-satisfactoriness, are expected to result in *adjustment behaviour* (i.e., behaviour directed at changing the situation, as for example, looking for a new job) (Dawis, 2005; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

As TWA was revised and expanded, it developed into an interaction theory, consisting of two models: (i) "the *predictive model*, [which] focuses on the variables that explain whether individuals are satisfied with their work environments and whether they are satisfactory to their work environments, which in turn predicts individuals' tenure in their work environments"; and (ii) "the *process model*, [that] focuses on how the fit between individuals and their environments is attained and maintained" (Dawis, 2005; Swanson & Schneider, 2013, p. 30).

Another well-known Person-Environment Fit theory is Holland's (1959, 1997) **Theory of Vocational Choice and Adjustment** (also known as Theory of Vocational Personalities), one of the most widely researched and applied theories of career development. Holland postulated that vocational interest is a fundamental component of one's personality, suggesting that people will want to work in a work environment that matches their interests and where they can exercise their skills and abilities, and express their attitudes and values; this perspective is similar to TWA's notion of correspondence. Those who find a work environment that match their personality are more likely to experience vocational stability, satisfaction, persistence and higher achievements (Nauta, 2013; Shahnasarian, 2013).

Holland's theory conceptualises vocational interests and vocational environments in terms of their resemblance to six 'RIASEC' typologies, which form a hexagon in a specific order: Realistic (R; related to outdoor and technical interests), Investigative (I; intellectual, scientific), Artistic (A; creative, expressive in literary, artistic, musical, or other creative areas), Social (S; interest in working with people), Enterprising (E; interest in persuasion, leadership), and Conventional (C; enjoyment of detail, computational activity, high degree of structure) (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Hill, 1989). Each type has a unique combination of preferred activities, self-beliefs, abilities, and values. As people look for congruence between their interest and their occupational environments, Artistic types, for example, are expected to dominate Artistic environments (Nauta, 2013; Shahnasarian, 2013). "Similarities between the types can also be described in terms of basic dimensions such as people oriented (social, enterprising) versus non-people-oriented (realistic, investigative) and intellectually oriented (investigative, artistic) versus practically oriented (conventional, realistic)" (Betz et al., 1989, p. 33). Although some individuals may fit a single type, most people combine various personality types and their chosen occupation may also fit with more than one category; for example, Artistic people may also be compatible with Investigative and Social environments. Some people may even resemble to all the types to some degree. The closest the resemblance to a single type, the higher the degree of *differentiation* of a person or an environment is. This hexagon model also allows Person-Environment *congruence* and *consistency* to be estimated: the shorter the distance between the personality type and the occupational type, the closer the relationship; the more adjacent the types on the hexagon, the more consistent, or the more compatible interests, personal dispositions, or job duties are (Nauta, 2013; Shahnasarian, 2013). A fourth diagnostic indicator in Holland's theory is *identity*. Regarding personalities, identity refers to how clear and stable a person's goals, interest and talents are defined, whereas regarding environments, identify refers to how clear, integrated and stable over time organisational goals, tasks and rewards, are (Holland, 1997; Nauta, 2013).

Focused on the triadic interaction among person, environmental, and behavioural influences in career development, and anchored in general social cognitive theory, the **Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)** (Lent, 2013; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) offers a comprehensive framework to understand the development of: career interest (how basic academic and career interests develop), career choice (how educational and career choices are made, in what way some paths become attractive and viable and others less likely to be pursued), and performance (how academic and career success is obtained, which level or quality of attainment individuals achieve). The authors have initially designed three segmental models (named interests, choice, and performance models) which put different emphasis on three core, cognitive-person, variables: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. SCCT focuses on how these variables interact with other aspects of the person and with his/her environment (e.g., race/ethnicity, culture, gender, ability, personality traits, educational experiences), alongside the individual's learning experiences, in shaping his/her occupational paths. *Self-efficacy* refers to a set of self-beliefs that are linked to particular behaviours or courses of action. *Outcome expectations* refer to beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of performing particular behaviours (e.g., what will happen if I do this?). *Personal goals* may be defined as one's intentions to engage in a certain activity or produce a given outcome (i.e., choice-content goals; e.g., to pursue a given academic degree) or to attain a certain level or quality of performance

(i.e., performance goals; e.g., to receive an A in a particular course) (Lent, 2013, pp. 118–119; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2006, p. 750). Although SCCT emphasizes individuals' agency, it also equates environmental facilitators and barriers that may either enable or limit their ability to influence and control their own career development.

SCCT was later expanded to include two new models: a model of satisfaction, which focused on factors that influence people's experience of satisfaction, or well-being, in educational and work settings (Lent & Brown, 2008), and a model of career self-management, that focus on a broad array of adaptive career behaviours (e.g., career decision-making, job finding, balancing work-life demands, retirement planning) that people employ to adjust to work environments and thrive over their career lifespan (Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent, Ezeofor, Morrison, Penn, & Ireland, 2016). The original interconnected models of career and academic interest, choice, and performance "emphasized *content* aspects of career development, that is, the types of activity domains toward which people are drawn, and at which they are likely to succeed and persist, in educational and occupational settings". The new models put "an increasing focus on *process* aspects of career development, such as the means by which people help to regulate their affect, adapt to changing circumstances, and direct their own goal-relevant behaviour at school and work" (Lent et al., 2016, p. 47).

Contemporary career perspectives

Over the years, careers are altering in shape and in form, and employees are now more likely to value professional mobility and expect to change jobs more frequently than they did in the past, countering the prevalence of a 'job for life' culture. As a result of changes in employment relations, in particular mass-downsizings and the growing use of temporary employees, and a reflection of contemporary work practices (which section 2.4.2 elaborates with greater detail), the popular view of the "promise of job security in return for hard work, or an organizational career in return for loyalty and hard work" is in decline (Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005, p. 822) and is being replaced by 'new' career patterns, such as *protean* careers and *boundaryless* careers. These modern career perspectives have emerged and become popular in the organisational literature over the past two decades, and are based on increased mobility and short-term transactional relationships between employer and employee, and develop beyond a single organisation or occupational setting (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). These new career types describe career attitudes, not vocational behaviour, but can be key drivers in indirectly affecting career outcomes via actual behaviour (Briscoe, Hall, & Frautschy DeMuth, 2006).

The **traditional** understanding of a career suggests relatively clear career paths and a view of career advancement as vertical, linear, and bounded by working lifetime membership in a single organisation or in a small number of organisations. This concept has been traditionally applied to managerial, technical, and professional occupations within large, bureaucratic organisations. Success was therefore defined by the organisation and measured by promotions, progression to higher status jobs and increased wages (Hall, 2004; Seibert, 2006). It is now widely recognised that careers no longer follow universal or normative stages, but are rather increasingly individual, fragmented, multidirectional, iterative, and labour market-oriented (Cappelli, 1999; McGuire, 2014; Riley et al., 2002). Conventional professional paths have not ceased to exist, they have simply been amplified by a varied set of career patterns, such as the protean, the boundaryless or the kaleidoscope careers.

Table 2.1 | Synopsis of the major theories of career development, choice and adjustment

Career Development Theory | Super (1957)

- Developmental career theory
- Career development is a process that takes place over the life span
- Vocational choice is a process of implementing and developing one's self-concept
- Work motivation is a function of the extent to which people can express themselves at work
- Postulates the existence of four career stages, each comprising different developmental tasks: Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement
- Careers develop within the context of other life domains and life roles and different roles have different levels of centrality in one's life

Career Construction Theory | Savickas (2005)

- Developmental career theory; expands Super's earlier conceptions
- Individuals build their careers by imposing meaning on their vocational behaviour and occupational experiences
- Careers are postulated as subjective, as people pattern their experiences into a cohesive whole narrative that produces a meaningful story
- Provides a way of thinking about how individuals make career choices from three perspectives: differential (vocational personality), developmental (career adaptability), and dynamic (life themes)
- Individuals actively construct their career identities by enacting three different roles: actors, agents and authors

Theory of Work Adjustment | Dawis and Lofquist (1984, 2005)

- Person-environment fit/trait factor theory
- Work adjustment is a continuous and dynamic process by which people achieve and maintain correspondence with the work environment
- Work adjustment is indicated by the individual's satisfaction with the work environment (i.e., the degree the work environment meets the requirements of the individual), and by the individual's satisfactoriness (i.e., the degree the individual meets the ability-requirements of the work environment)
- Tenure is a function of satisfaction and satisfactoriness, thus the most basic indicator of correspondence between the individual and his/her work environment
- Consists of both a structural/predictive model and a process model

Theory of Vocational Choice and Adjustment | Holland (1959, 1997)

- Person-environment fit/trait factor theory
- Personality types are the major influence in career choice development
- Occupational achievement, stability and satisfaction depend on congruence between one's personality and the work environment
- Vocational interests and vocational environments are conceptualised in terms of their resemblance to six typologies: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC); types of work environment correlate directly to personality types
- Four diagnostic indicators assess the interaction between the person and the work environment: differentiation, congruence, consistency and identity

Social Cognitive Career Theory | Lent and colleagues (1994, 2013)

- Comprehensive framework to understand the development of career and academic interest, choice and performance
- Three core, cognitive-person, variables interact with other aspects of the person and with his/her environment, alongside the individual's learning experiences, in shaping his/her occupational paths: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals
- Consist of three original segmental models, emphasizing content aspects of career development: interests model, choice model and performance model; and two additional models, focused on process aspects of career development: satisfaction model and career self-management model

Source: Own construction based on the authors previously mentioned in this section

The **protean career** is centred on Hall's (1976, 2002) conception of psychological success driven by individual and proactive career management, as opposed to career development dependent upon a given organisation, involving multiple job and organisational changes. The protean career emphasizes a self-directed approach to the career, in which the individual career actor, the person, and not the organisation, is in charge. The main success criteria are subjective (i.e., psychological success, defined based on the person's own values) as opposed to objective success that is measured or defined externally (through, for example, salary, position or promotions). (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 2004).

Protean careers involve two broad attitudinal dimensions, quite similar to the elements of the boundaryless career: (i) a values-driven attitude and (ii) a self-directed attitude toward career management (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Having a values-driven career orientation means that individuals make career decisions based on their own, personally meaningful, terms (as opposed to organisational values, for example), that translate into feeling of career success. Self-directed career management occurs when individuals take the initiative for managing their vocational behaviour, exploring career options and making career decisions according to their personal values. For individuals who hold protean attitudes, these personal values are relevant to their whole life space, rather than just focused on employment; these individuals are also more likely to be proactive and independent, rather than looking for external assistance in career management (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2010). "People can be higher or lower, weaker or stronger, in terms of being values driven, and/or self-directed in career management (...) and it is the union of such attitudes and behaviours that results in one being considered to fully demonstrate a protean career orientation" (Briscoe & Hall, 2006, p. 8).

The **boundaryless career** concept was first introduced by Michael Arthur and his colleagues in the mid-1990's (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), to describe the notion that careers are not bounded and transcend the scope of a single employer/organisation. Employees proactively manage their own careers, and the focus is on taking advantage of a series of employment opportunities beyond the boundaries of the employment environment, both within and across organisations, as a mean for success. Therefore, individuals who demonstrate a boundaryless career orientation are not likely to engage in a lifetime career in one or two organisations, but to fulfil their potential in multiple jobs and organisations (Arthur, 1994). This boundaryless career attitude refers to both organisational mobility preference (i.e., physical mobility) and a boundaryless mindset (i.e., psychological mobility). This notion of psychological boundarylessness does not necessarily imply physical nor employment mobility, it just entails predisposition and a comfortable or enthusiastic attitude towards frequent interorganisational mobility. However, the predisposition to physically cross organisational boundaries and unfold a career across several employers, is also key in a boundaryless career attitude (Briscoe et al., 2006). This 'new career' philosophy embraces not only the notion of the mobility, but also changes in the psychological contract that has been mediating the expectations of both employers and employees (see section 4.3.3).

Just like with protean careers, Sullivan and Arthur (2006, p. 23) advocate that a "boundaryless career can be viewed and operationalised by the degree of mobility exhibited by the career actor along both the physical and psychological continua". In a simplistic way, the interdependence between physical and psychological mobility can be placed and measured in four quadrants

(high/low psychical mobility and high/low psychological mobility). One can also refer to boundaryless careers in situations when individuals are involuntarily forced or voluntarily choose to leave their employers, therefore putting an end to career advancement within that organisation (Tams & Arthur, 2006).

For Feldman and Ng (2007), boundarylessness can be an attribute both of the work environment and of the individual's work history, as boundaryless careers can be function of both: (i) the *permeability* of institutional labour markets, that is the number of alternative jobs/organisations/occupations and corresponding ease or difficulty of entry; and (ii) the *plasticity* of individuals' career paths, which refers to the frequency and degree of change across a person's work history.

The concepts of protean and boundaryless career may, to some extent, overlap one another and are usually presented as opposed to the notion of traditional career (Greenhaus et al., 2010). While the protean career can be interpreted as orientation or attitude towards one's career that results in certain career behaviours, the boundaryless career generally involves boundary-crossing behaviours; however, both of these new career realities require individuals to take responsibility for their personal career decisions and development. Briscoe and Hall (2006) presented a matrix of 16 possible combinations resulting from the overlap of protean and boundaryless career orientation, according to the likelihood that these can be found in contemporary career contexts (high, medium, or low likelihood; being those career profiles considered to be medium or high further explored by the authors). Each of the combinations represents a career profile that is high or low in four quadrants: values driven and self-directed, for protean careers, and psychological and physical mobility, for boundaryless careers. This overlap represents a myriad of possibilities, that is, even though an individual could display protean attitudes and makes individualistic choices, they may not favour multidisciplinary cooperation. Similarly, one could embrace a boundaryless mindset and, at the same time, depend on one organisation to grow his or her career. The authors also highlight the role that context (namely of Western and Anglo cultures versus other cultures) plays in the definition of the protean and boundaryless metaphors (Briscoe & Hall, 2006).

Despite the predominant focus on the potential positive aspects associated with boundaryless careers, Sullivan (1999) draws attention to the little research devoted to the potential downside of boundaryless careers, such as the underemployment of workers, the potential reduction in organisational training and development programs, and the lack of personal identification with a firm. Some authors are also of the opinion that there is no such thing as boundaryless careers, even for highly skilled and highly mobile individuals, as careers are always *bounded* by cognitive limitations, prior career history, occupational identity and institutional structures (King, Burke, & Pemberton, 2005).

Wiernik and Kostal (2019) also propose that protean and boundaryless career orientations – protean self-directed, protean values-driven, and boundaryless psychological mobility – load onto a general factor, which the authors labelled '**proactive career orientation**'. Protean career orientation and psychological mobility largely overlap, whereas only boundaryless physical mobility preferences were found to be weakly related to the other construct. Rather than on attempting to solely focus on the traditional 'protean–boundaryless' model that contemplates protean orientations and psychological mobility separately, Wiernik and Kostal (2019) not only

found better fit, but also similar patterns of relations with personality characteristics and career behaviours and outcomes, when applying an alternative 'proactive career orientation-physical mobility preferences' model.

Although commonly referred to as 'new' or 'contemporary', these concepts are not necessarily recent in time, but such terms have been adopted to impose some discontinuity with earlier periods. In fact, when it comes to T&H, Mooney and Ryan (2010) argue that the boundaryless career has been a characteristic of the hotel management career over the last century, as well as Mainiero and Sullivan (2005), who claim that, out of necessity, women have been using the boundaryless career model for decades.

Although not benefiting of the same visibility with research about careers, a third career concept has also been proposed, not an extension of the protean or boundaryless concepts, but rather an alternative approach to examine careers: the **Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM)** (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Noticing that women and men describe their careers differently, with women's career histories being more relational than those of men (which are predominantly sequential in nature), Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) developed the KCM to understand the 'opt-out' or career interruption phenomenon that has been affecting highly trained women, mostly working mothers. Using the metaphor of a kaleidoscope, which produces changing patterns when the tube is rotated, the KCM explains how individuals shift the pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects of their lives to arrange their roles and relationships in new ways. Rather than follow the organisational career model, women decided to pursue alternative options to find more fulfilling jobs that better fit their lives, their families, and their interests; however, organisations still play an important, more supportive, role, in helping employees achieve balance and fulfilment in their careers.

According to the KCM, individuals focus on three parameters (needs-related) when making career decisions: (i) *authenticity*, defined as congruence between work and one's personal values (being genuine and true to oneself); (ii) *balance*, referring to the pursue of equilibrium between work and non-work demands; and (iii) *challenge*, which refers to stimulating work, career advancement and self-worth (by demonstrating responsibility, control, and autonomy). These three parameters form the *ABCs of Kaleidoscope Careers*. A person's need for authenticity juxtaposes against a family's need for balance, which intersects with an individual's need for challenge (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006). These three parameters are simultaneously active over the individual's life span but have different degrees of influence on career decisions or transitions depending on how predominant these are in that individual's life, at that particular time of his/her life. Over the course of the life span, the kaleidoscope's parameters shift in response to the context of that person's life, with one parameter, considered more meaningful and priority, moving to the forefront. The others remain active, but their intensity reduces and take a secondary role on the background (Mainiero & Gibson, 2017; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006).

The KCM has revealed that men and women prioritize different parameters at different career stages, suggesting that women tend to follow a *beta* kaleidoscope career path (family-focused): challenge issues are more intensely felt in early career stages, balance becomes more salient in mid-career stages, and authenticity arises later in their careers. In turn, for men, an *alpha* career patterns is expected (career driven): focus on challenge from early to midcareer, followed by

authenticity, and then balance later in their career; however, some men can also exhibit *beta* career patterns (which have been particularly observed for younger generations) (Mainiero & Gibson, 2017; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006). Research on the KCM has noted that, in addition to gender differences, generational differences can also be perceived, with members of Generation X showing significantly higher needs for authenticity and balance than Baby Boomers, thus placing more value on family-friendly work environments (Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007) (see also section 2.4.3).

Walsh, Sturman and Carroll (2011) posit that individuals who manage their own careers will likely look for employers that allow them to develop their human capital mix by performing intrinsically challenging work that provides them opportunities to learn and grow, and by engaging in learning-oriented relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and clients. In addition, the career actor will likely value the opportunity to obtain valued extrinsic rewards in exchange for the work he/she performed, as a means for living his/her desired lifestyle.

A summary of key features distinguishing between traditional and non-traditional, contemporary, careers is outlined in Table 2.2.

What type of career orientation does T&H promote?

The boundaryless career perspective is particularly relevant to industries with unpredictable, opportunistic markets, which, in a sense, is the T&H sector's case. The individual develops a personal reputation for being a key resource and develops a portfolio of experiences and expertise; skills, employability and marketability constitute, therefore, important attributes of the boundaryless career (McGuire, 2014). Although referring to the need of further studies addressing emerging career attitudes, Andersen and Hjalager (2001), advocate that "due to its structure, rapid shifts and the social character of its jobs, tourism seems to be an industry that, more than any other industry in the economy, attracts the ultramobile, the virtual, and the boundaryless" (p. 128).

But when trying to identify which contemporary career models would best fit a T&H career, it is necessary to understand how a T&H career looks like. This career has unique attributes that are shaped by a highly variable context and combination of skills that hospitality work requires, which in turn must be analysed in a context of changing employment, technology, vocational education and demographics (an overview is provided in section 2.4) (Baum, 2002). In such a fragmented industry, research on how people develop their careers is quite scarce; the exception are hotel managers, due to the fact that the hotel sector presents one of the more structured employment sectors in terms of a developmental hierarchy and hotel managers exhibit easy to trace career patterns (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). However, not all types of managers have been given the same attention, and analysis focusing on female managers' careers in the light of new career concepts, such as the boundaryless career, are even more limited (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2018).

Following her study on the longevity of hospitality careers that provided an in-depth analysis of career theories, Mooney (2014) found no support for hospitality careers with a protean orientation, possibly due to the fact that this career model is based on notions of self-fulfilment. Moreover, although the author considers that the boundaryless career theory may provide a

viable framework to study contemporary hospitality careers, as hospitality careers demonstrate features associated with new careers, such as high mobility, she also advocates that the *boundaryless* term may be misleading and *boundaries* do exist. It is rather suggested the hospitality career path still follows an upward, traditional career trajectory, from entry-level positions to senior management (Mooney, 2014). This idea may conform with what Sullivan and Baruch (2009) describe as *hybrid careers*, referring to careers that contain aspects of both the traditional and non-traditional (protean or boundaryless) career concepts. By deconstructing boundaryless and protean career orientations, Briscoe and Hall (2006) also show that both within and across these contemporary career metaphors, individuals may exhibit more profiles as the result of different combinations; this seems to be applicable to the multitude of jobs and career paths that are likely to be found in the T&H industry.

Table 2.2 | Traditional career perspectives versus non-traditional career perspectives: key features

Traditional career perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Long-term employment in one or in a small number of organisations · Employer-employee relationship is based on job security-loyalty exchange · Linear, upward, hierarchical progression · The organisation takes responsibility for employees' career planning and management · Success and progression are measured by promotions, increased status, increased wages and perks · Face time/physical presence is used as a proxy for performance and ambition · Age accompanies career stages, which have a fixed duration and sequence · Work identity and an accumulation of social capital that flow primarily from one's current employer (emphasis on firm specific skills)
New career perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Work in many organisations, jobs and contexts (successive and multidirectional employment situations and varying levels of interorganisational mobility) · Short-term employment commitments/less job security · More ambiguous employer-employee relationship · Flat, lean organisational structures (fewer opportunities for vertical mobility with the same employer) · Increasingly diversified workplaces (increased number of minorities) · Proliferation of international careers · Self-fulfilment and values-driven careers; main success criteria are subjective, with a focus on intrinsic rewards · Performance outcomes become more important than being physically present in the workplace · Individual agency/ career self-management (individuals, not organisations, take the responsibility for planning and managing of their own careers) · Career decisions seek to more easily accommodate family and/or personal lives and circumstances · Customised and alternatives work arrangements · Self-development and readjustment of skills and competencies to gain career capital/ competencies are employability and labour market-oriented (emphasis on transferable skills) · New psychological contracts

Source: Own construction based on the authors previously mentioned in this section

Job movement, at all levels and either with one employer or between a variety of organisations, is a key and traditional characteristic of hospitality workers' career patterns (Baum, 2015; Rowley & Purcell, 2001). This is reinforced by the predominance of small business units in many of the sub-sectors, which make it inevitable for employees to move between companies to develop their portfolio of expertise (Rowley & Purcell, 2001). This has been the case of hotel managers or *chefs*, whose careers are likely to involve mobility between and within organisations, but with little movement outside of the hotel sector (Ladkin & Riley, 1996). This propensity for mobility has been supported by McCabe and Savery (2007), who identified a new career pattern – presented as an extension of the boundaryless career and termed *butterflying* – when tracing the job movement of professionals in the convention and exhibition industry. The career structure of these professionals was described as horizontal, vertical, diagonal and intra-sectorial, without any specified career journey. The term *butterflying* refers to having more than one career route through various sectors, where individuals flutter between sectors essentially to build-up human capital and according to the opportunities of employment (McCabe and Savery, 2007). This notion of *butterflying* is supported by Carvalho, Costa, Lykke and Torres (2018), who found that the career paths of most of the women senior managers in Portuguese hotels and travel businesses who they interviewed, are not confined within the boundaries of a single organisation, but rather move between organisation; most of these moves happened due to the lack of vacancies at the top that could allow progression, but were still perceived as beneficial.

However, at the lowest levels of hospitality work, mobility may be a disadvantage rather than a career advantage. Not only many contingent hospitality workers have a succession of low paid jobs that do not lead to higher ranked jobs in the hierarchy, as well as many careers at lower levels (e.g., room attendants, kitchen porters) are not recognised as real careers (Mooney, 2014). Career paths in hospitality are not very clear and little is known about how careers develop in the sector (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017; Mooney, 2014) (see also section 2.3.1, *(Un)clear career routes*).

2.3 Tourism and Hospitality as a career choice

The image of an occupation is a critical element in career choice decisions and its reputation is related to both its content and its wider setting, particularly its social prestige. The tasks and duties that its practitioners must carry out, its contribution to society, the level of remuneration it is reputed to receive, or the lifestyle enjoyed by those enrolled in it, are key components in defining the image of a particular occupation. This image is neither permanent or unambiguous, and most certainly varies amongst individuals, and even between countries (Riley et al., 2002, p. 18).

In T&H, this is particularly relevant for attracting and recruiting talent, as the industry takes in a large proportion of first-jobbers. Occupations with a positive image are obviously attractive and the T&H employment appears to have two different readings: on the one hand, T&H jobs have a glamorous image, frequently associated with opportunities to travel, to meet people, to use/learn foreign languages or to perform non-routine work; on the other hand, negative aspects such as low pay, long hours, unpredictable shifts, menial work, insufficient training or

limited career progression opportunities, are often highlighted. Very often, these negative aspects become decisive factors in career choice as the positive aspects are generally considered less important when choosing a job (Boardman, Johns, & Petre, 2015; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Riley et al., 2002). However, T&H occupations do possess certain qualities which make them attractive for those considering employment in the sector. Both job characteristics and motivations to choose a career in T&H are further explored in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.

Misconceptions and lack of information about career opportunities usually aggravate the sector's difficulty in attracting talented graduate, while the above-mentioned negative aspects are also inherently associated with perceptions of T&H jobs as temporary employment and high turnover. Many occupations are seen as transitory or as contingent work, and many people work in the sector for short periods of time as a preparation for a career in another field (Riley et al., 2002). The sector still faces the critical issue of positioning itself as a desirable career option, as the boundaries between hospitality work as a 'job' and hospitality work as a 'career' are frequently blurred (Mooney, 2016, p. 10).

2.3.1 Job profiling: working in T&H

Notwithstanding technological innovation and change in the organisation of work, the T&H industry is known for being labour intensive, given to the importance and irreplaceable role of personnel service in service delivery, hence the term 'people industry' is adopted. It was being argued that the capital invested in the T&H industry creates more jobs than the same capital when invested in other industries, and tourism is a constant key support against unemployment. This labour intensity varies according to different factors, namely the type and stage of tourism development, infrastructure development level, and type of establishment (Kusluvan, 2003). Labour costs (i.e., payroll costs) are, therefore, the major expense that T&H businesses need to handle, and economic upturns and downturns have direct and immediate consequences on those employed (Solnet, Kralj, & Baum, 2013).

Although some exceptions can be found, due to the diversity of working environments in the industry, the T&H labour market in developed countries is predominantly described as a 'weak' labour market. The labour market comprises the total working environment at local, regional, national or transnational level, consisting of all industry sectors and their personnel requirements, and covering both an external and an internal dimension. Internal labour markets refer to the labour market inside organisations, which have their own set of rules regarding promotion criteria, training opportunities, pay differentials or how jobs are evaluated. Internal labour markets can be classified as strong or weak, being weak labour markets characterised by features such as unspecified hiring standards, multiple ports of entry, low skill specificity, no on-the-job training, no fixed criteria for promotion, pay differentials varying over time, flexible roles/responsibilities or use of part-time, casual or outsourced staff. These rules determine the movement of people and the rewards for jobs, and partly explain the employment characteristics across different sub-sectors of the economy. Therefore, in this case, the employment characteristics of the T&H industry (Baum, 2008; Solnet et al., 2013), namely those set out in Figure 2.2, are presented next.

T&H Employment			
Heterogeneous nature of the sector	Dual structure operation	Long working hours culture	Part-time vs. full-time work
Seasonal and short-term nature of employment	Youth/entry-level employment	Unskilled or semi-skilled nature of jobs	(Un)clear career routes
Image and status of hospitality work	Wage levels	Trade union membership	Gendered nature of employment

Figure 2.2 | Employment characteristics of the T&H industry

Source: Own construction

Heterogeneous nature of the sector

Influencing the employment characteristics of the tourism sector is the key premise that this is the most diverse sector, comprising a multitude of different activities, providing an indication of the vast array of job opportunities. Although all of them rooted within the services domain, tourism is composed of many branches and not only includes accommodation and food services, but also the activities of travel agencies and tour operators, passenger transportation and cultural, sport and recreational services. The hospitality industry can comprise a variety of fields, ranging from tourism, hotel management or event planning, to culinary arts, restaurant management, sports or gaming. And the same is verified in the number of available hospitality positions, ranging from front-of-the-house to back-of-the-house jobs, such as *chefs*, wait staff, receptionists, accountants, marketers or managers, considering that not all workers perform service tasks (Riley et al., 2002; UNWTO & International Labour Organization (ILO), 2014). This variety of jobs is positive for job seekers, allowing them to more easily find jobs that meet their needs and match their skill sets (Lacher & Oh, 2011). Lacher and Oh (2011) also advocate that this diversity may favour locals to fill most of the available positions, as opposed to more specialised industries that look, and often *import*, workers with unique skills.

The tourism sector also involves different types of establishments (both in size as in business type), forms of employment, contractual obligations and working arrangements. In addition, tourism employment patterns significantly differ between regions within the same country and between seasons of the year, and also depend on service standards, type of product or type of clientele (Riley et al., 2002; UNWTO & ILO, 2014). This also means that big differences are also perceived between the various subsectors when it comes to HRM practices (Baum, 2007).

Dual structure operation (business size and ownership)

The tourism industry is characterised by a dual structure, as at most destinations large and multinational firms operating on the global scale co-exist with a large number of local, small and often family-owned businesses, with the latest clearly dominating the sector in terms of number of establishments (Riley et al., 2002). Firm size is, therefore, a fundamental influence on tourism employment, and not only small-scale employers offer limited opportunities for promotion, advancement, training, or transfer to other departments, as the dominance of small businesses leads to unavoidable challenges in relation to lack of career pathways and informal approaches to employment practices in relation to recruitment, performance appraisal and training (Partington, 2017). Small businesses often lack the capacity (including business skills), resources (including financial capital) and commitment to effectively support the Human Resources development. Economic pressures take over small businesses as, unlike large national or multinational companies, there is no opportunity for loss absorption or cross-subsidization from other units. However, not all small businesses' features are bad, as the employee-employer relations may be more personal and collaborative in such settings, as some best practices can come from more informal approaches (Kusluvan, 2003; Partington, 2017).

Furthermore, "employment in the tourism industries involves a disproportionately high degree of employers/owner/proprietors, as well as own-account workers (self-employed), i.e., those who work on a contractual basis for a specified period of time but where there is no formal employer-employee relationship" (UNWTO & ILO), 2014, p. 28). But even though the sector is dominated by small businesses, a significant proportion of the workforce is employed by large organisations, employing more than 250 employees, which may be instrumental in delivering good practices and convey a better image of the sector (Partington, 2017).

Long working hours culture

In Portugal, people work on average 46.5 hours per week, a significantly high number when compared to the 38.6 hours economy-wide, and even when compared with the average across EU-28 countries (38.0 hours per week in the sector and 37.7 hours per week in the economy as a whole). Due to consumer demand patterns in hotels, restaurants and other leisure services, several authors (Costa, Carvalho, & Breda, 2011; Mooney, 2009; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016) refer to the long, irregular and unsociable hours faced by T&H employees, in the form of split-shifts, rotating-shifts, weekend shifts, night-shifts, or work during holiday periods, when other people are often at leisure, as one of the factors contributing to the negative image of the sector. Most hospitality services, namely hotels, operate a 24/7, 365 days a year system, which highly impacts labour availability, scheduling and rostering, and working conditions and benefits. These long and irregular hours are often combined with heavy workloads, routine work and insecurity at work (related to increased change of injuries, work-related illness – especially stress –, and violence and harassment) (ILO, 2010; OECD, 2017).

This long working hours culture (which includes having one's performance and dedication evaluated by the hours spent at work (Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016)) "heighten stress on workers with family responsibilities, particularly women who carry the majority of the care burden for children and the elderly as well as for household chores". Thus, it is crucial for these workers to rely on family support or on private or public services to assist them with childcare (ILO, 2010,

p. 14). The literature notes the high prevalence of work/family conflict in hospitality work, due to the 24/7 nature of the business, the existence of a 'face-time' culture and little family-friendly support (Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016), which is considered to be a major contributor to the high turnover plaguing the T&H industry (Blomme, van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010; Deery & Jago, 2009).

However, some authors also posit that the term *unsocial working hours* sounds so negative because it takes as reference the so-called 'nine-to-five' jobs, and does not consider some of the benefits of working outside a regular/fixed work schedule, such as travelling to work before or after the rush hour, or having free time during the daylight hours or on week days (Jones, Haslam, & Haslam, 2017; Harbourne, 1995, cit. by Partington, 2017). In addition, it should be considered that in tourism the boundaries between work and leisure time are somewhat narrow, as hospitality work involves a high degree of work related to socialising, and some individuals may spend part of their leisure time at workplace, considering working hours as leisure, especially when customers are friends or acquaintances (Riley et al., 2002).

Part-time vs. full-time work

Traditionally, 35 or more hours a week has been considered as full-time employment but, in some countries, notwithstanding the compliance with national laws, the requirements that specify what constitutes a full-time employee are left to employers' consideration as long as they consistently apply the same criteria to all employees. In turn, part-time work corresponds to when the normal working hours are less than the normal working hours of full-time employment in a comparable situation, and its main purpose is to reinforce service provision in specific moments, benefiting of extra staff at lower cost. Besides full pay, more benefits accrue for full-time workers than part-timers, including training and promotion opportunities.

As presented in a 2015⁴ OECD report (Stacey, 2015), an analysis of available statistical data on tourism employment⁵ for EU-28 countries (averages reporting to 2013) show that people working in hotels and restaurants are more likely to work **part-time** (32.9%) compared with workers in the overall economy (20.3%). In Portugal, contrary to the literature review, according to which there is plenty of part-time employment in the tourism sector, there is a reverse trend, with only 11.8% of part-time workers, compared to the 14.3% in the overall economy. However, within the EU, the tendency to work part-time highly varies from country to country.

Although there are some circumstances in which part-time work is involuntary and constitutes the only jobs available, not all people working part-time are looking for full-time work. Working part-time may be a personal preference for some people who are looking to fit their jobs with personal and family responsibilities (e.g., childcare), illness or education (ILO, 2010; Stacey, 2015). However, part-time employment can have variation in quality and context, as some part-time jobs may be designed to attract valued workers who prefer working part-time, while others

⁴ When not mentioned, statistical data presented in this sub-section, 2.3.1, refers to the year 2015.

⁵ In this OECD report (Stacey, 2015, p. 25), for statistical purposes, the hospitality sector – accommodation and food service activities – is used as a proxy for tourism, in the absence of more detailed and comparable information on tourism related employment. As the sector comprises different industries, but not all activities of these industries can be attributed to tourism, the author warns that these data (drawn from OECD, EUROSTAT and ILO data bases), present an incomplete picture of tourism employment and the analysis presented in this report should be understood in this context.

are designed to allow employers to secure competitive advantage through low remuneration costs and temporal flexibility (Lucas, 2004). The stereotypical view asserts that women are particularly attracted to part-time jobs because they have to accommodate domestic responsibilities; however, this idea is challenged by several authors, to whom women's choice is constrained by the lack of alternatives and weak bargaining position (see Walsh, 1999). In Portugal, a study based on official statistics from the Employment Survey carried out by the National Institute of Statistics in Portugal (INE), from 1998 to 2009, identified that the main reasons for working part-time in the overall economy were 'personal reasons'; however, in the tourism sector, to be engaged in studying or training was the primary reason mentioned by male part-timers (what may suggest that men expect better job opportunities once they finish their studies), while part-time was an option for women only when they cannot find a full-time job and, therefore, not a *real* choice (Costa et al., 2011).

Seasonal and short-term nature of employment

HR planning is particularly complex and challenging for tourism businesses, which activities can be highly seasonal, whether on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, i.e., suffering of cyclical variations in tourism demand (Lee & Farnsworth, 2003). In addition, some establishments provide year-round service, while others work on a non-permanent, seasonal basis (e.g., skiing resorts). The resort to short-term tactics of non-standard employment (such as temporary, seasonal or part-time workers, or even on call employees in case of unforeseen customer demand) is, therefore, a common practice (Cooper & Hall, 2008). The industry also heavily relies on a secondary labour market, which is made up with people who resort to T&H for short-term employment (e.g., students, housewives), who are prepared to accept low wages as they are not primary breadwinners (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2005). The share of people in temporary work or with a work contract of limited duration in hotels and restaurants is also higher, both for the EU-28 average (22.6% compared with 13.7% in the economy as a whole) and for Portugal (31.9% compared with 21.4%). Portugal, Spain and Italy, for example, are amongst the countries with lower rates of people employed throughout the whole year (68.1%, 62.1% and 69.8%, respectively), which is a result of changing seasons at regions that heavily rely on beach tourism (Stacey, 2015).

In turn, **job tenure** in the sector is low, with people more likely to spend less than two years working with the same employer, both in EU-28 countries (42.7% compared with 22.5% in the overall economy) as in Portugal (34.3% compared with 19.6%) (Stacey, 2015). Temporary employment and high turnover are also inherently associated with **limited opportunities for promotion and career progression**.

As with part-time work, temporary work may be a desirable arrangement for some groups (e.g., students who try to split their time between education and a job, tourists seeking transitory employment), matching the needs between employers who may prefer seasonal take-up of workers for busy periods and workers who are looking for more flexible arrangements. However, this predominance of on-call, casual, temporary, seasonal and part-time employment is typically related to job instability and a greater lack of employment opportunities, lower income security compared to a permanent contract, comparatively low pay (frequently below the national average) and highly variable income levels depending on the type of contract, limited career opportunity, a high level of subcontracting and outsourcing, and a high turnover

rate (ILO, 2010). Job instability is a direct consequence of seasonality and related job and work-flow fluctuations, and these feelings of insecurity have been leading employees to hold lower levels of loyalty to their current organisations and to more easily switch one job to another (Maden, 2014; Stacey, 2015). However, for some workers the constant fluctuation in consumer demand means lack of routine and improvisation and flexibility are considered positive features of the job (M. Riley et al., 2002).

Youth/entry-level employment

The nature of employment in the tourism sector (e.g., part-time, seasonal, casual) tends to attract younger adult workers and migrant workers. The T&H industry is one the major employers of young people; considering the age profile of the tourism workforce, it is perceived that this is much younger than for the economy as whole. In EU-28, just under a half of people working in tourism (45.8%) is between 15 and 34 years of age (compared to a bit less than a third, 31.9%, in the overall economy). In Portugal the difference is not so significant for this age group, 15-34 years (35.0% compared with 26.7%), but rather for the group between 15 and 24 years of age (12.5%; more than twice the share economy-wide, 5.4%) (Stacey, 2015).

Besides T&H work can be an easy way to earn ready money in travel breaks, school breaks or gap-years, the industry is also acknowledged as a relatively accessible entry point into employment (e.g., little or no prior knowledge or skills are required), often representing young people's first contact with the working life or facilitating their transition process from education to full-time employment. Also exit can be quite easier than in other sectors, as young workers can leave at relatively low personal and professional cost. Youth labour is also often more affordable to many tourism businesses, especially SMEs, representing lower labour costs (Robinson, Baum, Golubovskaya, Solnet, & Callan, 2019). However, if on the one hand it offers the opportunity for people to up-skill and move up the value chain, there is also the concern that young individuals get caught in a cycle of low paid, part-time and temporary work (Stacey, 2015).

T&H businesses are highly dependent on a young workforce, not only due to economic and strategic reasons, but also to aesthetic labour considerations, but many developed countries are now facing the consequences of a sharp drop in birth rates and a rapidly-ageing population (Robinson et al., 2019; Solnet, Baum, Robinson, & Lockstone-Binney, 2015). The industry workforce is thus dealing with "fewer young people entering the workforce and (...) more older workers having to work beyond traditional retirement ages", which increase is being promoted in most EU countries as result of pension crisis (Solnet et al., 2015, 2013). The T&H industry's – as well as the general – working population is now comprised by different generations, who coexist in the same workplace: Generation Z (now entering labour market), Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers (now heading towards retirement); the latter three are the most represented in today's workplace. Consequently, several studies have begun to investigate this multi-generational workforce in the T&H industry (e.g., Barron, Leask, & Fyall, 2014; Goh & Lee, 2018; Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Maxwell, Ogden, & Broadbridge, 2010). A brief profile of each generation is discussed below, but emphasis is given to Generation Y, given its currently dominant position in today's workforce and the fact that it most noticeably differs from previous generations.

Unskilled or semi-skilled nature of jobs

Considering the highest level of formal education attainment⁶, it is observed that a significant share of people working in tourism, in EU-28, has completed *upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education*, with corresponds to an intermediate level of formal education (54.2%, compared to 48.7% in the wider economy). The biggest variation between the tourism sector and the overall economy, at the European level, is on the other two sides of the scale: only 14.4% of people working in hospitality have completed some form of tertiary qualification (compared with 32.0% economy-wide) and 31.4% have only completed lower secondary education or below (compared with 19.3% economy-wide). In Portugal, concerning the *first and second stages of tertiary education* (the highest level), the situation is identical, with a very low share of tourism workers holding a tertiary-level degree (6.9%, compared with 21.3% in the overall economy). However, concerning the lower levels of educations, Portuguese workers' formal qualifications do not differ so significantly between the tourism sector and the economy as whole, but rather in comparison with the European reality: 68.2% of people working in hotels and restaurants in Portugal, have only completed *pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education* (compared to 55.9% in the overall economy, and more than twice than the EU-28 average) (Stacey, 2015).

The predominance of tourism workers with low academic qualifications is related to the high availability of low-skilled jobs, that require little or no formal training and few conceptual or knowledge-driven attributes, although many tourism jobs require a combination of soft and technical skills, as well as higher level skills. Due to the perception of hospitality work as unskilled, the industry poses low entry barriers, but given the diversity of activities in the tourism sector, employment may range from unskilled to highly skilled positions. About a quarter of service positions are estimated to be supervisory or skilled occupations at managerial, professional, or technical levels. However, some employers are sceptical about formal qualifications, as they do not perceive them as a guaranty of good performance or fit to the job from the new employee. It is frequently assumed that the knowledge and skills required to work in T&H can be easily learned by on the job training, without formal education or training (ILO, 2010; Kuslivan, 2003; Partington, 2017; Stacey, 2015).

The poor employment conditions that label the sector are also due to the transferability of skills; a concept that has different meanings for different authors: for Kuslivan (2003) the T&H industry requires skills that can be put to use across multiple occupations in or out the industry (e.g., retailing, banking), which make available a large pool of workers that can be recruited; whereas for Riley (2000) the kind of skills that most workers in the T&H industry possess are confined to the industry (thus encouraging high mobility within the industry, in particular for low-skilled job positions). Although a number of authors question this low-skilled stereotype in the context of hospitality, considering that this represents a technical and western-centric perception of work (e.g., Baum, 2008), this profile of jobs is clearly closely linked with the low status of tourism employment and, consequently, poor working conditions in general, and low

⁶ Levels as considered by the OECD: levels 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education; levels 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education; levels 5-6: First and second stage of tertiary education.

pay in particular, creating a circular logic that does not value formal education in the tourism and hospitality field.

Very often, the ease of access to semi or unskilled job positions is perceived as an opportunity for people to enter the labour market, gain experience, develop skills and in time move into higher level, better paid jobs, whether if those workers stay in the tourism sector or move to other sectors. In recent years, employers have also been placing emphasis on more generic, soft skills (e.g., ability to follow instructions, willingness to learn, ability to be flexible and adaptive) (Partington, 2017; Stacey, 2015). By way of example, Stacey (2015) highlights an analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data by the United States Travel Association, in 2012, which has found that workers whose first job was in the travel industry progressed further in their careers than those who started working in other industries (although not distinguishing if they stayed within the travel industry or not). This analysis suggested that the opportunity to work in the sector equips workers with a full range of skills and prepares them to succeed in any job, in the long term. This is particularly due to soft skills that many sectors value in their employees, but only the tourism sector is able to develop in such high degree.

(Un)clear career routes

As previously discussed on section 2.2, career progression is often used to describe the process of making progress toward better jobs, implying an upward trajectory, and while some occupations have clear career pathways and are clearly perceived as professional careers (e.g., airline pilots, medical practitioners, teachers), other do not. This is the case of many T&H careers, which develop in a more *ad hoc* way with greater fluidity and variability. Not only the tourist industry does not have its own distinct career system with clear internal career paths, as it shares its labour market with other sectors (Andersen & Hjalager, 2001; Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). Hence, this is one of the main reasons for the poor image of this sector. The diversity associated with T&H employment – involving a multitude of different activities, types of establishments, working arrangements and employment contracts – provides a wide range of job opportunities. As these can be difficult to categorise, career paths are also not very clear and little is known about how careers develop in the sector (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). There is a stigma in the hotel industry that the non-permanent nature of some jobs indicates the industry does not offer solid careers (Brien, 2004). The exception is with career in hotel management, which is a somewhat clear, structured and target career choice, with an easily observable developmental hierarchy, and that has received considerable attention in hospitality literature (e.g., Ladkin & Riley, 1996; Mkono, 2010); yet, some authors consider that the point in which workers evolve into managers is still blurred (Mooney, 2014).

Besides the strong difficulties in attracting and recruiting, it is not surprising when qualified and talented employees leave the T&H sector, as it can be difficult to find structured careers in which workers are given genuine prospects of career development (Kusluvan, 2003). Moreover, career advancement opportunities are important characteristics of a job, as they can lead to increased earnings and other desirable job attributes (McGinley, Hanks, & Line, 2017; Richardson, 2008). This is exacerbated by the predominance of small firms that account for about half of the employment offer but employ less than 50 people and offer limited career prospects. Only a few businesses offer “management careers in multi-layered organisations at individual unit, multi-unit, middle, and senior management positions” (Lashley, 2013, p. 284).

However, although T&H generate primarily entry-level jobs, these can be important career stepping-stones, particularly for the young and/or newly-graduates, helping the in building stronger resumes and in gaining a wider set of transversal skills (Lacher & Oh, 2011; Robinson et al., 2019).

Image and status of hospitality work

Analysing the image of tourism and hospitality jobs is complex as it encapsulates certain contradictions, with both truthful and fictional elements. On the one hand, that image is of glamour, while on the other, it portrays low status and little respect for its workers, carrying the stigma of 'servitude' (Riley et al., 2002). The type of work involved in the hospitality sector has been historically associated with servility, involving cooking, serving, and cleaning tasks, therefore 'dirty jobs', which are predominantly associated with women's work. It is a lot "about handling issues that relate to the anticipation and satisfaction of customer needs at the time and point of service delivery" (Baum, 2008, p. 721). However, for individuals who consider dealing with costumers to be their vocation, and like being in the front-line of service delivery, a job in T&H naturally becomes very attractive (Riley et al., 2002).

Although with little empirical evidence, previous research posit that this low status is context-influenced and overall perceptions of the status of hospitality work are merely subjective judgements. For example, in Anglo-Saxon and oriental countries (mainly those influenced by Confucianism), T&H are considered low in social status; in Latin American countries they benefit from modest respect; and still in others, these jobs have higher status, as they are believed to offer better work prospects than other traditional industries (e.g., Bali, Hawaii) or perceived as compatible with the local culture, as hospitality (being hospitable) is a fundamental part of the cultural identity (e.g., Mauritius) (Kusluvan, 2003). This view is also supported by Penny Wan, Wong, and Kong (2014), who conducted a study in Macau with 205 students at two major universities. Due to the acute labour shortage that followed the liberalisation of casino licensing in Macau in 2002 and the rapid growth in the numbers of casinos and hotels, employers started offering higher salaries and better benefits. The authors found that there was a significant relationship between the perceived social status of the industry and career prospects, as well as perceived career prospects were a significant determinant to students' commitment to the industry.

However, it is also argued that within the sector itself, and as a result of the many activities it comprises and also depending on broader economic and social circumstances (e.g., level of dependence on tourism of the region/country), some jobs may get to enjoy higher status and are perceived as desirable occupations, such as jobs in government organisations, managerial/supervisory positions in the accommodation sector, jobs in central operations of tour operators, museum curators, tourism consultants, airline pilots or elitist tour guiding (Baum, 2007; Kusluvan, 2003).

This is because, despite the predominant negative discourse, there are also some glamorous and positive aspects surrounding T&H work, such as the opportunity to travel, meeting different people and nationalities, the prestige of working in foreign owned firms, speaking foreign languages, dressing up nicely, to be in an attractive and exotic environment, to be in contact with rich and famous people, or the intrinsic rewards associated with helping customers (Dewar,

Sayers, & Meyer, 2002; Kusluvan, 2003). In one of the few studies highlighting more enjoyable and positive attributes of working in the hospitality sector, Mkono (2010) starts from the premise that there is a significant proportion of workers and managers who choose to work in the sector for their whole working lives because they are happy doing so. In her study with Zimbabwean hotel managers, the author has found that the main reasons why these professionals were happy with their careers were: the constant interaction with people from various countries, cultures, and lifestyles; working in a 'nice' environment (mostly related to the aesthetic quality of the work environment, such as hotels in resort areas); the perks (e.g., high quality meals at work, holiday packages, free or discounted accommodation); challenging and stimulating work, including the chance to express individual creativity; glamour and prestige (to be associated with luxury brands or 'celebrity' jobs, such as *chefs*); rewarding social and professional networking opportunities; the global nature of the sector and associated mobility (fostering career growth opportunities); the dynamic and exciting nature of the sector (contact with innovative settings and services and opportunities to learn); and working with a diverse workforce.

Wage levels

When it comes to pay in the hospitality sector, considerations often start as negative, as it is argued that a large part of the jobs are poorly paid and that there is an unreliable relationship between pay and tenure and between pay and skill (Riley et al., 2002). For hospitality workers, in most OECD countries, the wages are lower than the national average (up to around 37% lower than average earnings in the economy as a whole, and up to 60% lower in some countries). In Portugal, the ratio of accommodation and food services activities to total economy earnings was of 72% in 2013 (Stacey, 2015) and is the third worst paid economic activity, when comparing net monthly wage gains between economic activities (Costa et al., 2011).

The high proportion of micro-or small-sized firms in the hospitality sector can partly explain the low pay experienced by the workers, together with the lower and seriously undervalued skills required to work in the sector. Also the incidence of marginal workers such as young, women, casual employees, students, part-timers and migrant workers, who have little bargaining power, contribute to driving down the pay in the sector (Partington, 2017). Furthermore, although some economic theories, such as that of labour market equilibrium, hold that the market will adjust to labour shortages by increasing wages to attract manpower, this is not so clear and certain in sectors such as tourism, in which the wage structure is relatively low (Murray, Elliot, Simmonds, Madeley, & Taller, 2017).

On the other hand, people working in the hospitality sector frequently have access to full remunerations packages that include not only basic pay, but also gratuities or tips, and other fringe benefits (mainly non-monetary and informal), that are not captured in official data. This may be the case of free meals and lodging, free staff uniforms (and sometimes dry cleaning), discounts on overnight stays, sick pay schemes, private medical insurance or discounts on gym membership (Partington, 2017; Stacey, 2015). Nevertheless, workers in the hospitality sector usually enjoy fewer benefits when compared with other sectors (Partington, 2017).

Trade union membership

Although being among the top-job creating sectors, the T&H workers are less likely to be organised in trade unions than workers in other sectors and the unionisation of the T&H sector is at very low levels (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2005; Lucas, 2004). Gaining access to a critical mass of employees is very difficult and seriously limits any company-wide or sector-wide social dialogue and can be detrimental to negotiate more favourable working conditions or to get more favourable collective bargaining agreements. This low union density may be justified by several factors such as: the fragmented and heterogeneous nature of the sector; the predominance of small and medium sized organisations and their wide geographical dispersion; the existence of different ownership models (in particular, the increase of franchising); the reluctance to unionize and limited industrial relations experience of some groups of employees (e.g., the young, minorities); the predominance of a paternalistic management style and weak internal labour markets; high levels of part-time work; high labour turnover; the way work is structured around flexible patterns to match stochastic demand; or the use of subcontracting, outsourcing or internships which divide workers into different segments (Boardman et al., 2015; Kusluvan, 2003; Lucas, 2004).

But even when agreements with trade unions are in place, workers do not play a significant role within the 'sphere of influence' of large corporations. In their review of examples of trade unions involvement in hospitality supply chains, Boardman et al. (2015) couldn't find explicit examples or reliable rates of unionization (when found, where incredible low).

Gendered nature of employment

According to the UNWTO (2016), the majority of people employed in tourism worldwide⁷ are women, both in formal and informal jobs. Tourism offers women – who are, in many contexts, a socially disadvantaged group – several opportunities for income-generation and entrepreneurship. The share of women in the tourism workforce is quite high both in Portugal as in EU-28 and in most OECD countries. On average, women account for 54.1% of employment in the tourism sector in EU-28 (compared with 45.7% in the overall economy) and for 57.6% in Portugal (compared to 47.5%) (Boardman et al., 2015; Stacey, 2015). Portugal has one of the highest female employment rates in the European Union, particularly in full-time employment, and a high participation of working mothers. It is the country where motherhood most increases women's likelihood of being employed (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2019; Costa, Carvalho, Caçador, & Breda, 2012; Stacey, 2015).

As in other sectors, female tourism workers are also more likely to work in part-time, non-regular, jobs (Stacey, 2015). The same trend is observed in the Portuguese tourism sector, in which men prevail as own-account workers and employers, while women predominate as employees and unpaid family workers (Costa et al., 2011). Although tourism is an important source of employment for women and part-time work may be suitable for female workers with care responsibilities, due to the flexibility it can provide when managing household work and

⁷ This generalisation should be interpreted with caution, as in some countries, due to cultural reasons and gender roles, employment of women in front-line positions is not accepted/appropriate (Kusluvan, 2003).

family/childcare, this tends to be more precarious work, to yield low earning, and to limit career prospects (Costa et al., 2011; ILO, 2010; Stacey, 2015).

The tourism sector is characterised by significant horizontal and vertical segregation, resulting in a gender pyramid with women poorly represented in the highest levels of employment and management and highly concentrated in lower level, unskilled and typically caring roles (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2014; Stacey, 2015) – such as chambermaids or waitresses – or ‘glamorous’ roles, such as receptionists or sales and marketing staff (Kusluvan, 2003). Although women have higher levels of education than men, they are more frequently assigned low qualified jobs, while men detain executive and management positions. This situation is particularly relevant within the hotel sector (Carvalho et al., 2014). Besides carrying out a large amount of unpaid work in family tourism businesses (Robbins & Judge, 2013), women also tend to be assigned the most vulnerable jobs, “where they are more likely to experience poor working conditions, inequality of opportunity and treatment, violence, exploitation, stress and sexual harassment” (ILO, 2010, p. 14). These risks, mostly associated with the ‘glamorous’ roles, are reinforced by the sexual objectification of women, who are expected to dress in an ‘attractive’ manner and to look beautiful (Kusluvan, 2003). “The main causes underlying gender inequalities pointed out in the literature are the splitting of tasks between men and women, gender stereotypes, practices embedded within corporate culture, structural characteristics of companies, and the fact that, though apparently gender-neutral, companies and society itself reproduce gender” (Costa et al., 2012, p. 72). A more detailed analysis on gendered processes in organisations influencing women’s careers is presented in section 2.4.3 (*Gendered careers*).

This cycle of segregation also contemplates equal pay, as women in the T&H sector are paid on average 25 per cent less than male workers for comparable skills (ILO, 2010). In Portugal, women’s pay is consistently lower (Carvalho et al., 2014) and female tourism workers earn from 23 to 26 per cent less than male workers in net monthly wages (Costa et al., 2011). Moreover, studies suggest that overt discrimination may be the main reason underlying the gender pay gap in the tourism sector in Portugal (Carvalho, 2017; Santos & Varejão, 2007). The gender pay gap has recently been the focus of much political and public attention, and many countries have been promoting legislative and non-legislative initiatives to fight gender-based discrimination. Portugal is one of the countries that has been taking measures to tackle the gender pay gap. One of the most recent steps taken, was Portugal becoming a member of the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) in May 2019.

Overall, and similarly to what is portrayed by most authors, the preceding review of T&H employment (for which a summary is provided in Table 2.3 seems to be predominantly negative. However, positive aspects or mitigating circumstances to different features of T&H work can also be found, and next section (2.3.2) aims to offer some insights on why prospective employees seem to view T&H as a worthwhile and attractive career. It is important to stress that (as explored in section 3.2) this type of characteristics might be evaluated through an objective and/or subjective lens, and may differ according to individual needs, preferences or circumstances. These characteristics may therefore exert influence on individuals’ career choices, although these are not necessarily given the same importance by different people.

Table 2.3 | Summary of employment characteristics in the T&H industry

<p>Heterogeneous nature of the sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Multitude of activities · Great variety of jobs · Different forms of employment, contractual obligations and working arrangements 	<p>Dual structure operation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Business size and ownership (large and multinational firms vs. large number of local, small and often family-owned businesses) · Many informal employer-employee relationships
<p>Long working hours culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 24/7, 365 days a year operation · Long, irregular and unsociable hours (split-shifts, rotate-shifts, weekend shifts, night shifts, work during holiday periods) · Time spent at work vs. time for other life roles 	<p>Part-time vs. full-time work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increased likelihood of working part-time · Preference for working part-time or full-time · Different implications on pay levels, training and promotion opportunities
<p>Seasonal and short-term nature of employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cyclical fluctuations of tourism demand · Non-permanent operation associated with non-standard employment arrangements · Temporary work · Job tenure and job stability 	<p>Youth/entry-level employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Attraction of younger workers and migrant workers · Accessible entry way to employment · Association with lower labour costs
<p>Unskilled or semi-skilled nature of jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Still low academic qualifications · Perceptions of T&H as low-skilled · Sceptical employers about formal qualification · Transferability of skills 	<p>(Un)clear career routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Great variety of career paths · Fluid, variable and poorly structured careers · High rates of entry-level jobs · Predominance of small firms limiting career prospects
<p>Image and status of hospitality work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Image of glamour vs. stigma of 'servitude' · Attractive to service-oriented people · Many jobs associated with women's work 	<p>Wage levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lower wages than in the general economy · Unreliable relationship between pay and tenure/skill · Many fringe benefits complement remuneration packages
<p>Trade union membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Deeply low levels of unionisation · Many workers with little bargaining power 	<p>Gendered nature of employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · High female employment rates · Flexibility vs. casualisation · Significant horizontal and vertical segregation · Jobs' vulnerability (e.g., harassment) · Gender pay gap

Source: Own construction based on the authors previously mentioned in this section

2.3.2 Motivations to pursue a career in T&H and conceptions of the industry

Making a good, or bad, career decision will have a significant impact in one's life and if hospitality graduates are entering the T&H sector without an accurate understanding of it, this can be one of the main causes why so many entrants leave the sector, despite their investment in specialised education and training. This is particularly relevant when considering that a high proportion of T&H management graduates drop out (e.g., King, McKercher, & Waryszak, 2003; Sinéad, Deegan, O'Leary, & Deegan, 2005; Sturges & Guest, 2001) or that an also high number of students choose not even to work in hospitality, and chose working in other areas instead (e.g., Richardson, 2008, 2009).

While career development refers to one's experience before, during and, especially, after choosing a career, career choice can be seen as the process of selecting and entering a particular career path, which may overlap or not with one's educational life. This period of academic preparation can be considered part of the larger career development process (Lent & Brown, 2013). Lent and Brown (2013) remark two fundamental issues of career choice (p. 10):

- i. It is not necessarily a static or one-time process, as many people revise their choices over time, for various reasons (e.g., to pursue work that better fits their interests and talents, to shift paths after involuntary job loss, or to re-enter the workforce after raising children);
- ii. It has at least two phases: setting a goal and taking steps to implement this goal (through, for example, additional training or job search).

This complex and evolving process of organising information, processing knowledge and experience, deliberating among alternatives and making a commitment to a course of actions, is also referred to as **career decision-making** (Harren, 1979) and it includes a variety of individual, developmental, social, and environmental variables. Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994) is, in this context, a particularly relevant theory that may lead to a better understanding of these processes by which people make choices and persist at career and educationally relevant endeavours. **Career commitment** is another relevant driving force in shaping professionals' career choices as they pursue various jobs. Commitment to a career is associated with the development of personal career goals; as individuals' identification with these goals is high, they are also highly motivated to achieve them despite the eventual setbacks they might encounter (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990; Goulet & Singh, 2002).

The motivation literature, in particular the **Self-determination theory (SDT)** (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), a broad theory of human personality and motivation, also distinguishes between two primary types of motivation that represent the individual's perceptions of the reasons or goals *why* he/she takes a specific course of action, like choosing a career in a given area: intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. **Intrinsic motivation** refers to doing something because it is inherently satisfying, fun or enjoyable, rather than because of any external reward or benefit – in this case, like choosing a career in T&H because it is interesting and challenging. For example, in a study with 525 event management students from five US universities, Stone, Padron, Wray, La Lopa and Olson (2017) found that an enjoyable job, pleasant working environment, and an exciting job were the most important attributes for choosing a career in this field.

Extrinsic motivation refers to doing something to attain some separable outcome – such as choosing a career in T&H because it has good prospects for career progression or a good starting salary (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Brand reputation is also a factor that may affect job choice intention, as employers with more attractive brands are more likely to obtain recognition from job seekers. This strategy, known as *employer branding*⁸, allows undergraduates to get familiar with organisational cultural, values and other relevant characteristics, which may help them to decide which firms they would like to apply for jobs (Lin, Chiang, & Wu, 2018). Other well-known theoretical frameworks that categorise work-related needs, such as Maslow’s (1943) need theory or Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristics theory (1975, 1980), are addressed in more detail in section 3.3.

There are a number of studies exploring the careers goals, work-related expectations, preferences and/or perceptions of readiness (i.e., feeling duly prepared to enter the labour market) of students enrolled in T&H management programmes (a key source of potential employees, and possibly managers, for the industry), especially the degree to which they wish to develop careers in the T&H industry. If students made a deliberate decision to choose a degree in this field, it seems clear that, at some point, they have contemplated the possibility of pursuing a career in the T&H industry. Despite the increasing demand for T&H management programmes, most of these studies are based on the premise that the hospitality industry doesn’t seem to be the most favoured career track for many graduates, and found that many T&H students choose not to follow a hospitality career after they graduate (Costa, Breda, Malek, & Durão, 2013; King et al., 2003; Kuslivan & Kuslivan, 2000; Richardson, 2008, 2009). This is just one more of the most worrying signals that the T&H industry is failing to attract and retain highly qualified, adequately trained and motivated labour (Nachmias, Walmsley, & Orphanidou, 2017; Walsh, Chang, & Tse, 2015).

For example, Richardson (2008) found that more than 50 percent of Australian T&H students were considering careers outside the industry; moreover, more than one-third of these students claimed they would not be working in the hospitality industry once they graduated. Most alarmingly, King et al. (2003) found that up to half of all graduates (from two samples, at two Australian HE institutions) either never enter the T&H industry or drop-out within 3-5 years after graduation. Richardson (2008) has also found that having direct experience working in the industry may cause students to acquire negative views toward pursuing a career in it, as 46% of respondents with previous work experience claimed not to be interested in pursuing a career in T&H anymore; for almost most of them (96%), it was precisely this experience of working in industry, the main reason behind their decision. Also Nachmias et al. (2017), based on 24 in-depth interviews with UK and Cypriot students, revealed significant concerns with regard to the hospitality curriculum and students’ level of preparedness to make an effective transition into the industry. Findings indicated that most of the students had completely unrealistic expectations at the beginning of the study programme (the role of expectations in shaping individuals’ attitudes towards T&H work and careers is further examined in section 4.3.3).

⁸ Employer branding is a process of placing a positive and distinctive image in people’s minds, which grants companies competitive advantage in the war for talent, as these are more likely to attract job seekers (Lin et al., 2018).

Richardson (2009) reinforces this idea that T&H students are unclear about careers and working conditions in the hospitality industry, as the findings from a study with 379 students from eight Australian institutions indicate students might not have a clear idea of careers and working conditions in the hospitality industry. For example, although 93% of respondents considered very important to find a job that is enjoyable, only 39% believe they will actually find an enjoyable job in the T&H industry. The same was observable regarding the importance of high earnings over the length of career, which was very important to almost 98% of these students; yet perceived as a probable only for about 40% of them. In another study, based on 28 in-depth interviews conducted at 5 different universities in the UK, Nachmias and Walmsley (2015) also found support to the idea that most students (n=26) are not only strongly willing to change industry or a career trajectory in order to progress with their career, as they considered that the transferable skills gained on a hospitality degree can allow them to find better employment opportunities outside the industry.

Although a significant number of studies reveal that T&H undergraduate students tend to have a negative image of the industry (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000) and become less interested in selecting hospitality as their first career choice, exceptions can be found. Lu and Adler's (2009) study in China found that the majority of students were interested in pursuing a career in the H&T industry and expressed a desire for an advanced degree. Blomme, Van Rheede and Tromp's (2009) study in the Netherlands with first-year students, graduates and workers in the hospitality industry, found that all three groups hold "a positive view about the job content of their (future) job in the hospitality industry. They all agree to some extent that their (future) job is comprehensive, diverse and challenging" (p. 11). Of the first-year students, almost two thirds indicated genuine intention to work in the T&H industry; of the graduates, 83% indicated that they intended to work in the industry (however, the authors note that a share of the answers may include the undecided, as no answering option was included to distinguish those).

According to a study focused on the employment situation of tourism graduates and expectations of students enrolled in tourism-related degrees (Costa et al., 2012), it was observed that, within the broad set of activities comprising the tourism sector, students showed higher preference for working in travel agencies and tour operators, accommodation, recreation and leisure services, and national tourism organisations. Some areas are mostly preferred by male students (e.g., food and beverage, transportation, deconcentrated organisations of central government, and development agencies), while other are mostly preferred by female students (e.g., travel agencies and tour operators, or recreation and leisure services). Accommodation is the area where most of the graduates working in tourism were employed (Costa et al., 2012).

Riley, Ladkin and Szivas (2002) highlight that the **accessibility** of T&H occupations is an important factor in career decision-making, because of the relative ease of entry and inter-industry mobility (people coming from other professional areas, with transferable skills). This is closely tied to the great variety of skills and to the low skill levels that the sector accommodates. The T&H industry carries an implied promise of skill development. Not only entry is easy, as the required skills can be easily learnt 'on the job'⁹ and anyone can become a manager or an owner

⁹ The authors also remark that for employers this can also mean hiring unskilled staff and rely on 'on-the-job training'.

“The process is further facilitated by the diversity of organisations and occupations which encourages mobility. Constant organisational and occupational mobility creates regular vacancies for newcomers” (Riley et al., 2002, p. 26). On the other hand, contemporary employment relationships suggest that people are also motivated by opportunities to develop their human capital, becoming important to understand what they want and can learn from their jobs, and to perform intrinsically challenging work (Ladkin, 2011; Walsh, 2016). In line with new career concepts that advocate that individuals manage their own career paths, strengthening their human capital, gaining experience and remaining marketable become important trade-offs in employer-employee relationships (Sturges, Guest, & Mac Davey, 2000; Walsh, 2016). Today’s work conditions impel workers to value freedom and growth, subjective career success, and mobility, above more conventional values like security, higher pay and titles (Hall, 2004).

Non-routine work environments, as opposite to monotonous occupations such as factory work, and enjoying dealing with people are also frequently mentioned aspects that contribute to the attractiveness of T&H jobs. Not only most T&H jobs grant some degree of autonomy and opportunity for personalisation, but also a large proportion of these involve direct contact with customers, which grants variety and opportunities for socialisation (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Riley, 2000; Riley et al., 2002). To some extent, this enjoyment in working with people can also be interpreted as service orientation, which Walsh, Chang and Tse (2015) have found to positively impact student’s intention to join the hospitality industry after graduation. Service/customer orientation refers to basic individual disposition (not only at group level) to deal with customers, by being courteous, helpful, dependable, likable, self-controlled, problem-solving oriented and keen to deliver high service quality. Individuals with higher service orientation, are more likely to be attracted to service-based work and find it interesting and meaningful (Lin et al., 2018; Walsh et al., 2015, 2011).

Personal attributes are frequently discussed in relation to job choice. Some authors, for example, refer to **industry-person congeniality** as an important aspect in determining the attractiveness of T&H jobs. Inter-person congeniality is an individual trait based in the assumption that one’s personality matches the specific requirements of a given career, in this case, a T&H career. Similarly to service orientation, this may include the ability to enjoy the job, do derive pleasure in service-based work or to produce satisfied customers (Nair, Choudhary, & Prasad, 2017). Nair et al., (2017) are of the opinion that although this is an inherent quality of a person, it can be moulded, and schools play a key role in giving students the opportunity to see how their personality can meet the requirements of the industry and develop a positive attitude towards a career in T&H. In a study with Australian T&H undergraduate students, Richardson (2008, p. 34) found support to all of these assumptions: many students (72.9%) believe that there is a good fit between their personality and character and the types of jobs available in the industry; almost all students (89.5%) believe that they will get an opportunity to use their skills and abilities working in the industry; and many students (74.4%) state that they get pleasure out of seeing satisfied customers. These findings are closely aligned with Holland’s theory (1959, 1997; see section 2.2), which assumes that people that find a good fit between their personality type (Holland’s theory proposes six personality types ranging from more people-oriented to non-people oriented types and intellectually oriented to practically oriented types) and their occupation, are more likely to achieve satisfaction and perceptions of success with one’s career.

In fact, the rationale of this line of research is aligned with Person-Environment fit theories in general, which posit that individuals are active managers of their own careers and will choose jobs/careers that best match their skills, their needs and personality characteristics (Walsh et al., 2015) (the person-job fit approach is briefly described in section 3.2).

2.4 Challenges of contemporary HR management

In such a highly fragmented sector such as T&H, human resource development issues are a fundamental concern for all businesses, large and small (Stacey, 2015). When asked, for sure most managers will state that their businesses' greatest asset is their employees, along with the knowledge, skills and experience they held. "People are a unique source of value and competitive advantage, driving innovation, delivering quality tourism services and supporting sustainable tourism development" (Stacey, 2015, p. 23). And when they walk out the door, it is very likely that those valuable organisational resources walk out with them. However, several authors (e.g., Baum, 2007; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000) also posit that many managers are unconvinced, unwilling, or unable to view employees as an asset to their organisations, and view them instead as costs.

As labour shortages have emerged as one of the critical challenges worldwide, talent management has grown considerably in the last two decades. Despite an overview of the literature in the area of talent management between the years 2001 to 2012 provided by Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier (2013a) came out with only one article (in 62) addressing talent management within the scope of T&H, Deery and Jago (2015) consider that has been some research done in the area; they just point to a different focus from that of the mainstream management literature.

Dealing with talent has always been challenging, and although not new, this topic remains popular and contemporary. The business and employment context have changed, mostly characterised by macro-environmental changes, changes in the way firms are organised (see section 2.4.2) and demographic transformations (see section 2.4.3), and with it the role and relevance of talent.

Talent management is, therefore, "an organisational mindset that seeks to assure that the supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time, based on strategic business objectives" (Baum, 2008, p. 720). The popularity of talent management in the past years has resulted in a variety of definitions; yet, all interpretations point towards attracting, identifying, recruiting, retaining/engaging, and developing high potential and high performing individuals who are of value to sustain organisational goals and competitive advantage (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Walsh, Sturman, & Longstreet, 2010).

More than reducing costs – which can be one of the potential approaches but maybe not the more effective –, one of the most important ways of developing differentiation in today's highly competitive market is by providing an exceptional service. In this regard, human resources are indispensable instruments, in particular line-employees who are in close contact with costumers. Poor management, under-compensation and lack of appreciation are frequent reasons that do not move employees to deliver this exceptional quality service, and together

with the sector's labour intensity and its labour market characteristics, put significant strain on businesses to attract, retain and develop a skilled workforce over the time. Competent and loyal employees will stay with organisations that provide a supportive work environment that affords opportunities to grow and develop (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Stacey, 2015). But on a more positive note, and although the sector heavily relies on casual and outsourced staff in an attempt to minimise labour costs, it is believed that, in light of the current labour shortages, the competition for the best people will increase and this may turn out to be positive at least for core staff, both full or part-time, who may see improvements in pay, benefits, and working conditions (Partington, 2017).

In the Human Resources practitioner literature, many organisationally specific definitions of **talent** exist, highly influenced by the type of industry or occupation. An in-depth review of the talent in a business context can be found in the work of Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz (2013), who discuss different approaches to the conceptualisation of talent and group them into (i) an 'object' approach (i.e., talent as characteristics of people, such as natural ability, mastery, commitment or fit), versus (ii) an 'subject' approach (i.e., talent as all people or talent as some people). The objective approach is related to the AMO paradigm, "which proposes that employee performance is a function of the employee's ability (A), motivation (M) and opportunity (O) to perform", while the subject approach reflects the basic assumptions of human capital theory and focuses "on valuable, scarce, inimitable and difficult-to-replace individual employees" (Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013b, p. 327).

In this thesis, following Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2013) categorisation, talent is interpreted as characteristics of people, particularly skills, competences, abilities and knowledge that can be acquired and developed through formal education and specialised training, that allow them to perform certain tasks. The influences of specialised T&H high-level education on shaping *talent* and on career development are particularly addressed in the next section (2.4.1).

Organisations that invest in building a supportive and more personal relationship with their employees, invest in training, hire people who can learn (not only experienced people), take the responsibility for career development together with the employee, care about knowing why people are not happy (instead of instigate them to just leave), acknowledge employee's contribution, credit employees' merit or have a positive attitude towards people who are leaving (investigating the reasons why), are more likely to become an employer of choice. Not only is assumed that an employer of choice would be able to attract the best talent and retain new employees, as to improve current employees' performance by investing in their motivation, satisfaction, loyalty and development (Phillips & Connell, 2003a).

"In recent years, people have called for human resources to be relabelled as the *talent* or *human capital* function [emphasis added], with a focus on workforce, people and competencies" (Ulrich, 2014, p. 4). The 21st century is widely known as the beginning of the *Knowledge Age/Economy*, in which human capital and intellectual property are key components, thus meaning an ever-increasing demand for a well-educated and skilled workforce across the whole economy. However, Baum (2008) advises that, in the context of T&H, there should be some caution in the interpretation of these premises, namely because talent does not necessarily mean the same thing as it might in other sectors of the economy. For Baum (2008) the challenge for the tourism sector is in evaluating the skills and know-how that underpin its business

operations, namely what does talent mean in this sector, and how such talent can be most effectively developed across its workforce. Moreover, in T&H, the author posits that talent needs go beyond technical skills and “incorporate emotional, aesthetic and informational processing and analysis dimensions with a strong focus on the delivery of service to diverse consumers” (p. 720). This idea is reinforced by Swarbrooke (2017, p. 35), who advocates that the word *talent* was not frequently used with regard to T&H, as the “focus was on individuals with a set of technical competences, together with a general ‘service mentality’ [and that] was expected that over a period of years those who did particularly well in their areas of technical expertise or departments would rise to management positions”.

When discussing talent management and human capital issues in T&H organisations, employee turnover is undoubtedly one of the most critical matters. “Up-skilling people to become more proficient in their jobs, valuing and rewarding professional competence and supporting career development can improve the image of employment in the sector and create a more positive recruitment and retention cycle” (Stacey, 2015, p. 10). Hence, and together with education and training, opportunity for professional development and advancement are key dimensions of job quality (as further discussed in section 3.4). High skilled workers have access not only to more jobs, but also to better quality jobs, in comparison to low skilled workers, who are at a disadvantage in what refers to earnings, labour market security and quality of working environment (Stacey, 2015). And although seasonal and part-time employment may be especially attractive for those on the ‘periphery’ of the workforce, qualified workers leave for those same reasons (Kusluvan, 2003). Therefore, the sector’s success also depends on its ability to empower and develop young talents. Improvements in the quality of labour will be more important than the quantity of labour.

The hospitality industry offers diverse career opportunities and not only the industry turnover may represent an opportunity for many workers to look for better positions by moving between companies, as most hotel groups have long-term expansion plans in their own country or other countries. Although the most recent economic slowdown has had significant adverse effects on employment, T&H companies continued searching for the most talented staff (Walsh et al., 2011).

2.4.1 T&H education and the ‘graduatisation’ of the labour market

Recent years have seen increasing emphasis on access to Higher Education and on the importance of a graduate level skilled workforce, mostly as result of 20-year governmental policies designed to widen access and increase participation in Higher Education across Europe, and there is still little knowledge of how formal education influences career opportunities and career behaviour. “Graduates are perceived as potential key players in the drive towards enhancing value-added products and services in an economy demanding stronger skill-sets and advanced technical knowledge”, but if once only a very restricted number of persons belonged to this ‘elite’, we now operate in a crowded graduate labour market (Eurico, da Silva, & do Valle, 2015; Tomlinson, 2012, p. 408).

In some professions, holding a degree is a mandatory prerequisite for entry, while in others it increases the propensity of individuals to get a better position in the labour market and higher earnings both in the short and long term (Purcell, Elias, & Wilton, 2004; S. Robinson, Murrells, & Clinton, 2006). The T&H sector is not an exception, and the growing provision of degree courses have been a route for qualification and professionalisation, despite the provision of degree-level T&H education being a somewhat recent phenomenon (King et al., 2003). In Portugal, the first T&H bachelor's degree is traced back to the 1986, granted by private Higher Education Institutions, or to 1988, granted by public institutions (Correia, 2017).

Although many of the occupations are low skilled and the majority of workers have no formal qualifications, there is evidence to suggest that many people working in the industry are highly educated (González, Sánchez, & López-Guzmán, 2016; Szivas, Riley, & Airey, 2003). T&H jobs have been gradually experiencing what Tomlinson (2012) describes as 'graduatisation', when referring to jobs that were previously typically not held by graduates, and now are, despite the corresponding outcomes and rewards often being less than expected. This trend has been reflected in an increase in the number of tertiary education institutions offering T&H-related studies, and in addition to polytechnics, "many universities and technical institutes now offer an array of hospitality-related qualifications such as undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in hospitality management, gastronomy and culinary arts" (Ayres, 2006; Petrova & Mason, 2004; Thompson, Poulston, & Neill, 2017, p. 111). In Portugal, in the academic year 2019/2020, 42 undergraduate degrees within the scientific areas of T&H (*Tourism and Leisure* (30), *Hotels and Restaurants* (12)), were made available in public universities and polytechnics, accounting for 1,568 openings in the whole country (DGES, 2019)¹⁰.

However, there is still a significative predominance of T&H workers with low academic qualifications, which is related to the high availability of low-skilled jobs that require little or no formal training and few conceptual or knowledge-driven attributes, although many tourism jobs require a combination of soft and technical skills, as well as higher level skills. Due to the perception of hospitality work as unskilled, the industry poses low entry barriers, but given the diversity of activities in the tourism sector, employment may range from unskilled to highly skilled positions. About a quarter of service positions are estimated to be supervisory or skilled occupations at managerial, professional or technical level (ILO, 2010; Stacey, 2015). However, Brien, Thomas and Brown (2017) interestingly note that defining hotel jobs as low-skilled may be beneficial for hotels to justify the low levels of pay, when in reality low-skills is not what hotels are looking for in prospective employees.

Furthermore, some employers are sceptical about formal qualifications, as they do not perceive them as a guaranty of good performance or fit to the job from the new employee, and consider vocation, flexibility, mobility, work experience and operational competences more relevant than academic achievements (Ayres, 2006; Kusluvan, 2003; Nachmias et al., 2017; Petrova & Mason, 2004). It is frequently assumed that the knowledge and skills required to work in T&H can be easily learned by on the job training (ILO, 2010; Kusluvan, 2003; Partington, 2017; Stacey, 2015). This view is enhanced by the fact that many hospitality managers do not have appropriate

¹⁰ Portuguese General Directorate for Higher Education.

qualifications themselves and fail to meet the demands of managerial work, perpetuating an 'amateur' management style (Guerrier & Deery, 1998).

Qualification is pivotal to keep employees competitive in a continuously changing economic environment and to ensure the standard of service quality that is delivered to customers. Skills development aims to prepare graduates for future job responsibilities through the acquisition of new competences, knowledge, experiences, and attitudes. Curriculum design is often the outcome of a "triangular relationship between students, industry and the academy, which results in a strong vocational (and therefore practical) focus in hospitality programmes" (Thompson et al., 2017, p. 119). University departments delivering T&H programmes often struggle to compete with other bachelor of business-related programmes, as they need to show their relevance to the academic community as well as to the industry. The traditional skill-based focus of hospitality programmes has been gradually changing to meet the industry's needs for more general managerial skills and interpersonal competences, as for example problem-solving skills, flexibility, social skills or adaptability (Ford & Bach, 1996; Swarbrooke & Gibson, 2017). The T&H field also "demands talent skills sets in creative areas such as technology innovation and applications, e-marketing, financial and revenue management and planning, but these are largely common with other sectors and not specific to the industry" (Baum, 2019, pp. 3928–3929), which makes T&H graduates to encounter competition from graduates holding specific degrees in each one of these areas.

Curricula must reflect student's expectations and the industry needs, providing the skills and knowledge that is needed to 'fit' hospitality organisations, and preparing both operationally skilled and business-oriented graduates. Hospitality programmes are also expected to transmit fundamental cultural traits of the industry, so students can be more closely aligned with work in firms that comply with these characteristics (Dawson, 2014; Nick & McKechnie, 1995). Therefore, "the practical components of hospitality management courses are an important part of student development and education" (Thompson et al., 2017, p. 111).

In a study involving 73 hospitality practitioners (most of them hoteliers), Lefever and Withiam (1998) found that the industry consider that students are quite well-prepared to engage in hospitality work, showing an excited and energetic attitude; at the same time, they have shared concerns regarding student's tendency to overestimate or 'inflate' their abilities and to have unrealistic high expectations for their first jobs. Results have shown that the effectiveness of hospitality education curricula is quite dependent on the academia's ability to provide students not only with appropriate technical skills, but also realistic views of the industry. Tourism graduates working in charter airlines who were interviewed by Peita and Mason (2004) reported that their employers see little or no relevance of a tourism degree to their businesses, which was mentioned as an advantage but not as a prerequisite. It is suggested that these perceptions may be due to employers' little understanding of what tourism degrees involve, and to students' inability to convincingly show that they possess the required skills.

The role of Higher Education in meeting the needs of both the industry and the graduates has been receiving growing attention (Correia, Salgado, & Costa, 2017; Swarbrooke & Gibson, 2017; Thompson et al., 2017). In a study aimed at analysing the articulation level between hotel groups operating in Portugal and hospitality management programmes offered by Portuguese Higher Education Institutions of the public subsystem, Correia (2017) has verified that many T&H Higher

Education programmes have been designed and implemented without properly taking into account the needs of the industry. This is in line with recent formal assessments¹¹ of T&H degree programmes, which have disclosed marked mismatches between the knowledge, skills and competences that graduates are provided with and those that the industry requires (Correia, 2017).

The sector's widely recognised difficulties in retaining graduate entrants, which resulted in loss of valued skills and knowledge and in a greater questioning of the worthiness of the 'investment' made in one's careers (Sturges & Guest, 2001; Tomlinson, 2012). Academic discrepancies merged with labour mobility are to blame for the expertise gap where overeducated workers accept short-term jobs and eventually move on to greater jobs once they obtain enough experience. Plus, academic qualification may improve individuals' human capital and increase – also by making them more aware of – their 'employability potential', as more 'employable' people may desire to get a job elsewhere (Baruch, 2009). Higher Education is suggested to raise individuals' expectations and lead to aspire for jobs that suit their qualifications; the influence of Higher Education is particularly salient for the younger and expected to differ between men and women. However, these studies also remark that having higher levels of education does not necessarily lead to gender equality in the labour market (Costa et al., 2012; González et al., 2016). In fact, female graduates are less likely than male graduates to build a career in mainstream management, in spite of having a large presence in Higher Education, since inequalities of access are reinforced by subsequent early career moves. Often, female graduates' experiences during their supervised work experience year are negative and it is less common for them to get the type of job they desire. Additionally, it is harder for them to be rewarded with job offers with high salaries and benefits (Purcell, 1996).

Career management is also essential for the development of graduate talent, allowing both hospitality organisations to strengthen their talent pool, through the recognition of the potential and value of talent, and individuals to focus on their career progression and to be prepared to take on managerial positions in the future (Scott & Revis, 2008). This is particularly relevant in an era characterised by shifting demographic patterns and changing generational attitudes (see section 2.4.3), when career progression is less anchored around single organisations and specific job types, and individuals need not only to be more adaptive and plan for their own careers, but to continually build up their knowledge and skills, and therefore maintain their *employability* (Tomlinson, 2012). "(...) adequate education, upgrading training offers and enhancing career perspectives in the tourism sector and at workplace level" have been stressed by policy-makers such as the ILO or the OECD as fundamental to improve the quality of work and the image of the sector (Stacey, 2015, p. 15).

2.4.2 The changing nature of work relations

Market-led economic forces have led to globally significant changes in internal and external labour markets, putting a great pressure in many employment sectors that has been particularly

¹¹ In Portugal, the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education – A3ES is the responsible body for promoting and ensuring the quality of higher education provision (see <https://www.a3es.pt/en>).

affecting qualified workers. This pressure refers both to the implementation of restructuring strategies aimed at reducing labour costs (such as offshoring, downsizing and outsourcing, which in turn result in layoffs, forced occupational mobility and involuntary part-time jobs) and to the rise of more flexible job arrangements. Therefore, mainstream employment relations have changed significantly, and standard contracts with long-term career prospects and job stability have been increasingly replaced by more precarious situations such as temporary agency-based work, part-time work, fixed term contingent work and independent contracting (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Lucas, 2004; Siegrist, 2016).

This is particularly relevant in the T&H industry, which companies, due to problems in recruitment and retention of staff, aligned with an increasingly competitive market that puts pressure on service quality, have started to introduce more flexible practices (Boardman et al., 2015; Cooper & Hall, 2008; Michael & Lockwood, 1997). T&H businesses adopted an approach that relies on part-time, casual and short-contract staff, in a *as needed* or *on call* basis, as an attempt to adjust operations to fluctuating levels of tourism demand, by providing the necessary numerical variation of employees. It is therefore common to find companies that rely on a 'core', functional and flexible, workforce, complemented by 'peripheral' employees, that provide numerical flexibility (Yvonne & Lockwood, 1989). Resorting to informal labour markets also became a frequent option to managers, who have been relying on networking, recommendations and word of mouth to avoid formal, and more expensive, hiring (Boardman et al., 2015; Cooper & Hall, 2008). "Globally, hospitality organisations have flattened their organisational structures, removed tiers of middle management, outsourced departments and 'casualised' much of their workforce (Mooney, 2014, p. 43).

Outsourcing is, precisely, one of the factors that Cappelli (1999) believes to have contributed to the growth of market-based employment relationships. The author argues that it is not that contemporary terms and conditions employment got worse than before; instead, change is the result in the decline in employers' ability to manage employment and careers inside their organisations, whereas external labour markets gained relevance in shaping jobs and careers, to the extent of influencing employees' compensation and development.

As a result, the first decade of the twenty-first century was marked, worldwide, by a HR crisis in T&H, even though this has proven to be one of the most resilient industries. By the year 2000, and even before the global financial and economic crisis of 2008/09, there were already predictions of labour shortages to come, which would increase the competition for qualified employees and make employee retention a priority for companies (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). The crisis of 2008/09 has not only precipitated unemployment, but has also had a heavy impact on the quality of jobs in many OECD countries, namely through increased job insecurity, lower opportunities for training, more difficulties reconciling work and family responsibilities, or greater financial strains for workers and their families due to reduced earnings, and even shaped talent management and work organisation. There were significant transformations in labour policies and labour management that have led to an increase in inequalities, particularly in southern Europe and among women (Leschke & Jepsen, 2012; Stacey, 2015).

Even at times of high unemployment and availability of workforce, employee turnover has continued to plague the T&H industry, and many countries were, and still are, faced with the paradox of having difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled workers (Stacey, 2015). In the

UK, for instance, although it was expected that as labour became scarcer, employers would seek to improve the attractiveness of their job offers, this has not happened and many workers persist in low-skill, low-wage and low-prospect jobs (CIPD, 2017). At the same time, “the rapid increase of unemployment weakens the relative position of workers vis à vis employers, forcing them to accept worse working and employment conditions, with a negative impact on job quality” (Muñoz de Bustillo, Fernández-Macías, Antón, & Esteve, 2009, p. 7).

The reasons for this HR crisis in tourism are complex and interlinked, rooted on the type of work that services industry involve, the working conditions, the dominance of small businesses and the shifting demographics and social attitudes, which highly affect the pool of employable and suitably qualified workers (Cooper & Hall, 2008). In Canada, for example, the Canadian Tourism Research Institute (2016) has projected a potential labour shortage, suggesting that over 240,000 jobs specific to the tourism industry may be unfilled between 2010 and 2035, which represents over 10% of all tourism jobs available (Murray et al., 2017). Combined with a deceleration in the growth of the total labour force, due to an aging workforce (that is not being replaced due to low birth rates, in an industry that is heavily reliant on young workers), this trend is particularly worrying for the tourism sector. This is also the reality of many countries, including Portugal, that besides battling with an aging population, is also well known as a net exporter of tourism labour (Cooper & Hall, 2008). The repercussions of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic for HR are still to be known, but it can be anticipated that a changed workforce in changing organisations will pose additional challenges to the T&H industry.

The T&H sector also has a reputation of relying on poorly structured recruitment policies, namely the general lack of systematic selection procedures, often obsolete. Although the tourism industry has been experiencing countless changes over the years, it is also innately conservative and resistant to change. In some sectors, particularly accommodation and restaurants, many companies retain HRM styles from past decades and do not properly acknowledge that it is in human capital and knowledge that competitiveness depends on, resulting in continuously poor productivity, working conditions and remuneration – with these problems being particularly acute for SMEs, which support the majority of tourism jobs (Baum, 2007; Cooper & Hall, 2008). With the growing resort to outsourcing processes¹² – for instance, in the accommodation sector, housekeeping is one of the areas in which resorting to external servicing is more common, especially in large hotels –, some questions have also been raised about the working conditions of these employees, who are not considered to be under the responsibility of the hotels as they are employed by their sub-contractors (Cañada, 2018; Partington, 2017).

Following a ‘doing more with less’ approach, many employees have been facing increased workloads, longer work hours and greater stress, without an accompanying increase in resources (Harrington & Ladge, 2009). Harrington and Ladge (2009) also emphasize the role globalisation has been playing in most employees’ mindsets, fostering a culture of operation “in

¹² With the aim of cost saving and/or of eliminating the distraction of having to manage peripheral functions, outsourcing allows businesses to strategically use outside vendors to perform service activities in highly specific areas (Davidson et al., 2011).

global teams that require working longer days and being available during non-work hours” (p. 152).

Technology has also been changing the nature of many tourism jobs and generating new business models, but its impacts have been mixed. Whereas some industries face revolutionary changes that alter the nature of the jobs and skill requirements (e.g., the printing industry, with the change from metal print to electronically print, or the manufacturing industry, with the introduction of automatized product lines), others experience gradual change and traditional roles coexist with more technologically advanced jobs. Tourism employees have been gradually working alongside technology and have no choice but to adapt themselves, despite the majority of jobs remain physically demanding, and emotional, social and technical skills continue to be required (Cooper & Hall, 2008; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Riley et al., 2002).

This technological ascendancy can be less evident in front-line service than in behind-the-scenes jobs, as well as in many operations high-tech and low-tech live together (Cooper & Hall, 2008). In hotels, major effects are perceived in marketing, reservations and financial departments, but areas such as reception or kitchen maintain both traditional roles while taking advantage of technology. This means that the T&H industry is likely to experience technological diversity while not necessarily changing the role descriptions of jobs (Riley et al., 2002). Some tourism jobs may be most at risk of being technological substituted¹³ than others in the short-term (e.g., travel agents, reservations agents, museum attendants) (Riley et al., 2002), while others continue to be more easily performed by humans. This is because while artificial intelligence is expected to easily handle people’s inquiries and complains, but some simple physical tasks may be more complex for machines than for humans. However, Webster and Ivanov (2020) suggest that it may just be a matter of cultural/social mind-set shift, using the example that, at this moment, robots cannot change sheets in a bed, but hotels can still bypass the need for workers to do it, by handling their guests clean sheets and asking them to make their own beds in exchange of a given cost advantage. In the future, as tasks are expected to become increasingly automatized, this type of trends may even contribute to the development of market niches, with some consumers being keen to pay more for high-touch, personal, hospitality experiences, while regular consumers will experience high-tech hospitality (Ivanov & Webster, 2019).

Although the substitution of human labour can happen, the use of technology does not necessarily mean that human capital is not involved anymore. According to Ivanov and Webster (2019), the use of technology implies changes in the *skills* required to perform the job, due to de-skilling (meaning that less skilful employees can do the job) or up-skilling (meaning that more or different competences are required). The authors list a number of trade-offs for each scenario. De-skilling may allow companies to enlarge the pool of potential employees that can be hired, to be more competitive, to decrease salaries and reduce costs, or to practice lower prices. However, this may increase employees’ resistance and fear of automation, triggering tensions, if perceived as a threat. This can increase their turnover intentions and, consequently, impact psychological climate, innovation and service quality. In turn, up-skilling means that companies have to invest in employees’ (re)training, which is likely to increase their bargaining power, employability and salaries. Cost are expected to be the same or lower if the combined

¹³ Technological substitution means total replacement of a person by technological tools (Riley et al., 2002).

productivity of these up-skilled employees and technology is higher than their costs for the company (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). Riley et al. (2002) remark that human capital is a reactive variable, and “if machines are used or work processes simplified, then personal productivity can be increased. This is the straightforward ‘efficiency’ case where increased skill or simplification increases output” (Riley et al., 2002, p. 32). But for those thinking of technology just as a means for cost saving (in which the decreased use of HR can be included), multi- or up-skilling employees may require a much more significant investment. Riley et al. (2002) also posit that de-skilling or up-skilling depends on the type of work unit. Standardised units may need lower levels of human capital, but complex units with a wide range of services – in which most T&H business fit – might require high human capital and, therefore, different skills or retraining. In sum, a significant and continuous human capital investment is required to endow the workforce with the fundamental characteristics to maximize the full potential of technology benefits.

In light of demography issues that have been reshaping the labour market and leading to labour shortages, technology is also suggested to be particularly useful in helping companies reorganising their operations in order to need fewer employees; for T&H, this can mean reducing the industry’s dependency for human labour. *Substituting* people through technology seems a more viable and socially accepted¹⁴ solution to labour shortages (Ivanov & Webster, 2019).

Overall, from a HR management perspective, the introduction of robotics, artificial intelligence and service automation technologies on business processes within the T&H industry can impact: time spent with tasks that don’t add value in terms of creativity or revenue generation, the role of human resources (enhancing them, rather than replacing them), recruitment and dismissal processes, organisation of companies (new departments, job positions, communication links), the required number of employees in various departments, the required skills of employees, and employees’ receptiveness towards technology (Ivanov & Webster, 2019).

From an educational perspective, education systems will also have to adapt to technological developments in order to adequately prepare students for working with and using technology, by improving their technological understanding and building their digital literacy. Although automation will gradually shape the labour market, both cognitive and soft skills will play a more prominent role. Education is currently very time-limited and focused on young people, but workers’ adaptation and re-skilling will require new forms of adult, mid-career, education experiences (Servoz, 2019).

Technology has changed the organisation of work, leading to flatter processes of decision making, more flexible working methods, easier and regular communication (including across national borders), and permanent connection between employees and their companies. Advances in information technology also increase the portability of work, which may have a more positive or negative reading; if in one hand, it allows employees to work from home or other remote locations, on the other, it also results in increasingly blurred boundaries between work and non-work spheres. This is because tools like emails and cell phones have allowed employees to be electronically connected to work and their organisations on a 24/7 basis, which

¹⁴ In comparison with *producing* people or *importing* people (see Ivanov & Webster, 2019 for a more complete description of different solutions to plummeting populations).

may lead to overload, more hours of work and additional challenges in work-life conciliation (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014).

Besides economic circumstances, technological developments and demographic changes, the human capital in T&H is facing other challenges – such as changing lifestyles, increased mobility (including workers with different cultural backgrounds and training (e.g., immigrants)), demand patterns and travel behaviours, emergence of new markets, or pressure to deliver high quality tourism experiences to visitors – that are transforming the skill needs in the sector, the nature of tourism jobs, the composition of the tourism workforce and our conception of careers (McGuire, 2014; Siegrist, 2016; Stacey, 2015). As diversity in personnel increases (more women in all levels of organisations, greater use of outsourcing and part-time workers) careers are now a result of a wider experiences encompassing “activities and life roles such as volunteering work, periods of entrepreneurial activity and career breaks to engage with family and caring responsibilities” (McGuire, 2014, p. 55).

In Portugal, some efforts have been undertaken to better understand how to adjust the human resource planning agenda to wider trends, one example being the study “Better Skills, Best Tourism”, developed by the Portuguese Tourism Confederation (Stacey, 2015, p. 22).

2.4.3 Managing diversity at the workplace: Gendered careers

Besides internal pressures, such as the ever-increasing pressure on financial performance, organisations are being subject to increasing pressure from the external environment, with cultural and demographic changes being among the most common sources.

Major changes have occurred in the society in the last decades. Women are increasingly represented in the workforce, particularly in managerial-level jobs. Important changes also occurred in the household (e.g., decline in the percentage of male wage-earners, increased responsibility for aging parents), as well in family structures (e.g., decrease in family sizes). These aspects affect the ways individuals see their career unfold, and the blurred boundaries between work and home spheres in T&H jobs reinforces this trend (Ayres, 2006; Bakas, Costa, Durão, Carvalho, & Breda, 2018; Veijola & Jokinen, 2008). However, few research has been devoted to women’s careers in tourism (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, Torres, & Wahl, 2018; Mooney, 2014; Mooney & Ryan, 2009; Purcell, 1996; Segovia-Pérez, Figueroa-Domecq, & Fuentes-Moraleda, 2014; Segovia-Pérez, Figueroa-Domecq, Fuentes-Moraleda, & Muñoz-Mazón, 2019), and research focusing on the analysis of their careers in light of new career concepts, such as the boundaryless career, are even scarcer (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2018).

Although women’s presence in the T&H workforce has improved quantitatively and qualitatively, “women continue to encounter a host of barriers attributable to labour market discrimination” (Santero-Sanchez, Segovia-Pérez, Castro-Nuñez, Figueroa-Domecq, & Talón-Ballesterro, 2015, p. 234). The T&H industry is often said to offer women good employment opportunities, but some questions can be raised on how ‘women-friendly’ the T&H industry actually is (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2018). On the other hand, the T&H industry should recognize the vital importance of gender equality on the global context of sustainability and the

Sustainable Development Goals, as drivers for increasing its benefits and successful business (UNWTO, 2017).

Organisational practices such as those commonly found in the T&H industry (e.g., long, irregular and unsocial working hours), together with gendered stereotypes about male and female's supposed characteristics, and cultural and societal conceptions of women as primary caregivers, disproportionately disadvantage this group. Therefore, not only recruitment practices in T&H are influenced by stereotyped gender roles, but also career advancement. As partially exposed in section 2.3.1 (*Gendered nature of employment*), the T&H industry is highly marked by strong horizontal and vertical segregation. Men are over-represented in managerial positions, at the top of the hierarchy. Women are more frequently employed in typically female areas, lower ranked within organisational hierarchies (both in status and in required skills), with worse employment conditions and lower wages (Carvalho et al., 2014; Jordan, 1997; Mooney & Ryan, 2009; Purcell, 1996). Therefore, when it comes to developing, retaining, and advancing female talent, organisations have been shown to underperform (Walsh, Fleming, & Enz, 2016).

Feminist studies (Acker, 1990; Carvalho et al., 2019; Morgan & Pritchard, 2019; Pritchard, 2014; Wahl, 1998) have been showing that organisations are not gender-neutral, and actually reinforce gender differences, gendered power relations and the male-dominated gender order. Managers frequently stress that they mostly value candidates' skills, qualifications and attitudes when recruiting, thus denying the influence of gender upon their conceptions of their 'ideal worker'. However, when analysing managers' definitions of 'ideal' tourism employees it is possible to identify constructed gendered versions of what constitute 'ideal worker' characteristics. At a first glance, what seems 'gender-neutral' concepts are, in fact, perpetuating the male hegemony, by equating only masculine characteristics into the 'ideal worker' discourse (Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão, et al., 2017). One of the most salient characteristics is *flexibility*. The nature of tourism businesses, which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, places a great emphasis on employees' flexibility – that is, flexibility to be available to any work demands. However, due to social reproductive gender roles typically assigned to women, women find it more difficult to comply with this 'ideal tourism worker' model, which clearly has consequences on how their careers develop (Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão, et al., 2017). According to some authors, this flexibility may also refer to geographical mobility (Mooney & Ryan, 2009; Mónica Segovia-Pérez et al., 2014).

Increased gender equality is not usually perceived as having an economic value for organisations, which may justify that gender equality-specific policies are still at a very early development stage. However, some managers admit that these issues frequently fall within marketing strategies to improve companies' image, but are not taken seriously enough (F. Bakas et al., 2018). Furthermore, some caution should be taken when applying policies that promote more flexible work arrangements for female employees, as managers can be perpetuating stereotyped gender roles that imposed on women the responsibility for primary childcare (Costa, Bakas, Durão, & Breda, 2015).

Women are affected at different career stages and at different stages of their lives by the '**glass ceiling**' phenomenon, which can be roughly described as an invisible barrier that women and other minorities find when trying to advance to the highest-level positions in organisational hierarchies (Costa, Durão, et al., 2015; Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001; Mooney &

Ryan, 2009; Mónica Segovia-Pérez et al., 2014). Even the few women who find their way through and stand 'above' this glass ceiling continue to fight gender-related inequalities and discrimination (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, Torres, et al., 2018). Segovia-Pérez et al. (2014) propose that the factors underlying the formation of the glass ceiling, that may act both as facilitators and constrains to women's advancement, can be divided into:

- i. *Internal factors*, referring to those over which women have some degree of control. Among these factors, human capital (namely age and educational level) and family-related factors (motherhood and distribution of family responsibilities and domestic work) can be found; and
- ii. *External factors*, referring to those factors with direct influence over women's careers but over which they have more limited control. These include sociocultural factors (related to gendered stereotypes, roles, and processes), corporate culture (rooted in the country specific context in which it operates) and organisational policies (recruitment and promotion practices, mentoring programmes, equality policies).

Findings from a study (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2018) aimed at analysing women managers' careers in tourism organisations show that their careers followed three main types of paths, sometimes combining more than one type: linear careers (within the same organisation, male-dominated at the very top); job rotation across companies (also male-dominated); and entrepreneurship (which is perceived as a career stage and not an isolated event in their professional lives, with women themselves being at the top of their small-sized businesses). The authors used the boundaryless career model to analyse managers' career paths and patterns of high inter-organisational mobility, concluding that most of their moves were not limited within the boundaries of an organisation, but rather happened between organisations, with career progression being more the result of job rotation than of climbing the career ladder, depending on promotions. Although some of these moves were due to the lack of opportunities to progress within the organisational hierarchy, "mobility was often regarded as an important career asset"; and even when mobility does not mean upward progression somewhere else, it is associated with other valuable benefits, such as learning experiences, intrinsic rewards or important contacts (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2018, p. 9). Following another main tenet of boundaryless careers, that employees proactively manage their own careers, Carvalho, Costa, Lykke and Torres's (2018) study also revealed that women strongly emphasised their own agency and active role in career-making, advocating that their achievements are the outcome of individual characteristics (e.g., effort, hard work, competence, dedication, agency) and wish to take hold of fulfilling challenges. In the hospitality sector, at career-entry stage, gender is found to be both a privilege (e.g., easy entry to areas 'reserved' for women because women are perceived to better match such positions' requirements) and a penalty (e.g., sexual harassment from male co-workers in male-dominated areas). Gender is also found to regulate promotional opportunities, and not merit, as it is frequently presumed (Mooney, Ryan, & Harris, 2017).

Reporting on in-depth interviews with female executives in the hospitality industry in Spain, Segovia-Pérez et al. (2019) also proposed a holistic approach to describe women's career development, grouping the main barriers affecting women's careers and representation in decision-making positions, within the following levels:

- i. *Individual*, which refers to women’s self-perception, self-imposed barriers that lead to lack of confidence about their own management orientation and capabilities;
- ii. *Interactional*, referring to expected gender roles and stereotyping, expected behaviour associated with leadership style and family support;
- iii. *Institutional*, which include industry-specific factors, such as typical female occupations, long working hours, and constant need for availability; and
- iv. *Intersectional*, which includes two factors – gender roles and work-life balance – which are believed to be influenced and reinforced by factors on all individual-interactional-institutional levels.

Work-family balance, as an obstacle to women’s career progression, has been given special emphasis in many studies. Having children, in particular young children, may have a greater impact on women’s careers than on men's (Costa et al., 2012; S. Mooney, 2009; Mooney & Ryan, 2009). Working mothers are more likely to exit the workforce than non-mothers or men, or, as for female managers, to be less represented or to earn less than their male counterparts (Walsh et al., 2016). After reaching a certain point in their careers, women might not even want to progress further within the industry, which may be due to not seeing other women in top-management positions, not perceiving benefits in advancing (from what they see from other women in higher level positions or what they do *not* see), for anticipating increased difficulties in reconciling career and family, or for believing in the widespread idea that women cannot pursue motherhood and a career at the same time (Mooney, 2009; S. Mooney & Ryan, 2009). In any case “women workers are perceived as less available [or as a liability] by recruiters due to [this] supposed social reproductive responsibilities, irrespective of whether they have them or not” (Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão, et al., 2017, p. 73).

2.5 Summary

Significant changes in mainstream employment relations have prompted a reconceptualization of careers. During the twentieth century, a career meant a sequence of positions, a linear path through the entire work life, in one or in a small number of organisations. This traditional, bureaucratic career has been replaced by more embracing notions of career, and despite there is no single pattern dominating contemporary careers, these share a number of trends, such as the increased likelihood of frequent mobility beyond the borders of a single employer, or the accumulation and rearrangement of skills, knowledge and abilities to meet the demands of a changing workplace. *Protean*, *Boundaryless* or *Kaleidoscope* career orientations are, therefore, widely discussed modern career perspectives (Arthur, 1994; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Hall, 1976, 2004; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Sullivan, 1999). These ‘new’ career concepts are examined as potential orientations towards careers in T&H.

Therefore, in this chapter, major theories of career development, choice, and adjustment, as well as concepts of career and career development have been reviewed. There is a great need for a deeper understanding of the career development path in an industry as fragmented as T&H, previous studies pointing out to the fact that the T&H sector offers very few structured career opportunities (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017; Ladkin & Riley, 1996; McCabe & Savery, 2007). Being as difficult as it is for workers to be given genuine prospects of career development, it is

everything but surprising to have competent and qualified employees resign (Kusluvan, 2003). Discussions concerning the relationship between talent management and careers in the T&H field are still limited, not extending beyond the recognition that the loss of talented staff is a significant problem. This appears to be paramount in an industry that continuously operates in an often-unpredictable environment, characterised by high seasonality and both quantity and quality labour shortages. This chapter also sets the context for T&H as a career choice, by exploring the specific characteristics which are considered to shape the employment quality in this industry (such as long working hours culture, seasonal and short-term nature of employment, wage levels or the gendered nature of employment, just to name a few) and the motivations underpinning a decision to pursue a career in the T&H industry (which are function of both the attractiveness of the industry, accessibility of jobs and personal attributes).

There is a pressing need of talent management to move forward from a collection of HR practices that serve only organisational goals and allow individuals to develop and manage their own careers instead (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). Therefore, more than approaching employees as objects that's need to be managed by organisations, talent management must consider individuals' own interests, needs, preferences and career aspirations (Thunnissen, 2016). In addition, for development plans to be successful, over-generalisation should be avoided; strategies should be segmented to target different generations, career stages, personal needs and lifestyles (Hatum, 2010). T&H careers have unique attributes that are shaped by a highly variable context, which have been also examined in this chapter, particularly in relation to significant changes in mainstream employment relations, demographics, technology, and education.

3. Quality of life and well-being at work

3.1 Introduction

Work is an important part of human life, and individuals' positive or negative evaluations of their work are largely reflected in other spheres of their lives. Over the past few years, the meaning of quality of working life (QWL) has undergone great changes, and issues such as happiness and well-being at work have been subject of a lot of debate, which has led to an increase in concerns about employees' work experiences. Not only perceptions of QWL influence people's career decisions, as QWL is considered an important HRM strategy for high employee retention and high employee satisfaction, with strong repercussions on organisational effectiveness. Also divided in three parts, Chapter 3 contributes, therefore, to gain a deeper insight into the most significant issues influencing employees' evaluations of their QWL.

The first part addresses the conceptualisation of QWL and its development over time, referring to the existing 'family' of concepts, discussing both its objective and subjective nature, and drawing attention to other influential approaches in theoretical and empirical research on job quality, namely job satisfaction and person-job fit.

The second part of the chapter presents the most relevant theoretical approaches devoted to the measurement of QWL, systematizing different views on the core constituents of QWL. More specifically, special reference is made to Walton's model (1973), Hackman and Oldham's motivational theory (1975, 1980) and Sirgy et al.'s (2001) need-satisfaction and spillover theory-inspired model. Attention is also given to some of the most influential models stemming from occupation health psychology research and commonly applied to assessments of the quality of the working environment and work characteristics, namely: the Job Demand–Control–(Support) model, the Effort–Reward Imbalance model and the Job Demands–Resources model.

The third section is then dedicated to the analysis of the multidimensionality of QWL, namely to the identification of the main dimensions of job quality. These dimensions are drawn from the extant literature, both more generic and industry specific, although studies addressing QWL of T&H employees are rather scarce. The nature and characteristics of T&H employment presented in the previous chapter have also informed the selection of this set of dimensions.

3.2 Bad jobs vs. good jobs: the growing debate on quality of working life

Work plays such a very important role in the life of a person, as an integral part of our everyday life and our livelihood. We invest a significant part of our life preparing (through education and internships) and devoting ourselves to work. On average one spends around at least eight hours per day in the workplace (without considering commuting time), for about 35 or more years; that is one third of our entire life and does influence the overall quality of our life. Employees now *enjoy* the prospect of 60-year careers; this *enjoyment* may yield both a positive and negative interpretation. “Even in times of economic duress, the vast majority of the adult population age 25–75 is employed in some capacity”, i.e., most adults have a job and even although the time spent at work obviously varies by the person and occupation, we spend more time working than in any other waking activity (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 373). It is due to this significance of work in the lives of most people that workplace well-being and job quality have become such important issues that constitute specific areas of prominent policy-makers such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Not only work takes over people’s time and energy but also their identities, which is evidenced by how most people respond to the questions ‘What do you do?’ or ‘What are you?’ (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 343). In most studies about quality of life, attitude towards work is also found to be closely linked to life satisfaction (Sirgy, 2012).

It is increasingly recognised that the quality of jobs is significant because it influences attitudes, behaviour and outcomes for both individuals and institutions. Investigation towards the creation of ‘better jobs’ has been increasing across the EU and other most developed countries. Promoting better quality jobs has been a central aim of the European Union’s employment strategy since 2000 (Holman, 2012).

The OECD is actively working to bring job quality to the forefront of the policy debate, urging its member countries to design policies that “seek to stimulate more and better jobs to create sustainable and equitable future employment, promoting stronger, more inclusive growth and providing a key link between the economy and well-being” (Stacey, 2015, p. 17). In turn, the ILO posits that workers well-being is a key factor for organisational long-term effectiveness and the aim of measures for workplace well-being is to complement Occupational Safety and Health measures to make sure workers are safe, healthy, satisfied and engaged at work (ILO, n.d.). Even before the current global economic downturn, both these international bodies, and the EU have been collaborating on statistical indicators for measuring and ways to promote employment and ‘decent work’¹⁵ among their member countries.

How to do it is the big challenge, as the definition of uniform or comparable measurement methods and the design of any actions and interventions to improve the quality of jobs, rests on agreeing on a definition of what comprises a ‘good job’ (CIPD, 2017; Jones, Haslam, & Haslam,

¹⁵ More detailed information about the concept of ILO’s *decent work* is provided at:

<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>

For a brief overview about ‘decent work’ please see:

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/decent-work>

2017; Santero-Sanchez, Segovia-Pérez, Castro-Nuñez, Figueroa-Domecq, & Talón-Ballester, 2015). One of the more far reaching indices is the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), promoted by the European Union Agency EUROFOUND, which has been used for the last 20 years and addresses the differences between broad groups of workers. Portugal takes part of this survey since its first edition in 1990/1991, but at the national level, no job quality indices are available.

The efforts to conceptualise and operationalise QWL have thus been divided between academic and institutional initiatives (e.g., the launch of EWCS in 1990, ILO's concept of Decent Work launched in 1999 or the EU's focus on job quality as a result from the Lisbon Treaty in 2000), which have evolved in parallel (Burchell, Sehnbruch, Piasna, & Agloni, 2014). This conceptual multiplicity poses challenges both for the scientific understanding of job quality, as for the capacity of policy interventions to improve it.

This is partially due to the existence of a 'family of concepts' that can be found in both academic and *grey* human resource, organisational behaviour or quality of life literatures, covering very broad to more narrow approaches and all containing various dimensions, such as, but not limited to: job quality, quality of work/working life, decent work, fair work, good work, work well-being, fulfilling work, meaningful work, and quality of employment. The scope of this family of concepts is multi-focus and multi-level, ranging from a focus on workers, to the immediate worksite, to the employer organisation or to the economy and society (CIPD, 2017; Nadler & Lawler III, 1983).

Sometimes these different concepts are distinct, sometimes overlap, sometimes they are synonymous, sometimes they are used interchangeably, and sometimes are simply overstretched by researchers and policy-makers (CIPD, 2017). In some cases, the differences are not necessarily conceptual, but semantic (e.g., work well-being, well-being at work or employee well-being). The frequent colloquial use of this plethora of terms makes often difficult to ascertain their specific conceptual or theoretical sense. In other cases, 'quality of working life' is more frequently applied to subjective assessments, whereas 'job quality' or 'quality of work' are associated with objective assessments and terms such as 'decent work' or 'quality of employment' have been subject of mixed approaches (Burchell et al., 2014). This objective-subjective dichotomy is addressed further down the current section.

All these concepts have been widely discussed by numerous researchers with different disciplinary perspectives, which difficult the systematic compilation of information on this matter. Defining such concepts might seem apparently simple, as everyone understands what they consist of, although they might mean different things to different actors, whether these are scholars, workers, social partners or policymakers. Therefore, not only several concepts exists, as there are multiple definitions, conceptualisations and measurements for each of them (examples of more in-depth compilations can be find in Martel and Depuis (2006), CIPD (2017) or Sirgy (2012)).

In this work, the designation **quality of working life** was adopted as the preferred concept, as it was considered to better and more noticeably encompass references to the job (that includes both the work developed under a specific set of terms and conditions and employment in a

particular organisation) and to the occupation (employment in a particular sector, referring to a category of jobs).

QWL has been gaining visibility as an important construct within HRM and although there is still no formal definition, industrial psychologists and management scholars generally agree that it **deals with employee well-being and improved working conditions** and differs from the concept of satisfaction (Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001). Few examples from the multitude of conceptual definitions of QWL are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 | Synopsis of some frequently quoted QWL definitions

Author(s)	Definition
Nadler and Lawler III 1983	<i>QWL is a way of thinking about people, work, and organisations. Its distinctive elements are (1) a concern about the impact of work on people as well as on organizational effectiveness, and (2) the idea of participation in organizational problem solving and decision making. (p. 26)</i>
Kiernan and Knutson 1990	<i>QWL is an individual's interpretation of his/her role in the workplace and the interaction of that role with the expectations of others. A quality work life means something different to each and every individual, and is likely to vary according to the individual's age, career stage, and/or position in the industry. (p. 102)</i>
Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel and Lee 2001	<i>QWL [means] employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace. (p. 242)</i>
Martel and Dupuis 2006	<i>QWL, at a given time, corresponds to a condition experienced by the individual in his or her dynamic pursuit of his or her hierarchically organized goals within work domains where the reduction of the gap separating the individual from these goals is reflected by a positive impact on the individual's general quality of life, organizational performance, and consequently the overall functioning of society. (p. 355)</i>
Ahmad 2013	<i>QWL is generally associated with a series of objective organizational conditions and practices that enables employees of an organization to perceive that they are virtually safe, satisfied and have better chances of growth and development as individual human beings. (p. 73)</i>

Both Nadler and Lawler III (1983) and Kiernan and Knutson (1990) emphasize the subjective nature of QWL. However, Nadler and Lawler III define QWL as a 'way of thinking', which is also complex and subjective notion as difficult to operationalise as QWL. Martel and Dupuis (2006) and also Kiernan and Knutson (1990) highlight the dynamic nature of QWL, while Sirgy et al. (2001) and Ahmad (2013) place satisfaction as underlying QWL.

Nadler and Lawler III (1983), who have been involved in early debates surrounding the conceptualisation of QWL, also make two interest remarks regarding their proposal of a definition. First, the authors point out that being focused on QWL goes beyond concerns with productivity or organisational enhancement, because the focus is on individual outcomes, i.e.,

not only how people can do work better, but also how work can contribute for people to be better. Second, they advocate for participation in the process of organisational decision, which does not mean participation in all decisions, but involving people in the process of making important decisions that affect them and their work (Nadler & Lawler, 1983).

The concept of QWL emerged from psychology, then migrated to sociology and industrial relations. Although the expression *quality of working life* was not used then, its origins are rooted in the early twentieth century, with studies by the sociologist Elton Mayo at Western Electric's Hawthorn plant (who demonstrated the importance of the human factor at work, namely the influence of groups individual behaviour). The concept was born in a context of poor industrial relations and worker motivation and was, therefore, centred in obtaining a better fit between technical and social systems in workplaces and improve people's work conditions. Initially, the QWL movement sought to address worker alienation in an industrialized society which favoured technological advancement, productivity, and economic growth. The initial concept had a limited focus on job design, aiming to improve what is now referred to as 'work/employee engagement' (CIPD, 2017); Walton, 1973).

Gradually it extended to a drive for a wider social change and is broader than the aims of unionization movement; it evolved to emphasize the human dimensions of work – feelings, attitudes and motivations – by focusing on the quality of the relationship between the worker and the working environment (Martel & Dupuis, 2006). For some authors, the QWL movement was only initiated in the 1960s, with the work of Eric Trist and colleagues at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, in London, who developed a sociotechnical¹⁶ research tradition based on the analysis and redesign of work as a way to improve workers' satisfaction and well-being. "This movement emphasized upon improving the workplace conditions to meet the expectations of a more affluent and well-educated workforce and also live up to the expectations of the organizational needs for improved quality and productivity" (S. Ahmad, 2013, p. 74).

Nadler and Lawler III (1983) made one of the first systematisations of the different meanings that QWL had been assigned to over a 20 year-period of study, as presented on Table 3.1. However, research over the last three decades, has not confirmed the authors' last prediction, with a growing number of studies being published since then. In the recent years, QWL has generated wide scale interested from researchers, practitioners and policymakers.

One of the issues that emerges from the debate surrounding the dimensions that constitute the concept, is that if a 'good job' has an **objective** or a **subjective** facet; namely whether dimensions should be restricted to the intrinsic characteristics of the jobs themselves or extended to also include consideration of degree to which the job meets the needs or preferences of the individual worker (CIPD, 2017; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). Vinopal (2012) stresses that due to this dual nature, these objective and subjective dimensions should be examined together and their mutual relationship, clearly analysed.

¹⁶ To find more about the Socio-Technical Model please see Trist, E. (1981). The evolution of socio-technical systems: a conceptual framework and an action research program. *Journal of Issues in the Quality of Working Life Occasional Paper*, Issue 2.

Table 3.2 | Different meanings of QWL over time

QWL as a <i>Variable</i>	
1959-1972	QWL as an individual's reaction to work or the personal consequences of the work experience; focus on the impact of work on the individual; organisational actions towards quality of work under evaluation.
QWL as an <i>Approach</i>	
1969-1974/75	QWL's focus was still on the individual rather than on organisational outcomes, but at the same time meaning joint labour-management cooperative projects, aimed at improving outcomes for both the individual and the organization; QWL as a result of collaborative work.
QWL as a <i>Method</i>	
1972-1975	QWL as a set of methods, enhancing approaches, or technologies for the work environment and making it both more productive and more satisfying; QWL as synonym of autonomous work groups, job enrichment or design of workplaces as integrated social and technical systems (inspired by the work of Eric Trist).
QWL as a <i>Movement</i>	
1975-1980	QWL was more of an ideological statement about the nature of work and the worker's relationship to the organisation; ideals such as participate management and industry democracy were frequently evoked.
QWL as <i>Everything</i>	
1979-1982	QWL is seen as a global concept and is frequently perceived as a panacea for coping with problems, foreign competition, grievance quality problems, low-productivity rates, and just about everything else; all organisational efforts towards development and effectiveness may be labelled QWL and high expectations are created (although no innovation can embrace all these domains).
QWL as a <i>Nothing</i>	
1982 and beyond	The inevitable failure of some QWL projects (to be expected in any innovation) are envisioned and QWL's potential inability to deliver on some of the promises could lead to a growing disbelief, or even aversion, to the concept.

Source: Nadler and Lawler III (1983, pp. 22–24)

The *objective* tradition focuses on the essential aspects of working life that meet workers' needs from work – such as salary, working hours and their flexibility, legal protection of workers, type of work contract, and so on –, aiming to obtain a measure of job quality based on hard data and independent of workers' individual circumstances. These features can thus be observed at micro, meso and macro levels. In a macro-perspective, the quality of a job may be viewed against the backdrop of the labour market (EUROFOUND, 2012; Vinopal, 2012) (Table 3.3).

Consequently, the *subjective*¹⁷ perspective can only be measured on the individual level, as it is based in the 'utility' that each worker derives from his/her job, and this utility is perceived to be subjective as each worker has preferences over different job features. There are opposing arguments regarding if utility can be directly measured, with some authors arguing that it can be revealed through actions and behaviours towards work, and others preferring to use

¹⁷ "Self-reported variables are sometimes referred to as 'subjective', but this is a potential source of confusion when such reports are about objective job features. Rather, 'subjective' is a term that should be reserved for reports of feelings, perceptions, attitudes or values" (EUROFOUND, 2012, p. 10).

measures of well-being, including feelings and emotions, or job satisfaction (EUROFOUND, 2012).

Researchers from the subjective tradition believe that the objective approach considers jobs as unbiased, ignoring individual features such as gender, race and class. This divergence is crucial as the definition of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ jobs is not obvious: workers’ assessments of job quality varies, goes beyond the working environment *per se* and reflects a broad of personal characteristics and circumstances (CIPD, 2017, p.20). These assessments also mirror workers’ aspirations and expectations about the quality of their job (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). As a consequence, the terms and conditions of work and employment that might be perceived as objectively poor/bad, can be subjectively experienced by the job-holders as positive/good, and vice-versa.

Table 3.3 | Working life quality levels

	<i>Unit of analysis</i>	Objective characteristics	Subjective characteristics
Micro-level	<i>Individual</i>	Salary/wage Job characteristics	Satisfaction with salary Evaluation of relations at the workplace Etc.
Meso-level	<i>Company, location</i>	Average salary Jobs on offer	N.a.
Macro-level	<i>State, country</i>	Unemployment rate Level of legal protection of workers	N.a.

Source: Vinopal (2012)

Jones, Haslam and Haslam (2017) share this vision, arguing that the **‘right job’**, i.e., how well a job suits a particular individual, becomes a more important measure than ‘good job’, which cannot exist as a universal construct due to the wide variation between individuals in their preferences and drivers. Consequently, neither the ‘perfect job’ exists, “only the best job for a particular individual in a particular situation” (p. 146). The authors give the example of the highly comprehensive model of job quality proposed by Muñoz de Bustillo, Fernández-Macías, Antón and Esteve (2011), in which jobs that involve evening or weekend working are scored as being disadvantageous, when there may be individuals who actually prefers such work arrangements.

Furthermore, Royuela, López-Tamayo and Suriñach (2009), who computed a composite index for quality of working life and compared the results of the index with workers’ subjective perceptions of job satisfaction, remark that if an ‘objectively’ bad situation is not perceived as such by individuals, there will not be a strong stimulus for significant change.

Furthermore, standard analysis of the labour market usually focuses on quantity, on the aggregate labour market outcomes that are available in official statistics: the number of jobs and their correlates, that is, employment and unemployment rates. But, in fact, different jobs have different bundles of positive and negative attributes, and even these attributes evolve over time along with the structure and regulation of the labour market. Thus, “what at present may be considered average or good quality jobs might, as time goes by, turn into ‘middling’ or even

‘bad’ jobs, leading to a process of social dissatisfaction even in a context of high employment and stable working conditions” (Muñoz de Bustillo, Fernandez-Macias, Esteve, & Anton, 2011, pp. 449–450; Walton, 1973).

Anchored on more subjective aspects, there are two other influential approaches in theoretical and empirical research on job quality: job satisfaction and person-job fit.

Although **job satisfaction** has become a proxy for well-being and is the most commonly investigated aspect of well-being by academics and policy-makers, when looking at QWL literature, it seems consensual that it differs from the concept of QWL (Clark, 2015; Muñoz de Bustillo & Fernández-Macías, 2005; OECD, 2017; Sirgy et al., 2001). Although there is a strand of literature that validates job satisfaction as a reliable measure of how workers’ really feel about their job, there are also conflicting views in determining if job satisfaction is a feature or an outcome of QWL. Using job satisfaction, in particular the declared level of satisfaction of the worker with his/her job, as an overall indicator of job quality is one of the most common approaches for defining job quality. However, this option has its shortcomings and although an index of job satisfaction¹⁸ can be very useful for contrasting and externally validating the results of a job quality index, is not enough. One of the critiques directed at this approach is that, in some countries, very important differences in terms of work and employment conditions do not exert a socio-economically significant effect on reported job satisfaction, therefore not reflecting the real quality of jobs with different attributes (CIPD, 2017; Clark, 2015; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). Comparisons across individuals may also be difficult, as “job satisfaction may also reflect individuals’ expectations that are based on comparisons with their previous jobs, with reference groups or with other jobs available in the labour market” (OECD, 2017, p. 100). Other authors (e.g., Martel & Dupuis, 2006) highlight that the way satisfaction is measured, generally on a continuum, makes it inappropriate for measuring dynamic constructs such as QWL.

Some conceptualisations posit that QWL is essentially determined by individuals’ affective responses to their work environment (for example, QWL is the outcome when an employee experiences plenty of job uplifts/positive affect and little job hassles/negative affect), whereas perceptions of specific features of the work environment and organisational climate are instead more strongly related to job satisfaction (Sirgy, 2012). Locke (1976) advocated that overall job satisfaction can be interpreted as a weighted sum of job outcomes over different aspects of the job (e.g., pay, promotion, security); the weights are the job values, which refer to how important different job outcomes are for workers. Hierarchical theoretical concepts of QWL put job satisfaction as a middle link on the scale from *life satisfaction* → *job satisfaction* → *satisfaction with specific features of work* (Muñoz de Bustillo & Fernández-Macías, 2005). For Sirgy et al. (2001), the focus of QWL is beyond job satisfaction, involving “the effect of the workplace on satisfaction with the job, satisfaction in non-work life domains, and satisfaction with overall life, personal happiness, and subjective well-being” (p. 242).

¹⁸ The Job Description Index (cf. Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) is one of the most popular measures of quality of working life, involving five constructs related to satisfaction with work, pay, promotion policies, supervision, and co-workers.

Dissatisfaction with work is also considered to be the consequence of excessive levels of horizontal and vertical specialisation in rationalised organisations, which result in content, autonomy, and humanisation-deprived jobs. Quality of working life is presented by Hales (2001) as one of the fundamental principles of despecialised work organisations¹⁹ and described as “the conviction that work organization must reconcile the interests and goals of both employers and employees and thus strike a balance between the pursuit of efficiency and economic performance on the one hand and providing work is fulfilling, satisfying and well rewards on the other” (p. 102).

The basic premise of the **person-job fit** approach is that well-being can be conceptualised as the match between the characteristics of the worker and those of the job, which is measured in subjective terms; i.e., workers are asked to assess how much they value each work-related attribute (such as pay, autonomy or skill use) and the extent to which these attributes are available in their work environment. This approach stems from Person-Environment fit theories, which hypothesizes that individual behaviour is driven by the perceived congruence or match between the person and the environment one functions in, and also concerns more specific notions of fit, including person-job fit, person-organisation fit, person-group/team fit, person-supervisor fit, person-culture fit, person-vocation fit or person-industry fit. Although some of these domains may be referred, analysing more specifically each of them is beyond the scope of this study (for a meta-analysis, see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson (2005)).

One category of theories linking well-being with quality of life that has been subject of a lot of research focuses on the concept of **engagement** (see section 4.3). These theories imply that the employees become cognitively and affectively involved in work-related activities; the greater their involvement in these activities, the greater the well-being. In relation to **engagement theory**, one can argue that employees who are engaged in their jobs are likely to experience a higher level of well-being and happiness than those who are less engaged (Stairs & Gaplin, 2010).

3.3 Models and measures of QWL

The evolution of the concept of QWL has been mirrored by several studies and theoretical approaches devoted to the measurement of the concept, with different authors also differing in the views on the core constituents of QWL (Van Laar, Edwards, & Easton, 2007). The wide range of factors proposed by these various authors, without being industry specific, are predominately *motivational* factors, which if present contribute for positive evaluations of the work experience. Although several definitions, measures and even indexes of job quality exist, there is no consensus about what job features constitute this obviously multidimensional concept. Some measures rely on a single indicator, while others use multiple indicators, but even when composite figures are used, there are challenges and disagreements around the weighting of each indicator, as the relative importance of these dimensions is not necessarily the same for

¹⁹ Together with the ideology of empowerment, flexible work methods, recombination of works tasks (horizontal despecialisation), recombination of planning, control and execution (vertical despecialisation), and high-involvement employment relationship.

everyone or even for the same person at different times (Clark, 2015; Findlay, Kalleberg, & Warhurst, 2013; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2009).

Those that were identified as the most influential approaches in theoretical and empirical research on QWL are listed in Figure 3.1 and briefly described hereafter.

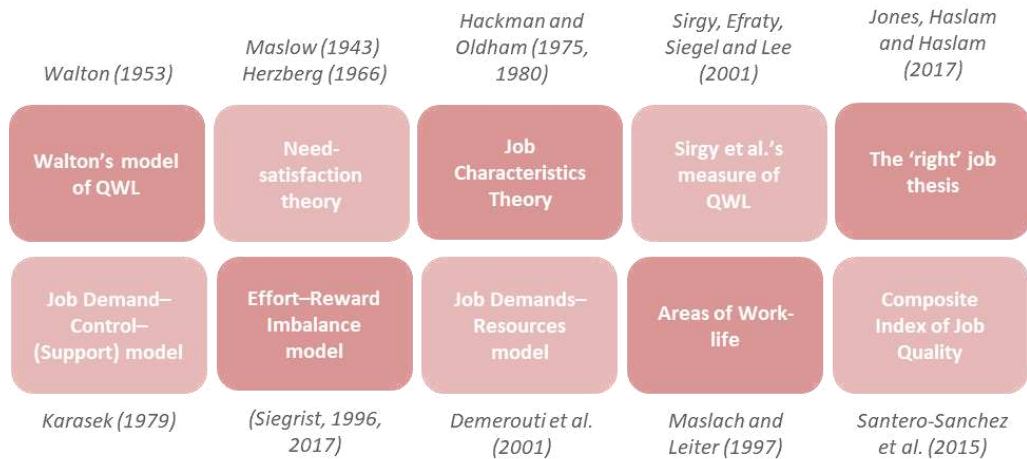


Figure 3.1 | Major theoretical frameworks of Quality of Working Life

Source: Own construction

Although it was first proposed in the 1970s, **Walton's model (1973)** remains one of the most renowned and used models, considered by many as a very complete and broad framework. This framework for analysing the salient features of the QWL, is consisted of eight major conceptual categories: (i) adequate and fair compensation; (ii) safe and healthy working conditions; (iii) immediate opportunity to use and develop human capabilities; (iv) future opportunity for continued growth and security (career opportunities and planning programs); (v) social integration in the work organisation (nature and influence of personal relationships); (vi) constitutionalism in the work organisation (framing rules and regulations intended at the protection of workers' rights); (vii) work and total life space (refers to what is now commonly termed work-life balance); and (viii) social relevance of work life (perceptions of the social responsibility of the employing organisation). The author also draws attention to the interrelationship and trade-offs among these eight criteria, remarking that some may be positively correlated, while others may seem apparently inconsistent, in particular when one may need to be subject to decline in order to other be improved (e.g., heavy emphasis on constitutionalism may promote impersonality, reduce social integration or limit more flexible work arrangements) (Walton, 1973).

Also Maslow (1943), with the hierarchy of needs, and Herzberg (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2011), by introducing the Two-Factor Theory of work motivation, have contributed for this field of research; their models complement one another and laid the foundations of the so-called **need-satisfaction theory**, that would become one of the dominant approaches in the QWL literature (Loscooco & Roschelle, 1991; Sirgy et al., 2001).

Hackman and Oldham’s motivational theory (1975, 1980) is also frequently evoked in QWL studies. These organizational psychologists developed the **Job Characteristics Theory (JCT)**, advocating that five core job dimensions – skill variety (use of a number of different skills and talents at work), task identity (opportunity to do a job from beginning to end, with a visible outcome), task significance (impact that the work has on the lives or work of other people), autonomy (degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion) and feedback (obtaining information about the effectiveness of job performance) – prompt three psychological states, i.e., experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of results of work activities. In turn, these psychological states lead to or have an effect on five on-the-job outcomes or results: intrinsic motivation, performance, satisfaction, and absenteeism and turnover (see Figure 3.2) (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

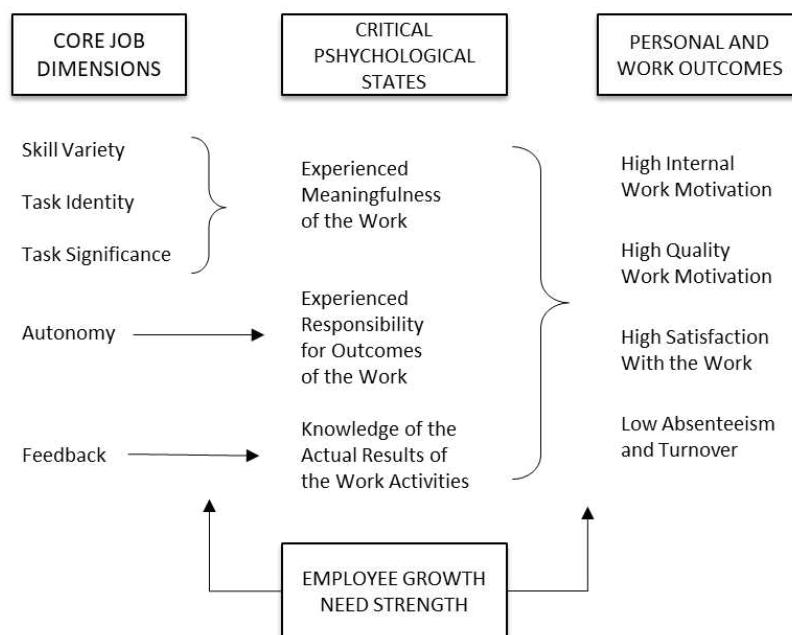


Figure 3.2 | Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristics Theoretical Model

Source: Hackman & Oldham (1975, p. 161)

Satisfaction, in particular, is measured both generally and specifically; specific measures of satisfaction in this model include: job security, pay and other compensation, peers and co-workers, supervision, and opportunity for growth and development. Hackman and Oldham’s (1975) model further suggests that the relationship between core job characteristics and the critical psychological states, as well as between these and personal and work outcomes, is stronger for individuals with high growth need strength, i.e., those who are highly motivated to learn and grow on the job.

Building on Hackman and Oldham’s model, **Sirgy et al. (2001)**, developed a comprehensive measure of QWL based on both this need-satisfaction theory and on the spillover theory²⁰ (also known as theory of side effects or transfer model). As previously seen, the need-satisfaction theory argues that people have basic needs they seek to fulfil through work. The basic premise of the authors’ constructs and measure is that employees derive satisfaction from their jobs and are likely to enjoy a sense of QWL to the extent that their jobs meet these needs. In turn, the spillover approach to QWL suggests that satisfaction in one life domain (e.g., work) may influence satisfaction in another (e.g., family, leisure, social, health, financial). The authors also discuss the existence of horizontal spillover and vertical spillover; horizontal spillover is the influence of one life area on a ‘neighbouring’ area (e.g., job satisfaction influencing feelings of family life satisfaction, and vice versa), whilst vertical spillover refers to the hierarchy of life domains in people’s minds (that has overall life satisfaction at the top) and the ‘spill over’ of (dis)satisfaction feelings from each life domain to the most superordinate domain (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3 | Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel and Lee’s (2001) measure of QWL: antecedents and consequences

Source: Sirgy et al. (2001, p. 249)

More specifically, the authors conceptualise QWL in terms of satisfaction of seven needs, totalling 16 need-satisfaction dimensions: (i) health and safety needs (protection from ill health and injury at work and outside of work, and enhancement of good health); (ii) economic and family needs (pay, job security, and other family needs); (iii) social needs (collegiality at work and leisure time off work); (iv) esteem needs (recognition and appreciation of work within the

²⁰ The spillover theory is just one of the theoretical models that have been proposed to understand the potential influence of work on a person’s other spheres of life; other are the compensation model, the segmentation model or the accommodation model (see Martel & Depuis, 2006).

organisation and outside the organisation); (v) actualization needs (realization of one's potential within the organization and as a professional); (vi) knowledge needs (learning to enhance job and professional skills); and (vii) aesthetic needs (creativity at work as well as personal creativity and general aesthetics). This QWL measure's nomological (predictive) validity was tested through hypotheses deduced from spillover theory, namely by analysing the effects of the need satisfaction with a number of factors – work environment, job requirements, supervisory behaviour and ancillary programs – on employee's overall work-related need satisfaction, on organisational commitment, on job satisfaction, on satisfaction in non-work life domains, and on life satisfaction (Sirgy et al., 2001).

Advocates of the '**right**' **job thesis**, also previously mentioned, **Jones, Haslam and Haslam (2017)**, proposed a model that distinguishes between core features, which are important for almost all workers (e.g., job security, personal safety, work intensity, enough pay to meet one's needs) and 'job fit' features, which are subject to more individual variation (e.g., autonomy, the opportunity to form close relationships). The model, developed from interviews with blue collar workers (occupations where employees are not required to have high levels of formal education), also identifies a number of influencers, which were appointed by interviewees as reasons for prioritising particular job features, including: personal circumstances or family factors, age and stage of life, past experience, personal health, nature of work, personality and gender.

When the focus is on the quality of the working environment and work characteristics and its impact on workers' well-being and their psychological and physical health conditions, there are also three very influential models that should be referenced: the Job Demand–Control–(Support) model, the Effort–Reward Imbalance model and the Job Demands–Resources model.

Rooted in occupational stress studies, Karasek's (1979) **Job Demands–Control (JCD) model** focuses on two dimensions of the work environment – (psychological) job demands (which refers to workload, primarily with respect to the intensity and time pressures in work) and job control (sometimes termed decision latitude or discretion, refers to a person's ability to control his/her work activities) –, and it is based on the assumption that job control can buffer the impact of high levels of job demands, therefore reducing the risk of strain and enhancing employees' satisfaction through the opportunity to engage in challenging tasks, as well as to use all available skills and learn new ones. This model hypothesises that *high-strain jobs* result from the combination of high job demands and low job control, while *active-learning jobs* result combination of high job demands and high job control (Figure 3.4).

This is because although jobs may be intensively demanding, if task enjoyment, learning and personal growth are also high, energy gets converted into effective action. As research developed to overcome some limitations, a third dimension – social support – was later added to the model; this expansion granted the model a new designation: Job Demand–Control–Support (JCDS) model (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). The expanded model hypothesises that 'iso-strain jobs' are characterised by high demands, low control, and low support (or isolation); therefore, the JCDS model states that social support moderates the negative impact of high strain.

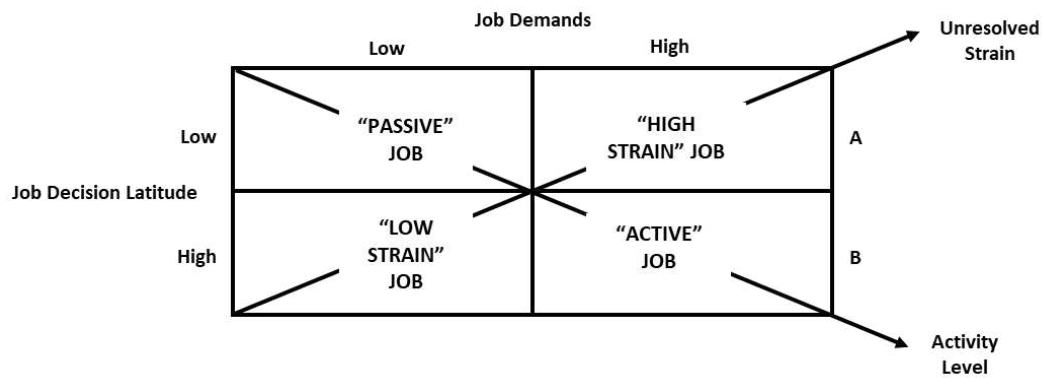


Figure 3.4 | Karasek's (1979) job strain model

Source: Karasek (1979, p. 288)

The **Effort–Reward Imbalance (ERI)** model (Siegrist, 1996, 2017) (Figure 3.5) emphasises the importance of norms of reciprocity, rather than the control structure of work. The basic premise of this model is that an imbalance between work efforts and the rewards from work violates this norm of reciprocity (high cost/low gain), thus having negative consequences for workers' health (e.g., cardiovascular health, psychiatric disorders, burnout). Therefore, perceived fairness between required efforts (both extrinsic job demands and intrinsic motivation to meet these demands) and received rewards (money, esteem or approval, and status control) is the main tenet of this model. The ERI model also introduces a personal coping pattern – *overcommitment* – which may moderate the association between effort–reward imbalance and employee wellbeing, as “consciously or unconsciously, [individuals] may strive towards continuously high achievement because of their underlying need for approval and esteem at work (...) [which] contributes to ‘high cost/low gain’ experience at work even in the absence of extrinsic pressure” (Siegrist, 2016, p. 10).

The severity of the effects of this failed reciprocity will be higher if workers experience difficulties in finding alternative choice in the labour market (also referred to as *dependency*) or if they are exposed to a highly competitive job market (which may lead to the second condition of failed reciprocity proposed by the author, named *strategic choice*, which refers to the acceptance of *high cost/low gain* on behalf of improving chances of career promotion) (Siegrist, 2017). Although some overlap exists, this model differs from the concept of Organisational Justice, as it is applied to social exchange beyond work-related organisational contexts and considers stressful effects of threats to social status (Siegrist, 2015).

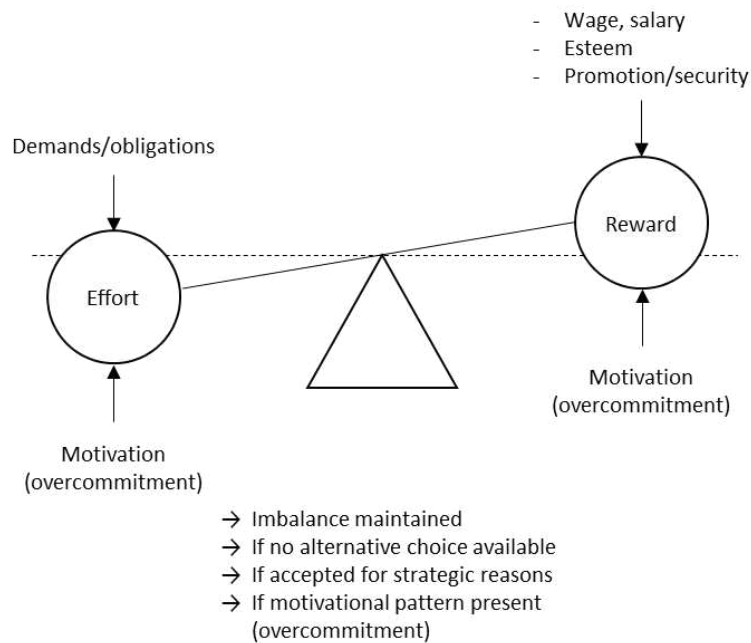


Figure 3.5 | The model of Effort–Reward Imbalance at work

Source: Siegrist (2017, p. 27, modified from Siegrist, 1996)

Inspired by job design and job stress theories, the **Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model** (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) is one of the most widely known models to explain workers’ well-being, aimed at providing a more general conceptual framework than its preceding models by integrating the key tenets of Job Demands–Control (Karasek, 1979), Job Characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), Conservation of Resources (Hobfoll, 1989) and Effort-Reward Imbalance (Siegrist, 2017) models into a single, overarching framework.

The JD-R model has its roots on the research on job burnout – in fact, Demerouti et al. (2001) first referred to it as the *Job demands–resources model of burnout* –, but has been adopted by several researchers to explore the antecedents of work engagement and other types of employee well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) (the expanded version of JD-R model including work engagement is further explored in section 4.3.1). The OECD itself has been making an extensive use of this model for describing the quality of the working environment (i.e., the non-economic aspects of employment) (OECD, 2017).

This model is based in the equilibrium between the resources that are made available to the employees, and the demands they are subject to in their working environment. Job demands refer to physical, psychological, social or organisational facets of work that require substantial physical and/or mental effort (e.g., time pressure, shift work, emotionally demanding interactions with clients or customers). When exceeding or falling below resources, demands may lead to decreased well-being and become job stressors (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources are the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of work (e.g., social support, autonomy, quality of the relationship with the supervisor, performance feedback, participation in decision making) that not only reduce job demands and its associated costs, but

are also instrumental in achieving work-related goals or stimulate personal growth, learning and development; when lacking, may lead to disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001).

A second proposition of the JD-R theory also postulates two central explanatory mechanisms: a health impairment process, which proposes that high job demands lead to strain and health impairment; and a motivational process, which posed that high resources lead to increased motivation and higher productivity. It is also proposed that the interaction between job demands and job resources is important for both the development of job strain and motivation; several job resources may buffer the impact of several job demands on job strain, and different types of job resources and job demands may interact in predicting job strain. In addition, job resources gain motivational potential particularly when confronted with high job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014) (Figure 3.6).

The model has been revised several times and extensive research has been contributing to the identification of potentially relevant job demands and resources, widening the range of job demands and job resources initially proposed; this is also where the flexibility of the JD-R model lies, as any demand or any resource may affect employee health and well-being, which can be applied to all work environments and tailored to any specific occupations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

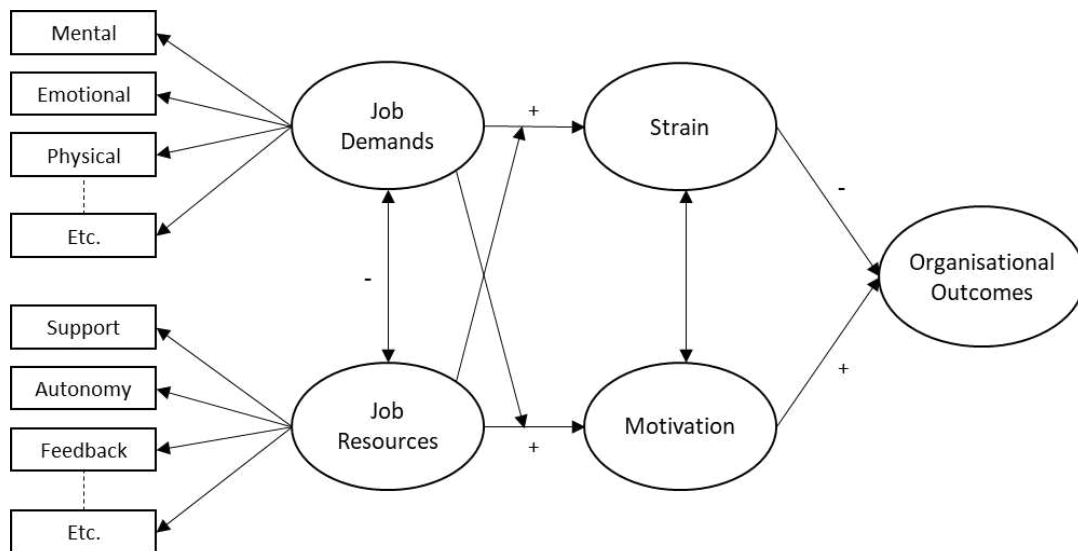


Figure 3.6 | The Job Demands–Resources model (main early propositions represented)

Source: Bakker and Demerouti (2007)

Rooted in the person-job approach and developed within the scope of research on job correlates of burnout, another worth mentioning theoretical framework is the **Areas of Work-life** (Leiter & Maslach, 1999, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The authors focused on the degree of experienced congruence between the person and six domains of his/her job environment; these domains being: workload (widely discussed feature, occurring when demands exceed resources), control (which was the focus of the JDC theory), reward (monetary, social and

intrinsic rewards), community (overall quality of social interaction at work), fairness (respect and confirmation of self-worth), and values (requirements of the job versus personal principles) (Leiter & Maslach, 1999, 2004). The authors posit that incongruities between the person and the job in at least one of these areas²¹, are predictive of burnout, whereas congruities are predictive of engagement and fit (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Job quality and theories in European context

More specifically directed at the T&H industry, Santero-Sanchez et al. (2015) proposed a **Composite Index of Job Quality** aimed at reflecting the industry's situation in a single measure. The development of this theoretical framework was focused on an objective perspective of job quality determined by the intrinsic characteristics of each job position and its relation to the characteristics of the employee, namely the employee's gender. Five variables were identified as significantly contributors to job quality in the hospitality industry: employment income and other emoluments, working hours and work-life balance, job security, skills and training, and on-the-job safety at work and gender equality. Data was retrieved from the Spanish Longitudinal Sample of Working Lives (LSWL) 2011 data set, which provides information on objective working conditions and workers' career history. Work week duration was found to be the most important contributor to job quality in the industry, considering that part-time work particular affects women. Results also confirmed that women held lower quality jobs than men and suggest that job quality varies across a person's career, as the gender gap widens with age (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015).

Job quality is a contextual phenomenon, that not only differs among persons – whose individual assessments also vary, depending on their individual circumstances, such as age, life stage, family/personal relationships, location and their 'values' on life and work – but also differs among occupations and labour market segments, societies and historical periods (CIPD, 2017; Findlay, Kalleberg, & Warhurst, 2013). "While labour-market policies, labour codes and firm-level practices shape the working environment at both the macro (country) and meso (organisation) levels, paid work is carried out by individual workers in specific contexts that may differ widely even within the same country, sector or firm" (OECD, 2017, p. 92). Using data from the European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS) 2005 data set, Holman (2012) draws on institutional theory (which suggests that a country's institutional regime will influence the level of job quality in that country) to explain job quality differences among 27 European countries in the patterns of job types. Results indicated that social democratic institutional regimes (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) have the greatest proportion of high-quality jobs (66.1%), followed by continental (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; 52.1%) and liberal (Ireland and the United Kingdom; 47.8%) regimes. Lower proportions are found in transactional regimes (eastern European countries²²; 33.5%) and southern European regimes (Cyprus, Italy, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Spain; 30.2%). The author also developed a taxonomy of job types, which are based on a unique combination of work and employment-related factors: active, saturated, team-based, passive, insecure and high-strain. Looking more

²¹ None of which being specifically suggested as the most critical predictor.

²² Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

specifically to southern European regimes, in which Portugal is included, a particularly high proportion of passive-independent jobs (29.5%) and insecure jobs (21.9%) are found. Holman's (2012) job type taxonomy suggests "that, although there may be one type of high-quality job in Europe (i.e., active jobs), there are two moderate-quality job types (i.e., saturated and team-based), and three low-quality job types (i.e., passive-independent, insecure and high-strain)" (p. 496).

Making the connection with HR management theories, high-commitment jobs are suggested to correspond to active, saturated and team-based jobs, whereas low-commitment jobs resemble to passive-independent, insecure and high-strain jobs. Correspondence is also found with three of the four job types of the Job Demands–Control (JCD) model (section 3.3, Figure 3.4): active, passive and high-strain jobs. Passive-independent jobs, for example, are classified as low quality, for combining low job resources and low job demands with little skill development and low pay (Holman, 2012).

Cross-national differences within Europe are also found to be rooted in the employment policies (e.g., full employment policies, employment rights, welfare provision) and the relative capacity of organised labour of each institutional regime (Gallie, 2007; Holman, 2012). According to employment regime theory, as "a result of differences in education and training systems and managerial practices", in comparison with other regimes, job quality and employee skill levels in southern European regimes are expected to be low. Southern European regimes are described as having: relatively little state intervention with regard to the regulation of working conditions; low capacity of organised labour to influence working conditions; limited state-sponsored training and education; reduced incentives for employers to invest in training due to low job security; and little initiative of employees for lifelong learning (Holman, 2012, p. 481).

3.4 Key dimensions of QWL: what job aspects matter the most in T&H?

Quality of working life is necessarily a multidimensional concept and translates into the sum of multiple aspects that one person values, affecting both the employment relationship and the work itself. Although a range of features can be easily identified as contributing to job quality to some extent, getting to a shortlist of the most relevant dimensions will always be influenced by the backgrounds and perspectives of each author (Jones et al., 2017). Thus, different disciplines make different interpretations and focus on different measures: economists typically focus on pay (e.g., Clark, 2005), psychologists favour job satisfaction (Holman, 2010), and sociologists – underpinned by 'the intrinsic quality of work' – consider skill, autonomy or job content, instead (e.g., Gallie, 2007). Even within the same discipline, there might be divergences (CIPD, 2017; Findlay, Kalleberg, & Warhurst, 2013; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). Other authors have paid greater attention to the impact of psychosocial demands, such as evidenced in models such as the Effort-Reward Imbalance (Siegrist, 1996, 2017) and the Job Demands–Control (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell, 1990), or to the impact of job resources (Bakker, van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010). "Thus, this multidimensional concept has to be analysed by taking a variety of aspects into account: the objective characteristics of employment; the specific characteristics of the job; and the subjective evaluation of these characteristics by the individual worker" (Royuela et al., 2009, p. 227).

Although the growing recognition that investigating what contributes for employees' well-being is paramount to promote positive work-related behaviours, such as work engagement, organisational commitment or intention to stay, studies addressing quality of working life of T&H employees are scarce. Among the few there is Wan and Chan's (2013) qualitative study with 40 employees from six casinos in Macau, which has identified four dimensions of QWL and 17 attributes that casino employees considered to be important, namely: (i) job characteristics (more rest time and regular shift work); (ii) HR policies (adequate and fair pay, fringe benefits, rewards and incentives, fair and clear promotion criteria, career advancement opportunities, training and staff activities); (iii) work group relationships (cooperation, respect and recognition, care and support, supervision, communication); and (iv) physical work environment (choice of smoking/non-smoking work area, better rest area, and computers with Internet connection).

These dimensions largely meet those also identified by Kandasamy and Ancheri (2009), who conducted a (also qualitative) study with 64 hotel employees and 84 hospitality management students who have experience working in the industry, and whose content analysis yielded 8 dimensions of QWL (and 28 related attributes). The dimensions were job characteristics, person-job fit, company image, HR policies, physical working conditions, work-life balance, work group relationship and interaction with customers.

Based on surveys with 406 frontline employees and 48 supervisors from a large-size hospitality service business-group in Taiwan, Hsiao, Jaw, Huan and Woodside (2015) proposed that configurations of seven work facet-specifics influence happiness-at-work (reported by employees) and work performance (assessed by managers), namely: supervisor support, quality of interpersonal relationships, physical work environment, joining social activities with colleagues, peer conflict and demands of teamwork (e.g., sharing information and responsibilities).

More generally oriented to work stress and well-being, O'Neill and Davis's (2011) interviewed 164 managers and hourly workers from 65 different hotels and identified interpersonal tensions at work and overloads (e.g., technology not functioning) as the most common work stressors. Managers reported higher levels of work stress than hourly employees, which might be due to the higher levels of responsibility of their role, and interpersonal tensions at work were also found to be linked to lower job satisfaction and greater turnover intentions (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). This is also supported by Nitzsche, Ribeiro and Laneiro (2018), who have found that supervisor and co-worker incivility were significant positive predictors of emotional exhaustion (stronger for supervisor incivility) and cynicism (strongly reported for co-worker incivility) among hotel Portuguese employees.

Resulting from a review of the extant literature, both more generic and industry specific, Figure 3.7 points out the main conceptual dimensions of QWL identified. No specific order or weight was assigned to this list of dimensions and a more detailed description for each dimension is found further below. As Walton (1973) also remarks, besides eventual interrelationship, depending on the work context or groups of individuals, QWL dimensions can generate new and different sets of factors, and can assume one or more hierarchies of significance. Therefore, not only the following dimensions have been selected because of the strong evidence that they promote employee well-being and positive job attitudes, but also because they are presumed

to be particularly relevant within T&H settings, considering the nature of T&H employment (as seen in section 2.3.1).



Figure 3.7 | Dimensions of QWL

Source: Own construction

Job content and work organisation

A considerable body of literature has focused on characteristics of the role/job and specific tasks being performed, mainly positioned as job demands or job stressors. In the hospitality industry, employees often perform routine tasks and are given little autonomy in carrying out their work (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). Jobs highly differ in how much they enable workers to use and develop their skills and knowledge, which affects their ego involvement, work engagement, self-esteem and challenge obtained from the work itself (Kahn, 1992; Walton, 1973). In this dimension, job features such as workload and work intensity, skill variety and use, job discretion and autonomy, and task clarity and performance feedback, are included.

Work intensity encompasses hours of work (including any mismatch between actual and desired hours, as well as *experienced* hours of work rather than *contractual* hours), time pressure, tightness of deadlines, speed of work and effort required to accomplish work task (Clark, 2015; Holman, 2012; OECD, 2017). Although features related to working time, such as duration of work, scheduling, flexibility, pace of work or workload (referred to as *role demands* in several studies), are listed within this dimension, they are also found in work-life balance studies as important factors influencing non-work life.

“Intensive work can bring higher pay, enhanced promotion opportunities and higher economic output” (OECD, 2017, p. 124), but it is also considered to directly influence the amount of time available for non-work activities, or lead to work accidents, sickness leaves and absenteeism. **Overload**, i.e., people having to do too much in too little time with too few resources, has a

consistent relationship with exhaustion, by depleting the capacity of people to meet the demands of their job (Leiter & Maslach, 2004).

When in association with skills level and opportunity for skill use, work intensity is also related to **job challenge demands**. It is important that workloads, whether quantitative or qualitative, are adapted to the resources and/or the abilities of the individual and the needs of the position, resulting in well-balanced task complexity and cognitive demands (Holman, 2012; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). Intrinsically challenging work, variety (skill and task variety, non-repetitive work, variation in job content and location), use of different/multiple skills and talents of the person, role responsibility, and opportunities for planning (rather than just implementation), are core job characteristics frequently associated with job-related well-being (Clark, 2015; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Kahn, 1990; OECD, 2017; Walton, 1973; Warr, 1999). Meaningful tasks let individuals feel a sense of competence and growth because they require both conventional and creative competences. This mix of mastery and challenge can contribute to employees' engagement, as well as to experiences of flow (Sonnetag, 2017).

Job/task discretion and autonomy, is a function of the style of leadership both at organisational and other levels, and refer to the degree of flexibility and control²³ that employees are given to make adjustments to their task boundaries and work processes (including working methods, effort, pace, quality standards or social interactions), according to their personal needs, abilities, preferences and circumstances. This allows employees to play an active and proactive role in influencing, redesigning and changing certain aspects of their jobs, which helps them to cope with high job demands, particularly with regards to the negative effects of high work intensity (Chiang, Birtch, & Cai, 2014; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Jones et al., 2017; Leiter & Maslach, 2004; OECD, 2017; Walton, 1973; Warr, 1999). To Hales (1998), discretion (as *choice* over how work is carried over) and participation (*voice* in organisational decision-making) are key management practices connected with employee empowerment, which relies on giving workers the freedom and resources to control the circumstances of their own work. To Holman (2012), discretion and autonomy are related to personal control, together with absence of close supervision, self-determination/self-control, participation in decision-making and freedom of choice. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) call this process of employees shaping their own jobs as '**job crafting**'. These authors advocate that employees craft their jobs by making physical and cognitive changes in the tasks and/or relational boundaries of their work. Such actions affect both the meaning of the work (i.e., individuals' understandings of the purpose of their work) and one's work identity (i.e., how individuals define themselves at work).

Task/role clarity – sometimes referred to as *environmental clarity* or *task identity* by other authors (e.g., Warr (1999) or Hackman and Oldham (1975), respectively) – refers to whether work tasks and role expectation are well defined and well communicated to workers, involving information about the work process and expected results, as well as information about required behaviour and consequences of behaviour (OECD, 2017; Walton, 1973; Warr, 1999). Some authors (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Walton, 1973) also consider the degree to which the job involves completion of whole tasks, rather than some parts of a meaningful task, i.e., the extent to which one can see one's work from beginning to end.

²³ The role of control is pivotal in the Demand-Control theory of job stress.

Feedback on how the employee is performing the job is a fundamental component of this dimension. Feedback involves obtaining direct, clear and regular information, either from their immediate supervisors or through formal assessment tools and other human management practices (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; OECD, 2017; Warr, 1999). Effective feedback “fosters learning, increases job competence and the likelihood of being successful in achieving work goals, and improves communication (...); conversely, a lack of feedback may cause ‘role ambiguity’ (i.e., being unclear or uncertain about what is expected from oneself at the workplace) and stress. Regular feedback may also reduce workers’ tendency to worry about work when at home, thereby reducing home-work interference, and buffer the negative consequences of work overload and exhaustion” (OECD, 2017, pp. 132–133).

Pay and fringe benefits

Primarily, employment is a way of earning, so it comes as no surprise that pay is a constant in certainly all models of quality of life and well-being at work (Burchell et al., 2014; Clark, 2005; Walton, 1973; Warr, 1999), as well as it is a frequently identified factor when labour shortages are discussed (George, 2015). An employer’s ability to offer an attractive **compensation and benefits package** can play a key role in attracting and retaining talented employees. When companies pay wages that are below industry standards it sends the message that their work is not valued (Messmer, 2003).

From an objective and measurable perspective, extrinsic rewards, including basic pay, performance-related pay, overtime, bonus pay, pay raises and fringe benefits (such as social security provision, accommodation subsidies, annual leave, health plans, training grants, workman’s compensation, promotion programmes or child care), often act as central determinants of perceptions of career success and a key component of Human Resources practices to promote employee commitment, satisfaction and retention (Choi, Cheong, & Feinberg, 2012; Nickson, 2012; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015; Walsh, 2016). Some compensation plans also include an equity ownership-stake such as stock options, profit sharing, or manager partner programs (Murphy & Williams, 2004). In his Two-Factor Theory, Herzberg (1971) considers these as *hygiene* factors, which although do not motivate or cause satisfaction, prevent dissatisfaction. Pay and insufficient rewards were identified in several studies as a strong predictor of employee turnover (e.g., Campion, 1991; Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009; Li-Ping Tang, Kim, & Shin-Hsiung Tang, 2000).

Job-holders have prospects of receiving **adequate and fair compensation**, not only in accordance with the efforts and contributions made, but also enough to fulfil their basic requirements and preferred lifestyles. Although these are somewhat relative and ideology-influenced notions, Walton (1987) describes *adequacy* as the extent to which income meets socially determined standards of sufficiency or the subjective standards of the recipient, while *fairness* refers to the extent to which the compensation for a certain work is consistent with the pay for other work. No consensual measures to judge adequacy are found but for fairness, several standards can be used, such as the supply/demand for particular skills, the ability to pay (i.e., more profitable organisations should pay more), shared productivity gains, the proportionality between levels of salary, or the evaluation of a job based on the relation between pay, required training, job responsibility, unfavourable working conditions or other factors (George, 2015; Walton, 1973). Perceptions of fairness and transparency related to the

amount and distribution of resources (not limited to pay) are also further explored in employment-related literature as procedural justice (e.g., Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001).

Levels of salary may also have different implications for different workers depending on each country's system of income tax credit or the existence or not of social programmes (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). For Kalleberg (2011), the existence of opportunities for increases in earnings over time is also an important feature of this dimension.

George (2015), however, remarks that the role of compensation does not, however, appear to be straight forward, referring to studies in which while citing a number of others in which pay it's not by itself a key factor in retention.

Recognition and appreciation for work

Genuine, consistently and frequently applied formal and informal recognition programs provide management with a powerful tool to influence employees to adopt the organisation's values and mission (Herzberg, 1966). It seems common sense, that people enjoy going to work and feel that their efforts are acknowledged, appreciated and rewarded. Several studies show that T&H employees "complain about being under-valued; unappreciated; and not recognized, respected, or rewarded on par with their efforts", which may be due to low prestige typically associated with T&H jobs (Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010, p. 198).

There are two basic types of rewards that can be used to positively reinforce performance-enhancing behaviours: **tangible/monetary** and **socio-emotional/non-monetary rewards**. Often overlooked, these non-monetary rewards include attention, genuine recognition for a job well done, compliments, certificates of achievement, awards, meetings to celebrate successes, respectful treatment, coaching and feedback. This type of rewards have no associated cost, everyone can use them, recipients will not likely feel overwhelmed by them, and may even be more valued than tangible rewards because they are highly personalised (Luthans, 2000).

Luthans (2000) refers to recognition as an important leadership tool, used to sustain motivation via the demonstration, to employees, of the link between performance and rewards. The author refers to his previous work, in which he has found that effective leaders – those delivering quality results through satisfied and committed employees – put their efforts in communicating with employees on a regular basis and reinforcing their value-enhancing behaviours. In this study, the author asked the participants to indicate (in multiple choice format) which type of recognition they would prefer, and although the most mentioned were tangible recognition rewards (like a gift certificate) or public acknowledgment, many written answers in the 'other' category provide an indication that social recognition is highly valued. Examples of these answers are: "just someone saying thanks", "more respect", "a nice note" or "a letter from the President or a personal thanks".

The OECD's (2017) Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment also mentions intrinsic rewards, which refer to the extent workers find value and purpose in what they do, and find their work interesting and useful to others. In the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, 1980), task significance is the denomination used to describe the degree to which workers perceive that their job is important and is recognised as such by

others. This idea is also closely related to another possible conceptualisation of employee well-being: meaningful work.

Meaningfulness of a job refers to when more than yielding an economic benefit, jobs are viewed as a calling and workers are given the opportunity to make **meaningful contributions** to their organisations, to their clients or the wider society, which is considerably different from the simple attempt to make workers satisfied or happy with their jobs (Kara, Uysal, Sirgy, & Lee, 2013; Sirgy, 2012). In sum, giving workers the opportunity to make meaningful contributions, to experience their jobs as important and useful, to perceive their position as socially valued, and to feel that they are receiving a return on their investments (physical, cognitive, emotional) on role performances, are also relevant forms of recognition of their value, which it's expected to contribute to their motivation and engagement and to protect them from psychological exhaustion and distress (Kahn, 1990; OECD, 2017; Warr, 1999).

Recognition can also assume the form of **representation and voice**, by including employee direct consultation and involvement in decision-making (CIPD, 2017; Hales, 1998; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). In the aforementioned OECD's (2017) Inventory, mentions can also be found regarding individuals' opportunity for self-realisation, which refer to the extent to which workers are able to contribute to work tasks by applying their own ideas and perform at their best.

Opportunities for advancement, development, and growth

Drawing from the former discussion on career development in T&H and the impact of unclear career structures on the poor image of the sector, recruitment and employees' attitudes at work (sections 2.2 and 2.3.1), the enjoyment of **progressive people management practices** takes on great importance in assessments of QWL. Following an upward trajectory, progress through a career is based on ever improving occupations and status, with the access to some supervisory and managerial positions being restricted by formal education prerequisites (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017; Walton, 1973). "As individuals gain more experience, they take on more challenging roles and responsibilities, usually rewarded with higher levels of pay" (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017, p. 73).

Employee development refers to the process of providing **experiential learning** and **growth opportunities** to employees, which is critical for advancing in one's career and enhancing workers' well-being. More specifically, training and learning opportunities are crucial for preventing skill obsolescence, gaining transferable job skills, reducing the risk of unemployment, and increasing work motivation and chances for promotion. In many studies, this was a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, trust, organisational commitment, and employee's intentions to remain with the organisation (Cheng & Brown, 1998; Costen & Salazar, 2011; OECD, 2017).

Walton (1973) makes an interesting distinction between some key criteria in keeping employees' interest in their work and career pursuits: development (the extent to which one's activities maintain and expand one's capabilities), prospective application (the expectation to use new or expanded knowledge in future work assignments) and advancement opportunities (socially recognised opportunities both for organisational and career progression). The *International Social Survey Programme*, one of selected international and national surveys analysed by the OECD (2017) regarding the measurement of the quality of the working

environment, also includes additional reference to the degree to which one is able to use past work experience and skills in the current job and whether the current job is helpful for a new job.

Training involves providing employees not only with the basic knowledge and skills they need to perform their duties to the company's standards, but also contributes for reducing mistakes and yielding more effective employees (Costen & Salazar, 2011). Workplace learning can be both formal and informal. The first refers to structured training opportunities, paid or provided by the employer, which can be assessed in terms of incidence (i.e., frequency and up-to-datedness), duration (i.e., the length of training received) and quality (i.e., the extent to which training raises earnings capacity and skills). Informal learning takes place through immediate work activities and the social relations embedded in them (i.e., on-the-job training with co-workers and supervisors or other forms of on-site training (e.g., self-learning, on-line tutorials)) (OECD, 2017, p. 140). Investment in training often clashes with the high turnover rates affecting the T&H industry, caught up in a vicious circle: due to ongoing cycle of replacement, employers do not perceive benefits in investing on training, as people do not remain long enough to be proficient; and for being a 'poor trainer', the sector also fails in retaining staff, who look for better conditions somewhere else (Partington, 2017).

The content of training and development programmes can include language courses, quality management, health, stress handling and telephone etiquette or other job-related skills. From their research on Australian and Singaporean hotel industries' Human Resources programmes, Cheng and Brown (1998) report that much of the training is done in-house (except for managers and supervisors, to whom training is provided by external actors), and special emphasis is put on the involvement of line employees.

In this dimension of QWL, opportunities for **self-realisation** are also considered as relevant features of career advancement. These refer to the extent employees feel that they perform at their best, by personally contributing to work tasks, applying their own ideas, and shaping the product of their work (OECD, 2017).

Job security

Job (in)security is frequently used as a proxy for job quality, as it refers to "people's evaluation of their current employment conditions and perception of their future in their current job from positive and negative perspectives" (Zeytinoglu et al., 2012, p. 2810). Closely connected with career advancement, as presented in the previous item, the terms of employment may include both objective and subjective aspects, such as perceptions of job (in)security.

The objective dimension of job security refers to **contractual stability**, which is mostly determined by the type of employment contract as defined in the workers' by-laws, working full-time hours and paid and unpaid overtime. Judging from the vast amount of research they have prompted, job duration and permanent/temporary employment²⁴ are two variables of particular relevance to the hospitality industry (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). The subjective

²⁴ Which may present various forms: permanent full-time, permanent part-time, permanent seasonal, temporary full-time, and temporary part-time (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015).

dimension is determined by individual differences across different organisational settings and refers to **perceptions of job insecurity**, i.e., workers' anticipation or fear of losing their jobs within the foreseeable future, e.g., in the next 3, 6 or 12 months. Feeling confident that their job position will be steady available as long as they want to continue working there or feeling confident that they will not likely be laid off, are examples of perceptions of job security (Zeytinoglu et al., 2012).

Thus, it is not surprising that job insecurity is one of the most important and common work stressors and its long-term effects on individual health and well-being are comparable to the effects of unemployment itself. As seen in section 2.4.2, the **transformations in the nature of work** occurring in most economically developed parts of the world over the last decades are the cause of feelings of uncertainty, stress and anxiety for many workers, both regarding the existence (the job itself) and the features of their job (stability, promotions). This later refers to potential worsening of working conditions, lack of career opportunities or decreasing salary (Adewale, 2015; Cheng & Chan, 2008; OECD, 2017).

According to the OECD (2017, p. 139), "these worries are generally well founded, as research has shown that workers' perceived job insecurity is a strong predictor of future job losses, indicating that employees have a good sense of the prospects of their workplace". Therefore, job insecurity can hamper the 'psychological contract' at work, undermining the effort-reward balance and lowering workers' commitment and discretionary effort. Job security is also an important variable in many turnover models, as relating to increased job search behaviours and increased likelihood of turnover (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Murphy, Burton, Henagan, & Briscoe, 2013), as well as to other several important outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Murphy et al., 2013; Vujičić, Jovičić, Lalić, Gagić, & Cvejanov, 2015).

Also Zeytinoglu et al. (2012), in a study involving 5-star hotel front-line staff and airline cabin crews, among employees from other sectors, have found significant and positive association between job security and intention to stay. Job security appears to be marked by gender differences, as some studies and databases show that more male workers benefit of permanent contracts as compared to female workers, as well as men are more likely to be organised in trade unions, thus benefiting of higher influence leverage for protecting their working conditions (Cañada, 2018; OECD, 2017; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015).

Although Walton's model (1973) also contemplates security on its own, associated with development and advancement opportunities, there is another interesting dimension which is also considered to be related, in a broader sense, to this concept: **constitutionalism in the work organisation**. According to this author, framing rules and regulations intended at the protection of workers' rights (and of the employers', to some extent), personal privacy (regarding workers' off-the-job behaviour and actions of his/her family members), free speech (the right to dissent openly from the views of superiors without fear of reprisal), equity (in all matters, including compensation schemes, symbolic rewards and – again – job security) and due process (governance by the 'rule of law' rather than the rule of men), stand out as key elements of constitutionalism in providing higher QWL. Free speech is partly in line with Kahn's (1990, p. 708) notion of **psychological safety**, which refers to "feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career", as trust, engagement in

processes of change and self-expression are dependent on consistent, predictable and clear – therefore, safe – work contexts.

In this dimension of QWL, **geographic security** (i.e., linkages to a particular area on a long-term basis or proximity to one's home) (Hausknecht et al., 2009) and **collective representation by trade union** (namely the existence of social dialogue and worker involvement, collective bargaining and relations with unions) (Baum, 2015; Boardman et al., 2015; Douglas, Haar, & Harris, 2017) are also considered as features of job/employment security.

Interpersonal and supportive relations at work

The nature of personal relationships is an unavoidable dimension within the framework of social organisations, and influences employees' identity and self-esteem. Not only social interactions are frequently seen as common work stressors, as employees' evaluations of their jobs are shaped by their perceptions of support provided by their organisations (Walton, 1973); thus, the dynamics between an individual and his/her peers might lead to adjustment and attachment or alienation from the workplace (Porter & Steers, 1973). These interactions cover various types of workplace relationships and different types of support (e.g., reciprocal help, socio-emotional support, instrumental support, openness, respect); therefore, **social support**²⁵ can be considered in itself a multidimensional concept, encompassing variables such as organisational support (support from the employer/management), supervisor support, support from co-workers, and support from customers.

Social support includes having a friendly atmosphere among the staff, having a sense of community, recognizing the value of employees' contributions, and providing employees with opportunities to interact with colleagues, make friends and collaborate on work-related tasks (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; OECD, 2017; Walton, 1973; Warr, 1999). It also means that organisations are perceived as attaching importance to their personnel, pay them fairly, and care for their needs and expectations, and supervisors are interested in employee's goals, personal growth and well-being (Daskin & Tezer, 2012). Sirgy (2012) also mentions the impact of teamwork on satisfaction with work, as this is a certain degree of felt interdependence of functions, tasks, and shared decision-making, fosters reciprocal trust and respect among team members.

Social support buffers the negative consequences of both extensive job demands, and intimidation (i.e., malicious behaviour aiming to instil fear) and discrimination (i.e., less favourable treatment or prejudice due to race, gender, religion, origins, disability, life style or physical appearance) at the workplace (OECD, 2017; Walton, 1973). Although discrimination and stereotyping in the workplace is more frequently associated with factors such as gender or race, Wilks and Neto (2013) advocate that age (in particular with reference to older individuals) can as-much influence work-related well-being. **Co-worker support** is particularly relevant in abusive supervision work contexts, reinforcing positive behaviour with the aim of developing

²⁵ Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is at the core of the Organisational Support Theory, which explains relationships between employers and employees based on social exchange. POS refers to the degree to which employees believe their work organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

positive relationships. In the T&H context, workplace environments are characterised as 'violent', and dictatorial, unfriendly, uncivil and hostile behaviour have been associated with supervisors, particularly in high power distance cultures (Xu et al., 2015). **Employee representation and voice** may also be relevant in this context, when workers are able to communicate and discuss work problems and matters affecting their work with the management, enhancing employers' awareness of their needs (OECD, 2017; I. Williamson, Burnett, & Bartol, 2009). Consequently, an **ethical company culture** is also perceived as a key component of this dimension of QWL.

It is also considered relevant that references are made to appropriate **styles of leadership** – positive and effective – and good **managerial practices**, as important components of this dimension (Kara et al., 2013; OECD, 2017). "Good management practices include taking (good) actions to organise work, resolve conflict, treat workers with respect, and encourage them to take part in organisational decisions" (OECD, 2017, p. 132). To this, Jones et al. (2017) add the need for managers to provide recognition and to be fair and reasonable.

The availability of support also helps employees to reduce customer-related stressors, to deal with customers' requests and complains and resolve service failures, particularly for employees who have intense face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with customers (Karatepe, 2012) (see also *Emotional labour* in next sub-section, *Health, job stress and emotional demands*).

Social support is not exclusively work-related, and may include support from family, spouses or partners (Seiger & Wiese, 2009), as well as supervisor work-family specific support, which is considered to alleviate work-family conflict experiences (for example, by approving family-related requests or by alleviating high workloads) (Goh, Ilies, & Wilson, 2015).

Health, job stress and emotional demands

In terms of impact on people's health and well-being, a 'good' job would be one which had a positive impact on health, rather than just not having adverse effects (Jones et al., 2017). The significant changes of employment relations and working conditions (section 2.2), together with an increased economic competition and pressures for cost-containment, have been pressuring workers with higher workloads and work intensity. These pressures often go along with job insecurity and have long-term **effects on health and well-being**, that go far beyond traditional occupational diseases and include a wide spectrum of work-related stressors that affect people's perceptions, cognitions, emotions, and motivations (Siegrist, 2016). The safeguard and improvement of workers' health and well-being, is presented by several authors as one of the main duties of any employer, relating healthy and safety working conditions with reasonable working hours and reduced risks of illness and injury (CIPD, 2017; Clark, 2015; Lee, Back, & Chan, 2015; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015; Walton, 1973).

There is substantial empirical evidence to show that **psychosocial risk factors** at work predict undesirable physiological conditions, and more specific studies on work stress in the hospitality industry have found relations of work-related to severe health implications, associated with physiological symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, indigestion, ulcers, blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Undesirable psychological responses (e.g., anxiety, depression, and burnout) among employees are also acknowledged as a consequence of

occupational stress, and can have a detrimental effect on individuals' personal lives, potentially resulting in divorce, substance abuse and suicide (Hwang, Hyun, & Park, 2013; Newton & Teo, 2014). Furthermore, occupational stressors have been shown to negatively influence employee attitudes (e.g., job dissatisfaction, organisational commitment) and employee behaviours that have implications for organisational effectiveness and productivity (e.g., increased levels of workplace accidents, higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, reduced job performance) (Gabel Shemueli, Dolan, Suárez Ceretti, & Nunñez del Prado, 2015; Mohamed, 2015; Newton & Teo, 2014).

The hospitality industry can be highly stressful, particularly when employees are not capable of handling the stressors associated with hospitality jobs, namely the long working hours, night and evening shifts, work overload, antisocial working hours, interaction with demanding customers or even conflict with one's personal values. Additional burden on employees is also placed by strong seasonality, as most establishments are not fully staffed during peak demand periods (Baum, 1999). **Work stress** can be a particularly acute problem in customer-oriented fields because employees often experience conflicting demands of customers. For contact employees, providing a friendly service at all times, especially when dealing with angry or uncivil costumers and having to restrain their temper, can be emotionally draining (Deery & Jago, 2009; Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014; O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Partington, 2017; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016). This is often referred to as **emotional labour**, a concept that has been well documented amongst hospitality employees, as they are expected to express feelings such as enthusiasm, friendliness and cheerfulness despite negative emotions that they may experience.

Another concept that is usually associated with job stress is that of **job burnout**, extensively studied by Occupational Health or Industrial/Organisational Psychologists. It is argued that burnout is an occupational hazard that results from chronic exposure to stressful working environments, especially for workers "who do 'people-work' of some kind" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 99). This type of jobs are usually characterised by high job demands and low resources, as "the prevailing norms are to be selfless and put others' needs first; to work long hours and do whatever it takes to help a client or patient or student; to go the extra mile and to give one's all" (Maslach & Leiter, 2016, p. 1; Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout can arise from unsuccessful management of chronic work-related stress, resulting in a psychological syndrome²⁶ characterized by symptoms such as: overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001).

In general, burnout represents a mismatch between what a person wants to do and what that person must do, so that it arises when there is significant disharmony between the nature of a person's job and the characteristics of the person doing the job, i.e., what a person *has* to do, versus what a person *wants* to do. Research has demonstrated that burnout is also seen as contagious and has a negative spillover effect on people's non-work lives, as well as it is also frequently and positively associated with turnover (Maslach et al., 2001).

²⁶ Burnout was included in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) by the World Health Organization as an occupational phenomenon (yet, not classified as medical condition): (https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/burn-out/en/).

Issues relating to obtaining a work-life balance²⁷ have received increased attention over recent years, and there is a whole strand of research associated with work-life balance, mostly focusing on work time arrangements, such as work duration, intensity, scheduling, and flexibility (CPID, 2017). In the T&H field, due to irregular working hours, heavy workloads and frequent overtime, this is a topic of utmost importance. When you combine the substantial shift in the present day's social and economic circumstances, an increase of tension in work and family responsibilities (more women working outside their homes, more dual-career couples, taking care of the elderly, some companies needing their employees to work longer hours) can be observed (Yavas, Babakus, & Karatepe, 2008). According to Sullivan and Mainiero (2007), who proposed the Kaleidoscope Career Model, workers are changing their jobs every 4.5 years, and many of those job changes are prompted by a desire to allow a better balance between work and family life.

Individuals' work experiences may have positive or negative effects on other spheres of his/her life. As these spheres are limited by personal time and energy, they can conflict or compete, which constitutes the so-called **work-non-work conflict** (Tsaur, Liang, & Hsu, 2012; Walton, 1973). Walton (1973) describes the concept of balance between work and total life space, as work schedules, career demands and travel requirements that do not take off-work, leisure or family time on a regular basis, or as promotions that do not require repeated geographical moves. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), there are three forms of work-life conflict: time-based conflict (caused by an uneven distribution of time, resulting in insufficient time to each role a person plays), strain-based (state of tension that one role causes, which may affect another role) and behaviour-based (specific behaviour associated with one role that cannot meet the behavioural expectation of another role).

There is a plethora of studies which have investigated work-family conflict – in which role pressures from work and family domains are, to some extent, mutually incompatible, and participation in one of the roles is made more difficult due to participation in the other – (Blomme, Sok, & Tromp, 2013; Deery & Jago, 2009; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Guest, 2002; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2006; Tromp & Blomme, 2014; Zhao & Mattila, 2013; Zhao, Qu, & Liu, 2014), and some research has even been particularly focused on the directionality of the conflict, namely if it is work-family or family-work oriented (García-Cabrera, Lucia-Casademunt, Cuéllar-Molina, & Padilla-Angulo, 2018; Karatepe, 2013; Yavas et al., 2008; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016). Other studies have been directed to other forms of inter-role conflict, such as work-leisure conflict (e.g., Lin, Huang, Yang, & Chiang, 2014; Tsaur et al., 2012).

When the goal is to create a **family-friendly environment**, increasing balance and reducing conflict, there are two types of initiatives: (i) a family-friendly culture, based on organisational and supervisor support regarding good work-family balance (e.g., supportive and flexible supervisors and co-workers, non-penalisation for employees who make use of family-friendly work arrangements, not linking career opportunities with visibility and working long hours); and (ii) family-friendly policies, programmes or benefits, which may include flexible work arrangements (e.g., flextime, compressed workweeks, permanent part-time work,

²⁷ Although work is an important part of one's life, with reference to the work-life balance concept, *life* should be understood as a non-work domain, as opposed to *work-life*.

telecommuting, and job-sharing), family/medical leaves (e.g., extended maternal/paternal leaves), dependent care assistance (e.g., childcare/elder care referral services, on-site childcare) or resource services (e.g., seminars or assistance programmes) (Blomme et al., 2013; Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2006). In their research about work-non-work interference, Tromp and Blomme (2014) have been adopting different terminology, using 'home' instead of 'family'. According to the authors, this is particularly relevant for highly educated staff, as the definition of 'home' encompasses a wider variety of possible situations that are more in line with today's changing home domains (e.g., dual-earner couples, couples living apart together, single parents, co-parenting couples).

Table 3.4 summarizes the aforementioned QWL dimensions. A set of characteristics/themes is assigned to each dimension, which also individually represent terms that are commonly used in the employment-related literature.

Table 3.4 | Summary of the QWL dimensions and related themes

	1 JOB CONTENT AND WORK ORGANISATION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Job characteristics and job design/crafting . Opportunities to make full use of individual skills and training provided . Adequate workload (adapted to the resources and/or skill level) and cognitive demands . Working hours arrangements . Task discretion/autonomy or flexibility in decisions regarding their work activities . Role/task clarity and complexity and performance feedback
	2 PAY AND FRINGE BENEFITS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Wage level and type of payment (e.g., fixed salary, performance pay) and satisfaction with pay . Transparency and fairness of pay, i.e., pay is set by a fair method and is proportional to contributions made) . Adequacy of pay to the labour market, economic situation of the employer and employees' basic requirements/needs . Incentives and fringe benefits (e.g., health cover, meals, profit sharing, bonuses, subscriptions)
	3 RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION FOR WORK
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Genuine performance and dedication appraisal, credit and praise . Tangible/monetary and socio-emotional/non-monetary rewards . Incentives for personal and professional development . Meaningfulness and perceptions of value, purpose and utility of the job . Representation and voice
	4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Continued personal growth and skill development, through training and learning opportunities . Opportunities to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities (usually associated with supervisory or managerial positions, higher status and higher levels and pay) . Career prospects with the same employer (through promotions) or with different ones . Opportunities for self-realisation
	5 JOB SECURITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Perceptions of threat of job loss and concern over the future continuity of the current job . Contractual stability (e.g., type of employment contract, working full-time hours) . Perceptions of staff turnover (critical job positions subject to dismissals) . Workers' rights and protection, including collective representation by trade union . Equity and perceptions of discrimination (based on gender, age, family situation, etc.)
	6 INTERPERSONAL AND SUPPORTIVE RELATIONS AT WORK
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Work group relationship (e.g., teamwork, respect, non-abusive and non-discriminative workplaces) . Supervisor's competence, honesty and support (including leadership style) . Organisational support, ethical and supportive company culture . Interaction with customers
	7 HEALTH, JOB STRESS AND EMOTIONAL DEMANDS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Safe and healthy working conditions . Physical and psycho-social work intensity, pressure and demands . Self-reported exhaustion and stress (including lack of energy, fatigue and lack of interest) . Perceived impact of work on health/the extent to which work pressures and demands are perceived as acceptable and not excessive or 'stressful' (including emotional labour)
	8 WORK-LIFE BALANCE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Extent to which work-life conflicts with non-work life (e.g., work-family life, work-leisure time) . Flexibility to meet requirements from multiple roles in one's life . Availability of time and energy to engage in non-work activities . Family-friendly environment (family-friendly culture/policies, programmes or benefits) . Location of the place of work (convenience, proximity, commuting time)

Source: Own construction based on the authors previously mentioned in this section

3.5 Summary

This chapter offers a review of the literature related to the conceptualisation of quality of working life (QWL), exploring its relation to influential approaches such as job satisfaction and person-job fit. The most relevant theoretical approaches devoted to the measurement of QWL, from Walton's (1973) seminal work to more contemporary models, such as the 'right' job thesis by Jones, Haslam and Haslam (2017), are explored. The lack of consensus around this concept definition and measurement is also due to its complex, multidimensional and dynamic nature. Even if jobs are theoretically identified as 'good', they may not suit every person who holds and performs those jobs because subjects' criteria and evaluation may change over time, due to changes in reference points, to changes in the person's perspective and priorities, to ever growing needs of each person, and in response to changing conditions (CIPD, 2017; Jones et al., 2017; Martel & Dupuis, 2006; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). As employment is also embedded within specific institutional, economic and cultural contexts, there are 'characteristics' which are likely to differ from country to country and to influence how different people evaluate their situation (Burchell et al., 2014; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2009).

In general terms, the quality of a job refers to the extent to which a set of work and employment-related factors contribute to, or detract from, workers' well-being, and foster positive attitudes towards one's job-occupation (CIPD, 2017; Holman, 2012; Muñoz de Bustillo, Fernández-Macías, Esteve, & Antón, 2011). The objectives of the present study are particularly aligned with the strand of literature that postulates that QWL is essentially determined by individuals' affective responses to work, as well as with the definition of QWL proposed by Nadler and Lawler (1983), due to the focus on the outcomes for the individual. Besides focusing on productivity or organisational enhancement, i.e. *how people can do work better*, the emphasis is also in the positive impacts deriving from work, meaning *how work may cause people to be better*. That is why the resources and conditions that organisations offer to their employees are very likely to affect not only their physical well-being (e.g., economic and safety needs) but also their psychological and spiritual well-being (e.g., growth needs) (Kara et al., 2013).

QWL has been gaining visibility as an important construct within HR management. However, despite the growing recognition that QWL is an essential dimension of employee retention and employee satisfaction, with strong repercussions on organisational effectiveness, studies focusing on T&H employees are still scarce. Empirical research addressing quality of life and well-being in tourism has traditionally focused on residents of host communities and tourists (e.g., Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016). In this chapter there was also a focus on the main dimensions influencing employees' evaluations of their QWL in light of industry-specific characteristics of T&H. As the result of a comprehensive literature review, eight main conceptual dimensions of QWL were identified, which have informed protocols for data generation in the empirical study: (i) job content and work organisation; (ii) pay and fringe benefits; (iii) recognition and appreciation for work; (iv) opportunities for advancement, development and growth; (v) job security; (vi) interpersonal and supportive relations at work; (vii) health, job stress and emotional demands; and (viii) work-life balance.

4. Orientation towards work, organisations, and careers

4.1 Introduction

A growing body of research has been evidencing, at a higher or lower degree, that many employee and organisational outcomes, such as work attendance, intention to quit, intention to stay, employee turnover, employee engagement, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job involvement and effort, prosocial and organisational citizenship or job performance and productivity, are closely linked with employee well-being and perceived QWL. This final chapter of the literature review aims to address some of these outcomes, as a means for a better understanding of the balance of power in the contemporary employer-employee relationship. Changes in career structures which have led to significant changes in psychological contract make it significantly more challenging to reduce high turnover rates – which are exceptionally high and problematic for the T&H industry – and to retain valuable employees. This has implications for the longevity of T&H careers and employee’s motivation and desire to invest in work-related positive attitudes, issues that are addressed across this chapter.

Chapter 4 is divided in three parts. The first part is dedicated to expectations, a fundamental issue in all employment relationships that may contribute to explain perceptions and evaluation of work experiences, as well as the turnover phenomenon. Expectancy theory is explored, as well as the role of realistic job previews and the relevance of psychological contracts within these exchange processes. The second part presents an extensive review focused on employee turnover as a potential negative outcome of unmet expectations and psychological contract breach; more specifically: its conceptualisation, costs and consequences, and determinants – with emphasis given to the main turnover theories and foundational models, since the pioneering turnover model of March and Simon (1958) to the paradigm shifts introduced by the ‘Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover’ and the concept of job embeddedness. More contemporary approaches on why individuals choose to remain with their organisations are also included. The third and last part briefly addresses the psychological bond between employers and employees, focusing on positive job experiences, such as work engagement, that have a great potential for reducing employee turnover and promoting employee retention and talent development.

4.2 Managing expectations

Needs and expectations form the basis of individuals' motivational driving force and the ongoing fulfilment of these needs and expectations at work is a source of motivation. These ever-changing, and, often conflicting, needs and expectations can be categorised in several ways (Mullins, 2001). One of the most common is the basic distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; the former refers to tangible rewards, whereas the latter relates to psychological rewards and internal feelings (please refer to section 2.3.2 for a more detailed description).

All individuals "carry in their minds a normative view of what work should be. This normative view, or set of expectations, is forged by myriad social influences, including upbringing (e.g., parental influences), education, past experiences, and even socio-economic trends. [Moreover] these expectations become the backdrop against which employees compare their daily experiences at work". Expectations develop over time through various social experiences and are generally and overarchingly applied to any prospective work context (Green, Finkel, Fitzsimons, & Gino, 2017, p. 9). It should also be expected that each employee has a somewhat different set of expectations depending on his/her own values and needs at any given time (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

Expectancy theory has been a widely used, perhaps the dominant, conceptual framework to understand human motivations in work organisations. "It has been used to explain how much effort is expended to do a job, how individuals decide to enter (or leave) both occupations and organizations, and, less often, how satisfied people are with their jobs" (Wanous, Keon, & Latack, 1983, p. 66). Expectancy theory was central in the development of turnover models, such as the Intermediate Linkages Model of Mobley et al. (1979) or Steers and Mowday's (1981) model (as seen in section 4.2.2); in the former the authors placed special emphasis in the anticipation of future outcomes, while in the latter job expectations and values are considered to be at the early beginning of the individual's decision to stay or to leave.

Individuals' behaviours are influenced by the expected results of their actions, and the basic tenet of this theory is that motivation is determined by the perceived – which may be not necessarily the real – strength of the link between effort expended, performance achieved, and rewards obtained. The possibilities that an employee's expectations are met are also dependent on how realistic or unrealistic these expectations are; that is, how clearly the employee fully understands what is expected from him/her, and what the organisation offers in return (Porter & Steers, 1973).

Rooted on research on employee withdrawal, namely absenteeism and turnover, Porter and Steers (1973) conceived the concept of **met expectations** as "the discrepancy between what a person encounters on this job in the way of positive and negative experiences and what he expected to encounter" (p. 152). Porter and Steers (1973) posited that when an individual's expectations are not substantially met, his/her propensity to withdraw from the job will increase. The individual's decision to participate or to withdraw will be the result of processes of balancing potential or received rewards with desired expectations. The findings of Porter and Steers' (1973) review pointed to the centrality of the concept of met expectations in the withdrawal decision and revealed that employees place high relevance on their expectations mostly regarding pay, promotion, supervisory relations, and peer group interactions.

It is also possible to describe expectations based on the moment when they are formed regarding organisational entry, being *pre-entry* and *post-entry expectations* the most commonly used (Sutton & Griffin, 2004). Sutton and Griffin (2004) describe pre-entry expectations as those referring to newcomer expectations, formed before organisational entry, while post-entry expectations were described as those perceptions formed after a specified period of work in the organisation. The authors still remark that the term *met expectations* is used to describe pre-entry and post-entry expectations, as well as differences and interactions between the two.

But the first explicit formulations of expectancy theory applied to organisational behaviour were proposed by Victor Vroom (1964). **Vroom's VIE model** – standing for Valence, Instrumentality and Expectancy –, in particular, has been the subject of numerous empirical studies, despite the fact that its components are somewhat abstract and there is little consensus on how to interpret and measure them (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). Individuals subjectively combine these three constructs to determine the extent to which they should exert a given level of effort; Vroom (1964) referred to this as *motivational force*.

In theory, Vroom (1964) has actually presented two models, the first for the prediction of the valences of outcomes (including the valence and instrumentality dimensions), and the second for the prediction (which further included expectancy). An outcome is simply anything an individual might want to attain (Mitchell & Beach, 1976). Although this model can be used to predict the valence of any outcome, it has been applied most frequently to the prediction of job satisfaction, occupational preference, or the valence of good performance (Mitchell & Beach, 1976, p. 235). More in particular (Mitchell & Beach, 1976; Mullins, 2001; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996; Vroom, 1964):

- i. *Valence* refers to a person's feelings, strength or affective (positive or negative) orientations towards specific outcomes, interpreted as the importance, attractiveness, desirability, or anticipated satisfaction with outcomes. It should also be noted that valence is not the same as the *value* of the outcome for the individual, valence refers to the anticipated satisfaction associated with an outcome, while value is the actual satisfaction resulting from attainment of the outcome;
- ii. *Instrumentality* refers to the perceived degree of probability that a first-level, performance-related, outcome will lead to the attainment of a second level, need-related, outcome. For example, good performance is instrumental in leading to the satisfaction with pay or promotion;
- iii. *Expectancy* relates to the perceived degree of probability that a given level of effort or an action, will lead to the desired outcome or performance (Figure 4.1).

In his review, Vroom (1969) found a consistent relationship between job dissatisfaction and turnover, and by placing it within this theory framework, the author conceived that the probability of resignation was a function of the difference in strength between the force to remain and the force to leave. "The force to remain was assumed to be reflected in job satisfaction levels. The force to leave, on the other hand, was thought to be influenced by the valence of outcomes that an individual cannot attain without leaving his or her present position and by the expectancy that these other outcomes can in fact be attained elsewhere". It was suggested that measurements of the expectancy/valence framework would better predict the

outcome of an individual's decision to stay or to leave than would measurements of job satisfaction alone (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 112).

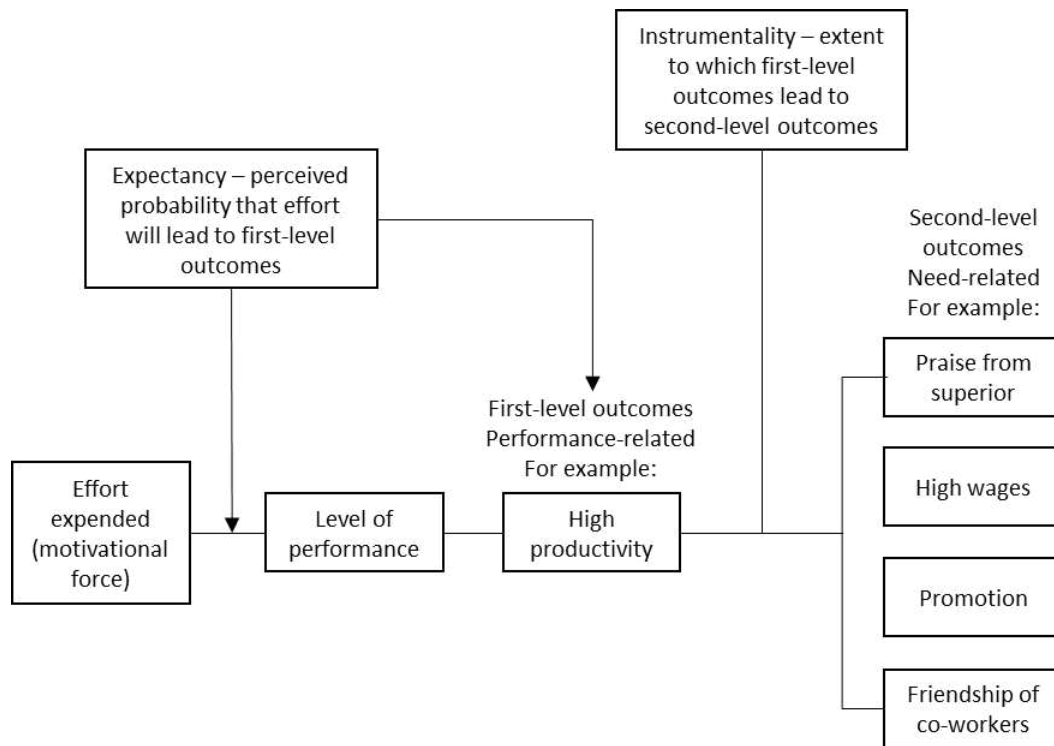


Figure 4.1 | A basic model of expectancy theory
Source: Mullins (2001)

As expectancy theory specifies how an individual ‘chooses’ among several courses of action, it can also be applied to studies of occupational and organisational choice (Wanous et al., 1983). According to Vroom’s conceptualization, choosing a job is dependent on whether there exists a better alternative. Wanous et al. (1983) suggest that expectancy theory may be more appropriate for explaining occupational or organisational choices than for explaining work motivation or job performance; one of the reasons the authors used to justify this stance is that choosing an institution is better controlled by the individual than one’s job performance, as the latter is probably controlled by outer aspects.

Literature on expectations has focused mainly on the effects of met and unmet expectations and their expected outcomes. Met expectations have been associated with organisational commitment, job-satisfaction, self-efficacy, motivation, performance and retention, while unmet expectations have been associated with absenteeism, intentions to quit and turnover (Porter & Steers, 1973; Sturges et al., 2000; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992). The influence of expectations on employees’ emotional experiences at work has also been linked to job burnout, as the result of idealistic or unrealistic expectations (Maslach et al., 2001), and to work engagement, as the result of confirmed expectations that are associated with energy and positive emotional responses (Green et al., 2017).

As per Steers and Mowday (1981), expectations are influenced by three factors: (i) individual characteristics; (ii) available information about job and organisation (factor which is referred to as realistic job previews and is further detailed below); and (iii) alternative job opportunities (see also section 4.3.2).

Realistic job previews

Some authors contend that job expectations are influenced by the knowledge that employees have about the job and the organisation, both at the time of organisational choice and entry, and during reappraisal periods throughout one's career (Mowday et al., 1982). This idea is in line with the research on realistic job previews, a notion that has been widely explored with regards to employee attraction and recruitment.

Realistic job previews are intended to provide the individual with realistic pre-employment expectations about what type of job environment one is entering, so that he/she does not get disappointed by his/her own set of unmet expectations. Prior and accurate information on the nature of the job, expected roles, type of rewards that one can possibly receive in exchange of his/her participation, the likelihood of achieving success and the personality profile required thereof, and on the positive and negative aspects of the job, is one of the ways of creating realistic job previews. Other way can be through real experiences of what a certain job is like. These can be provided by work simulations, work tours or internships (Dickerson, 2009; Porter & Steers, 1973; Wanous et al., 1992).

Realistic job previews represent, therefore, a way of creating met expectations (Dickerson, 2009; Steers & Mowday, 1981; Wanous et al., 1992). These realistic expectations also encourage self-selection, by helping prospective employees to make a more informed career decision when seeking for a job position. Therefore, it is possible that even prior to employment, individuals can conclude that the outcomes they may attain in a given organisation, the rewards that the organisation offers, do not justify the effort to join in the first place (Earnest, Allen, & Landis, 2011; Porter & Steers, 1973). When applying expectancy theory to choosing among job offers, Vroom (1969) used instrumentality to refer to the expectation of certain outcomes that would occur if one joined a certain organisation (based on the likelihood of certain outcomes being present in that given organisation).

Another positive consequence of realistic job previews may be the perceived honesty of the organisations. By providing open and realistic, even if negative, assessments about the job and work environment, organisations can be seen as trustworthy and honest, which may foster loyalty and encourage retention (Earnest et al., 2011). On the other hand, prior knowledge is expected to result in a greater degree of congruence between individual role and reward expectations and later job experiences, therefore yielding lower likelihood for job turnover and greater likelihood for successful recruitment, job/career satisfaction and occupational retention (Dickerson, 2009; Phillips, 1998; Porter & Steers, 1973; Wanous et al., 1983).

4.2.1 Expectations and experiences in T&H

T&H is an educational popular choice, with students exhibiting high enthusiastic and high expectations about their future work opportunities. However, many graduates seem to become quickly disillusioned with this field of employment, therefore contributing to the high turnover rates in the industry. Several researchers suggested the discrepancy between what students and newcomers expect and what they experience once in the job, is one of the main reasons why people leave the T&H industry; sometimes is enough for employees to leave that they don't experience at a high enough level factors which they consider important (Blomme et al., 2009; Dewar et al., 2002; Iverson & Deery, 1997; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000).

Previous research has examined attitudes towards career in the hospitality industry and found that students' perceptions and expectations of careers and working conditions in the hospitality industry might not be very clear, therefore reporting not being willing to remain in the industry (Richardson, 2008, 2009). Expectations were, therefore, considered significantly relevant for career choice (Richardson, 2009). But while some authors (e.g., Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000) suggest that realistic expectations may influence hospitality graduates to remain in the T&H industry, others (e.g., Dickerson, 2009; Lu & Adler, 2009; Roney & Perin Öztin, 2007) found that even when students are provided with more realistic expectations and have some work experience, they might also form negative perceptions of the industry.

When comparing the employment situation of tourism graduates and expectations of students enrolled in tourism-related degrees in Portugal, Costa et al. (2012) show that students who would like to hold a leadership position at work represent a higher proportion of respondents than in the graduates subsample (and more in particular, 5.3% higher for male students and 3.3% higher for female students). With regard to expected salaries, in comparison to the real salaries reported by tourism graduates, students' expectations for their first job after finishing their degree cannot be said to be unrealistic; 39.6% of male students and 42.1% of female students placed their expectations within the 600-899 Euros range. However, five years after graduation, students expect a significant raise in their salaries (with 36.1% of male students and 35% of female students expecting to move to the 1200-1799 Euros) when, in reality, a significant proportion of graduates earnings are below this level and even less than 599 Euros. Although women expect lower salaries than men do, the real gender gap is much wider than their expectations reveal. Hospitality was the students' most preferred field of activity, and it was indeed the subsector in which most graduates are employed. Although recreation and leisure services, or public sector organisations (e.g., national, regional and local tourism organisations) also gathered the preference of a lot of students, they do not employ a significant number of graduates (Costa et al., 2012).

In a study with 360 US students, Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) found that previous work experience was positively related to career intentions, suggesting that these experiences could foster students' confidence in their capabilities and help them build realistic expectations of the industry. This idea is also supported by Brown, Bosselman and Thomas (2016), who advocate that internships allow students to better confirm their career expectations. On the other hand, Robinson, Ruhanen and Breakey's (2016) qualitative study has figured that students' career aspirations had changed after undertaking their internships, as the majority expressed the desire to pursue a career in tourism, instead of a career in hospitality. Based on these premises,

tourism and hospitality management programs in postsecondary education usually include an experiential component, in an attempt to more effectively prepare the students for the demands of the industry (Dickerson, 2009; Thompson et al., 2017). Several authors (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Lu & Adler, 2009) have been also emphasizing the importance of on-the-job experience in addition to education for the same reasons.

Although the longitudinal study by Irving and Meyer (1994) was not industry specific (as a diverse group of students, recently graduated and recently employed in various industries, was used), it showed that strong positive or negative experiences in early stages of employment had a stronger effect on the decision to stay or to leave than the confirmation (*met*) or disconfirmation (*unmet*) pre-entry expectations.

Prior research has also reported generational differences in employees' perspectives and expectations (Lub, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2016), although much of the research found pertains to Generation Y, a.k.a. Millennials. For Generation Y, Higher Education is suggested to be a significant factor influencing expectations' formation. This growing number of highly-educated employees tend to have higher career expectations as well as to request a higher quality of their personal life outside of work, putting more importance on time-off-work for relaxation and to spend with family and friends (Wong & Ko, 2009). Based on the views of undergraduate students with work experience in the hospitality industry, Maxwell et al. (2010) posit that for Generation Y, meeting personal goals and receiving good pay are both important career entry expectations and long-term career aspirations. Although these employees do not appear to work long hours, they want to work hard and have a good work-life balance. Particularly for women, enjoy challenging work, fairness, clarity and equality in career progression are also important.

Focusing on the influence of the socioeconomic context on Millennials' career expectations (although the study is not specifically applied to the T&H industry), De Hauw and De Vos (2010) found that recession was related to lower levels of optimism. Throughout times of recession, Millennials are expected to lower their work-life stability assumptions. Nonetheless, their assumptions concerning work content, training, career growth and financial benefits remain high, which suggests that such expectations are largely embedded within the generation.

T&H workers also likely to experience higher levels of unmet expectations, especially early in their career. A 3-year longitudinal study examining pre- and post-entry attitudes and expectations of tourism graduates in New Zealand, in order to determine the degree of fit between employees and employment in the T&H industry, has found that students are generally satisfied with their working conditions. However, students tend to have unrealistic expectations about the salary they will receive upon graduation. Results also revealed that pre-entry perceived importance of opportunities for combining work and leisure (e.g., travel, outdoor work) decreased after job entry, while intellectual challenge and the opportunities for promotion significantly increased (Dewar et al., 2002). Blomme et al. (2009) have also examined the differences between pre-entry expectations of first-year students and graduates, and post-entry expectations of people working in the hospitality industry; overall, students hold more positive views towards almost all job factors (namely, job content, development opportunities, salary and career opportunities) than do current workers. Results of the study also suggest that development opportunities related to pre-entry expectations and career opportunities are

unmet expectations, while expectations related to salary are not likely to become unmet expectations (as it wasn't a reason to decide whether to work in the hospitality industry or not) (Blomme et al., 2009).

If workers are changing their career paths because their pre-entry assumptions are not satisfied, then maybe modifying work environments is not enough to stop employee turnover. Perhaps these modifications need to be extended to the school system, where students' pre-entry expectations are being developed (Blomme et al., 2009).

4.2.2 The psychological contract

The rhetoric of the 'new careers' proposes that individuals are expected to take responsibility for managing their own careers, and organisations are no longer expected to offer careers for life. Although the majority of individuals still experience a full-time job with the same institution, the psychological contract has changed significantly (Tams & Arthur, 2006). The 'traditional' contract was based in the exchange of loyalty for job security. In turn, under the 'new' contract, employees exchange performance for enhanced 'employability', as continuous learning and skills acquisition make them more marketable in the external labour market (Sullivan, 1999; Tams & Arthur, 2006).

Psychological contract theory has also been used as a descriptive framework for the employment relationship and for explaining workers' expectations, attitudes and behaviours, with psychological contract fulfilment being positively associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job performance, organisational citizenship behaviour or decreased intentions to leave (Robinson, 1996; Thunnissen, 2015). Underpinned by expectancy theory, the psychological contract is influenced by one's desired goals and outcomes, while the experience of these goals and outcomes determines the individual's motivation to work and his/her behaviour at work (Lucas, 2004).

The psychological contract is a form of employer-employee exchange which focus on employee's perceptions of mutual obligations between the two parties, which goals respectively determine the specific terms of the contract. These obligations are commitments to future action and refer to attitudes and intentions (Rousseau, 1989). As in what is its most widely known definition, the psychological contract has been described as an individual's beliefs, shaped by the organisation, regarding terms and conditions of an implicit and reciprocal exchange agreement between the individual and the organisation (Rousseau, 1989, 1995).

These contracts start being developed during recruitment but, unlike pre-entry expectations, are formed through interactions with the employer and made of expectations which are implicitly or explicitly promised by the employer. Since then the contract will change as the relationship evolves, until one of the parties breaks the link (Robinson, 1996; Sutton & Griffin, 2004). As such, a psychological contract emerges when the employee believes that "a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations" (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123) (Figure 4.2). Although the psychological contract is not the same as a the formal, written legal contract, and may not be enforceable, is very real to the individuals who hold it (Blomme et al., 2009; Coyle-Shapiro, 2006).

Psychological contracts, which comprise perceived obligations, must be distinguished from expectations, the general beliefs held by employees about what they will find in their jobs and organisations. Although psychological contracts can produce some expectations, not all expectations emanate from perceived promises, and expectations can exist in the absence of perceived promises or contracts. Pre-entry expectations, such as high salaries, good co-workers, and affinity to the job, can emanate from a variety of sources, including past experiences, observations by friends and social norms. Psychological contracts, instead, involve beliefs about what employees believe they are entitled to receive, or should receive, because they perceive that their employer have promised to provide those things. Thus, only the expectations that emanate from perceived implicit or explicit promises by the employer are part of the psychological contracts (Robinson, 1996).

Belief that reciprocity *will* occur can be a precursor to the development of a psychological contract. However, it is the individual's belief in an obligation of reciprocity that constitutes the contract. This belief is unilateral, held by a given individual, and does not constrain those of any other parties to the relationship. These are beliefs or perceptions regarding promises and acceptance. Each party believes that both parties have made promises and have accepted the same contract terms; each party considers that they share the same interpretation of the contract. However, this does not necessarily mean that both parties share a common understanding of all contract terms (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

Certain factors promote the individual's belief that a contract exists. If an overt promise is made (e.g., a commitment to computer training for a new hire made during a selection interview), the more explicit and verifiable it is (e.g., in writing or in front of witnesses) the stronger will be the belief in the existence of a contract (Rousseau, 1989, p. 124). Employer branding is a notion that can also influence psychological contract's formation, as some expectations may arise from the value individuals' place on employer brand image and its capability of delivering promises (Martin, 2009).

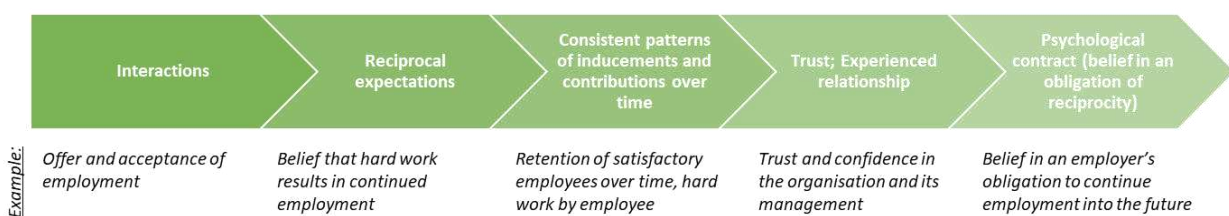


Figure 4.2 | Development of an individual's psychological contract

Source: Rousseau (1989)

Riley et al. (2002) highlight that, for being based on assumptions, psychological contracts are imprecise and open to misinterpretation. Moreover, the level of imprecisions is determined by the nature of the work/technological process in which the job exists, with some jobs originating more imprecise contracts – which is the case of T&H jobs – than others. The highly the imprecision, the more difficult is for management to apply formal control processes.

Building on social exchange and the norm of reciprocity, a parallel can also be drawn between economic and social exchange and the two existing types of psychological contracts, which can be differentiated based on their focus, time frame, stability, scope, and tangibility (Coyle-Shapiro, 2006; Greenhaus et al., 2010; Rousseau, 1995):

- i. *Transactional contracts* are short-term and mainly characterised by economic and extrinsic exchanges, i.e., performance-based pay. The terms of this type of contract are tangible and remain static over the length of the relationship. Lower levels of commitment are expected from both parties, and allowance for easy exit is implicit. The scope of the contract is narrow, and little spillover between work and personal life is observable. T&H seasonal workers are a good example of employees who engaged in this type of contracts (they are hired for a specific period of time, to deliver a specific output and their employment situation is not likely to affect their personal life (in contrast to being a doctor, for example)).
- ii. *Relational contracts* are open-ended and long-term. Its content of what is exchanged within this contract evolves over the course of the relationship, thus being more ambiguous. Employees are hired under the view that they can develop and remain with the employer during their whole professional life. These contracts are thus characterised by a mix of non-monetizable factors, such as loyalty or commitment, and financial rewards. As the employment relationship is more likely to contribute to employee's self-identify and self-esteem, higher spillover between work and personal life is observable.

As previously mentioned, in light of the changes in employment relations and career structures, as well as due to growing organisational needs for flexibility, relational contracts have been gradually replaced by more transactional contracts (Greenhaus et al., 2010).

The lack of fulfilment of aspects of the psychological contract will lead to what is called a violation or breach of the contract. By not honouring the psychological contract terms, organisations or other parties are not reciprocating employee's contribution as he/she believed they were obligated to do, which is perceived as a trust violation. This psychological contract breach is a subjective experience; it's the employees' belief that a breach has happened that may affect their behaviour, regardless of whether that belief is legitimate or whether an actual breach occurred (Robinson, 1996; Rousseau, 1989). As a consequence, employees' attitudes are likely to change; more specifically, terms of the contract are likely to be redefined more towards transactional terms, turnover is likely to increase, and performance and organisational commitment and citizenship are likely to decrease (Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1989). This pattern of behaviour is somewhat similar to unmet expectations leading to undesirable behavioural effects (Green et al., 2017).

4.3 Leaving or staying: conceptualisation, causes and consequences of employee turnover

The reason for the constant career shift in today's workforce might be the desire to discover an ideal job that satisfies one's job-related needs/desires. Recognizing the importance of these

needs/desires is an immense responsibility for institutions focused on fulfilling their employees and retaining talent in this unstable business macro-environment (Maden, 2014).

Not only turnover confronts organisations with escalating costs and low productivity, as it may also lead to the degradation of service quality and subsequently loss of costumers and competitiveness, particularly in service industries in which employees are the first-contact public voice and image of their organisations, thus directly influencing the company performance (Kim, 2014; Maden, 2014; Tews, Michel, & Stafford, 2013). By adopting more effective employee management policies, T&H businesses can aim to maintain a high level of service and remain competitive. An organisation needs to make employee retention a priority particularly after it invests on training, which will also help strengthen its image and reputation (Vasquez, 2014). Therefore, employee turnover has been a subject of research for several years in the T&H industry and although turnover is seen as a usual phenomenon in the service industry in general, it has been noted to be exceptionally high in the hospitality industry over the last decades and higher than in other industries. The nature of T&H work, coupled with the rewards it provides (or lack thereof), can make it challenging to for professionals to stay committed to their organisations and develop satisfying, sustained careers in this industry (Cho et al., 2009; Deery & Shaw, 1997; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Yang et al., 2012).

However, some worrying numbers lead us to question the actual capacity of the T&H industry in remaining competitive as a long-term career choice. For example, according to Tracey and Hinkin (2008), over 25% of employees leave their firms each year, many of those often choosing to work in other industries. In turn, and most alarming, Blomme (2006) found that after 6 years from graduation, 70% of graduates (from a Dutch hotel school) were no longer employed in the hospitality industry. Moreover, according to a Gallup's (2013) study, 63% of employees worldwide reported not being engaged at work and 24% even felt actively disengaged.

Turnover – Concept

More than 60 years after the turnover concept started to be debated in organisational and HR management literature, scholars still focus their attention on this research topic. The earliest turnover models, proposed by organisational psychologists, are traced back to the second half of the twentieth century, and by 2017 there were already more than 2,000 articles published on the topic (Lee, Hom, Eberly, Li, & Mitchell, 2017). This extensive research demonstrates that this is still a key issue for academics and has revealed a growing interest from practitioners in the most diverse industries across the globe.

Turnover is the result of a withdrawal decision process that Price (1977, p. 4) has defined as “the movement of members across the boundary of an organisation”, in which ‘members’ refers to individuals, employees of a given organisation, and ‘movement’ can be perceived both as accession and separation actions. This separation implies a form of membership suspension or total disconnection, and does not comprise transfers within the organisation or other forms of internal mobility (Mobley, 1982). For Tett and Meyer (1993), this separation represents the termination of the psychological contract between the employee and the employer organisation (a topic that will be further detailed in section 4.3.3). Separation is specifically mentioned, as most of the research on turnover focus on members leaving the organisation, rather than those entering (Price, 2001). Mobley (1982) and Price (2001) also place emphasis on the nature of this

membership, which should involve a monetary compensation, therefore excluding other ties such as students, volunteers or trade union members. Turnover is just one of the forms that withdrawal behaviour can assume, as the result of alienation, disengagement or under-identification from/with work, comprising a set of actions that employees take to separate themselves from work or from a given organisation, which can range from tardiness (showing up late) or absenteeism to low job performance or counterproductive work behaviour/service sabotage (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Kao et al., 2014; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

As turnover is often perceived as the result of a sequence of influential and psychological aspects, it is important to distinguish voluntary from involuntary turnover, which accounting and consequences for organisations (and individuals) are very distinct. For Morrell, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson (2001), this dichotomous classification is particularly necessary when turnover is thought to be associated with specific factors, such as organisational commitment, or to be preceded by a psychological state, such as intent to quit, in order to avoid biased assessments of the nature of the employment relationship for different types of leavers.

Voluntary turnover usually takes the form of resignation and occurs when an employee takes the decision to leave the organisation (Emiroğlu et al., 2015), thus representing voluntary exit, an exercise of choice and the result of a decision process (Morrell et al., 2001). These leavers are also commonly referred to as 'quits' (Price, 2001). Maertz and Campion (1998, p. 50), criticizing the lack of explicit criteria to define voluntary turnover across studies, refer to it as "instances wherein management agrees that the employee had the physical opportunity to continue employment with the company, at the time of the termination".

In turn, **involuntary turnover** occurs when the employer makes the decision to lay-off or dismiss an employee (besides situations of death, ill-health or retirement), either for reasons in which the employee has little or no personal say (such as the real or perceived need for retrenchment, restructuring or downsizing) or for reasons specifically associated with the employee (such as poor performance, insubordination, at-will employment clauses, staff conflict or theft) (Mobley, 1982; Morrell et al., 2001). Although in most literature turnover voluntariness is typically considered dichotomous (i.e., voluntary or involuntary), Maertz and Campion (1998) are of the opinion that this dimension of turnover should be measured on a continuum, as the many reasons behind turnover decisions may have both voluntary and involuntary aspects.

Within the scope of HR Management and related disciplines such as Business Management, Industrial Psychology or Organisational Behaviour, voluntary turnover has been receiving much more attention as a research topic for presenting a theoretical structure that can be easily understood because of the homogeneity of research subjects (Price, 1977), but mainly for its potential managerial implications in terms of prediction, control and policy design. Although some theorists suggest that most turnover is voluntary (Price, 1977), when looking at workers and organisations in general, the instances in which employees have been *forced* to leave are likely to be more representative than those in which employees have *chosen* to leave (Morrell et al., 2001). Some authors seem to consider that involuntary turnover cannot be controlled either by the employee or the company itself (e.g., Mobley, 1982), while others place it within the control of the management (e.g., Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008; Rowley & Purcell, 2001).

This is where organisational concerns about the **avoidability** of turnover, namely voluntary turnover – a.k.a. ‘avoidable turnover’ –, lie (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012; Price, 2001), and why it is important for managers to understand what type of intervention can be planned. This is exemplified by Morrell et al. (2001) who stress that if a company is able to identify situations of unavoidable voluntary turnover (e.g., cessation due to relocation by a spouse), it would be more beneficial to manage turnover *post hoc* and focusing on minimising the disruption and inconvenience of the lost – that constitutes a control approach –, rather than spend resources on theorised preventative measures (e.g., increasing pay) – which is intended as a prevention approach. However, these authors also point that although this division is not clear, an assessment of avoidability would help managers “to recognise instances of turnover as symptomatic of underlying problems” and to avoid needless and potentially harmful changes (p. 221). Voluntariness is also important to be considered as most turnover models apply to self-motivated employment termination (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Turnover intention

This withdrawal can assume a **physical** or **mental** form. For employees that don’t have the possibility or opportunity to leave their jobs, the possible short-term choice is psychological/attitudinal withdrawal, such as the desire to quit, the intent to find alternative employment, or presenteeism (Daskin & Tezer, 2012; Johns, 2010).

Behavioural intention is a reliable determinant of actual behaviour. Mobley (1982) formally established the academic status of turnover intention in the studies of turnover and more than 30 years of research revealed consistent evidence that an employee’s cognition of turnover (i.e., intention) is the strongest predictor of actual turnover and the direct antecedent variable of turnover behaviour (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979; Tett & Meyer, 1993). In fact, meta-analyses (e.g., Griffeth et al., 2000; Steel & Ovalle, 1984) show that intentions to quit were identified as a major predictor of actual turnover in countless studies. Therefore, and with the adoption of a *proactive* stance, as opposed to a *reactive* one, many conceptualisations and enquiries focus on turnover *intentions* rather than *actual* turnover. Several studies have been examining the relationship between turnover intent and actual turnover, but measuring them separately, although actual turnover is expected to increase as intents also do.

Both Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth's (1978) and Mowday, Porter and Steers' (1982) definitions converge at the point that **turnover intention** is a subjective estimation of an employee regarding the probability of holding a conscious and deliberate intention to leave his/her job at some point in the near future. Also Tett and Meyer (1993) emphasize the conscious and deliberate wilfulness of terminating employment with a given company. Intention to quit may be therefore perceived as a form of voluntary turnover.

This *intention to leave* – concept that is interchangeably used with *turnover intention* – is considered as the last step in a sequence of withdrawal cognitions, in which search (either passive or active) for alternative employment in other organisations and thoughts of quitting, are also included (Mobley et al., 1978; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Therefore, employee turnover should not be seen as a time-bounded event, but as the outcome of a process of disengagement that may last for an undefined period of time, that can take days or years until the actual decision

to leave is made. Steers and Mowday (1981) further note that some authors (e.g., Mobley, 1977, Mobley, Homer & Hollingsworth, 1978, Fishbein, 1967, or Hom et al., 1979) even make more elaborate distinctions between *desire to leave* and *intent to leave*, with the former being described as an individual's attitude toward the act of quitting and an immediate determinant of intent to leave, a perspective that seems to meet Maertz and Campion's (1998) suggestion to perceive turnover voluntariness on a continuum instead of as an isolated occurrence.

Especially for smaller employers, it can be difficult to offer clear opportunities for career development and progression, so it can be expected that employees will move from one employer to the other, but still remaining within the industry; this can be referred to as *circulation*, rather than *turnover* (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2005). These patterns of transition between, or even within, organisations through the course of a professional's work life can also be analysed on the grounds of **career mobility**. Moving across jobs and/or occupations – in which individuals collect a variety of work experiences and skill sets – is expected to become the rule, rather than the exception (Sullivan, 1999), and this is precisely the assumption at the core of boundaryless careers.

Intention to stay

By contrast, **intention to stay** is often found in literature as the reverse psychological state, referring to employees' awareness and deliberate willingness to stay and maintain their job. Although most scholars just presume that staying is the mere opposite of leaving, some authors suggest that turnover and retention should be more properly viewed as related, but not necessarily reciprocal, processes (Cho et al., 2009; Steel & Lounsbury, 2009; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Alongside intention to leave, empirical studies have demonstrated that intention to stay is one of the best single predictors of actual turnover (Igharia & Greenhaus, 1992; Tett & Meyer, 1993).

However, although there is a significant body of research on the causes why people voluntary leave, employees' intention to stay has been receiving considerably less attention as a research topic in comparison to employees' intention to leave. With regard to the T&H industry, the studies of Cho et al., 2009, Demir, Demir and Nield (2015) or Kim and Jogaratnam (2010) are some of the few exceptions.

Demir et al. (2015), who analysed the relationship of person-organisation fit and hotel employees' intention to remain, both directly and through organisational identification, presented intention to remain as an indicator of responsibility awareness (contributing to reduce absenteeism, lateness or task neglect, for example), job satisfaction, identification with the organisation and strong job-employee fit. This assumption that employees who perceive a better fit with their organisation are more likely to stay is supported by other authors (e.g., Chew & Chan, 2008). Based on a study with non-supervisory hotel and restaurant employees in the US, Kim and Jogaratnam (2010) reported that intrinsic motivation and supervisory leadership emerged as the most significant predictors of employees' intent to stay. In a study aimed at examining whether the predictors that decrease employee intention to leave (namely perceived organisational and supervisors' support, and organisational commitment) would also increase employees' intention to stay, Cho et al. (2009) found that despite the negative effect on intention to leave, only perceived organisational support had a positive impact on intention to stay. These findings support the notion that employees who perceive

high organisational support tend to be loyal to the organisation and put on their efforts to maintain membership.

Chew and Chan's (2008) research, where a Delphi technique was used, reported a number of issues that were identified by 13 experts (e.g., academics, HR managers and organisational psychologists) as important for employee retention, namely: satisfying work environment, training and career development opportunities, reward and recognition, good pay and conditions, good working relationships, good resources, state of the art equipment, status, challenging job and autonomy.

Largely after the work of Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski and Erez (2001), there is now increased interest in explaining why employee choose to remain with an organisation. The authors proposed the new construct of **job embeddedness**, which describes the broad set of forces that influence people's decision to maintain their current employment situation (see section 4.2.2; *The shift towards Job Embeddedness*).

Job mobility

Employee voluntary turnover is one possible lens to look at changes in employment status, but **mobility** is also an important perspective to consider, especially within the context of careers research. As a result of a growing focus on boundaryless careers, particular emphasis is placed on interorganisational mobility. "Employees are now more likely to value professional mobility and expect to change jobs more frequently than they have been in the past [...], and this high degree of mobility can have implications for individual employees, organisations, and entire industries" (McGinley & Martinez, 2018, p. 1108).

A potentially more damaging form of turnover is career change, which is defined as the movement to a new occupation that is not a part of an expected or typical career progression (McGinley & Martinez, 2018). Some authors describe these career changes as 'complex' job mobility, as it involves a change in both industry and occupation, and not just merely job or employer shifts (Neal, 1999). Combined with the transitory nature of much work within the T&H industry, high career change rates may exacerbate the already high costs of turnover (McGinley & Martinez, 2018).

Neal (1999) developed a model of mobility, based on two main assumptions: (i) workers are concerned about their match with their current careers, i.e., how well one is suited for that type of work; (ii) workers are also concerned about their match with their current employer, i.e., how well one works with one's colleagues and how well one is suited to the work environment that the organisation offers. The model yields an optimal job search strategy that involves two stages: complex job changes happen early in a workers' career, when one searches for a career, and only when a suitable career match is found, workers start to look for potential employers. When suitable career matches are found it means that future job changes should simply involve changes of employers (Neal, 1999).

According to Delfgaauw (2007), the motives for job change of workers who stay in their industry differ from the motives of workers who change industry, especially when jobs within an industry have features in common. This provides employee with enough information about other jobs in a certain industry, updating their expectations. When salaries, work environment, stress,

responsibilities, and conditions matter in an employee's decision to quit a job, they are more likely to switch to another industry. On the other hand, when they are not happy with training opportunities, the atmosphere at work, amount of work or travel (to and from work) time, they are more likely to remain in the same industry (Delfgaauw, 2007).

Although recognitions that the construct career mobility has been used to include almost any kind of change in job duties, Feldman and Ng (2007) distinguish between job, organisational and career/occupational change. According to the authors, *job change* refers to substantial changes in work responsibilities, hierarchical levels, or titles within an organisation, including internal promotions, transfers, and demotions. *Organisational change* refers to any change in the employing firm, which may or not involve job change as well. In turn, *occupational change* (term that the authors prefer in relation to career change, which is more ambiguous) is related to major transitions in career paths, that require new skills, routines, and work environments, as well as new training, education, or vocational preparation (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

With regards to factors influencing mobility within the T&H industry, two points of view are of special importance. The first is related to the growth that the T&H industry has been experiencing in recent years, which has been significantly high in Portugal in recent years. According to research conducted by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), in 2018, the Travel & Tourism sector in Portugal grew by one of the highest rates in Europe. Tourism has contributed to one in five of all jobs in the country and produced 1 Euro in every 5 Euros (WTTC, 2019). The emergence of new firms or the growth of existing firms is expected to increase both internal and external mobility; the latter due to perceptions of more job opportunities available in the external labour market (Feldman & Ng, 2007) (see also section 4.2.2; sub-section *Perceived job alternatives*). The second has to do with the rigidity and permeability of occupational mobility structures (Feldman & Ng, 2007). As described previously, the T&H sector is characterised by low levels of rigidity and higher levels of permeability, especially due to the low entry barriers, the predominance of low-skilled jobs, the use of a secondary labour market, and perceptions of the status of hospitality work as low and transitory.

Other authors (e.g., Duncan, Scott, & Baum, 2013; Ladkin, 2011; Veijola & Jokinen, 2008) have also been examining other perspectives on mobility, namely within the mobilities paradigm, such as migrant labour and transnational movement of individuals involved in the T&H industry. Increased mobility within and between countries, including sanctioned and unsanctioned migration, is and will continue impacting population change with regards both to age and ethnic profiles. This is particularly relevant for the T&H sector in developing countries, which competitiveness might be restrained due to the continuous departure of key workers (Solnet et al., 2015, 2013). With strong social and cultural implications, these reflections are very important for a better understanding of the complexities of T&H work, being, however, beyond the scope of this work.

4.3.1 Implications, costs, and consequences of employee turnover

The implications of turnover can take various forms and may have repercussions on different dimensions. The most immediate consequences are obviously assigned to **organisations**, but

impacts are also perceived for individuals and for the broader society, as turnover can also be an indication of the stability of employment in a specific industry (not only turnover can be measured for individual companies, as well as for an industry as a whole). These impacts are well documented in the literature, although organisational theorists have been more interested in predicting employee attitudes and behaviours than in understanding their consequences (Phillips & Connell, 2003c).

Flamholtz (1973) was one of the first to put forward models that summarise the original and the replacement costs of human resources. Original costs refer to the acquisition and development (through direct and indirect costs of training) of employees, while the replacement costs incorporate both the original investment and termination costs of an employee and the acquisition and development of a substitute. Cascio (1991, cit. by Tziner & Birati, 1996, p. 114) also made one of the most significant contributions in this respect, by proposing a mathematical model that consists of categories of expenses which sum should constitute the overall cost of employee turnover, namely: separation, replacement, training and reduced productivity costs.

Building on the work of Cascio (1991) and Wasmuth and Davis (1983), Hinkin and Tracey (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000, 2005, 2006; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008) developed an expanded model consisting of five major cost categories: pre-departure, recruitment, selection, orientation and training, and productivity loss. This model was followed by the development of a web-based computer programme, specifically designed for the hospitality industry, which allows to assess the average cost of turnover for any number of positions and to run comparisons, as “each category comprises several cost categories (i.e., formulas) that when combined would provide a reasonable estimate of the total cost of turnover”²⁸ (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000, 2005).

Although costs vary by industry, position or geography, most organisations face, to some extent, separation/pre-departure costs, recruitment/attraction/selection costs, and hiring/orientation and training costs. Although these **direct costs** are substantial, most literature puts special emphasis on the indirect effects of turnover, which result from operational disruption and have strong implications on organisational performance. Hindered performance can be due to vacancy costs, pre-departure productivity loss, learning curve (cost incurred and lost revenue), errors/mistakes, supervisory and peer disruption, loss of knowledge and expertise, demoralisation of organisational membership or loss of client relationship (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Phillips & Connell, 2003b, 2003c; Staw, 1980; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008). These **indirect costs** have been shown to account for the largest percentage of the costs and are perhaps the most difficult to access and monitor (Phillips & Connell, 2003c; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008). Apart from productivity losses, operational disruption negatively impacts job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and particularly in the T&H industry, where the relationship between employees

²⁸ This 10-minute and eight screens tool, which was named *Turnover Cost Evaluator* and made available at the Cornell University Center for Hospitality Research website, allows practitioners to accurately compute all of the costs associated with the departure and replacement of an employee and immediately visualise and print the results (Hinkin & Tracey, 2005). Managers can also use this tool to “create ‘what if’ scenarios to determine how much an increase or decrease in the turnover rate might affect the overall cost”. The authors have also been using the programme and subsequent web-based version to collect data and test the proposed methodology (Hinkin & Tracey, 2006, p. 9).

and customers is critical, may cause a deterioration in the quality of service and the of the organisation (Emiroğlu et al., 2015; Kim, 2014).

As it is believed that employees who perform better in their jobs have more external employment opportunities available than poor performers, high turnover is generally presented as harmful to firm performance (Holtom et al., 2008). Losing employees that are highly skilled may lead to the erosion of the company's implicit knowledge base, as the tacit knowledge that was accumulated by the employee during the duration of employment is lost, thus hindering the development of organisational competencies and the company's competitive advantage (Blomme et al., 2010; Walsh et al., 2010).

Furthermore, when key members leave, not only the organisation loses human capital as the morale of remaining employees is also affected. This happens either when the curiosity about the reasons why a colleague is leaving distracts them from their tasks, or when team members are forced to take on the workload of departing colleagues, solve problems caused by their departure or do some of the work of the new employees, often neglecting their own responsibilities to the customer while doing so (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Phillips & Connell, 2003a). Ultimately, turnover may provoke a chain-reaction or a reflective sentiment among the remaining members, making them question their own motivations to stay, when another individual is considered that job as not desirable anymore. Former co-workers may re-evaluate their position in the organisation and possibly develop negative job attitudes (Staw, 1980; Steers & Mowday, 1981). Following these assumptions, and although most research is focused on turnover as an individual phenomenon, there is also a line of research dedicated to the study of **collective turnover**, which is defined by Bartunek, Huang and Walsh (2008, p. 6) as "the turnover of two or more organizational members in close temporal proximity based on shared social processes and decisions to leave an organization". Hence, the perceived reasons of turnover is a key moderator, highly influencing demoralisation among other employees, as individual factors (e.g., family problems, location, economic conditions) are less likely to result in demoralisation than organisational factors (e.g., nature of the work, pay or leadership behaviours) (Staw, 1980). The impact will be higher as more cohesive the work group is, or as higher the organisational social status of the departing member is (Bartunek et al., 2008; Mobley, 1982; Staw, 1980).

At the end of the line, high turnover may have a tremendous negative impact on the quality of customer service and lead, in turn, to a drop in customer satisfaction, to the loss of regular customers and to a decline in company profit. This impact is particularly relevant when there is high turnover of front-line employees, who are key providers of external customer service and are "constantly involved in fire-fighting when their departments are staffed with inexperienced employees", thus being more susceptible of experiencing burnout (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000, p. 20; Phillips & Connell, 2003a). When there is the need to fill in vacancies quickly, managers often incur in little-weighted and indiscriminate hires, which only compromises the service experience (Tews, Michel, & Allen, 2014). The hotel industry, in particular, traditionally relies on casual employees, who are engaged by the hour at will and have multiple jobs, as a means of achieving labour flexibility and filling in job vacancies. Naturally, this poses additional challenges in terms of training effort, company loyalty, quality of service and productivity (Davidson et al., 2010).

Globally, high turnover may cause severe damages in the image of a company, and a bad reputation in recruitment channels can be difficult to revert (Phillips & Connell, 2003a).

Both when the departure is voluntary or involuntary, there are usually some problems that could have been avoided, and that create a huge variety of **negative implications for individuals** who made the decision of leaving his/her job.

As most employee benefits are related to tenure, starting a new job implies losing the benefits tied to the previous organisation and 'resetting the clock'. The same can be observed regarding career progression, as changing to a different organisation may involve starting from a lower base, which may represent a setback in career development, payroll status or even in the professional's self-esteem. Some individuals also leave their jobs without immediate employment alternatives, which may result in increased financial difficulties (Mobley, 1982; Phillips & Connell, 2003a). In dual-income households, one of the members of the couple changing to a different job (possibility with different employment conditions and location) may also impact on the career of the spouse or have further implications in social and family support systems (Mobley, 1982). For many workers, the workplace is their primary – and sometimes, the only – social network, which means that moving to a different organisation will mean cutting-off these ties and losing the emotional support they provide (Phillips & Connell, 2003a).

Quitting can also result in high levels of stress and anxiety, as "significant energy is expended on finding new jobs, and adjusting to new situations", as well as it implies "giving up known routines and inter-personal connections at one's previous place of employment", even when it's a desired transition (Holtom et al., 2008, p. 233). Leaving employees who used to work in developing projects or innovative practices may also experience feelings of wasted effort and time after working in a given organisation (Phillips & Connell, 2003a). On the other hand, employees may have also set high expectations about the chosen job alternative, which may have come to be dashed by the reality of the new organisation, and frequent job changes may also not be easy to explain to potential future employers (Mobley, 1982).

Studies addressing the impact of turnover are dominated by a concern with its detrimental effects on costs and expenses and on organisational effectiveness, and both the impact of the voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover to an organisation is enormous (Cho et al., 2009). Nevertheless, it would be too simplistic to face turnover as a negative issue since in a market economy, a reasonable degree of employee turnover has also positive implications for organisations, provided that it is kept to a certain manageable level (Lv, Xu, & Ji, 2012). "In today's changing world of work, reasonable levels of employee-initiated turnover improve organizational flexibility and employee independence, and they can lessen the need for management-initiated layoffs" (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 28).

The **benefits of turnover** have received less attention than the costs, as they are somewhat less obvious and even more difficult to quantify. Increased performance, reduction of entrenched conflict, increased mobility and staff morale, and higher potential for innovation and adaptation, are some of the potential positive impacts of turnover for employers (Staw, 1980).

If in one hand, the turnover of capable and high skilled employees is considered a loss to the company, the turnover of incapable or complaining employees is an opportunity to hire new employees and reach more desirable outcomes (Kim, Im, & Hwang, 2015). If the *right* people

are leaving, it creates an opportunity to replace underperforming individuals by someone with higher skills or motivation (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Although the traditional perspective presents the performance of a new employee as initially low, that will only reach the level of the preceding employee after a certain period of time and after gaining some experience, there are some potential gains in performance to which little attention is given to. A new employee may be more highly motivated than the departing employee or even possessing greater abilities and up-to-date training. This can be particularly relevant for high contact jobs, such as those in the tourism and hospitality field, where employees can become psychologically burned out over time (Staw, 1980).

From an evolutionary perspective, turnover may also be useful to 'break' the homogeneity in the profile of older organisational members, who can be highly committed to previous practices and policies (which may have been successful in the past but are currently outmoded or inappropriate) and are highly resistant to change. Usually, the higher the hierarchical level in which turnover occurs, the bigger the changes in organisational policy are. In lower levels, turnover is less likely to provide much change, as these roles do not exert so much influence on others. However, "the *potential* for innovation does exist on all organisational levels with many valuable improvements coming from middle and lower levels" (Staw, 1980, p. 264). With regards to the succession policy, it should be noted that while inside succession may be beneficial for staff morale, it may reduce the potential for adaptation, as the new role occupant it's likely to have the same background, experiences and policy commitment as his/her predecessor. An outside replacement is more likely to bring new perspectives and less likely to conform (Staw, 1980).

Instead of been considered a cost to the organisation, turnover may also contribute to the reduction of entrenched conflict – which can be both hierarchical (e.g., between workers and supervisors) and lateral (e.g., among workers in the same department) –, when it helps to resolve deep-seated conflicts among organisational members. In situations of unresolved strife, when one party decides to leave rather than continuing the fight, this may actually help to stabilise the organisational environment and even also proves to be beneficial for the individuals involved (Mobley, 1982; Staw, 1980).

Even when the people leaving are cherished by their co-workers or considered valuable to the organisation, their exit may leave vacant positions that otherwise would not be available. As little turnover may not give room for the organisation to promote highly competent employees, the departure of some employees may be determinant of internal promotion opportunities. However, this is only likely when there is little organisational growth (and there is no rapid expansion by acquisition) and policies of inside succession are privileged (Staw, 1980). Turnover can also be considered beneficial to organisational performance when it is preferable that disgruntled employees leave, rather than engaging in other withdrawal and counterproductive behaviours, such as absenteeism, lateness, sabotage or production deviance (Mobley, 1982).

For an employee, turnover can also be positive when he/she has outgrown opportunities in a given organisation and can advance his/her career in other organisation, looking for example, for employment with better pay, more challenging tasks or a more supportive and pleasant organisational climate. Changing to a different organisation may also reduce stress levels and

anxiety and solve any existing conflicts, which may improve the individual's psychological well-being. When successful in finding another job, individuals may also feel more self-confident and efficient, as well as proud before his/her family and friends for taking a better job position (Mobley, 1982).

In sum, given the extensive potential consequences of employee turnover (which disruptive power is consensually considered to be higher than the benefits) and the different instances of quitting, organisations should focus their efforts at the individual level, identifying who they most want to prevent from quitting and the reasons driving the desire to leave. This will allow them to determine if they desire to take some action to avoid turnover (as in some situations organisations won't wish to stop poor performers from leaving) and what inducements they are willing to offer to make valuable employees stay.

These debates between the negative and positive impacts of turnover relate to the **functionality** of turnover, highlighting the need of differentiating leavers in terms of their productivity and assessing the extent to which they are or not an asset to the organisation (Hom et al., 2012; Morrell et al., 2001). The impact of turnover varies based on many factors, such as the difficulty in replacing high-skilled workers or the amount of training required for some job positions. Using the restaurant and fast food industry as an example, due to the predominance of transient and low-skilled staff, workers are frequently replaced without major impacts for both parts, as limited training is required to reach full productivity and leavers can easily find similar employment options. In contrast, as result of a more appealing job offer or lack of opportunities for career progression, if a company loses knowledgeable and experienced personnel, especially when they occupy positions of responsibility, this may impact the business at many levels and for an indefinite period of time. Estimates of the losses for an employee may vary from a few thousand dollars to more than two times the worker's salary depending on the industry, the content of the job, the availability of replacements and other factors (Holtom et al., 2008). Robbins (1995) cit. by Yang, Wan and Fu (2012), for example, pointed out that overall costs associated with employee turnover range 1.2 to 2 times higher than the annual salary of the former employee, with an average cost of 1.5 times higher.

Therefore, **dysfunctional turnover** refers to harmful results to an organisation, while **functional turnover** results in the possibility for improvement in human resource management by facilitating the exit of low-performing employees. However, the distinction between functional and dysfunctional leavers is only relevant when turnover isn't an acute problem, as coping and retention initiatives are irrelevant if there isn't sufficient labour power (Morrell et al., 2001).

4.3.2 Determinants of voluntary turnover: main theories and foundational models

Organisations' urge for greater control over voluntary turnover has inspired a considerable amount of research on this topic and many theories have been put out in an attempt to understand the turnover phenomenon. Most of turnover models describe the turnover phenomenon as a multistage process composed of attitudinal (e.g., affective disposition such as satisfaction), intentional (e.g., intention to leave) and behavioural (turnover) components that flow towards the decision to quit or stay, focusing on the moderating or predictive role of a vast

number of competing antecedent variables which are mainly defined by interactions between the employees and their work environment.

When analysing the vast literature on turnover, Morrell et al. (2001) highlight two dominant perspectives or traditions of turnover research: the economic/labour market school and the psychological school. Labour market accounts are more typically determinist as they place more emphasis on externally determined variables, such as opportunity or unemployment (e.g., labour supply and demand, job search, availability of job opportunities or perceived alternatives). Psychological accounts (e.g., March & Simon, 1958; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979; Price & Mueller, 1986; Sheridan & Abelson, 1983) are essentially voluntarist, the focus is on employees and they emphasize the decision dimension of turnover, the role of individual choice and affective issues. Therefore, the first preclude the use of selective human resource strategies and their solutions may be beyond the companies' ability to influence labour market variables, whereas the former allows an effective management of turnover, by giving firms the possibility of allocating resources on a specific employee or group of employees (Morrell et al., 2001).

The 'core' dominant models that have shaped the research on turnover – as pictured in Figure 4.3 – are chronologically listed and briefly introduced below. These models had a profound impact on subsequent theorizing and on the work of many later authors.

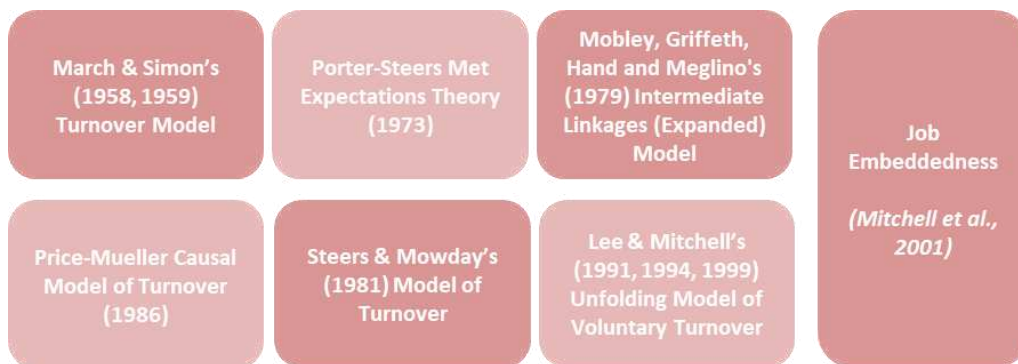


Figure 4.3 | Major theoretical frameworks of voluntary turnover

Source: Own construction

March & Simon's (1958, 1959) Turnover Model

The first complete and stand-alone turnover theory was proposed by James March and Herbert Simon in the 1950s (March & Simon, 1958), and it has influenced many of the theories of turnover that would follow. In their now classic book *Organizations*, they presented a literature-based model of the 'decision to participate', in which the perceived desirability of movement and the perceived ease of movement in and out of an organisation (concepts which today are typically labelled as job satisfaction and perceived alternatives (Holtom et al., 2008)) are the two end-stage processes at the centre of this model. Mainly influenced by the theory of Organisational Equilibrium of Barnard (1938), March and Simon argued that all employees

confront two fundamental decisions in their interactions with a company: the decision *to produce* and the decision *to participate*. “The decision to produce involves whether employees are willing to work as hard and produce as much as the organization demands. The decision to participate concerns whether various participants – primarily employees, but March and Simon also discussed customers and investors – choose to remain with the organization or leave” (D. E. Bowen & Siehl, 1997, p. 57).

March and Simon theorised about a state of equilibrium between an individual’s contribution to an organisation (e.g., work) and the organisational compensation/inducements (e.g., pay) which is provided in return; thus, individuals decide to quit when this compensation is considered to be no longer balanced with the contribution. This balance was described by the authors as being function of two motivational dimensions: perceived desirability of movement, which is influenced by job satisfaction and the possibility of intra-organisational transfer (evidently dependent on the size of the organisation), and perceived ease of movement, which is determined by the number of perceived opportunities available outside the organisation (see Figure 4.4).

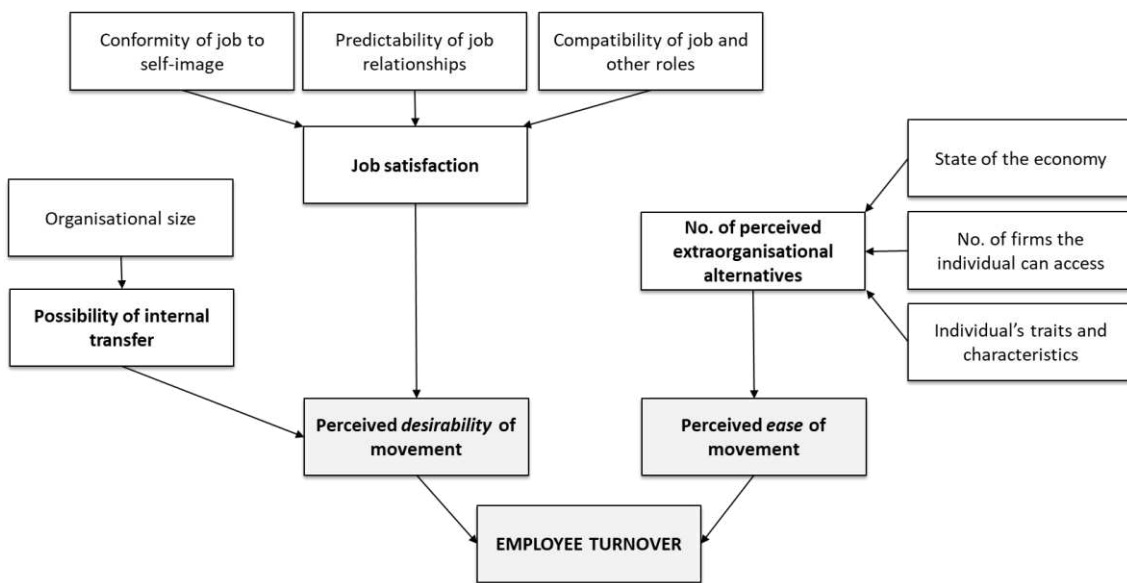


Figure 4.4 | March and Simon’s turnover model

Source: Own construction based on Mobley (1982) and Morrell et al. (2001)

Some authors (e.g., Lee & Mitchell, 1994) consider that the success of this model may have overly influenced the subsequent conceptual models and that it failed in including important variables (e.g., different forms of organisational commitment), but despite offering a static and perhaps too simplistic view, and although few studies have directly tested it, its importance relies on the “number of ideas which it incorporates that are still the object of turnover researchers’ attention” (Morrell et al., 2001, p. 232).

Porter-Steers Met Expectations Theory (1973) and subsequent work

Lyman Porter and his associates have proposed several key constructs that profoundly shaped turnover theory and research until today. Influenced by Vroom's Expectancy theory (see section 4.3.3), Porter and Steers' (1973) theory presents employees' 'unmet expectations' as the driving factor in influencing turnover decisions, in which met expectations are considered as a "discrepancy between what a person encounters on his job in the way of positive and negative experiences and what he expected to encounter" (p. 152). Porter and Steers (1973) have proposed four 'levels' or categories of factors that were found to affect withdrawal and that appear to be widespread throughout the various facets of the organisational structure:

- i. Organisation-wide factors (pay and promotion, job security, and organisational size);
- ii. Immediate work environment factors (supervisory style, work unit size, and the nature of peer group interaction);
- iii. Job-related factors (general nature of the work, job stress and repetitiveness, job autonomy and responsibility, and role ambiguity and conflict); and
- iv. Personal factors (age, tenure with the organisation, similarity of job and vocational interest, personality characteristics, and family considerations).

These four categories essentially group possible 'internal' variables, as they are related to the individual's identification with a work situation. Although considered pertinent in the analysis of withdrawal behaviours, 'external' variables (e.g., economic conditions, availability of job opportunities) were not included in their framework. The more closely the job fulfils the employees' initial expectations, the greater it will be their job satisfaction; when an individual's expectations²⁹ are not substantially met, the propensity to withdraw will increase. This model has become a central theory of job satisfaction and stimulated Realistic Job Previews theory and research (see also section 4.3.3) (Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017).

Porter and his colleagues (Porter, Crampon, & Smith, 1976; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974) also pioneered the research on **organisational commitment** (see section 4.3.2) as an attitude that could explain different portions of turnover variance than job satisfaction. Their seminal work has evolved into a new strand of research on organisational commitment and was expanded by other scholars (Hom et al., 2017). Later, Dalton, Krackhardt and Porter (1981) also came to challenge the assumption that turnover was always dysfunctional and urged the need to further examine the quitters, thus presenting the idea that the loss of surplus, low-quality, or costly labour (i.e., functional turnover) could eventually enhance organisational performance (Hom et al., 2017).

Mobley, Griffeth, Hand and Meglino's (1979) Intermediate Linkages (Expanded) Model

William Mobley (1977) is the author of the, considered by many, most influential single paper on turnover (Hom et al., 2017). Conceptually influenced by March and Simon (1958) and Locke's (1976) job satisfaction construct, Mobley posited that the relation between satisfaction and turnover was not simple and straightforward, and he was the first to theorise that turnover intention is the direct antecedent variable of turnover behaviour, thus being the proximal and

²⁹ cf. Locke (1976) for more specific distinction between different levels of expectations.

strongest predictor of leaving. In his originally dubbed 'Intermediate Linkages Model', Mobley (1977) theorised about a sequence of withdrawal cognitions and job-search behaviours that would intervene between the experience of job dissatisfaction and the decision to quit³⁰.

Later, and together with his colleagues (Mobley et al., 1979, 1978), an extended version of the model was proposed. As a result of several refinements, and following conceptual traditions in the domain of attitude theory (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009), this was considered as a groundbreaking content model in clarifying a large array of distal causes why people quit their jobs and still influence today's research on voluntary turnover (Hom et al., 2017; Morrell et al., 2001). This model suggests that there are four core antecedents for the decision to quit: job satisfaction, expected utility of alternate roles within the organisation, expected utility of alternate roles outside the organisation, and non-work values and roles (Figure 4.5) (Mobley, 1982)³¹. "In the expanded model, employee values, job perceptions, and labour market perceptions combined to influence withdrawal intentions via the linkages" (Holtom et al., 2008, p. 237).

This model allows scoping for individual differences, as the authors considered that some factors might influence employees in different ways and not equally apply to all organisational members. For example, whereas in other models routinisation is considered to negatively influence job satisfaction (see Price and Mueller, 1986), Mobley and his colleagues posit that one individual may find routine demotivating, while another may consider it as a sign of stability. Although these differences in perceptions may place problems in rendering some variables, this may increase the potential of this model to *understand*, rather than to *predict* turnover (Morrell et al., 2001). Expectancy theory was also central in the development of this model, as emphasis in the anticipation of future outcomes is also placed by the authors. Satisfaction is a present-oriented evaluation but by itself does not address the expectancy of future satisfaction, considering the impact of changes over time. According to this, it is possible for an individual to be dissatisfied at work, yet to remain in the expectation that things will improve or that an eventual positive utility may come (e.g., promotion). On the contrary, it is also possible for an individual to be satisfied at work but still looking for a more satisfying employment situation or facing the expectation of things getting worse (Hom et al., 2017; Morrell et al., 2001).

Mobley et al. (1979) were among the first to identify potential moderating effects on the turnover decision (e.g., non-work values, gratification, impulsive behaviour) as well as suggesting alternative withdrawal behaviours such as increased absenteeism (Holtom et al., 2008). By including economic, individual, environmental and organisational variables, as well as emphasizing values and expectancy, the complexity and comprehensiveness of this model also becomes its main limitation (Mobley, 1982). Therefore, empirical assessment of the model as a whole is difficult and subsequent research has only validated or partly validated portions of the model. Although empirical findings have been contradicting Mobley's linear progression of mediating processes and new alternative structural configurations have been suggested over

³⁰ Evaluation of job; experienced job dissatisfaction; thoughts of quitting; evaluation of subjective expected utility of job search and costs of quitting; search intentions; evaluation of alternatives; comparison of alternatives versus present job; intention to quit/stay; and quit/stay.

³¹ For a more detailed description of these four core areas please see Mobley (1982).

the years, his constructs and measures are still present in modern theory and work (Morrell et al., 2001).

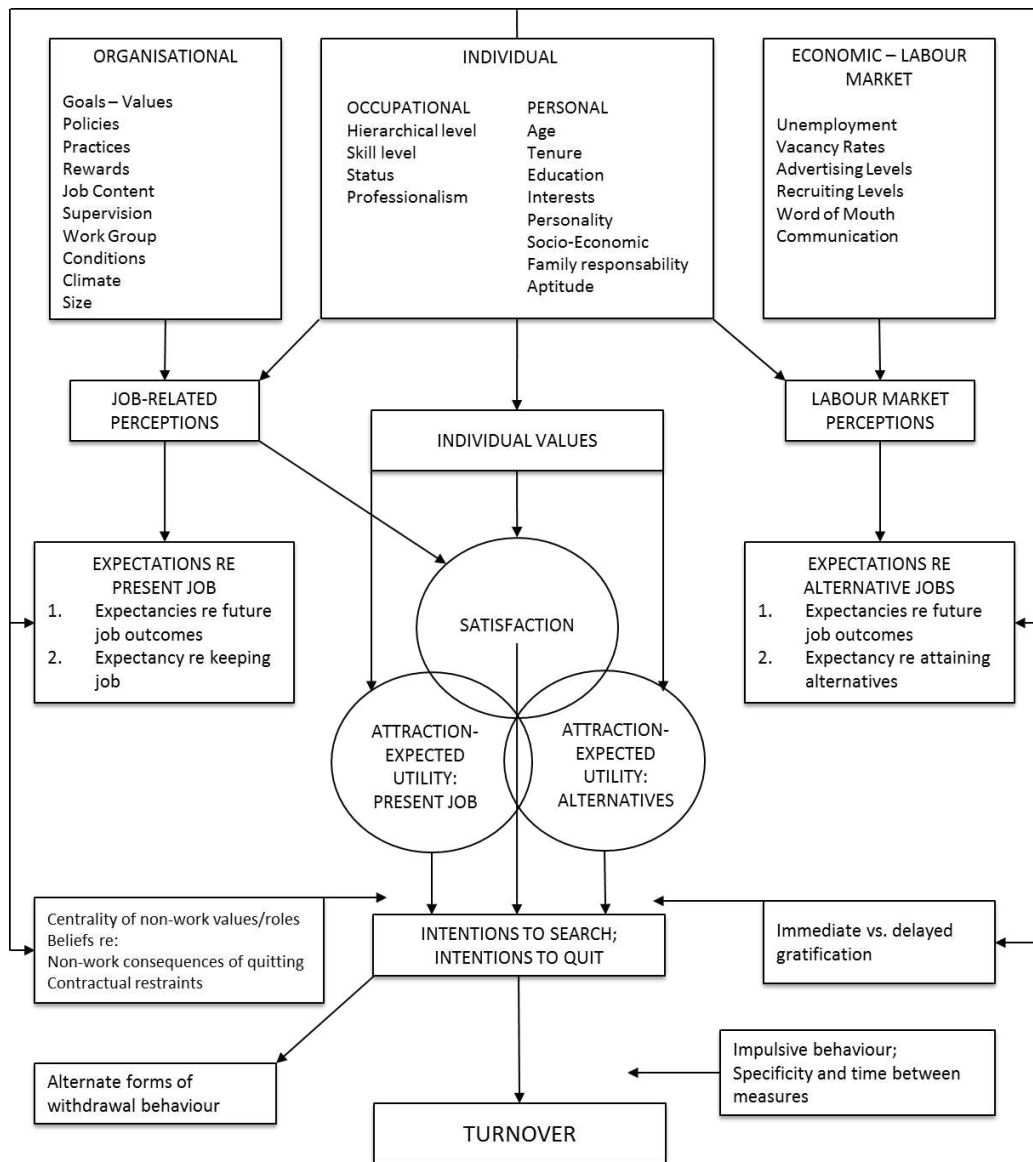


Figure 4.5 | Mobley et al.'s (1979) expanded model

Source: Mobley (1982)

Price-Mueller Causal Model of Turnover (1986)

One of the most widely accepted theoretical models, Price and Mueller's (1986) work places emphasis on "analysing the causal determinants of [voluntary] turnover, and outlining the causal pathways between antecedent variables and the ultimate dependent variable 'turnover'" (Morrell et al., 2001, p. 234). In comparison with March and Simon's, Price and Mueller's causal and structural approach offers a much more dynamic account of turnover, formally reflecting the view that turnover is the outcome of an employee's decision process.

Their model is the result of the extension and refinement of earlier frameworks (Price, 1977; Price & Mueller, 1981) and had its foundations in a 'structural' model of turnover that began to be developed by Price in 1972. Capitalizing on his sociology background and informed by an extensive and methodical review of literature and empirical data from a broad range of disciplines, Price (1977) identified a comprehensive list of determinants of turnover. In Price's model, the organisation is the unit of analysis (together with its subunits, such as departments and work colleagues) and impacts for individuals and society were not included (Price, 1989). As with many models, some shortcomings emerged when testing the model (including the lack of occupational heterogeneity of the sample, which was restricted to hospital staff) and, over time, Price and Muller revised and enhanced their framework by adding other exogenous and endogenous variables.

These researchers placed the causal determinants of their model – the exogenous variables – into three major groups: environmental (opportunity and kinship responsibilities), individual (general training, job involvement, and positive and negative affectivity), and structural (autonomy, justice, stress, pay, promotional chances, routinisation and social support) factors. Job satisfaction, organisational commitment, search behaviour and intent to stay were advanced as endogenous/intervening variables, whose values were determined by the other variables in the model and that work as moderators between the causal determinants and the dependent variable 'turnover' (Price, 2001) (Figure 4.6).

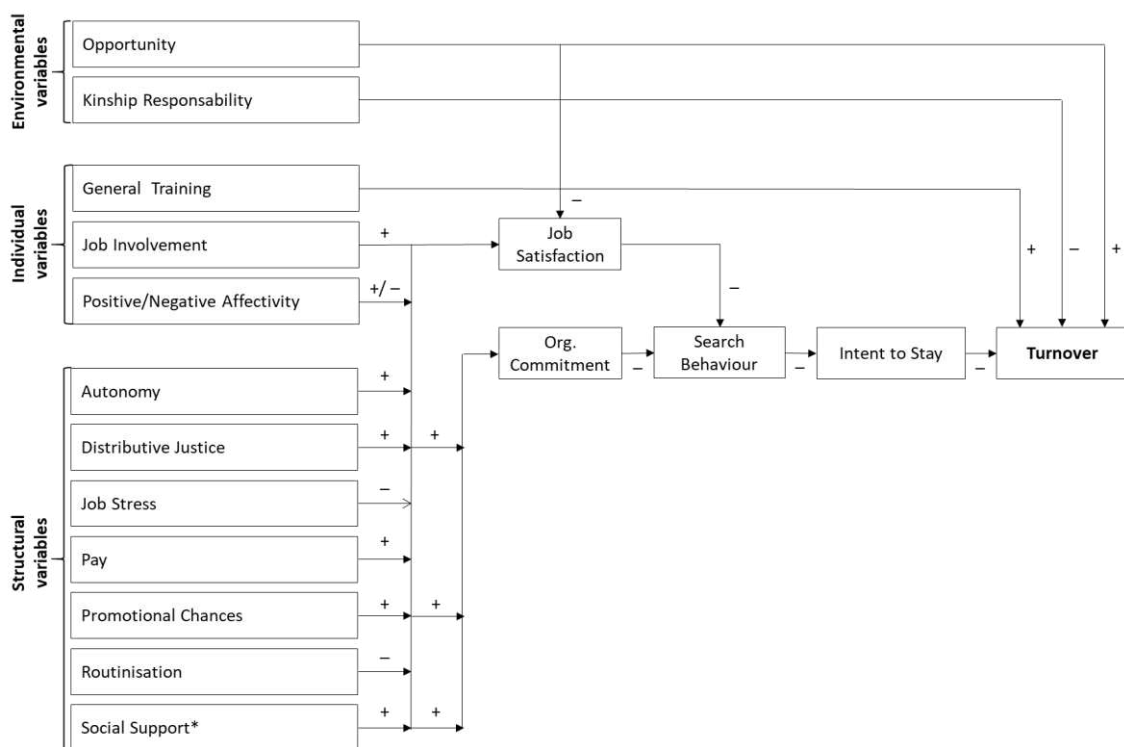


Figure 4.6 | Price and Mueller's causal model of turnover

Source: Own construction based on Price (2001)

Figure key: (+) Positive relationship; (-) Negative relationship; * Only supervisory support has impact on job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

More than focusing on attitudinal causes, Price and Muller's theories emphasized key environmental drivers, with potential to result in practical models that could assist managers in their efforts to reduce voluntary leaving, and that still influence modern research on external influences of turnover. This model "captured not only workplace (e.g., integration, pay) and labour market (job opportunity) causes but also community (kinship responsibility) and occupational (professionalism) drivers" (Hom et al., 2017, p. 533). Other theorists consider, however, that besides the summation of empirical findings and rigorous testing of causal pathways, Price and Muller's work might have widened its potential if fundamental theory of behaviour and action – like that of March and Simon's – wasn't missing (Morrell et al., 2001).

Steers & Mowday's (1981) Model of Turnover

Critiquing the fragmented developments on turnover theory by that date, Steers and Mowday (1981) attempted to incorporate previous turnover models into a comprehensive process model of voluntary employee termination. Steers and Mowday (1981) theorised both about turnover as well as accommodation, thereby presenting their model in two parts: (i) the procedures by which employees decide to stay or leave an organisation; and (ii) the procedures by which employees learn to cope with their participation decision once it has been made.

By gathering the existing literature on the topic, they proposed a sequence of variables leading to employees' staying with or leaving an organisation, and included some unique features (Figure 4.7). Three main segments compose their model (Hom et al., 2017; Lee & Mowday, 1987; Steers & Mowday, 1981):

- i. (a) Job expectations and values, (b) organisational characteristics and experiences and (c) job performance level, were presented as determinants of employees' affective responses to their jobs. Steers and Mowday put special emphasis on the job performance level, arguing that a high job performance may heighten one's expectations concerning organisational rewards, while poor performers may adopt a 'who cares?' attitude or try to rationalise their poor job attitudes ('this is a crummy job anyway'). Job expectations and values in particular, are influenced by (a) individual characteristics (e.g., age, sex, education, family responsibilities), (b) available information about a job and an organisation³², and (c) alternative job opportunities.
- ii. Employees' affective responses to the job affect their intention to stay/to leave, and this relation is moderated by non-work influences (e.g., transference of one's spouse). The role of several job attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment and job involvement, were discussed. Although most models present termination as inevitable once an employee is dissatisfied, the affective responses may alternatively lead a dissatisfied employee to promptly try to change the situation or eliminate those aspects of the work situation that are compelling him/her to leave (e.g., attempted intra-organisational transfer, attempts to restructure one's job or job responsibilities, threatening to leave), to withdraw in other way (e.g., absenteeism, drug abuse or

³² Following the literature on 'realistic job previews', these modellers consider that when people are better informed about prospective jobs, they are more likely to develop realistic job expectations that can be more easily met by the organisation (Steers & Mowday, 1981).

alcoholism, sabotage, slow-downs) or to cognitively re-evaluate the job more favourably, which could influence subsequent attitudes.

- iii. Turnover is ultimately determined by the intention to leave the organisation and by job search success, i.e., the existence of alternative job opportunities (presented in the model as a moderator). Alternative job opportunities in particular, are primarily determined by (a) individual characteristics and (b) labour market and economic conditions. However, Steers and Mowday posited the existence of multiple turnover routes as the sequence of variables may differ across individuals (e.g., for some employees the intention to leave may lead them directly to quit, even without another job offer, while other employees may initiate the search for a more attractive job, leaving only after acquiring a new job). Feedback loops were also outlined in this model, showing other ways of managing dissatisfaction besides leaving. For example, with regard to the availability of alternative job opportunities, if the market conditions change and the employee is presented with the possibility of a new position, his/her expectations may increase; but if the organisation finds difficult to meet these expectations, the employees' attitudes may change and the desire/intention to leave is reinforced.

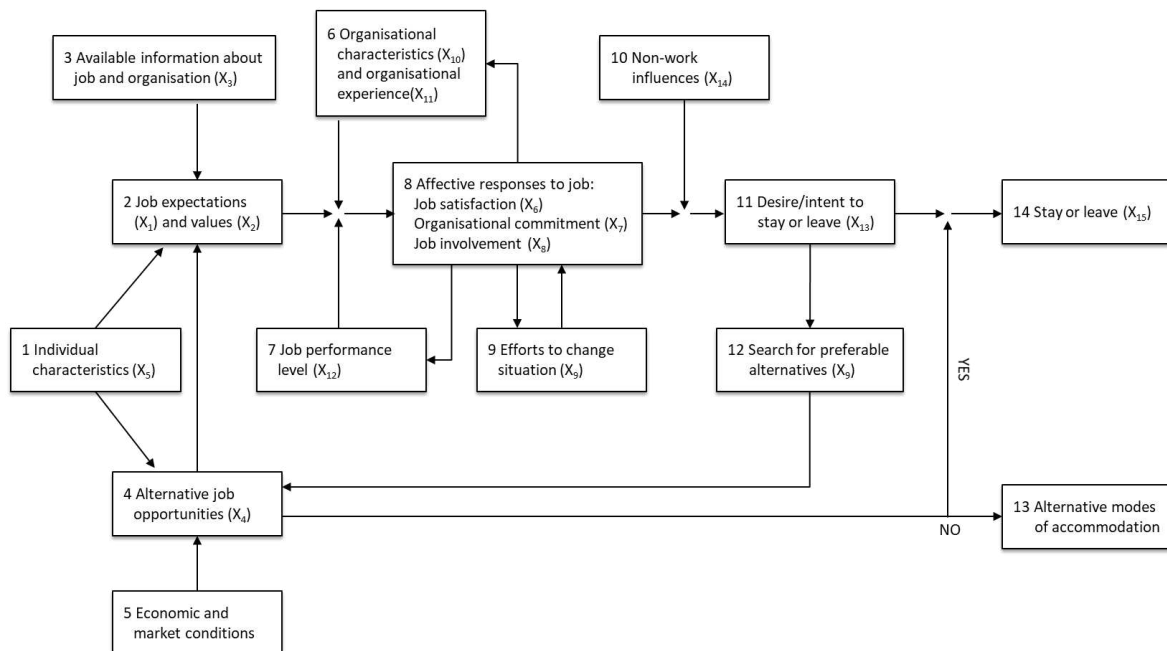


Figure 4.7 | Steers and Mowday's model of turnover

Source: Mowday et al. (1982)

Lee & Mitchell's (1991, 1994, 1999) Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover

By the early 1990's turnover research was somewhat stationery, until Lee and Mitchell (1994; 1999) challenged the prevailing paradigm and put forth a radically new turnover theory to explain organisational attachment, known as the 'Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover'

(Morrell et al., 2001), partly based upon some of the ideas presented by Mobley (1977), Steers and Mowday (1981), and Hulin and his associates (1985). Up to this moment, traditional turnover theories hold that quitting was a process initiated by job dissatisfaction, followed by search of alternatives, and completed with an evaluation of these alternatives based on their subjective expected utility (attractiveness vs. risk).

Influenced by ‘image theory’³³ of decision making, Lee and Mitchell portray human decision-making as a nonlinear process, proposing that turnover may not always be the result of accumulated job dissatisfaction (but of other factors instead), may occur without much deliberation at all (without comparing alternatives), and may be based in a compatibility judgment (Holtom et al., 2008; Lee, Mitchell, Wise, & Fireman, 1996). Focused on *how* people leave their jobs, this model and its key constructs have been endorsed by scholars and practitioners, becoming the dominant turnover perspective.

Lee and his colleagues (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999; Lee et al., 1996) were also pioneers in using qualitative methodology for validating turnover models, by conducting interviews with leavers and, based on pattern matching, determining that the majority of leavers followed one of four theorized paths (Hom et al., 2017). The model’s major components include ‘shocks to the system’ – a shock being a jarring event (internal or external) that initiates the psychological decision process involved in quitting a job – and the amount of psychological analysis that precedes a decision to quit and the act of quitting (which can vary from a simple and quick judgment to a highly rational, expected-value comparison of alternatives) (Lee et al., 1996). Each path, as depicted in Figure 4.8 and briefly explained below, summarizes how employees interpret their work environments, by describing possible combinations of shocks (or no shocks), and how they identify decision options and enact responses (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee et al., 1996):

- i. *Path #1 (Script + Shock)* – Some shocks activate a pre-existing action plan, to which the authors refer to as a *matching script*, and induce leaving; yet, this shock doesn’t need to be surprising or negative. For example, “a female employee may have planned in some detail how she would stay home for a few years to raise her first child upon becoming pregnant (a script); when pregnancy actually occurs (a shock), the script is enacted by her actual quitting”. This particular example also emphasizes that some leavers not always quit for other job, but rather exit the workforce for full-time schooling or stay-at-home parenting (Lee et al., 1996, p. 7);
- ii. *Path #2 (Shock + Image violation)* – A shock prompts an employee to reassess the quality of his/her basic attachment to the organisation, making him/her question the desire to be a member. This reassessment occurs in the absence of job alternatives and results in the binary outcome of staying or quitting. These shocks, usually negative, may cause the individual to believe that there is a mismatch between his/her values, goals, or goal strategies; the employee leaves or stays depending on the discrepancies emerging from comparison process. For example, an employee is bypassed for promotion (a shock),

³³ According to image theory (Beach, 1990), people are constantly bombarded with information that could potentially lead to changes in behaviour. Most of the time the status quo is maintained and information that suggests changes is screened and rejected, rarely forcing people into decision modes (T. W. Lee & Mitchell, 1994).

thus feeling that his/her career has been seriously hindered (an image violation), which makes him/her decided that is no longer possible to continue in that company.

- iii. *Path #3 (Shock + Image violation + Disaffection + Job search + Evaluation of alternatives + Offers in hand)* – A shock prompts an employee to assess if a basic attachment could be formed with another organisation, making him/her question the desire to leave the current organisation. This assessment occurs in the presence of at least one specific job alternative (which may include unsolicited job offers). In contrast to decision path #2, decision path #3 involves three sets of judgements and there have no immediate outcomes as staying or leaving. In the first set, if there is fit of values, goals, or goal strategies, the employee stays; if not, the employee engages in some level of disaffection, which prompts the examination of job alternatives. In the second set, the employee assesses the fit between images and possible job alternatives for compatibility. Here, if there is a fit, the employee further scrutinises the fitting alternative; if not, the employee rules out the alternative. In the third set, the alternatives are analysed based on their subjective expected utility and the employee chooses the option that is judged to better fit his/her preferences. In the end, either the current organisation is judged better and the employee stays, or another organisation is judged better and the employee leaves. For example, a woman is transferred to another location (a shock) and becomes unhappy (misfit between shock and images), which drives her to read employment advertisements. When alternatives are located, if considered acceptable but no better than the current situation, she stays; if considered acceptable and better than the present situation, she leaves.
- iv. *Path #4* – No shock is involved and an assessment of one's fit to the job occurs gradually. "Over time, some employees may come to believe that they no longer fit in their jobs, because their values have become compromised or their goals are not being reached". This may have two possible outcomes: if there is fit, the employee experiences job satisfaction; if there is not fit, some job dissatisfaction is suggested. In a no-fit scenario, decision path #4 can produce two sub-paths. In *Path #4a (Image violation + Disaffection)*, the employee may judge to be highly dissatisfied and simply quit, regardless of the presence or absence of alternatives. In *Path #4b (Image violation + Disaffection + Job search + Evaluation of alternatives + Offers in hand)*, people engaged in quitting processes as described by the traditional turnover models. Theoretically, this path begins with some level of job dissatisfaction, which leads to lower organisational commitment, job search activity, perception of the feasibility of mobility, intention to leave, and higher likelihood of quitting.

In an extensive critical review on voluntary turnover research, Holtom et al. (2008) do acknowledge the existence of accumulated evidence supporting the key elements of this model, in particular the shock concept, built from numerous samples (though limited to Western societies).

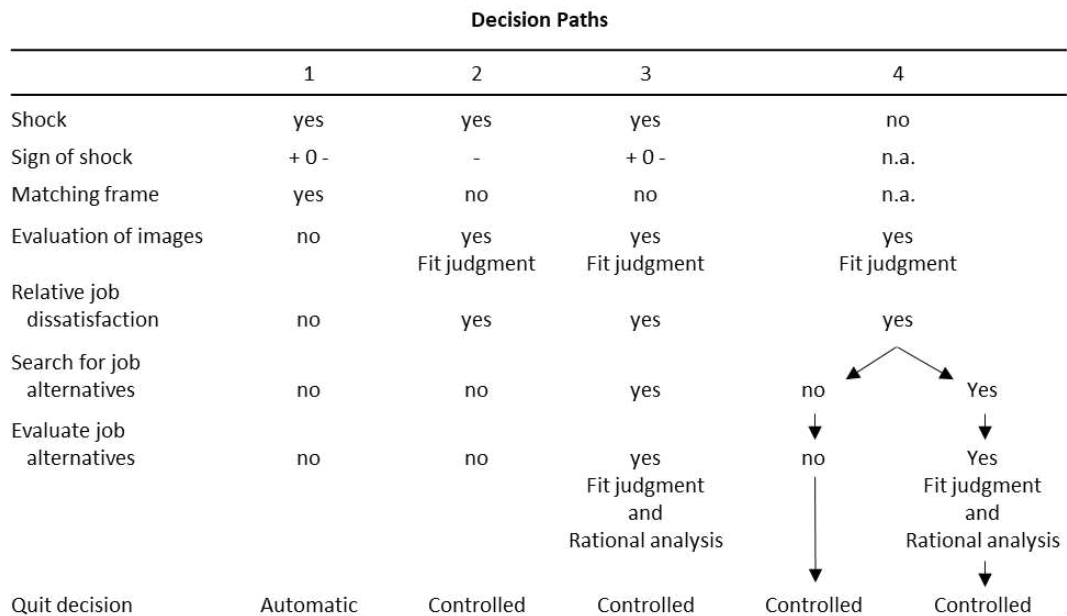


Figure 4.8 | Decision paths of the Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover and its characteristics

Source: Lee and Mitchell (1994)

Perceived job alternatives

Job and employment security are also key concepts in the discussion on turnover, because even individuals employed in insecure jobs may not perceive their situation as bad, if they consider having chances of finding a good job elsewhere. Besides, whereas job security means to continue employed in the same job, employment security refers to availability of other jobs within the labour market.

Not surprisingly, alternative job opportunities are a common constituent of almost all main models of turnover (March & Simon, 1958; Mobley et al., 1979; Steers & Mowday, 1981). “The greater the number of attractive job alternatives, the more demanding an individual may be when evaluating his or her current job or job offer” (Steers & Mowday, 1981). The attractiveness of alternative jobs also changes over time, because as time goes by, expectations tend to become more realistic, employees are more knowledgeable about their organisation and employees are more likely to develop behavioural commitments that make it less attractive to leave the organisation and find employment somewhere else. Therefore, the relevance of alternative jobs is higher at the stage of organisational entry (Mowday et al., 1982). However, as seen in Steers and Mowday’s (1981) model of turnover, a feedback loop regarding the availability of alternative job opportunities can also occur, meaning that if an employee is offered a new and attractive alternative position, his/her expectations on the current job are likely to change and the organisation may find difficult to meet these expectations, what will possibly increase the desire and intent to leave.

An employees’ decision to leave a job can also be influenced by contextual factors such as employability and labour market conditions. In this regards, another label that shows similarities

with perceived job alternative is self-perceived *employability*³⁴, i.e., individuals' perceptions of their chances of obtaining a new job. Rothwell and Arnold (2007) defined employability as "the extent to which people possess the skills and other attributes to find and stay in work of the kind they want" (p. 23). This notion is often associated with new models of work and career that go beyond organisations' limits, such as the boundaryless career, and mobility cognitions. The authors have also proposed that self-perceived employability comprises two sets of dimensions. The first, relate to internal labour markets, including individuals' self-perceived valuation of their own utility to their employing organisation, and the value the organisation attributes to their occupation or occupational group. The second, relate to external labour markets, including individuals' self-perception of their worth, based more on their personal skills, and the value that external labour market assigns to people with the individual's occupational experience (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). For Feldman and Ng (2007), the *permeability* of institutional labour markets, that is the number of alternative jobs/organisations/occupations and corresponding ease or difficulty of entry, is one of the major components of the boundaryless career concept.

Some authors argue that alternative employment opportunities influence turnover behaviour and satisfaction becomes the best predictor of turnover during periods of high economic opportunity, with a strong negative correlation between unemployment rates and voluntary turnover rates being observed (Maertz Jr. & Campion, 1998; Morrell et al., 2001). However, this relation between unemployment and turnover should be carefully analysed, taking into consideration other variables such as the type of industry and even different types of firms within the same industry, because although aggregate-level economic-demographic studies show that labour market conditions significantly impact turnover rates, when analysing the decision-making process that individuals follow in determining if they stay or if they quit, it was found that actual unemployment rates do not affect actual individual-level turnover (Holtom et al., 2008).

The shift towards Job Embeddedness

Aiming for a more comprehensive understanding of organisational attachment – because the psychology of staying differs from that of leaving –, and departing from the Unfolding Model – an approach to how people leave –, Mitchell et al.'s (2001) contributed to a paradigm shift, with the conceptual lens being then turned to why people stay. Their analysis was grounded in the development, measurement and test of a new construct: job embeddedness.

Job embeddedness refers to the combination of three distinct forces that make people desire to maintain their current employment situation: (i) the extent to which people are linked with other people or activities; (ii) the extent to which their jobs and communities fit with other aspects of their lives; and (iii) the ease with which these same links can be broken, that is, what they would sacrifice if they left. The authors even use the analogy of being trapped or stuck in a net or in a web to describe what it is to be highly embedded. The authors have labelled these three above-mentioned dimensions as *links*, *fit*, and *sacrifice*, respectively. By considering that

³⁴ Here, the use of employability refers to the individual perspective, but other stances can be adopted. At national workforce level, employability refers to government policy, whereas within HR management employability is an HR strategy proposed as an alternative to career or job-for-life (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

each dimension derives both from organisations and communities (e.g., fit to the organisation, fit to the community), a three-by-two matrix is created with a total of six dimensions. More specifically:

- i. *Links* refer to formal and informal connections that a person has with institutions or other individuals. The higher the links, that is, the more connected an individual is with the organisation (e.g., belonging to work groups, support from supervisors) and to the community (e.g., non-work friends, spousal employment, church groups), the stronger an employee will be bounded to the job and/or organisation.
- ii. *Fit* is defined as the individual's perceived compatibility with the organisation and the community; the authors theorised that employee's personal values, career goals and future plans need to be congruent with those of the organisational culture and with the demands of the job, as well as they need to think they (and their families) fit the community in which they live. The higher the fit, the stronger an employee will feel personally and professionally tied to the organisation.
- iii. *Sacrifice* refers to the perceived material or psychological costs of leaving; the more an employee perceives to be giving up on benefits and advantages that usually are associated with tenure, to be incurring in personal losses (e.g., giving up colleagues or projects), or to lose the sense of belonging to a community or desirable community attributes (e.g., school quality, neighbourhood safety), the more difficult it is to switch jobs. Community sacrifices becomes particularly relevant when the employee need to relocate and move to other home or city (D. Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2001).

All put together, the greater the perception of fit, the number of links, and the desire to avoid sacrifices, the greater the forces towards job embeddedness will be. This has incremental effects on turnover beyond satisfaction and commitment. These dimensions are also concerned with both on-job and off-the-job experiences (Mitchell et al., 2001). On-the-job influences include, for example, bonds with co-workers or fit between one's skills and the demands of the job; off-the-job influences, such as personal, family and community commitments (Holton, Mitchell, & Lee, 2006).

Besides theory development, Mitchell and his colleagues (2001) also provided empirical support for the job embeddedness construct. Drawing on data from two samples, of retail and hospital employees respectively, the authors reported that job embeddedness was reliably measured as an aggregated score across the proposed six dimensions, which was also correlated with intention to leave and subsequent voluntary turnover. The test has also revealed that job embeddedness can significantly predict turnover after the effects of gender, satisfaction, commitment, job search, and perceived alternatives had been controlled. Further research confirmed job embeddedness usefulness to improve retention, attendance, organisational citizenship behaviours³⁵, and job performance (Lee et al., 2004). Lee et al. (2004) also considered

³⁵ Organisational citizenship behaviour deals with discretionary, not-contractually defined individual actions, behaviours that go beyond typical or expected in-role performance. These behaviours, not directly or explicitly recognised by the company's formal reward system, although not critical for the job, contribute positively to organisational efficiency and effectiveness via resource transformation, innovation and adaptability (Organ, 1988).

on and off-the-job separately, reporting that on-the-job embeddedness predicts citizenship behaviour and in-role job performance, even above satisfaction and commitment; in turn, off-the-job embeddedness predicted absences and turnover, also more significantly than satisfaction and commitment did.

Although job embeddedness shows, at first, some similarities with other job attitudes, namely job satisfaction or organisational commitment, especially in what refers to organisational-related sacrifice, there are also many differences, as for example the fact that these job attitudes only assess on-the-job dimensions or the fact that the authors focus more on contextual influences, thus being the embeddedness dimensions less *affective*-oriented (Mitchell et al., 2001). Since the concept of job embeddedness has been put forward, other scholars have also been focusing on different foci of embeddedness, such as organisational, occupational and career, family or community embeddedness (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Lee, Burch, & Mitchell, 2014).

4.3.3 Employee turnover in T&H businesses

As previously seen in section 4.2.1, either voluntary or involuntary, the impact of turnover can be substantial. Information on turnover – both on the factors influencing employees' exit or willingness to, and on turnover rates – may endow organisations of a higher or lower ability to manage turnover effectively. When confronted with high turnover rates, managers have to deal with a continuous cycle of recruitment, selection and training that strain their organisations and costs escalate.

Several studies report that employee turnover rates in the T&H sector can range between 60% and 300% (Pang, Kucukusta, & Chan, 2015; Yang et al., 2012), with sub-sectors such as restaurants, cafes and catering businesses registering extremely high losses, as there are often seen as a transitional employment solution for young people between the completion of their school studies and the formal beginning of their careers, or as part-time or summer jobs. This means that although employers are dealing with poorly skilled staff that is very likely experiencing their first professional activity and are not committed to a particular industry, these workers are perceived as transient, their exit is expected, and turnover is easily managed. In this case, some refer to 'circulation' to define this movement of employees who are not lost to the industry, as opposed to 'turnover' (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2005). This also means that the tourism sector benefits both from a primary labour market, made up of all those that pursue study programmes and aspire to work in this field, and from a secondary labour market, comprising these transient workers who will likely not engage in tourism-related activities in the long run.

According to the estimations of Hinkin and Tracey (2000), and although varying from position to position and depending on the complexity of the task, turnover costs are substantial even in entry-level positions for relatively simple jobs. In one of their studies with full-service hotels in Miami and New York, the overall average cost of turnover for a front-desk employee was nearly

one-third of the position's annual salary. Hinkin and Tracey (2006) also highlighted what they believed to be the first study examining the cost of employee turnover in the hospitality industry, performed by Wasmuth and Davis (1983), a three-year study of voluntary turnover in five departments in each of 20 hotels located in North America and Europe, in which overall turnover averaged 60%. Food and beverage, front-office, and housekeeping were the departments with disproportionate rates of turnover above that average, with the average cost of replacing an hourly line employee being estimated at USD 1,500 and at USD 3,000 for a salaried staff member. In New Zealand, for example, the hospitality sector had a turnover rate of 29.2% for 2006 as opposed to a 16.7% national average for all sectors (Statistics New Zealand (2006) cit. by Williams, Harris, & Parker, 2008).

Tracey and Hinkin (2008) also found that, although costs vary substantially for different property types (e.g., standard, resort, motel), the cost of turnover is generally highest for complex jobs in large upscale hotels and, for example, a front-desk job could cost more than USD 12,000 to replace when considering recruitment and replacement costs and productivity loss. Still according to the same authors (Tracey & Hinkin, 2008), turnover rates in hospitality contexts can go down to 25% when it comes to managerial positions, going up to 50% for entry-level employees and, ultimately, up to 120% in quick-service restaurants. Based on a sample of 64 hotels, also Davidson et al. (2010) indicated that the turnover expenses could reach approximately USD 110,000 a year for managerial staff and USD 656,000 for line employees, per hotel, accounting for an astonishing value of USD 7 million and USD 42 million a year, respectively.

Drawing on data from a three-year nation-wide project held in Portugal about the employment situation of tourism graduates and expectations of students enrolled in tourism-related degrees, Costa et al. (2013) report that a high percentage of tourism employed graduates (26.8%) are working outside the tourism field, although half of these graduates had started their professional activity in the industry. More female graduates were found working outside the tourism field (28.6% versus 27.8%) (Costa et al., 2012). It was found that graduates working outside the tourism industry face less adverse conditions concerning their working schedule (working less hours per week and in unsocial hours) and are more represented in higher hierarchical positions. However, not all perspectives are negative for tourism workers, with results also showing that in comparison with graduates working in the tourism industry, those working in other areas earn lower wages, are more exposed to poorer contractual situations and reveal lower satisfaction levels with their jobs. These findings may evidence saturation of the labour market or perceptions of lack of recognition of tourism degrees, given that working outside the sector does not seem to be yielding higher salaries or relevant better working conditions (Costa, Breda, et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, the high turnover levels of the industry are naturally linked to the nature of the jobs and working conditions (discussed in section 2.3.1). Previous researchers suggested a discrepancy between what employees expect and what they experience as one of the reasons why hospitality employees leave the hospitality industry. In addition, factors employees find important, but do not experience at a high enough level, may lead the employees to search for a job elsewhere (Blomme et al., 2009; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000).

More in particular, Hinkin and Tracey (2000) point poor supervision and little responsibility, mundane and repetitive jobs, or inadequate compensation for work that involves intensive, and often stressful, interaction with costumers, as the main reasons for high turnover. Others have also portrayed hospitality as 'pass-through' industry, an employer of 'necessity', for workers who are just making their way to other careers (Woods, 1999 cit. by Kusluvan, 2003).

Rowley and Purcell (2001) posit that for most individuals, the decision to quit the hospitality industry is a trade-off between these positive and negative features, also called as 'pull' and 'push' factors. These authors stress, that in what refers to the hospitality industry in particular, the use of intrinsically transient staff, local competition for labour, and mobility and career progression are causes of a positive turnover culture, while changes in ownership and leadership, stress and burnout, false expectations, and poor management practices come up at the other end of the spectrum. Push and pull factors are also strongly influenced by labour market conditions, as in a tight labour market is not so likely that employees respond as strongly to push-factors, and pull-factors need to be very clear to and specific to drive resignation; i.e., in times of higher job uncertainty, it is less likely that an employee would leave without a clear job offer by another company. Other researchers studying employee turnover in the hospitality industry found three pull factors supporting the turnover intention, namely age (young age profile and part time employment status), low unemployment or remuneration (low pay being directly linked to low satisfaction and exit) (Williams et al., 2008).

Despite the vast research on employee turnover, less is known about employee retention. However, some studies on the factors that may predict employees' retention or their willingness to stay with their organisations, can also be found. In an extensive analysis of open-ended response from more than 24,000 hospitality employees, Hausknecht, Rodda and Howard (2009) identified 12 factors possibly predicting retention; the most frequently mentioned retention factor was job satisfaction (liking one's job; referred by 51% of all respondents), followed by extrinsic rewards (amount of pay and benefits; 41%), constituent attachments (attachment to supervisors, co-workers or costumers; 34%), organisational commitment (identification and involvement with the organisation; 17%), organisational prestige (organisation perceived as reputable; 13%), lack of alternatives (unavailability of other jobs; 10%), investments (length of service; 9%), advancement opportunities (potential of upward progression; 8%), location (proximity to one's home; 8%), organisational justice (fairness; 7%), flexible work arrangements (nature of work schedule or hours; 7%), and non-work influences (responsibilities outside the organisation; 3%).

Cho et al. (2009) compared the determinants of intent to leave versus intent to stay among hospitality employees. Results suggested that perceived organisational support and organisational commitment could contribute to decrease intention to leave, while only organisational support positively impacted intention to stay, reinforcing the assumption that the factors affecting intention to leave are not reversely the same influencing intention to stay.

Further research that can contribute to uncover key reasons why those working in the T&H may want to remain in their jobs and with their organisations, therefore providing valuable recommendations for organisations to fight turnover-related issues, is still necessary.

4.4 Investing in career- and work-related positive outcomes

Within today's business environment, one of the most important factors of organisational success is a highly motivated, committed, productive and innovative workforce. This is especially relevant for T&H businesses, labour intensive, and employees are expected to possess some qualities specific to the type of service provided, which requires them to perform intellectual, physical and emotional labour.

Deloitte's report, *Global Human Capital Trends* (2017), highlights that, especially under the growing influence of Millennials at the workplace, employees expect a more productive, engaging and enjoyable work experience. Their survey's respondents considered engagement as one of top priorities, and employee experience as a major trend; however, although almost 80% of the executives rated employee experience as important or very important, only 22% admitted that their companies were excellent at building a differentiated employee experience. The Towers Perrin Talent Report (2003), whose study involved more than 35,000 employees in the US, also revealed that less than a fifth of the respondents are 'highly engaged'; however, the study has also found that 66% of those highly engaged employees plan to stay with their current employers (compared to 12% of disengaged employees).

Although traditional research on employee turnover and occupational well-being has tended to emphasize the negative – i.e., negative attitudes or mental strain as causes of leaving – attention has recently turned to more positive job experiences, such as work engagement, empowerment, psychological capital or social support (e.g., Mills, Fleck, & Kozikowski, 2013; Robertson, Birch, & Cooper, 2012; Stairs & Galpin, 2010). Although the new career theory defines careers based on their lack of allegiance to a single employer, the notion of the (over) committed employees remains relevant nowadays, explaining how people now perceive their jobs and consequent work arrangements. Although contemporary organisations advocate for more flexible arrangements, the way researchers think about employee engagement and motivation is still underpinned by organisational fit (Mooney, 2014). Many researchers focus on the idea that in work settings, the level of congruence an individual establishes with his/her job, and the organisation he/she works for, highly influences work outcomes (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996).

Understanding and maximising employees' value and prioritising their motivation is vital both for employee retention and talent development. Motivation can be roughly looked at as a complex mixture of desires, needs, goals, will, dedication and effort; it is also what defines the level of effort allocated to, persistence in, and initiation of behaviour (both in terms of mental behaviour of turnover cognitions and physical behaviour of actually leaving) (Carl P. Maertz & Griffeth, 2004), and what triggers the necessary actions for talent to manifest itself, so employees at all levels work to the top of their potential (Gagné, 2010). Underlying motivational theories (see Figure 4.9 for some examples) is the general ideal of intensifying and directing people's potential towards the achievement of organisational goals.

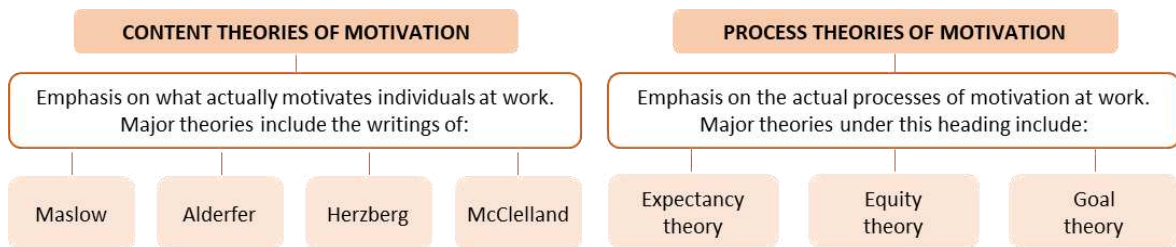


Figure 4.9 | Most influential theories of motivation

Source: Own construction based on Mullins (2001, p. 228)

Motivational constructs focus on what drives people, both internally and externally, to invest themselves at work and productively perform tasks that meet organisational requirements and goals, thus contributing to their own growth and development and that of those organisations (Kahn, 1992). In an attempt to understand how to promote people’s attachment to their work and/or organisations, many researchers have focused on work attitudes that are important at different levels, such as job satisfaction (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Edwin A. Locke, 1969), organisational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) or job involvement (Kanungo, 1979, 1982; Lawler & Hall, 1970; Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965) (see section 4.3.2).

Adopting the same stance, Kahn (1992, p. 321) refers to ‘**psychological presence at work**’ to describe the experiential “state enabling organization members to draw deeply on their personal selves in role performances, i.e., express thoughts and feelings, question assumptions, innovate”. The author posits that the more fully present at work, more fully employees are able to place themselves into their performance, thus manifesting personally engaging behaviours. Four dimensions underline this *psychological presence*: attentiveness (engaging in open and non-defensive behaviour), connection (putting self in the place of another person, bonding, experiencing empathy), integration (putting physical, intellectual and emotional dimensions of one’s self together at work) and focus in role performances (using one’s facilities to help other, maintaining the integrity of the person and integrity of the role).

Likewise, Ulrich (2014) employs the same analogy of ‘being there’ to describe commitment towards one’s work. When dwelling on individual contribution for organisational success, Ulrich (2014) posited that talent is a function of three concepts: *competence* (ability to do the work), *commitment* (willingness to do the work) and *contribution* (finding meaning and purpose in one’s work). Competence means that individuals possess the *right* knowledge, skills and values required for that specific job at that given moment, thus contributing for good decision-making. Commitment is what makes competent people work harder, do what they are asked to do, but most important, doing it *right*. Commitment is based “on building an employee value proposition to ensure that employees who give value to their organisation will in turn receive value back” (Ulrich, 2014, p. 2). Nevertheless, although competence and commitment have long been supporting pillars for talent, the author also advocates that for younger employees, in particular for members of Gen Z, contribution is fundamental to maintain their interest in what they are doing and improve their productivity. A sense of contribution through work can be found when employees feel that their personal needs are being met and work is perceived as a

setting for finding meaning in one’s life. This equation is multiplicative, i.e., all concepts need to be managed together and if one is missing, the others will not replace it or compensate it enough (Ulrich, 2014).

Anchored on work attitude and turnover literatures, and based on psychological mechanisms motivating behaviour, Maertz Jr. and Griffeth (2004) identified eight motive categories, or **Forces**, that can potentially explain why employees quit or stay with organisations; the proposed framework consists of affective, calculative, contractual, behavioural, alternative, normative, moral/ethical and constituent forces. In Table 4.1, the short description provided by the authors for the motivational mechanisms underlying each force type is presented.

Table 4.1 | Maertz Jr. and Griffeths’ (2004) ‘8 Forces’ framework

Type of force	Motivational mechanism for attachment and withdrawal
Affective forces	Hedonistic approach–avoidance mechanism. Positive/negative emotional responses toward the organisation cause psychological comfort or discomfort with membership. Emotional comfort motivates approach or staying; discomfort motivates avoidance or quitting.
Calculative forces	Rational calculation of the probability of attaining important values and goals in the future through continued membership. Favourable calculation of future value/goal attainment at the current organization motivates staying. Unfavourable calculation of future value/goal attainment motivates quitting.
Contractual forces	Perceived obligations to stay with the organisation under the psychological contract or withdrawal response to organisational breaches of the psychological contract. These depend on a norm of reciprocity.
Behavioural forces	Desire to avoid the explicit and psychological costs of quitting brought on by investments in membership or by past behaviours that favour/oppose membership. Higher costs motivate staying, while lower costs or behaviours opposing membership motivate quitting.
Alternative forces	Magnitude and strength of self-efficacy beliefs about obtaining alternative jobs/roles: the level of valued outcomes that may be provided by alternatives and the certainty of obtaining these alternatives. Lower S-E → staying; higher S-E→ quitting
Normative forces	Meeting the perceived expectations of salient others outside the organisation that include or imply either staying or quitting, assuming some motivation to comply with these expectations.
Moral/ethical forces	Maintaining consistency between behaviour and values regarding turnover. These values range from ‘quitting is bad/persistence is a virtue’ to ‘changing jobs regularly is good/staying long causes stagnation’.
Constituent forces	Motivation to remain or quit depends on the employee’s attachment to individual co-workers or groups within the organisation. Attachment to the constituent means attachment to the organisation, unless the constituent shows signs of leaving.

Source: Maertz Jr. and Griffeth (2004, p. 669)

Rooted in the concept of *participation*, Allport (1945) discussed the difference between being active, participant and reactive. “When the work-situation in which the individual finds himself

realistically engages the status-seeking motive, when the individual is busily engaged in using his talents, understanding his work, and having pleasant social relations with foreman and fellow-worker, then he is, as the saying goes, 'identified' with his job. He likes his work; he is absorbed in it; he is productive" (p. 122). To achieve this mind-set, it's not enough to be task-involved, ego-involvement is also necessary; reaction is the outcome of absence of ego-involvement.

Hales (2001) has also posited that *high-involvement employment relationships*, as one of the fundamental principles of despecialised work organisations, configure employment as long-term commitment, that goes beyond economic attachment and entails loyalty and obligations both on the part of employers and employees. The author lists fair pay, good working conditions, recognition and praise, employment security, and opportunities for training and development, as conditions that must be met in order to foster this *high involvement* (Hales, 2001).

The role of exchange processes in organisations has been the focus of a significant body of literature, with the concepts of **social exchange** (Blau, 1964) and **reciprocity** (Gouldner, 1960) being widely used to describe the motivational basis behind employee behaviours and positive attitudes. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been frequently applied to diverse areas, such as psychological contracts (e.g., Rousseau, 1995) and organisational support (e.g., Wayne, Shore, & Linden, 1997), or to explain why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organisation (e.g., Saks, 2006). "One of the basic tenets of SET is that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments. To do so, parties must abide by certain 'rules' of exchange. (...) In this way, rules and norms of exchange are 'the guidelines' of exchange processes (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 875). Saks (2006) argues that one way for individuals to repay their organisations for receiving particular resources is through engagement.

SET also suggests that employees enter a relationship with an employer to obtain some type of benefits or rewards. When organisations are willing to provide employees with the benefits and resources they expect, these generates feeling of commitment, attachment and obligation in the employees, which can stimulate positive attitudes and behavioural responses that, in turn, contribute to the performance of the organisation (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). As opposed to the tangible, short-term, benefits in economic exchanges, this social transactional relationship is discretionary and supported by a norm of reciprocity, which specifies that the favourable treatment from one party generates favourable treatment in return (Gouldner, 1960). This is also applicable to the reverse, as poor or negative behaviour would be reciprocated for perceived negative behaviour. Therefore, employees respond according to their perceptions, i.e., their commitment to the organisation will be strongly influenced by their perception on the organisation's commitment to them (Eisenberger et al., 1986). These processes are also at the base of the formation of a psychological contract between the employee and their employer (see also section 4.3.3).

This reciprocal interdependence is in line with Robinson, Perryman and Hayday's (2004) description of engagement as a two-way relationship dependent on *choice*: organisations can choose the type of engagement they want to foster; employees can choose to repay their organisation in varying degrees, in response to the resources they are provided by the organisation. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in **employee engagement**, which

became a business buzzword applied by HR practitioners, consultancy firms and the popular business press. In the 1930-40's, the thesis of 'happy productive worker' was in vogue and the focus was on job satisfaction, whereas in the 1970-80's, the attention shifted for the 'war for talent' and the role that organisational commitment could play in it; this shift happened mainly for the weak relation found between job satisfaction and performance, and due to the recognition that people could be unhappy with their organisation but not necessarily with their job. At the turn of the millennium, due to the changes in employment relationships, employees' growing qualifications, and growing emphasis on productivity and efficiency, the focus shifted once more, towards employee engagement. It became more important to have employees highly engaged with their work, rather than just in maintain long-term membership to the organisation (Meyer, 2017). Although employee engagement has stolen the spotlight from organisational commitment, commitment is still quite relevant nowadays. Although employer-employee relationships have changed, organisations still compete for attracting and retaining the most talented individuals, and employee commitment is not only relevant when direct towards the organisation, but also towards policies, projects or goals (Meyer, 2017).

Employee engagement

The extensive body of evidence on engagement³⁶ suggests that it consists of positive behaviour or a positive state of mind at work, linked to a range of organisational outcomes as well as work-related measures of individual well-being (Clark, 2015; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). The concept of work engagement³⁷ emerged within the field of positive psychology, which introduced a shift in the traditional focus on mental illness and human weaknesses towards well-being, mental health and optimal functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001). "Everyday connotations of engagement refer to involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, absorption, focused effort, zeal, dedication, and energy" (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 15).

Kahn's (1990) ethnographic study, in which he interviewed summer camp counsellors and members of an architecture firm about their moments of engagement and disengagement at work, is advanced as the earliest theory of employee engagement. Kahn (1990) first described engagement as the way and degree people invest themselves in their work to achieve personal and career benefits. Rooted in role theory and in Hackman and Oldham's (1980) proposal that job characteristics drive employees' attitudes and, subsequently, behaviours, Kahn (1990) conceptualised that there were three psychological conditions that help to explain the variance in people investing or not themselves in their work role performances, that is, justifying their engagement or disengagement at work:

- i. *Meaningfulness* – the feeling of receiving return on investments of one's self in role performance, which is influenced by the nature of the job (i.e., task and role characteristics);

³⁶ The term *employee engagement*, *work engagement* or *engagement* are used interchangeably to refer to the engagement construct unless it is clearly state otherwise.

³⁷ In this study, the terms 'employee engagement' and 'work engagement' are used interchangeably; however, some authors (e.g., Schaufeli, 2013) do distinguish them. For Schaufeli (2013), employee engagement refers to the relationship with one's *work*, and work engagement includes the relationship with the *organisation*; this distinction brings this latter concept closer to other concepts such as organisational commitment.

- ii. *Psychological safety* – feeling able to show and employ one’s self without fear of negative consequences, mainly influenced by the social environment (i.e., interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, management style, and social norms);
- iii. *Availability* – feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences, which depends on the personal resources that people can bring to their role performance, such as physical energy.

In a nutshell, workers will be more engaged at work in situations where they experienced more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety, and when they were more psychologically available. Engaged employees are thus expected to put much effort into their work because they identify with it.

In the only empirical study to test Kahn’s (1990) theory, May, Gilson and Harter (2004) found that the three psychological conditions – meaningfulness, safety, and availability – were significantly related to engagement, with meaningfulness displaying the strongest relation.

The most dominant conceptualisation of engagement derives from the work of Schaufeli and his colleagues (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). These researchers viewed work engagement as a motivational construct on its own right, defining it as a “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). The first half of this definition suggests that engagement is a positive and fulfilling affective state, similar to job satisfaction, while the second half reflects action-oriented behavioural tendencies. The engagement construct is operationalised as comprising three dimensions – vigour and absorption in, and dedication to, one’s work. More specifically:

- i. *Vigour* is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence in the face of difficulties;
- ii. *Dedication* refers to a strong involvement in one’s work, accompanied by feelings of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge;
- iii. *Absorption* relates to a pleasant state of total concentration and immersion in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly, and one is unable to detach oneself from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295).

Vigour and dedication are considered as the core dimensions of engagement, whereas absorption is described as resembling to **‘flow’**³⁸ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), a state of optimal experience and complete absorption in job-related activities that contributes positively and significantly to subjective well-being; however, while flow is a more complex concept and refers to short-term ‘peak’ experiences, absorption is a persistent state. The whole concept of engagement is not a momentary or specific state of mind, but rather a “more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Absorption is also the most controversial dimension, as there are some doubts on whether this is an independent dimension or rather an output of the other two. Following the three-component proposal of Schaufeli and colleagues,

³⁸ More specifically about the concept of flow, which is not within the scope of this study, the reading of Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975) and subsequent work of the author (1982, 1990, 1997), is recommended.

engagement is operationalized with the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), a self-report instrument that includes the three abovementioned dimensions. An alternative instrument for the assessment of work engagement is the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti & Bakker, 2008), which has been originally developed to assess burnout, but includes positively and negatively phrased items that can be used to assess engagement as well.

One of the most renowned streams of research on engagement comes precisely from the occupational health psychology literature, which conceives job engagement as the **positive antithesis of burnout** (chronologically, after Kahn (1990), this is the other major early developmental theory on employee engagement). According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), burnout is an erosion of engagement and the three dimensions of engagement – energy, involvement and efficacy – are direct opposites of three dimensions of burnout. Whereas this approach views work engagement as the opposite or positive antithesis of burnout, Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) view considers engagement and burnout as independent states, while still maintaining that engagement is the opposite of burnout (negatively related to it).

Burnout is experienced in response to chronic job stressors and is defined as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion (fatigue, tiredness), cynicism/depersonalisation (indifference or distant attitude towards work), and inefficacy (reduced accomplishment) (Maslach, 1998; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Maslach and Leiter (1997) consider burnout and engagement to be the opposite poles of a continuum; therefore, low scores on exhaustion and cynicism, and high scores on efficacy, are indicative of engagement, whereas high scores on exhaustion and cynicism, and low scores on professional efficacy, are indicative of burnout. In other words, energy turns into exhaustion, involvement turns into cynicism, and efficacy into ineffectiveness. In other words, people who have high levels of engagement will inevitably have low levels of burnout, and vice versa. Following Maslach and Leiter's (1997) approach and using the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI) (Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Jackson, 1986) – the most prevalent measure of burnout – as a bipolar instrument that assesses burnout as well as engagement, vigour is advanced as the direct positive opposite of exhaustion (the continuum that is spanned by exhaustion and vigour has been labelled *activation*), and dedication as the direct positive opposite of cynicism (the continuum that is spanned by cynicism and dedication has been labelled *identification*). For reduced professional efficacy and absorption, which are the third characteristics of burnout and engagement respectively, this polarity effect is not equated (González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006).

Saks (2006) was the first in the academic community to combine previous theories of employee engagement (thus arguing that engagement was developed from cognitive, emotional and behavioural components) and to propose an empirical model to test antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Building on Social Exchange Theory, he was also the first to distinguish between types of engagement, namely *job* (performing the work role) and *organisational* (performing the role as a member of the organisation) engagement. Macey and Schneider (2008) were also the first authors to conceptualize *trait*, *state*, and *behavioural* engagement, as separate yet related constructs, that together underpin the development of employee engagement.

As depicted in Table 4.2, definitions of engagement generally “reflect two essential qualities: (i) a positive and energized work-related motivational state, and (ii) a genuine willingness to

contribute to work role and organizational success” (Albrecht, 2010, pp. 4–5). Bakker (2009) evokes that engaged workers perform better than non-engaged worker because they often experience positive emotions (e.g., happiness, joy, enthusiasm), experience better health, create they own job resources, and transfer their engagement to the other members of their work team, as also to their clients. Work engagement is primarily related to intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation.

Table 4.2 | Synopsis of the most frequently quoted definitions of engagement

Author(s)	Definition
Kahn 1990	<i>Personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performances. (p. 700)</i>
Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker 2002	<i>Engagement is (...) a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. (p. 74)</i>
Harter, Schmidt and Hayes 2002	<i>Employee engagement refers to the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work. (p. 269)</i>
Saks 2006	<i>[Engagement is] a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance. (p. 602)</i>
Macey & Schneider 2008	<i>[Trait engagement] can be regarded as an inclination or orientation to experience the world from a particular vantage point (e.g., positive affectivity characterized by feelings of enthusiasm) and [it] gets reflected in psychological state engagement [affective satisfaction, involvement, commitment, empowerment]. (...) psychological state engagement is an antecedent of behavioural engagement, which [is defined] in terms of discretionary effort (...) or a specific form of in-role or extra-role effort or behaviour (p. 5-6).</i>

Engaged employees are highly energetic and enthusiastic about their work. According to a study conducted by the UK-based Institute for Employment Studies, when referring to *engaged* employees, HR professionals think of individuals that demonstrate: (i) belief in their organisation; (ii) desire to work to make things better; (iii) understanding of business context and the ‘bigger picture’; (iv) respectful of, and helpful to, colleagues; (v) willingness to ‘go the extra mile’; and (vi) keeping up to date with developments in the field (Robinson et al., 2004) (Figure 4.10). Because of their positive attitude and high levels of energy, engaged employees create their own feedback mechanism and their enthusiasm is also expressed outside work, in other activities such as hobbies or physical exercise. Although working hard and feeling tired, engaged employees perceive their tiredness as a pleasant state associated with positive accomplishments (Bakker, 2010). Besides, “the more highly engaged the employee, the more likely he or she will be to say positive things about the organization, thereby contributing to the

development of a positive employer brand; want to remain within the organization, thereby minimizing turnover; and regularly exert a superior level of effort, thereby potentially influencing such variables as service quality, customer satisfaction, productivity, sales, profitability, etc.” (Christensen Hughes & Rog, 2008, p. 749).

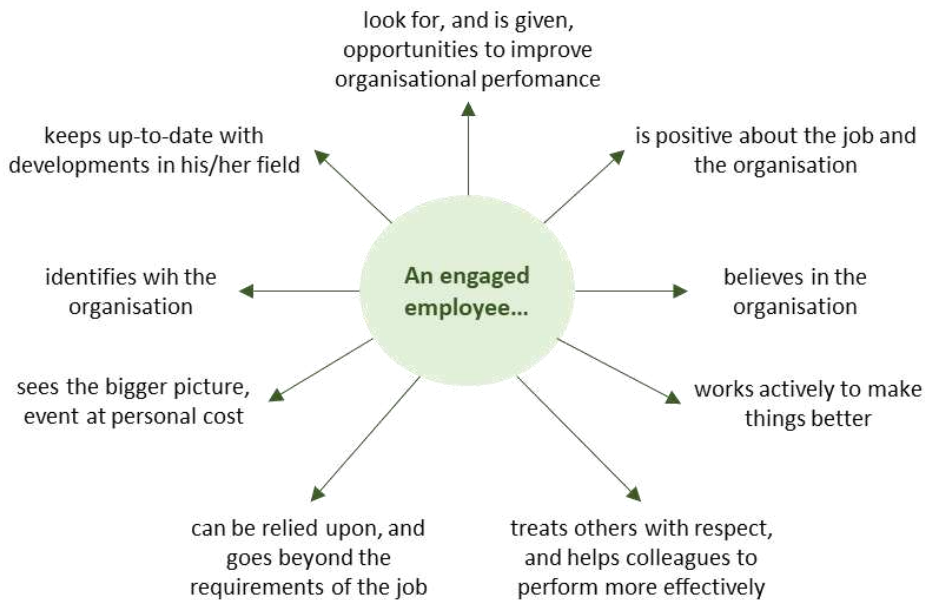


Figure 4.10 | Characteristics of an engaged employee

Source: IES (2003) cit. by Robinson et al. (2004)

The benefits of enhanced employee engagement have been linked to the employee (e.g., better psychosomatic health) (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), but mainly to organisation-level outcomes such as productivity, profitability and financial returns (Harter et al., 2002; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009b), task and overall performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005), decreased absenteeism, turnover intentions and actual turnover (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Yalabik, Popaitoon, Chowne, & Rayton, 2013), increased organisational citizenship behaviours (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Rich et al., 2010), positive job attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organisational commitment) (Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Yalabik et al., 2013), and even increased customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Harter et al., 2002; Salanova et al., 2005).

Although virtually all studies on work engagement report multiple benefits, some authors (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Madden & Bailey, 2017) raise questions of whether it can be a ‘dark side’ of work engagement, as unrealistic optimism, overconfidence or high levels of arousal may have adverse effects on health and productivity, thus leading to poor performance, risk-taking, inappropriate behaviours or poor judgement. High levels of absorption can also make employees become so immersed in their work that they forget about rest and personal

relationships. Although engaged employees are not workaholics, they can be ‘over-engaged’ in their work, and let it interfere with other spheres of their lives (Bakker et al., 2011). There is a thin line between engagement, over-engagement, workaholism, and even disengagement. **Disengagement** refers to a personal choice, a state of low or non-existent energy, and unwillingness to invest one’s self into work (Green et al., 2017; Madden & Bailey, 2017). In turn, **workaholism** is a compulsive desire, an inner drive – not socially produced – that pushes individuals towards work. Workaholism encapsulates a compulsive tendency to work excessively. Engaged employees also work hard, are involved, and feel happily engrossed in their work – which is similar for workaholics – however, for workaholics, work is not fun, it’s an addiction, and working hard is an obsession (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Madden & Bailey, 2017; Schaufeli, 2013). Madden and Bailey (2017) also note that some organisations can try to subvert the tenets of engagement; though it seems management is interested in employees’ happiness and well-being, the real goal is actually an receptive and compliant workforce.

Theoretically, work engagement is proposed to develop as a function of the same job resources that boost motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Much research on the **antecedents** of engagement suggests that the balance between job demands and available resources leads to work engagement (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Following the burnout-antithesis approach, Maslach et al. (2001) suggested that burnout arises from chronic mismatches between people and their work setting in terms of some or all of six **areas of work-life** (section 3.3): workload, control, rewards and recognition, community and social support, perceived fairness, and values. The greater the match between a person and these six areas, the greater one’s engagement (Figure 4.11); the greater the mismatch, the greater the likelihood of burnout. Both engagement and burnout are also expected to mediate the link between these six domains and various work attitudes and health outcomes.

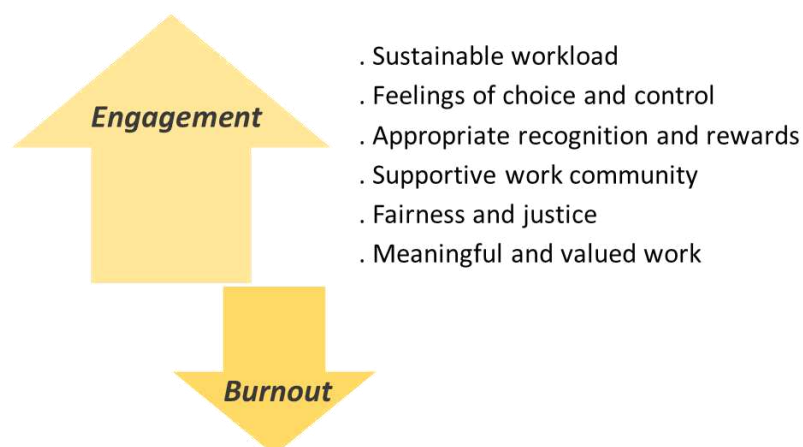


Figure 4.11 | Six areas of work-life and their association with employee engagement

Source: Own construction based on Maslach et al. (2001)

Also deriving from the burnout literature, the most frequently used theory of employee engagement is the **Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model** (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001) (see also section 3.3, where a short description of this model and its premises has been already provided). Since its early development, and due to the possibility of application to various occupational settings, the JD-R framework has been used in a number of studies (see Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), was subject to extensions and matured into a theory. According to its authors, this theory allows to “understand, explain, and make predictions about employee wellbeing (e.g., burnout, health, motivation, work engagement) and job performance” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, p. 8).

At the heart of the JD-R model lies the assumption that although every occupation has its own characteristics and unique environment, the characteristics of any work environment can be classified in two general categories: job demands and job resources. When meeting **job demands** is associated with high effort, depletion of energy and high physiological and/or psychological costs, these may turn into stressors and generate negative responses (e.g., depression, anxiety, exhaustion, burnout). In turn, when available – that is, employees have both access to them and knowledge to use them –, **job resources** (such as social support, autonomy, skill variety, performance feedback, or learning opportunities) not only help to reduce job demands and its costs, but also play a salient role in initiating a motivational process that leads to employee work engagement, positive attitudes and well-being, and lowers the potential for burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008). The interaction between job demands and job resources is important for both the development of job strain and motivation, as job resources may buffer the impact of job demands on stress-related reactions. Job resources also particularly influence motivation or work engagement in situations of high job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) (Figure 3.6 and Figure 4.12). As Schaufeli (2017) notes, “high job demands and poor job resources contribute to burnout, whereas only abundant job resources (and not low job demands) contribute to work engagement” (p. 121).

This motivational process links job resources with organizational outcomes, such as job performance, extra-role performance or turnover intention, via engagement (Figure 3.6). Following this premise, job resources can both function as intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Job resources play an *intrinsic* motivational role because they satisfy basic needs and foster employees’ growth, learning and development; for instance, proper feedback fosters learning, which increases job competence. They also play an *extrinsic* motivational role, because they are instrumental in successfully completing tasks and achieving work goals and job requirements; for instance, supportive colleagues or a supportive supervisor may increase the likelihood of being successful in achieving one’s work goals. By feeling intrinsically and/or extrinsically motivated, employees are more likely to drive themselves to engage with their work (Bakker et al., 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

An important extension of the original model and theory was the inclusion of **personal resources**, to make the distinction between workplace resources, available at the work setting, and specific personality traits that the individual brings with him/her to work. Personal resources are therefore individual differences, such as self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, or organisational-based self-esteem, that are believed to be activated by job resources and to be related to work engagement (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007, 2009a) (Figure 4.12).

Bakker and Demerouti (2017) emphasise that the first 10 years of research with JD-R theory produced evidence for the first six propositions (Table 4.3), but longitudinal studies conducted by several scholars provided evidence that lead to further refinements. The original JD-R model took a top-down perspective of job design in organisations, in which the organisations oversaw the design of both the job demands and resources of their employees, who were basically reactive to it. By considering that individuals are also often proactive and take personal initiative to change their current situation, the authors added a bottom-up approach and introduced **job crafting** in the model. They argued that by engaging in job crafting behaviours, employees can optimize their working environment and stay motivated, that is “proactively increase their job resources (e.g., ask for feedback and help) and challenge job demands (e.g., start a new project, learn to master a new skill), and decrease their hindrance job demands (e.g., reduce workload and bureaucracy)” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016, p. 276).

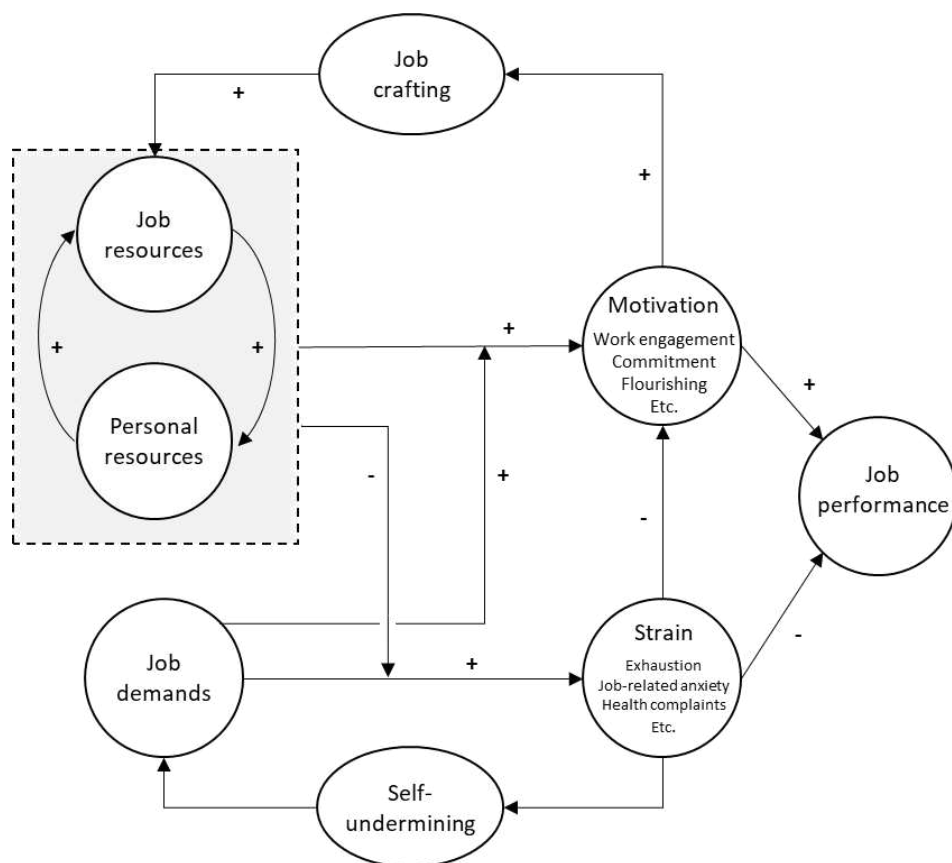


Figure 4.12 | The Job Demands–Resources model (latest version identified at the date of the study)

Source: Based on Bakker and Demerouti (2008, 2016)

Looking on the other hand to the health-impairment process, there is also a body of research indicating that employees under stress perceive and create more job demands over time, which Bakker and Costa (2014) suggested to be the result of **self-undermining** behaviour. The authors argue that self-undermining behaviour is the consequence of high levels of strain (e.g., exhaustion), resulting in added obstacles that may undermine performance (e.g., mistakes,

creation of conflicts, poor communication), which perpetuates a vicious cycle of even higher levels of strain and more job demands. These considerations led to the inclusion of the 8th, and last (to date), proposition of the JD-R theory (Table 4.3) (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2016).

Table 4.3 | Summary of the propositions of the Job Demands–Resources theory

Proposition 1	<i>All types of job characteristics can be classified in one of two categories: job demands and job resources</i>
Proposition 2	<i>Job demands and resources instigate two very different processes, namely a health-impairment process and a motivational process</i>
Proposition 3	<i>Job resources can buffer the impact of job demands on strain</i>
Proposition 4	<i>Job resources particularly influence motivation when job demands are high</i>
Proposition 5	<i>Personal resources such as optimism and self-efficacy can play a similar role as job resources</i>
Proposition 6	<i>Motivation has a positive impact on job performance, whereas job strain has a negative impact on job performance</i>
Proposition 7	<i>Employees who are motivated by their work are likely to use job crafting behaviours, which lead to higher levels of job and personal resources and even higher levels of motivation</i>
Proposition 8	<i>Employees who are strained by their work are likely to show self-undermining behaviours, which lead to higher levels of job demands, and even higher levels of job strain</i>

Source: Based on Bakker and Demerouti (2016, pp. 274–276)

Studies specifically directed at the **T&H industry** have been increasing in recent years and focus on the relationship of employee engagement with job satisfaction (Burke, Koyuncu, Fiksenbaum, & Tekin, 2013; Lee & Ok, 2016; Moura, Orgambidez-Ramos, & Jesus, 2015), organisational commitment (Lee & Ok, 2016), psychological capital (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015; Paek, Schuckert, Kim, & Lee, 2015), intention to leave/intention to stay (Burke et al., 2013; Park & Gursoy, 2012) and work-family and family-work conflict/facilitation (Burke et al., 2013; Karatepe & Demir, 2014). The linkage of generational differences with employee engagement has also been the focus of some of the research in this field (Bartunek et al., 2008; Maxwell et al., 2010; J. Park & Gursoy, 2012).

Just to name a few, a study with full-time frontline hotel employees in Turkey, Karatepe and Demir (2014) found that employees with core self-evaluations are highly engaged in their work, which positively contributes to an easier integration in both family and work roles. Findings from another study conducted with Turkish front-line hotel employees also revealed that work engagement was significantly related to job satisfaction, employee use of voice behaviour, intent to stay, and lower levels of work-family and family work conflict (Burke et al., 2013).

In a cross-sectional study with 152 Portuguese hotel employees, work engagement was found to significantly predict job satisfaction. Results also supported the JD-R model by demonstrating

that positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction, may be predicted by the motivational process and job demands (Moura et al., 2015). Findings from a study with contact employees (working on hotel receptions and restaurants, this time on Spain) showed that organisational resources (namely training, autonomy, technology) and employee engagement contribute to predict service climate, which in turn predicts employee performance and then customer loyalty (Salanova et al., 2005).

When investigating the relationship between hotel employee engagement and several positive organisational outcomes, Lee and Ok (2016) have also found that engagement was directly and positively associated with intrinsic rewards, leader-member exchange³⁹, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. Employment engagement was also indirectly associated with job satisfaction and organisational commitment, through leader-member exchange, as well as to organisational commitment, through job satisfaction.

Although it has been shown to be a conceptually and empirically distinct construct, work engagement has been argued to substantially (conceptual and empirically) overlap these other motivational constructs (i.e., job satisfaction, organisational commitment and job involvement) (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2015; Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Newman, Joseph, & Hulin, 2010; Robinson et al., 2004). At an individual-level organisational research, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job involvement – the three most commonly studied job attitudes – focus on employees' orientation towards their work and their organisations (Newman et al., 2010) and can be indicative of positive perceptions of career development and QWL (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991) (see section 4.3.2). Some include engagement in the set of the most important work-related attitudes, together with job satisfaction, organisational commitment or job involvement (e.g., OECD, 2017; Robbins & Judge, 2013), whereas others, such as Saks (2006) argue that engagement is not an attitude, but rather the degree to which individuals are absorbed in the performance of their work roles.

Given the theoretical and empirical proximity among job satisfaction, job involvement, and organisational commitment (in particular affective commitment), Newman and colleagues (Harrison et al., 2006; Newman et al., 2010) proposed that these three attitudes can be combined in a single higher-order attitude factor – which the authors labelled 'A-factor' (A standing for *job attitude*) –, and that engagement is closely related, or perhaps a constituting element, of this A-factor. The authors advocate that the employee engagement construct is nearly redundant with a higher-order job attitude construct. Newman et al. (2010) used meta-analysis to extend Harrison et al.'s (2006) *attitude–engagement model*, showing that the A-factor robustly predicts a broad criterion of behavioural engagement (defined by focal job performance, citizenship behaviour, lateness, absence, and turnover) (Figure 4.13).

³⁹ Leader-member exchange refers to dyadic relationship between leaders and each member of their work group (Lee & Ok, 2016).

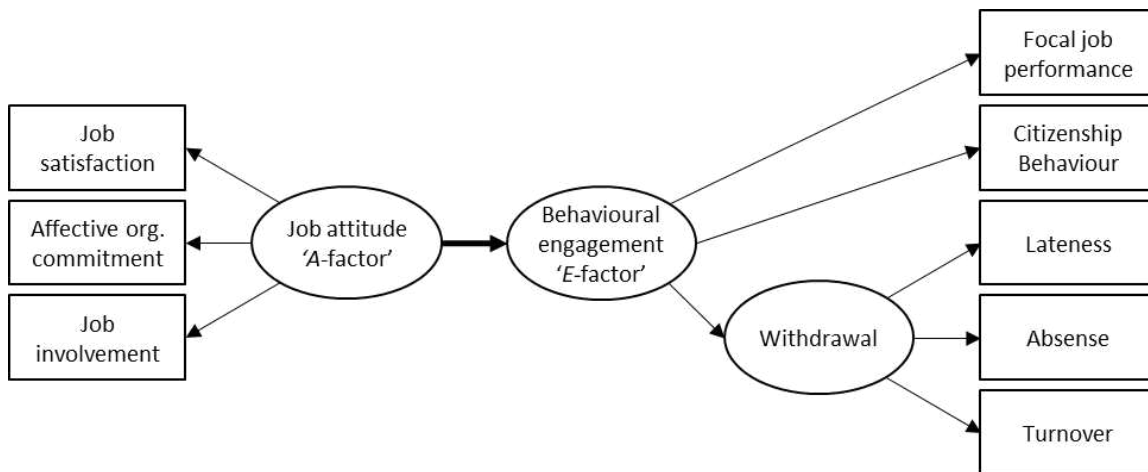


Figure 4.13 | The updated *attitude–engagement* model
 Source: Newman et al. (2010)

Job satisfaction and organisational commitment, identified as fundamental evaluations of one’s job experiences, were initially indicated as underlying overall job attitude (Harrison et al., 2006); due to theoretical and empirical redundancy with the other two attitudes, job involvement was later incorporated into the higher-order attitude factor (Newman et al., 2010).

Based on the tenets of attitude theory – that is, broad attitudes predict broad behavioural criteria (cf. Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) –, Newman et al. (2010) proposed that a broad behavioural criterion that describes the overlap among job performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, and withdrawal (lateness, absence, and turnover), would be predicted by a broad job attitude. This behavioural criterion, which was labelled by the authors as *E-Factor* (*E* standing for *behavioural engagement*), reflects individuals’ tendency to contribute with desirable inputs from their work roles. Therefore, *A-Factor* is an important predictor of the *E-Factor*.

4.5 Summary

Deloitte’s *Global Human Capital Trends* (2015) posits that “the balance of power in the employer-employee relationship has shifted making today’s employees more like customers partners than subordinates” (p. 2). For business organisations, a motivated and productive workforce is key to gain and maintaining sustainable competitive advantages, and it is becoming increasingly clear for organisations that many workplace problems draw from a lack of commitment to the needs of their workers (ILO, n.d.; Kara et al., 2013). Modern career philosophies not only embrace the notions of mobility, agency and career self-management, but also involve changes in the psychological contract that has been mediating the expectations of both employers and employees. Even if full-time employment with a single organisation may continue to be a prevailing experience for many individuals, psychological contracts have significantly changed. The nature of T&H work, coupled with the rewards it provides (or lack thereof), poses significant challenges to the management of employee turnover and retention, employee membership status, and career longevity (Cho et al., 2009; Deery & Shaw, 1997;

Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Yang et al., 2012). Although high turnover rates are seen in several industries as 'normal', as a characteristic of the industry itself, excessive levels of turnover are not beneficial. The study of turnover has a rich theoretical history and many organisational theorists have been focusing on developing and estimating content and process models aimed at understanding the factors that can explain and predict employee turnover to some degree.

Part of this chapter has, therefore, focused on the concept and main theories and foundational models of employee turnover. Although decisions to leave can be influenced by external, unexpected or random events, non-work related variables, or impulsive (or more relaxed) employee's attitudes towards work, most of the current dominant models focus on the role of antecedent factors. These are the core of content models that focus on *why* individuals quit, while process models focus on *how* individuals arrive at their final decisions to quit (Griffeth, 2000; C. P. Maertz & Campion, 2004; Morrell et al., 2001). Largely supported by the tenets of the expectancy theory, which can be used to explain occupational or organisational choices (Wanous et al., 1983) and in which some turnover models are also rooted (Mobley et al., 1979; Steers & Mowday, 1981), a special emphasis was given to job expectations, in particular to the concept of *met expectations*. Met expectations, whether at pre-entry and post-entry levels are of utmost importance in job/organisational/career withdrawal decisions (Porter & Steers, 1973; Sutton & Griffin, 2004). These expectations develop over time through various social experiences and depend on each individual's own values and needs at different moments of his/her life (Green et al., 2017; Mowday et al., 1982; Steers & Mowday, 1981). The role of expectations in the study of the psychological bond between employers and employees are also explored in this chapter, as understanding and maximising employees' value and prioritising their motivation is vital both for employee retention and talent development. The paradigm shift that resulted in an increasing focus on *why* people *stay* was also explored in this chapter and provided the basis for establishing the connection of employee retention with positive job outcomes such as work engagement.

Chapter 4 is the final chapter of the literature review. The next chapter discusses the research methodology applied in this study.

Part III

METHODOLOGY



5. Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Previous chapters presented a review of the literature considered relevant for this research, which has also informed the methodological options hereby described. This chapter outlines the methodology and epistemological assumptions on which this research project is based.

A constructivist-interpretivist stance with a critical orientation was adopted in this study. Building on multiple data sets, a qualitative, inductive-sequential, complementarity-aimed, multi-method research design, and thematic analysis combined with narrative elements, were employed to explore the experiences of highly educated individuals at different stages of their careers within the hotel sector, and to investigate how these experiences came to shape their understanding of quality of working life and permanence in this industry. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to offer a rationale for the methodological choices underpinning this empirical investigation, which aims to build up new or deeper explanations about the phenomenon that is being studied. This chapter is therefore structured as follows.

Firstly, in section 5.2, the research framework is presented, in which the definition of the research problem, the fields of study addressed in the literature review, and the research questions and objectives are explained. In section 5.3, the philosophical assumptions grounding this study are explained, leading on to a discussion of prevalent research paradigms in social sciences, in general, and in Tourism studies, in particular. The research process and strategies of inquiry are described in section 5.4; in particular, the choices for the adoption of a qualitative approach and a multi-method design are explained.

This is followed by the description, in section 5.5, of the stages that form the basis of the empirical study, and specificities on the methods and techniques adopted are given. The research participants' profile is also described herein. Section 5.6 is dedicated to the procedures regarding data analysis and interpretation, referring to how the adopted methodology led to the findings and discussion presented in chapters 6, 7 and 8. Finally, in section 5.7, the chapter concludes with some considerations on validity and trustworthiness of the research, researcher's positionality and reflexivity, ethical issues and limitations.

5.2 Structuring the research framework

Although there is no general agreement on the number or denomination of the stages making up the process of scientific research, it is generally recognised that it develops in a sequence of steps. Moreover, although this process is generally described as rational and straightforward, this is rarely the case, and for this reason it should be interpreted as flexible, emergent, and adaptable in face of unexpected circumstances, opportunities and problems.

There seems to be a general agreement that the process of planning a research typically includes: the formulation of a research problem/question, review of related research, clarification of central concepts, selection of research design and data collection techniques, selection of relevant site(s) and subjects, collection of relevant data, analysis and interpretation, conceptual and theoretical work, and writing up findings and conclusions. In comparison with the stepwise design of quantitative studies, qualitative studies require more iterative and cyclical approaches to sampling, data collection, analysis and interpretation (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2014; Pizam, 1994). This thesis was no exception, and a great deal of adaptation and on-going adjustment was necessary. A graphical overview of the overall research process adopted when developing this study is presented in Figure 5.1, on the following page. All the steps are described in detail along the following sections.

Any scientific investigation starts with the identification of a research topic, which may be informed by a practical concern or some scientific or intellectual interest of the researcher. Thus, the formulation of a clear and well-defined scientific problem – an interrogative sentence or statement that asks about the relation between two or more variables – is the first, and the most important step in the planning of a research investigation, as it will determine, to a large extent, the research methods to be used in the study (Pizam, 1994) (see section 5.2.1).

This research aims at contributing to a deeper understanding of work experiences of highly educated HR in the T&H industry, and of ways these experiences have influenced career dynamics in the sector. By combining theoretical and philosophical perspectives and the complementary qualitative research methods, the study intends to offer nuanced and critical new insights concerning career retention and longevity in the hotel sector, grounded on the capitalisation of T&H tertiary education. The research approach is based on in-depth, individual, first-hand narratives of career experience, decisions, perceptions and feelings, conducted with three groups of carefully selected participants, offering three different viewpoints on the subject. The highlight is on the cognition of quality of working life, informing on the meaning and importance given to work-/career-related experiences.

The progressive design of the research problem, which implied redrafting the research question, was based on exploratory readings (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1988), particularly of Tourism, Human Resources Management and Organisational Psychology literature. This comprehensive exploratory literature review, occasionally accompanied by discussions with peers and experts on the various topics of this study, allowed not only justifying the relevance of this work for tourism research, but also setting the conceptual basis for the development of the research specific objectives and methodology.

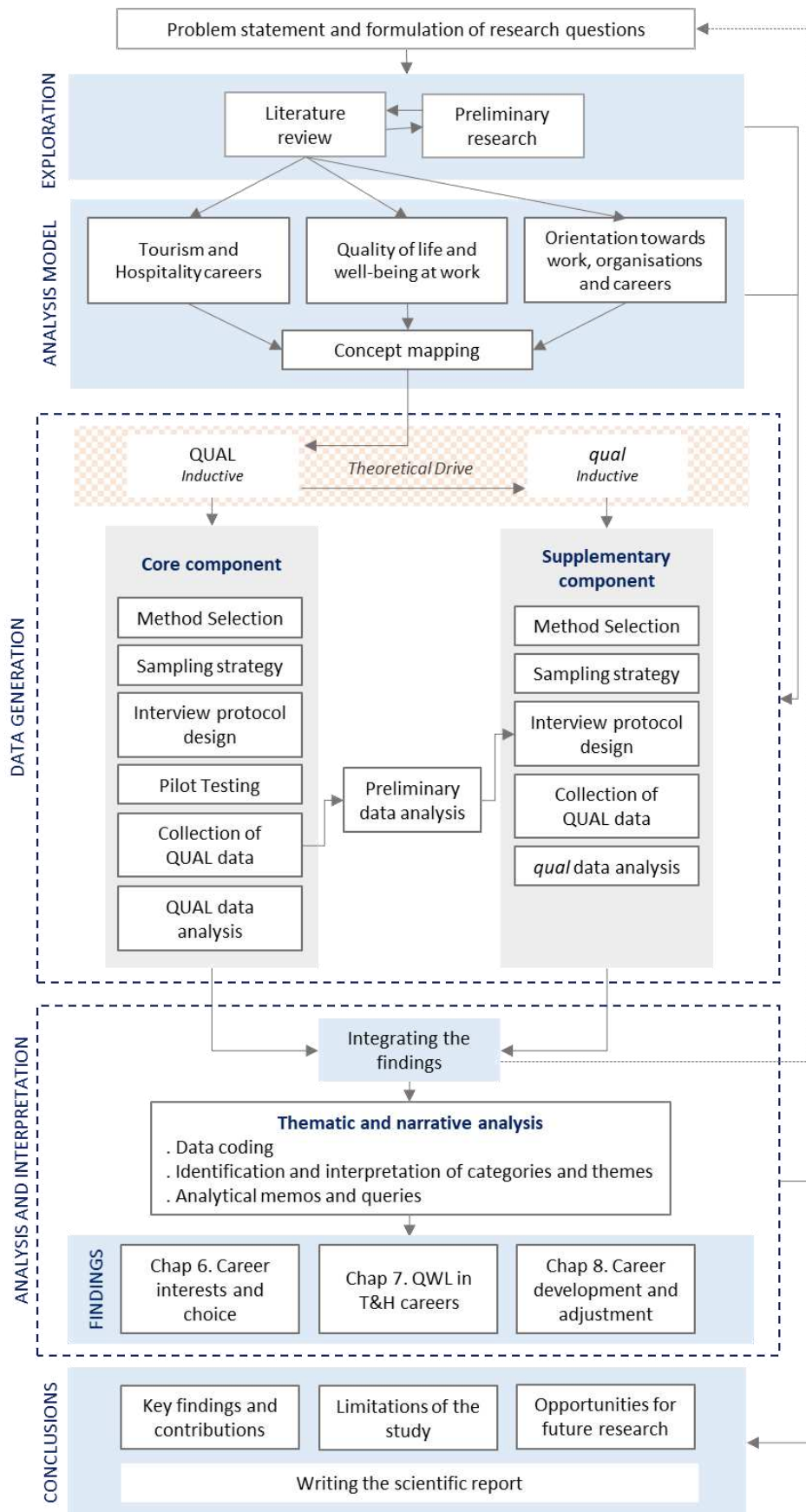


Figure 5.1 | Structure outline of the research process

Source: Own construction based on Coutinho (2011), Creswell (2012), Morse (2010a), Pizam (1994), Quivy and Campenhoudt (1988)

5.2.1 Research aims, research questions and objectives

To explore the complex career dynamics in the T&H industry, the overall aim of this study and the key research questions underpinning the inquiry were then outlined, as presented in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 as follows.

Table 5.1 | Research problem, general objective, and unit of analysis

Research problem
To what extent is the T&H industry being successful in retaining and capitalise on staff with dedicated T&H high-level qualifications and what implications does it have for personal career development?
Overall research aim
To understand the dynamics of retention and capitalisation of a growing workforce with T&H dedicated educational background and long-term career ambitions.
Unit of analysis
Experiences and subjective meanings of highly educated <i>Employees</i> , <i>Leavers</i> , and <i>Newcomers</i> in the hospitality industry (particularly in the hotel sector).

Table 5.2 | Key research questions and corresponding specific objectives

Research questions	Specific objectives
RQ1. What moves individuals towards a degree and a career in T&H?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To examine the image of the T&H industry as a first choice for long-term career in light of individuals' interests, motivations, and future prospects. . To understand challenges underlying career decision-making in the context of a changing labour market. . To analyse the process of education-to-work transition of prospective graduates.
RQ2. How do highly educated individuals conceive quality of working life (QWL) in the Hospitality industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To identify key-dimensions of QWL. . To investigate how do individuals perceive their QWL in the Hospitality industry. . To examine conceptions of the quality of the employee-employer relationship considering the changing nature of employment relations.
RQ3. In what ways do the experiences of highly educated individuals influence their decisions on job-career permanence or termination?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To interpret the different meanings that individuals ascribe to staying or quitting their job-occupation, informed by their perceptions and evaluation of work experiences. . To analyse the extent to which conceptions of QWL shape individuals' career adjustment and willingness for job-occupational permanence or change. . To explore contemporary view on employee turnover and retention in T&H.
RQ4. How do Hospitality careers unfold for highly educated individuals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To analyse individuals' stories of their career trajectories, identifying structural, social, and individual factors impacting Hospitality careers. . To investigate the dynamic nature of career construction in the Hospitality industry and which type of career orientation it enables. . To characterise the role of T&H higher education degrees in career construction and development.

5.2.2 Critical literature review: fields of study and conceptual framework

A comprehensive literature review, embedded in three main thematic areas, as presented in Figure 5.2, was conducted in the first part of this thesis report. At a preliminary stage, this literature review was aimed at: (i) identifying the existing theoretical frameworks relating to the topics being studied in each of these areas; (ii) locate the study within existing knowledge and establishing links to other studies, hence identifying/confirming gaps in knowledge; (iii) assisting the formulation of the research questions and objectives; (iv) defining key concepts; and (iv) developing the conceptual framework that guides this study. Subsequently, this literature review has also informed the following: (i) research design and strategies of inquiry that best fit the objectives of the study; (ii) data generation/collection, particularly guiding interview protocol design; and (iii) data analysis, by serving as a basis to potential themes anticipation and to findings discussion and interpretation.

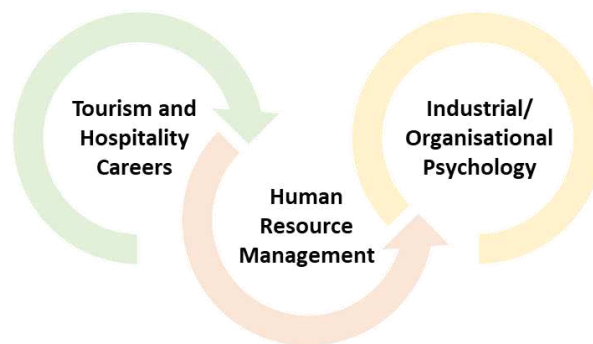


Figure 5.2 | Literature review: main areas/disciplinary fields of analysis

Source: Own construction

This literature review has shed light on the complexity and interweaving of the many concepts and theories relating to the career choice, career development and work adjustment of highly educated individuals. This has oriented the researcher towards a more holistic understanding and portraying of how people experience, perceive, and respond to their career development in the T&H industry. Table 5.3 outlines the main themes approached within Chapters 2 and 4.

Considering that this is an applied investigation in the Tourism field, as well as the fact that occupation and industry-specific structure may enable certain career orientations, some of the specificities of Tourism and Hospitality as a field of study are briefly addressed below, also aimed at justifying the narrowing focus towards the hospitality industry, and onwards on the hotel sector, that was employed in this study.

Table 5.3 | Detailed framework of literature review

	Chapter 2 <i>Tourism and Hospitality careers</i>	Chapter 3 <i>Quality of life and well-being at work</i>	Chapter 4 <i>Orientation towards work, organisations and careers</i>
Topic	The nature, structure, and development of careers	Quality of working life/ Employment-related experiences	Negative and positive work-related outcomes
Disciplinary domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Tourism . HR Management . Vocational Psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . I/O Psychology . HR Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . HR Management . I/O Psychology/ Organisational behaviour . Tourism
Main themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Career development and work adjustment . Work and employment characteristics in T&H . Motivations to pursue a career in T&H . Investing in high level qualifications/graduate talent management . Diversity at the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Bad jobs vs. good jobs . Objective vs. subjective well-being . Influential models and measures of QWL . Main dimensions of QWL in T&H 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Employee turnover vs. retention . Influences/implications on career decisions/career longevity in T&H . Positive organisational behaviour/positive job attitudes . Expectations and reciprocity

Source: Own construction

Tourism and Hospitality: contextualizing research design and data collection choices

As a field of study and research, the complexity of tourism studies draws in its **interdisciplinary nature** and in their reciprocity and mutuality. Due to its near relationship to other social sciences, tourism can be observed from a wide range of perspectives, from a variety of disciplines such as Education, Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Geography, Urban and regional planning, Business, or Hotel and restaurant administration, among several others (Jafari & Ritchie, 1981).

Over the years, the tourism concept has broadened into holistic and systemic interpretations and the **systems approach** has been adopted by many researchers to describe and model the complex and dynamic nature of the tourism phenomenon, including both elements of demand and supply (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2011; Gunn & Var, 2002; Inskeep, 1991; Leiper, 1979; Mill & Morrison, 1985; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Leiper (1979) pioneered the modelling of tourism as a system, in what is still one of the most cited models. This system describes the movement of the traveller from the region of origin to the region of destination, thus passing through a transit route region. Leiper’s framework includes five distinct elements in the tourism system that are dependent on each other – tourists, a tourist generating region, a transit route region, a tourist destination region and the tourism industry (later revised by the author to *tourism industries* (Leiper, 2008)) – and affect and are affect by other environments (e.g., human, socio-cultural,

economical, technological, physical, political, legal). Within a destination, several sub-systems can be found, corresponding to different products or sub-sectors: tourism marketing, tourist careers (transportation), tourist accommodation, tourist attractions, miscellaneous tourism services and tourism regulation (including government and education) (Leiper, 1979).

Goeldner and Ritchie's (2011) framework on the tourism system is of particular relevance for this research, for contemplating the role and the careers of the people working in the tourism industry. Goeldner and Ritchie (2011) put forward a complex diagram detailing the different components, as well as the processes and outcomes of the tourism phenomenon (Figure 5.3), in which the tourists and the travel experiences they seek when travelling to a destination are at the core.

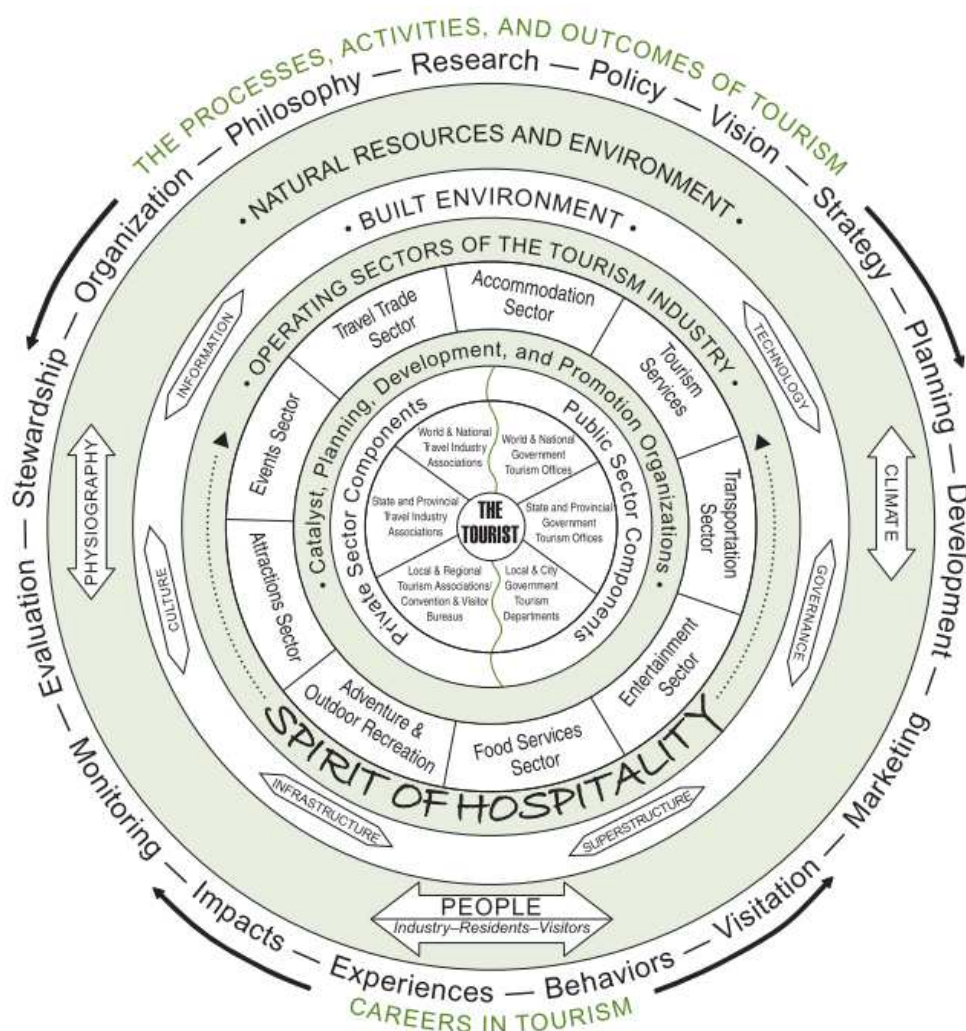


Figure 5.3 | The tourism phenomenon: components of tourism and tourism management

Source: Goeldner and Ritchie (2011)

Accommodation, tourism services, transportation, entertainment, food services, adventure and outdoor recreation, attractions, events, and travel trade, are the operating sectors of the

tourism industry. These operating sectors are responsible for delivering high-quality memorable experiences which are the essence of what the authors called *spirit of hospitality*:

“All of the foregoing segments, sectors, and organisations require people to make the various processes work and to make the broad range of activities and experiences available to travellers. It is these ‘experiences’ that are the tourism product, the intended outcome of the tourism phenomenon. The people in the tourism industry who provide these experiences, as in any industry, must perform a vast number of organisational functions. These functions range from relatively simple jobs to highly sophisticated and demanding tasks.” (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2011, p. 15).

Going beyond the simple provision of a service, the term **hospitality**, as in *hospitality* industry, is intrinsically linked to the way people in the industry provide the service, which is critical to the customer’s overall enjoyment of the experience, thus translating into customer satisfaction and loyalty (Dawson & Abbott, 2011). Tourism and hospitality jobs are co-related, having both unique as shared features, and tourism careers frequent overlap with hospitality careers, with hospitality comprising the sub-sectors that better perform in terms of employment (Swarbrooke & Gibson, 2017). As per Mullins (2001) *hospitality* is a collective, all-embracing nomenclature, for a larger grouping of organisations that provide different types of services for tourists. Within the hospitality industry, the **accommodation** sector – in particular **hotels** – enjoy greater visibility than other sub-sectors, both for being at the heart of tourism activities, as one of the basic needs of tourists (Jafari, 1974; Swarbrooke & Gibson, 2017), and for their direct influence in the tourism development of destination areas (Fyall, 2018; UNWTO & ILO, 2014).

Following the objectives of this thesis, the term(s) *tourism and hospitality* are used in aggregated form, as hendiadys, not only to especially emphasise the focus on the hospitality sector (in which the empirical work of this research is focused on; see section 5.5), but also to allow for a more holistic view of career development and quality of working life issues (considering aspects that are transversal to various tourism *industries*) (Figure 5.4).



Figure 5.4 | Research focus with the Tourism field guiding the empirical study

Source: Own construction

5.3 Research philosophy and methodological approach

At the beginning of any research project, the researcher is faced with the major challenge of developing a reasonable understanding of complex research philosophies and approaches in order to choose the most appropriate one. Many of the fundamental challenges a social science researcher faces relate to decision-making and justification for the research strategy and methods adopted, and an understanding of the theory and philosophical foundations of social science research which is key in rendering transparency and accountability to the research process (Crotty, 1998). The researcher's decisions and actions are based on a system of principles, beliefs and values that not only defines his/her *worldview*, but also allow him/her to think about and make sense of the complexities of the world (Corbetta, 2003; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 2014).

This system of beliefs is known as *paradigm*; a term that was popularized by the work of the physical science, historian and philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn, who wrote the influential, but also controversial book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962 about the radical shifts in thinking within physical sciences. This term has then become popular as a way of describing the various points of view that researchers take in their search for explanations. Paradigms are, therefore, conceptual frameworks shared by members of a research community, which determine how a given phenomenon should be studied and which standards and methods should be used to study it in order to make science evolve (Kuhn, 1970). One of the functions of a paradigm is, therefore, to establish acceptable research methods and techniques within a discipline, legitimising it (Corbetta, 2003). Paradigms are deeply embedded in its practitioners' socialization, hence choosing a research paradigm that is congruent with one's beliefs about the nature of the world is key to ensure a strong research design (Patton, 2014).

Ontological, epistemological, and methodological considerations

There are five main interconnected **assumptions** governing an inquiry paradigm that all research philosophies make: ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology, and methods. Therefore, different research philosophies can be distinguished by the differences and similarities in their ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. Collectively, these provide a framework to guide the researcher in the development of strategies, methods and practices, and to which Figure 5.5 provides an overview. The essence of these elements relates to:

- i) the nature of the knowledge, reality and/or social world, and what can be known about it (*ontology*);
- ii) the nature of knowledge and construction of knowledge (what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge), including the relationship between the researcher and what can be known (*epistemology*);
- iii) the role of values and ethics within the research process (*axiology*);
- iv) how can the researcher find out about what can be known (*methodology and methods*) (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Epistemology guides methodological choices, is axiological and relies on the researcher's definition of reality, i.e., the ontology of the researcher, and therefore, epistemological and ontological issues tend to emerge together and shape the paradigm which will guide the

research (Crotty, 1998). Although quite loosely referred to in the literature, methodology constitutes an approach to inquiry, an explanation or justification for the methods to be adopted. Anchored in specific disciplines, methodology shapes and is shaped by research objectives, questions, and design. In turn, methods are the procedures, tools and techniques which produce data, whose meaning derives from the methodology within which they are employed (Carter & Little, 2007; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004) (Figure 5.5).

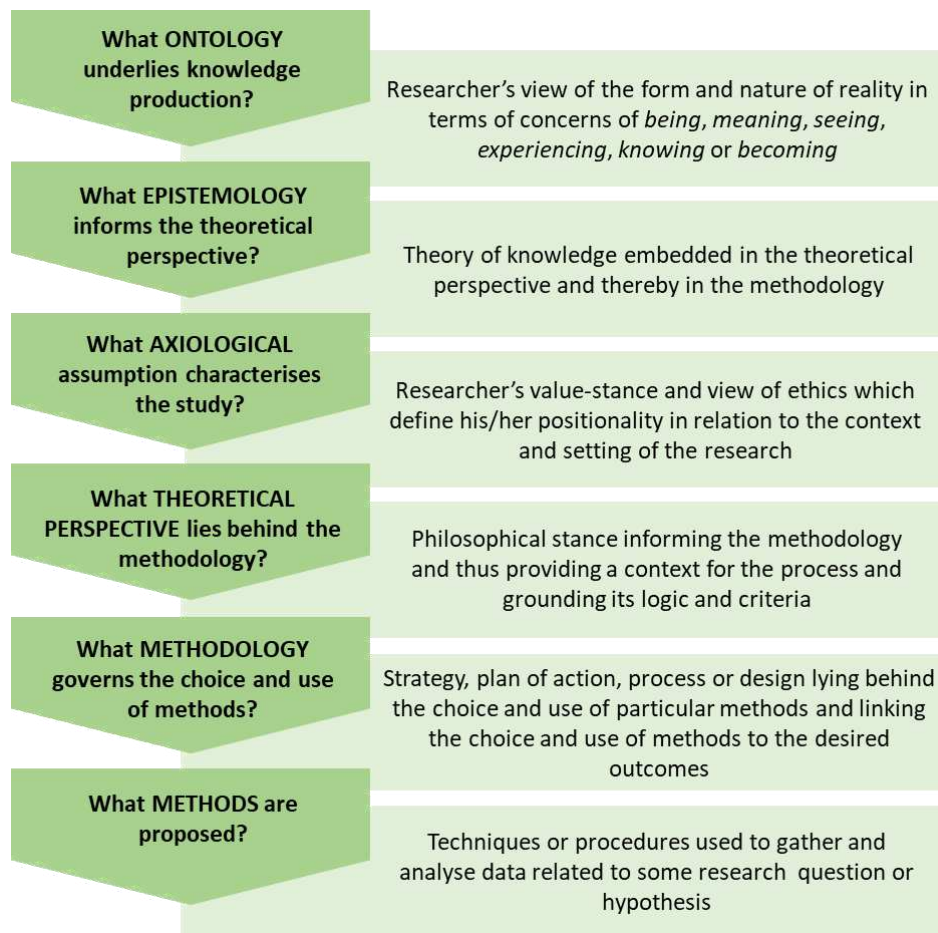


Figure 5.5 | Philosophical assumptions guiding research and paradigm choice
Source: Own construction based on Crotty (1998) and Lincoln and Guba (1985)

Among the philosophical perspectives that have accompanied the growth of social and human science since its origins, there are several frames of reference. Each one of these paradigms “provides flexible guidelines that connect theory and method and help to determine the structure and shape of any inquiry” (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, p. 34). Despite positivism and interpretivism being considered the founding paradigms of social research (Corbetta, 2003), these philosophical frameworks are also socially constructed and change over time and space, wherefore some scholars advocate the conceptualisation and operationalisation of new and more inclusive paradigms (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Different research philosophies and interpretation frameworks, underpinned by different ontological and epistemological

assumptions, were analysed in order to determine the most adequate paradigmatic position to support this study. Appendix I presents an overview of the fundamental differences in operating premises between the leading frameworks in social sciences. This is, however, a non-exhaustive list. Beside, organising paradigms into neat categories can be problematic, as some paradigms are seen as such in their own right, while others are new perspectives of existing paradigms, and some methodologists and science philosophers may choose more than others to detail different strands of some of these philosophical stances.

For example, qualitative methodologists Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2018), who have (re)organised their categorisation over the years, generally describe five paradigms: positivism, postpositivism, critical theories, constructivism, and participatory views. Creswell and Poth (2018) (considering that Creswell has also provided many formulations over the years) refer to four main interpretative frameworks – postpositivism, social constructivism, transformative frameworks, and postmodern perspectives –, further complemented with pragmatism, feminist theories, critical theory and critical race theory, queer theory and disability theories. Within business and management research, Saunders et al. (2016) outline five research philosophies: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism. In the psychology field, Ponterotto and Grieger (2007) specify positivism, postpositivism, constructivist-interpretivist and critical-ideological paradigms. Drawing from tourism studies, Tribe (2001) identifies three paradigms – scientific positivism, interpretive method, critical theory – while Jennings (2009) more extensively distinguishes between positivism, postpositivism, critical realism, pragmatism, chaos and complexity theory orientation, critical theory, social construction, postmodern perspectives, and participatory views.

Positivism relates to the philosophical stance of the physical and natural science, which is based on the belief that there is a singular and objective reality, a single truth, that can be discovered with the appropriate experimental methods. It takes the view that a ‘real’ world exists externally to the researcher and independently of how the world is perceived and conceptualised by people. Therefore, this worldview is impartial and value-free, relies on the hypothetico-deductive method to test pre-established hypothesis, and its end-product are law-like generalisations (Lincoln et al., 2018; Saunders et al., 2016; Veal, 2018). Exclusively drawn up by quantitative research, positivism has been the dominant force in science for more than 150 years (Ponterotto, 2005). Typically, two versions of positivism are presented: the original nineteenth century version, also labelled classic positivism, and its twentieth century reformulation, labelled post-positivism. **Post-positivist** researchers agree with the main tenets of the positivist paradigm, holding that there is an independent and objective reality to be studied, but admit that it can never really be fully apprehended or understood. Post-positivists are also more reflexive, acknowledging contextual influences and the fallibility of observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gray, 2013; Lincoln et al., 2018; Ponterotto, 2005). Post-positivists thus “hold a deterministic philosophy in which causes (probably) determine effects or outcomes” (Creswell, 2014, p. 36). Critical realism is a related tradition of post-positivism with an emancipatory role, that claims that reality is shaped by culture, language and political interests.

Constructivism⁴⁰/interpretivism, which encompasses a number of more specific movements, emerged as a reaction to positivism and empiricism by contending that knowledge and truth about the social world are not actually discovered but rather created through the researcher's interaction with the studied phenomenon. In contrast with (post)positivism, by subscribing to a realist ontology, the constructivism/interpretivism paradigm assumes multiple, apprehendable, and equally valid realities. Its epistemological position is subjective, holding that there can be as many realities as there are participants, and lived experiences must be understood from the point of view of those who live them (Lincoln et al., 2018; Ponterotto, 2005; Schwandt, 1998; Willis, 2007). These subjective meanings are not "simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives", which makes them appear natural and inevitable (Creswell, 2014, p. 37; Schwandt, 1998). The constructivist/interpretivist inquiry paradigm relies on a holistic-inductive approach, and the research process is reflexive and highly value bounded (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Lincoln et al., 2018). The end-product of constructivist/interpretivist are not universally applicable theories, as time- and context-free generalisations are neither desirable nor possible, but rather new, rich and contextually – culturally and historically – situated understandings. Qualitative research generally draws on constructivist/interpretivist beliefs (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln et al., 2018).

Critical inquiry frameworks, traced back to Frankfurt School and largely influenced by postmodernism, emphasise the world-making role of power relations, control and ideology that are assumed to dominate one's understanding of the social world (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Ponterotto, 2005). By having historically evolved (hence the historical realism ontology), social structures (e.g., class, race, gender) are taken as 'real', natural and inevitable, and influence the way people make sense of their lives and choices; these constructions are distorted because they have been shaped by ideological factors, but make people unknowingly participate in systems of dominance and oppression, therefore having real consequences (Caton, 2014; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003). Radically reflexive, by accepting different ways of thinking and giving voice to alternative worldviews, critical theory seeks transformational change, emancipation and social justice for marginalised groups (Gray, 2013; Lincoln et al., 2018; Ponterotto, 2005). Critical theory should, however, be interpreted broadly, as there are many schools of thought and no single theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003).

Driven by a similar social reconstructionist agenda, there is **transformative theory**, an *umbrella* approach⁴¹ that places central importance on the lives and experiences of marginalised groups. Ontologically, the transformative paradigm, argues that "there are multiple realities that are socially constructed, but it is necessary to be explicit about the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, racial, gender, age, and disability values that define [those] realities" (Mertens, 2007, p. 2016). Knowledge rests on respectful interactions between a reflexive and ethical researcher and the research participants. It reflects asymmetric power relations in a complex cultural context, aiming at linking the results of social inquiry to action and advocating

⁴⁰ Often also referred to as constructionism, despite differences exist (cf. Young & Collin, 2004).

⁴¹ Rooted in feminism, critical race theory, post-colonial and indigenous theory, queer theory, and disability theory.

social justice and emancipation (Mertens, 2007, 2009). Transformative was proposed by Mertens as a suitable paradigm for mixed methods research (R. F. Hall, 2013; Mertens, 2007).

Much (or most) mixed method approaches are also rooted in some version of **pragmatism**, an approach that advocates that improving practice is more important than epistemology purism, and different approaches and methods can, or must, be integrated in the same study. In pragmatic research, research philosophies can remain separate, but can also be mixed or combined into another research design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). “Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality” and the researcher is free to choose multiple methods and multiple sources of data collection, if considered the best to meet the specific nature of their research problems (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 64). Pragmatism focus on *what works*, on practical solutions and implications for real social problems. Knowledge is relational, temporal, contextual, and emphasis is placed in communication and shared meaning making (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). The main tenets of pragmatism are also related with the notion of *bricolage*, which is briefly addressed later in this section.

Paradigmatic and methodological approaches in Tourism research

In the early stages of tourism studies and research, roughly until the late twentieth century, positivism and postpositivism held a dominant position as major paradigms of influence. These approaches, targeted at producing standardised and robust theory-testing systems, were normalised and legitimised through the several ‘institutions’ of research and publication, and professional organisations, therefore privileging quantitative research methodologies and methods for long time (Jennings, 2009; Tribe, 2005). It was mostly in the latter quarter of the twentieth century, that other philosophical frameworks with different paradigmatic foci and methodological traditions – namely qualitative and mixed methods methodologies – took root as the result of “counter-discourses and debates, which had previously emerged in the 1980s from environmentally and socially situated framings, [that] started to challenge the orthodoxy of tourism as solely a business-focused phenomena [as initial studies were business studies applied to a tourism context (Tribe, 2005)] to be understood primarily from post/positivist agendas”. This is the case of critical realism, pragmatism, chaos and complexity theory, critical theory orientation, constructivism/interpretivism, postmodernism, or participatory paradigms (Jennings, 2009, p. 684).

Although much of the seminal work in tourism studies was initiated through qualitative research, it was more likely to be published in non-tourism journals (Riley & Love, 2000). Qualitative inquiry is often undervalued and labelled as a poor alternative to *scientific, rigorous, unambiguous* quantitative studies, especially because ‘quality’ is an elusive parameter for comparing research and qualitative techniques took more time to be well defined (Jennings, 2009; Riley & Love, 2000). Over the past decades, this assumption has been increasingly questioned in many social science disciplines (e.g., education, sociology, anthropology, and consumer behaviour), and qualitative research is now seen as a process, more than just merely a method, adjunct to quantitative research; tourism scholars were, however, somewhat reluctant in adopting and accepting paradigmatic and related methodological diversity (Jennings, 2009; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004; Riley & Love, 2000).

With the shift towards qualitative methodologies and research, tourism studies have advanced a 'critical turn' by demonstrating "greater reflexivity and greater consideration of 'gender, class and race', as well as searches for 'new models' of research" (Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins, 2005; Bianchi, 2009; Jennings, 2009, pp. 682–683; Tribe, 2005). According to Wilson et al. (2019, p. 5) this is also the moment (early 2000s onwards) when tourism researchers start to question methods and methodologies, awakening to matters of ontology and epistemology, and developing reflexive and embodied critiques and accounts in tourism.

This 'critical turn' resonates with Tribe's (2005) 'new tourism research' or with Denzin and Lincoln's (1998, 2018)⁴² 'crisis of representation' moment. The former emphasises the emergence of more reflexivity, and the adoption and growing dissemination of innovative and radical lines of enquiry, and the latter is marked by traits such as: the challenging of social research's rigour and generalisability; the emergence of reflexivity, embodiment and personal biography of researchers; the recognition of multiple interpretations; or the raising of questions around issues of gender, class and race (namely the impact embodied characteristics have on data generation and interpretation) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004).

"In the late 1990s and early 2000s, qualitative and quantitative agendas have been challenged by the use of (methodological) 'triangulation' in tourism research studies, particularly using mixed methods (generally quantitative followed by qualitative methods) in research projects/agendas" (Jennings, 2009, p. 683). As result, both the transformative (Heimtun & Morgan, 2012) and the pragmatism (Pansiri, 2006) paradigms have been gaining ground in tourism studies.

In addition, Davies (2003) also remarks that tourism industries highly differ from conventional industries, and positivist approaches, despite suitable for revealing trends and data-descriptive insights, may have difficulties in accommodating characteristics such as the changing nature of tourism firms, dynamic features of markets, the highly perishable nature of tourism products, technological change, the wide variety of business practices (e.g., outsourcing), changing institutional arrangements or behavioural characteristics.

Adopting a constructivist-interpretative stance

There is no single best research philosophy, as each contributes to a unique and valuable way of seeing the world, and the researcher should thus choose the one that better conveys his/her beliefs, assumptions and views of the world. Following (i) the researcher's reflexivity (addressed in section 5.7 with more detail), (ii) the research question and objectives of this study presented in section 5.2, and (iii) in line with the frameworks suggested by Crotty (1998) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) – as graphically presented in Figure 5.5 –, the inquiry framework was established,

⁴² Denzin and Lincoln (1998, 2018, p. 44) divide the history of social research into eight to nine historical phases, which they refer to as the 'moments of qualitative research': the traditional (1900–1950), the modernist or golden age (1950–1970), blurred genres (1970–1980), the paradigm wars (1980–1985), the crisis of representation (1986–1990), the postmodern (1990–1995), postexperimental inquiry (1995–2000), the methodologically contested present (2000–2004), paradigm proliferation (2005–2010), the fractured, posthumanist phase that battles managerialism in the audit-driven academy (2010–2015), and an uncertain, utopian future, where critical inquiry finds its voice in the public arena (2016–). Wilson et al. (2019, pp. 4–5) have recently offered an alignment of Denzin and Lincoln's moments of qualitative research to Tourism studies.

underpinning a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm choice. The rationale for this choice is described in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 | Philosophical assumptions orienting the adoption of a constructivist-interpretivist stance

Philosophical assumption	Rationale
Ontology: <i>Relativism</i>	<p>This thesis focuses on the perceptions of highly educated individuals relating to their experience as hotel staff. In line with the relativist ontological position of constructivism, these perceptions are viewed as subjective, influenced by the context in relation to which they are observed, i.e., by an external and variable reality (in particular the social environment; e.g., national/regional context, hotel sector work cultures, educational background). Therefore, multiple viewpoints and meanings of the same phenomenon exist in the minds of the different groups of participants, which the researcher conducting this study aims to elicit. Multiple interpretations of these meanings also exist, which the researcher does not attempt to read as if constituting a single, universal truth that could be determined by a process of measurement. A thick description of the career dynamics in T&H and its complexity in its unique context was sought instead.</p>
Epistemology: <i>Social constructivist/ dialogic interaction</i>	<p>Participants' perceptions are shaped by individual experiences and interaction with other social actors (e.g., co-workers, supervisors, family members, the researcher herself). In this investigation, meaning is co-constructed from the narratives of the participants and the researcher's interpretation of <i>their lived experiences</i> in different contexts and cultures. Intense interaction between the researcher and the participants was sought through comprehensive and deep dialogue (in particular, in-depth interviews).</p>
Axiology: <i>Value-bonded, researcher's values and lived experience acknowledged</i>	<p>As the epistemology underlying a constructivist position requires intensive researcher-participant interaction, research is automatically influenced by the researcher's values and her own lived experiences. Looking for mutual understanding, the researcher recognises that her interpretation flows from her personal, cultural, and historical experiences, by acknowledging and describing her position to the participants in the study as an integral part of the research process (see also <i>Positionality</i> in section 5.7).</p>
Methodology: <i>Qualitative, inductively-driven, multi-method design</i>	<p>Given the centrality of researcher-participant interaction, the constructivism-interpretivism paradigm assumes a <i>naturalistic</i> (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) set of methodological procedures such as the in-depth face-to-face interviewing strategy which was adopted in this study. The process of meaning construction is based on participants' own voices and words. Aiming for clarification and a more comprehensive understanding of the specific context in which participants work and live, a supplementary method was also used (key informant interviews). Meaningful patterns and themes that contribute to an understanding of how participants make sense of their career experiences were revealed through thematic analysis. These methodological choices are described in more detail in section 5.4.</p>

Source: Own construction

One limitation assigned to constructivism-interpretivism is that this theoretical perspective, despite considering contextual grounding (which is essential for understanding people's interpretations of given phenomena and life situations), and overcoming the unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched (that characterises positivism), lacks critical orientation and implicitly neglects the impact of hegemony and ideology on knowledge and social reality, therefore not addressing issues such as power or agency (Caton, 2014; Tribe, 2004). Classic constructivist-interpretivist researchers do not seek to challenge dominant discourse or transformation of exploitative social structures, assumptions that boosted the role of critical inquiry in further enhancing the practicability and transformational power of research (Caton, 2014; Lincoln et al., 2018). However, critical qualitative inquiry, involving inter- and cross-disciplinary moves, has gained grounds as an integral part of an international, interpretive public social science discourse (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Schwandt, 1998). Hence, and as further detailed below, **critical theory** knowledge claims were also considered in this investigation.

Bricolage – borrowing viewpoints from critical theory

Notwithstanding the importance of understanding the paradigm underpinning one's research, which will define not only the study's methodology and methods, but also many of the standards by which the study will be evaluated, it would be too simplistic to assume that each research would fall neatly under a single paradigm (Morrow, 2005). As many philosophical orientations exist nowadays, researchers may feel that more than one paradigm resonates with their personal sensibilities (Caton, 2014). As there is no single set of methods that can provide the 'right' answers to the research questions, and the need to move towards more transdisciplinary and multi-method research is increasingly being proposed, the researcher can work between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms, thus presenting him/herself as *bricoleur* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Kincheloe, 2001; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Building from postmodern conceptions, bricolage requires that a research topic is approached from multiple disciplinary perspectives, which implies borrowing both multiple methods of inquiry and employing diverse theoretical and philosophical underpinnings (Kincheloe, 2001). An interpretive bricoleur produces a *bricolage* by finding and combine different set of representations, which, just like as a puzzle, are put together, providing a complete picture as possible of a complex social phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, 2018; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004).

Constructivism and critical theory are often portrayed as radically differing philosophical traditions, particularly with regards to their ontological assumptions and research aims. Epistemological, constructivists and critical theorists converge in the belief that researchers and their values are inevitably intertwined with the social phenomena being studied (Caton, 2014; Lincoln et al., 2018), but scholars like Kincheloe and McLaren (2003), Caton (2014) or Howell (2016) are also of the opinion that further convergence points can be found if interpretations are made more loosely. The influence of perspectives such as postmodernism or poststructuralism have encouraged researchers towards critical thinking, criticality in the research process, and reflexivity in their role as knowledge producers but also as voices of authority. As understanding meaning is central both to constructivists and to many critical theorists, "then what is called into question philosophically is not the nature of reality [i.e., ontology] but the nature and consequences of meaning" (Caton, 2014, p. 131). Each perspective

thus acknowledges the real existence of multiple meanings, as well as recognises real consequences as flowing from those meanings. Neither constructivist or critical theorists are concerned with labelling these multiple constructions “as ‘true or false’, but rather as ‘better or worse’, depending on the nature of the outcomes produced” (Caton, 2014, p. 132). As in constructivism, critical theorists advocate a reality that is constructed within a social–historical context, yet conceptualised within relations of power, in which various identities and subjectivities – e.g., gendered/racialized/ethnic/classist/homophobic – are formed (Ponterotto, 2005). Lincoln et al. (2018) also remark that just like positivism and postpositivism are clearly commensurable paradigms, “elements of interpretivist/postmodern, critical theory, constructivist, and participative inquiry can fit comfortably together” (p. 233).

In mainstream management and HR development research, the ontological and epistemological positivist perspectives have been dominant, and the increased use of qualitative methods in management is commonly interpreted as “a purely instrumental process, objective, politically neutral, simply concerned with methods to ensure control and efficiency in organisations” (Valentin, 2006, p. 17). As interpretive frameworks are not believed to pay enough attention to the ways in which people’s understandings are shaped by the structure and culture of the institutions in which they live and work, growing emphasis has been placed on critical perspectives as means to question established social orders, management practices, ideologies, discourses and institutions (Valentin, 2006).

With regards to theory-driven tourism research, as previously mentioned, interpretive, alternative and critical modes of enquiry have gradually emerged (Tribe, 2004). By drawing on a variety of compatible theoretical offerings to yield cumulative insights on complex situations, pluralistic or eclectic research is deemed appropriate and desirable in order to meet the complexity and heterogeneity of the tourism field (Tribe, Dann, & Jamal, 2015), and several calls for T&H studies to take more critical paths of inquiry have been made (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2007; Tribe, 2005; Wilson, Harris, & Small, 2008; Wilson, Small, & Harris, 2012). A positive sign is that constructivism and critical theory are in fact two increasingly popular research approaches within tourism studies (Caton, 2014). Since the study of hospitality might have broader social effects and not only being limited to organisational and managerial implications, an increasing international academic interest in the study of hospitality from a wider range of social science perspectives, has also been observed (Baum, 2015; Baum & Hai, 2019; Baum, Kralj, Robinson, & Solnet, 2016; Ladkin, 2011; Lashley, 2007; Solnet et al., 2015).

The researcher conducting this thesis also anticipated that multiple meanings of participants’ career experiences and decisions would be identified. She did not aspire to reveal a single truth or to describe a single reality, but rather to provide new insights and nuanced understandings of career dynamics in the T&H industry. The researcher has also considered that this should include being critically reflexive about employment relationships in T&H, particularly with regards to those relationships which are mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted, so that research can also produce practical, pragmatic knowledge. Directly or indirectly, and independently of whom exerts it, the use of power in influencing behaviour is a pervading feature of work organisations (Acker, 2006; Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). There are different types of power and different power relationships at the workplace, and structural determinants of the social environment are responsible for perpetuating hierarchical

power relations, such as those related to gender roles, for example (Acker, 2006; Dundon et al., 2017; Lucas, 2004; Willis, 2007). Gender, race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion are example of (in)equality and diversity dimensions that underly power imbalance towards employees (Acker, 2006; Kirton & Greene, 2015). Despite the widely debated problematic nature of work in T&H, poor employment conditions and inequality associated with T&H jobs, “asymmetries of power and divisions of labour that have grown under conditions of neo-liberal capitalism and globalisation” are commonly overlooked and critical research in this field remains scant (Bianchi, 2009, p. 487; D. Williamson, Rasmussen, & Ravenswood, 2017). Critical research takes on the necessity of critique of the current ideology, with the objective of exposing dominating or oppressive relationships in society (Willis, 2007), including employment relations.

Considering the gendered nature of T&H employment evidencing women’s discrimination and disadvantage on multiple grounds (section 2.3.1) and the gendered power relations influencing women’s careers in this industry (section 2.4.3) previously noted in Chapter 2, this investigation places special emphasis on gendered constructions of the research participants.

By resorting to bricolage, the researcher also acknowledges that “research is an interactive process shaped by one’s personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting”, while recognizing that bricolage is culturally, temporally, and structurally defined, historically situated, and should strive for constructive action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 47). In this thesis, mostly built on a complementarity rationale (with a view to elaboration, clarification and richness-enhancing), the notion of bricolage has not only underpinned the combination of theoretical and philosophical perspectives, but also the adoption of complementary methods of inquiry:

- i) A critical (particularly gender-sensitive) lens was combined with a constructivism-interpretivist stance in understanding the way participants make sense of their work experiences in the hotel sector, in specific contexts and moments.
- ii) A sequential, inductively-driven, multi-method qualitative strategy was implemented, based on a combination of QUAL (in-depth interviews with highly educated individuals) and *qual* (key informant interviews) (strategy that is specifically addressed in section 5.4.2) integrated through thematic analysis (option/procedure that is described in section 5.6.2).

5.4 Research approaches and strategies of inquiry

Having established a constructivist-interpretivist approach as philosophical grounding for this investigation, section 5.4 is devoted to describing the rationale for the adoption of a qualitative approach and a multi-method design. The overall strategy of this thesis is mostly based on Creswell’s (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018) and Saunders et al. (2016) frameworks for research and on an extensive review and assessment of different methodological orientations and their alignment with the research question and objectives of this study. As interpretivist research seeks methodologies that enable a deep understanding of the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon, qualitative methodological approaches and

methods are best suited for addressing research questions designed to explore, interpret, or understand the social context (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Crotty, 1998; Ponterotto, 2005).

5.4.1 Adopting a qualitative approach

As seen in the previous section, quantitative and qualitative approaches derive from different traditions of scientific philosophy, and philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research hold as their core assumption that reality is multiple, contextual, and socially constructed. Qualitative research generally draws on post-positivist or interpretivist/constructivist beliefs which require holistic study and naturalistic inquiry (Davies, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Willis, 2007), but similarly to quantitative research, qualitative research may also be used within realist and pragmatist philosophies (Saunders et al., 2016).

Qualitative research is often referred to as *naturalistic*, because researchers operate within a real-world setting or context, which the research does not attempt to affect, control or manipulate, in order “to establish trust, participation, access to meanings and in-depth understanding” (Patton, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016, p. 168). It is *holistic* because researchers gather data on multiple aspects of each case, event or setting being studied that, despite being treated as unique, provide a comprehensive and complete picture of the whole (Patton, 2014). It is also referred to as *interpretive* since researchers seek to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings that people assign to their experiences, and consequently, to the phenomenon being studied, using their everyday language (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Saunders et al., 2016).

For those undertaking a qualitative study, Snape and Spencer (2003) posit that more important than finding a single definition for qualitative research, it is taking into account the main distinctive elements that allow defining qualitative research as such, namely those described in Figure 5.6.

Yin (2011) shares Snape and Spencer’s view, yet listing five additional features that characterise qualitative research, which have highly oriented this thesis:

- i) *Studying the meaning of people’s lives, under real-world conditions* – in this thesis this is done by dealing with the recollection of different groups of participants, at different ‘career stages’ (i.e., different viewpoints of the same phenomenon), about their personal experiences when performing their work roles;
- ii) *Representing the views and perspectives of the participants* – by gathering in-depth, individual, first-hand accounts of career experiences and decisions and positioning herself (the researcher) as an integral part of research process;
- iii) *Covering the contextual conditions within which people live* – by taking into consideration the social, institutional, and environmental systems (e.g., family, cultural, organisational) within which participants’ work life take/took place and that strongly influence them;
- iv) *Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour* – mainly by exploring the little known influence of *quality of working life* on people’s career assessment and subsequent decisions, which have a knock-on

effect on positive organisational behaviour and employee retention/turnover intentions; and

- v) *Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone* – by adopting a complementarity-aimed multi-method approach in order to reinforce the study’s credibility and trustworthiness.

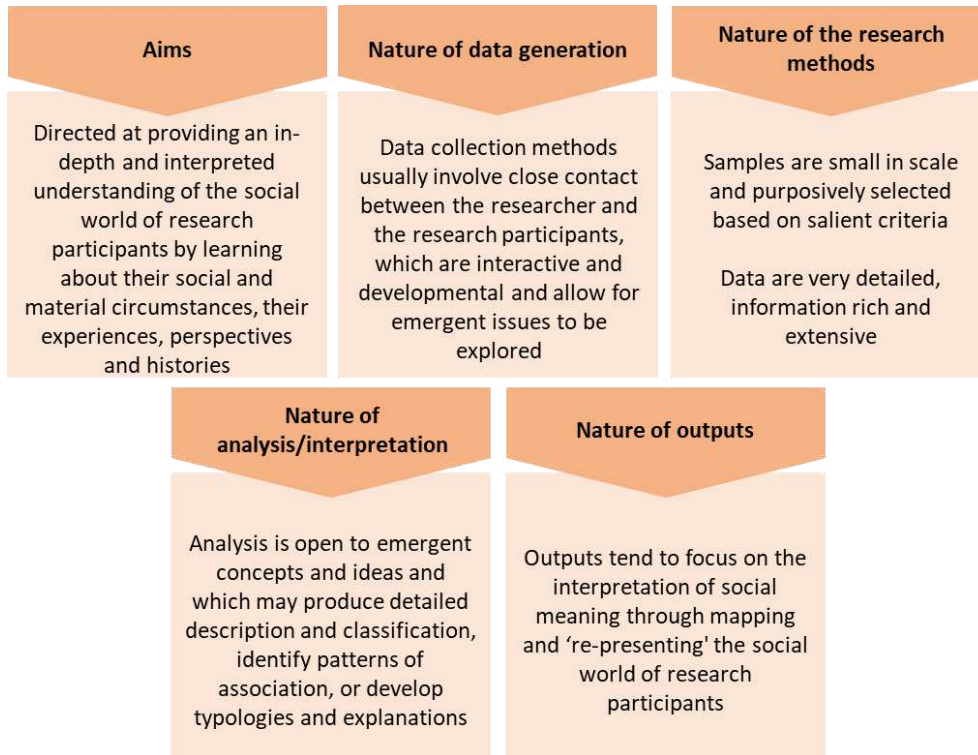


Figure 5.6 | Distinctive features of qualitative research

Source: Own construction based on Snape and Spencer (2003)

Qualitative data is primarily gathered in oral or written form, from documents, observation, entries from social media or interviews with participants, which are usually transformed into written texts through transcription, for analytic use aimed at extracting the meanings of these texts (Polkinghorne, 2005). The number of data collection methods that each study implements is contingent on the purpose of the research; therefore, while some studies may employ only one method (e.g., interviews) aiming to explore personal stories and worldviews, other studies may employ at least three different methods (e.g., interviews + participant observation + focus groups), in order to gather a broader spectrum of evidence and perspectives to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis (Saldaña, 2011).

In this thesis, primary data was collected via in-depth interviews with three groups of participants (followed by supplementary key informant interviews, as detailed in sections 5.4.2 and 5.5). These were considered the methods that would provide more valuable insights into the complexity of personal career experiences, via the stories told by individuals, by making their voices heard and by revealing underlying dimensions and meanings of different career patterns.

These methods were also considered the most suitable ones for exploring how participants' opinions and perspectives are formed in which context and, consequently, for answering the 'what?', 'why?' and 'how?' questions that characterise qualitative inquiries (Creswell, 2014; Marshall, 1996; Snape & Spencer, 2003).

In qualitative research, the **unit of analysis** refers to the person, collective, or object that is the target of the investigation. Polkinghorne (2005) posits that the unit of analysis in qualitative research is experience, not individuals or groups. "Qualitative studies vary in the kinds of experience they investigate; yet, their interest is about the experience itself not about its distribution in a population. Some studies focus on displaying the constituent and relational aspects that make up an experience, and other studies focus on exhibiting an experiential process" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 139). In this thesis, the unit of analysis consists of the experiences of highly educated *Employees, Leavers, and Newcomers* in the hotel sector. The primary focus of data collection – considering that both sampling strategies and sample size are dependent on prior decisions about the most appropriate units of analysis (Patton, 2014) – are highly educated individuals' work experiences in the hotel sector, how these individuals are affected by the meanings they assigned to these experiences, and how these meanings impact career decisions.

The research process typically involves emerging questions and procedures, with data being collected in the participant's natural setting or context. The researcher positions him/herself and bring his/her own values (see section 5.7) into the study while collecting and interpreting the data, therefore emphasizing the value-laden nature of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Data analysis inductively moves from narrow units of analysis (e.g., significant statements) to broader themes (e.g., meaning units). As further described in section 5.6.2, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Patton, 2014) was considered the most appropriate approach to find substantively meaningful patterns and themes that could contribute to a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and meaning-making. This choice was shaped by the research objectives and by the theoretical and strategic framework that guided research design decisions.

With respect to the **approach to theory development**, qualitative inquiry is particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery, and inductive logic. In inductive research, also called theory-building research, analysis begins with specific observations of data from which the researcher infers theoretical concepts, patterns, and associations. Meaningful categories or dimensions emerge from the patterns the researcher finds through open-ended observation, without presupposing in advance what those dimensions will be. Moreover, the researcher seeks to understand the multiple interrelationships among these dimensions, without making prior assumptions about the nature of these relationships (Patton, 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003).

Inductive analysis contrasts with the hypothetical-deductive approach that typically orients quantitative research, therefore also called theory-testing research. Deductive research is a logically derived process in which the investigator specifies, in advance (before data collection) and based on an explicit theoretical framework that will allow him/her to understand observations or cases, which research hypothesis will be tested, which variables are important and what relationships among those variables can be expected (Patton, 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003).

However, although qualitative research is often viewed as predominantly inductive, and these two approaches reflect different ways of shifting between data, inductive and deductive processes are not mutually exclusive (Snape & Spencer, 2003; Yin, 2011). Although there is a clear epistemological, theoretical and methodological rupture between inductive and logical-deductive methodologies, these two approaches should not be considered today as opposites, since they influence one another and can be combined at different stages of the qualitative research process (Guerra, 2006). This latter assumption was also made by the researcher, as although an inductive reasoning prevails in this study, both inductive and deductive approaches were combined in an iterative process, at different stages of the investigation.

Although many of the theories and concepts previously discussed in the literature review, from Chapters 2 to 4, are not new to the literature, an inductive reasoning was adopted aiming at identifying themes and explaining patterns that could contribute to the development of a richer theoretical perspective than the already existing one. As will be further described in section 5.4.2, both the core and supplementary components of the qualitative multi-method design adopted in this investigation have an inductive theoretical drive. Deductive inferences were developed throughout the research process, such as in designing the research framework (theory preceding observation and devising of concept map, supplementary component design), and in category development within data analysis (both inductive and deductive logic were used to create and refine categories, and more fully interrogate the data).

One of the greatest **strengths** of qualitative research, due to the use of inductive probing, is the ability to ask questions, clarify expressions or meaning and to give voice to research participants by telling their stories in their own words and cognitive constructs (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). According to Veal (2018, pp. 135–136), qualitative methods are particularly appropriate when the focus of the research is on meanings and attitudes, when the situation calls for exploratory theory building rather than theory testing, or when the researcher accepts that the concepts, terms and issues must be defined by the subjects themselves and not by the researcher in advance. In this thesis, this was, for example, the special case of QWL, where the interview protocol was oriented to grasp individuals' own conceptions of this concept, using their own words.

The choice for a qualitative approach was therefore the result of the alignment between the belief system, i.e., the paradigm underpinning this research approach, the research question(s), and the research approach which is also described in this chapter. This choice was considered the most suitable one for this thesis due to the T&H industry's career idiosyncrasies, in particular because of the individualistic, dynamic, and context-specific nature of such career experiences, and of the multiple career orientations that T&H enable.

5.4.2 Following a multi-method design

The nature of social research itself prescribes that the research process is highly subjective and there is no single set of methods that can assure total insight. The research must instead take into account this subjectivity, his/her ethics, value and politics, and “use a range of appropriate interconnected interpretive methods to maximize understanding of the research problem”

(Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, p. 34). In general, mixed methods research constitutes a commonly used strategy within social research methods, that evolved from a combination of methods of inquiry to a methodological orientation with its own worldview, vocabulary and techniques (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Mixed methods research is predominantly defined as a cross-paradigmatic, concurrent or sequential combination of quantitative and qualitative methods with equal or dominant status (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Most authors usually postulate three research methodological approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods; quantitative and qualitative approaches usually being represented in different ends of a continuum, and mixed methods residing in the middle. Advocates of this categorisation usually classify mixed methods research as “an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). In the commonly used mixed methods notation system, each method is referred to as *Qual* or *Quan* (or QUAL and QUAN to emphasize dominance/primacy) for qualitative and quantitative research, respectively (Morse, 2003).

However, discussions and controversies related to nomenclature and terminology in mixed method research are not new, with different research methodologists employing different terms and definitions⁴³. The editors of the SAGE *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* (one of the reference journals in this field), Fetters and Molina-Azorin (2016), dedicated an editorial to revisit terminology used in mixed research, after ten years of publication. According to them, **multiple methods research** refers to all various combinations of methods, involving more than one data collection procedure. These can include two or more exclusively qualitative approaches (Qual plus Qual), two or more quantitative approaches (Quan plus Quan) or a combination of qualitative and quantitative (Qual plus Quan, hence *mixed methods*). Therefore, mixed methods are thereby presented by Fetters and Molina-Azorin (2016) as a category of multi-methods or multiple methods research.

Morse (2003, 2010b), however, contends that this definition is by no means restricted to the combination of this two lines of inquiry, by stating that “when speaking of mixed methods design, we are not talking about mix-and-match research (with strategies liberally selected and combined); rather, we are talking about using supplemental research strategies to collect data that would not otherwise be obtainable by using the main method and incorporating these data into the base method” (Morse, 2003, p. 191). The author posits that mixed methods can be interpreted as any research that includes “different types of data, approaches to analysis, or research conducted on two different populations or groups, whether it is qualitative or quantitative” (Morse, 2010a, p. 340). According to Morse and Niehaus (2009), mixed methods research is aimed at systematically using two or more methods to answer the same research question, including two or more quantitative *or* qualitative methods (Quan plus Quan or Qual plus Qual), or it uses both qualitative *and* quantitative methods (QUAL plus QUAN). For these authors, while mixed method refers to a single project with a core and a supplemental

⁴³ For a deeper examination and discussion on the diverse stances and definitions of mixed methods see Creswell (2013) Khoo-Lattimore, Mura and Yung (2019) or Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) (this latter authors, in particular, compiled and subsequently analysed 19 definitions of mixed methods research as provided by the leader methodologists in this field).

component, *multiple method research* refers to two complete, yet related, methods (quantitative and/or qualitative) for conducting two independent research projects over time (Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

Other research methodologists, such as Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), Hunter (cited by R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007) or Saunders et al. (2016), also use the term **multi-method research** when referring to studies using different styles of research (different project data collection procedures or research methods) combined in the same research project, each of which from the same QUAN or QUAL tradition, and therefore restricted to the same worldview (Quan plus Quan, Qual plus Qual). According to Saunders et al. (2016), a qualitative research design using a single data collection technique and the corresponding qualitative analytical procedure should be labelled as mono-method, while using more than one qualitative data collection technique and corresponding analytical procedure would grant it the denomination of multi-method qualitative study. Figure 5.7 offers an overview to this categorisation scheme.

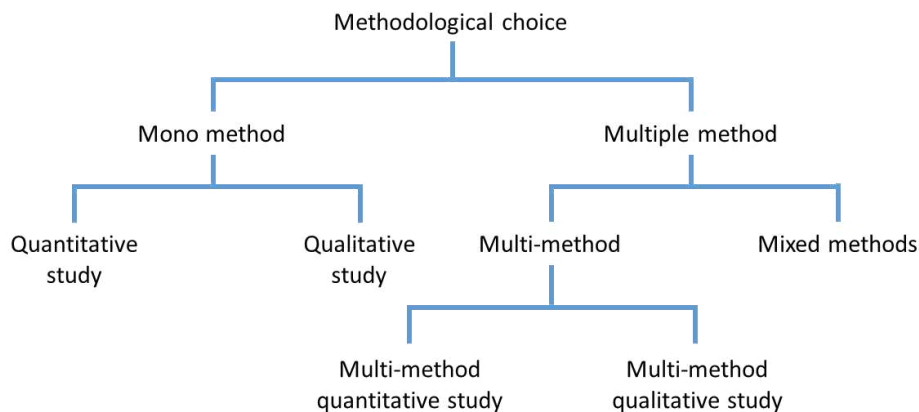


Figure 5.7 | Methodological choice

Source: Saunders et al. (2016)

With this categorisation in mind, this thesis adopts a **multi-method qualitative** strategy. The rationale for this choice is primarily based on the specific research objectives of this study. More specifically, the researcher was interested in studying more than one group of subjects, the study's theoretical framework is rooted in several concepts, and the research questions target multiple dimensions of participants' experiences; such issues increase the complexity of the study, therefore supporting the relevance of such research design (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). The researcher remarks, however, that despite largely drawing on Morse's (Morse, 2010b, 2010a; Morse & Niehaus, 2009) framework for research design (which is described by Morse under the denomination *mixed methods design*), the use of the terms *multi-method* or *multiple methods research* was preferred in order to reinforce differentiation from the typical Qual plus Quan

approach. Nevertheless, much of the mixed-methods specific literature is applicable for the generality of multiple methods and therefore also cited in this thesis⁴⁴.

Considering the rationale for conducting a multiple methods research and the objectives of this thesis, a multi-method design was chosen with **complementarity** as the main purpose in mind. A popular classification of purposes and rationales for conducting mixed method research that is still widely used today is that of Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), who identified five broad purposes for broad purposes, as presented in Table 5.5. In a complementarity mixed-method study, different methods “are used to measure overlapping but also different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon. This differs from the triangulation intent in that the logic of convergence requires that the different methods assess the same conceptual phenomenon” (Greene et al., 1989, p. 258).

Table 5.5 | Purposes for mixed-method evaluation design

Purpose	Rationale
Triangulation	Seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon.
Complementarity	Seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method.
Development	Seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.
Initiation	Seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.
Expansion	Seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components.

Source: Greene et al. (1989, p. 259)

Following Morse’s (2010a, 2010b) novel proposal, “the defining characteristic of mixed method research design is that it involves a primary or core method combined with one or more strategies drawn from a second, different method for addressing the research question by either collecting or analysis data” (Morse & Niehaus, 2009, p. 14). In other words, and similarly to the choices made in this thesis, a mixed method design comprises:

⁴⁴ Instances when reference to *mixed methods* is made within this section are an attempt to maintain coherence with the terminology used by the cited original authors.

- i) A core component, the ‘backbone’ of the project; plus
- ii) A supplementary component, an incomplete method introduced to expand the scope of the project (Figure 5.8).

The **core component** is the primary or main study, complete on itself, that is used to address most of the research questions. This component is always dominant and conducted with a standard of rigour that allows it to stand on its own and even be published independently. It relies on standard qualitative methods (e.g., grounded theory, phenomenology) and derives from observation, focus groups or semi structured interviews, and so forth (Morse, 2010b, 2010a; Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

The **supplementary component** provides explanation or insight within the context of the core component, therefore enhancing the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It consists “of research strategy(ies) that are used within another qualitative method (rather than a complete method as such), such as a particular style of interviews or an observational technique” (Morse, 2010b, p. 484). Despite this component is said not to be complete to be interpreted alone, for some reason such as lacking saturation or being too narrow to be of interest by itself, it is still capable of providing valuable and adequate answers, tailormade for a specific project, so that researchers have confidence in the data (Morse, 2010b, 2010a; Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

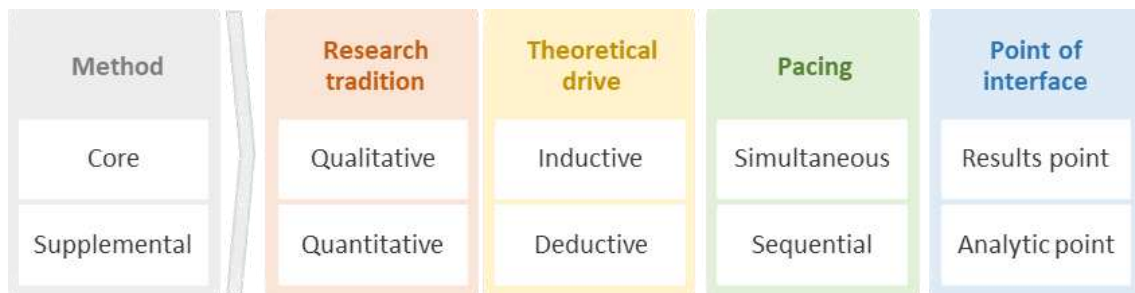


Figure 5.8 | Main dimensions of mixed method design

Source: Own construction

Research design is directed by and extends from the research question(s). If the research question is descriptive and interpretative, then the **theoretical drive** of the research will be inductive. Theoretical drive is the conceptual direction of the overall research – which can be inductive or deductive – and this direction should be particularly evident in the core component, but the supplementary component can be based in different assumptions, which should be followed throughout the supplementary method (Morse, 2010a; Morse & Niehaus, 2009). As the theoretical drive guides the use of the core method of the research, one can talk about qualitatively-driven or quantitatively-driven research. The core component is represented by upper case letters – QUAL, QUAN – and the supplemental component by lower case letters – QUAN-*qual*, QUAL-*quan* (Morse & Niehaus, 2009) (Figure 5.8). “The primary characteristic is that both the core component and the supplementary component have an inductive theoretical

drive. That means that the project is exploratory descriptive, with a goal that may range from rich description to theory development” (Morse, 2010b, p. 484).

With regard to the mode in which core and supplementary components are synchronised, mixed methods can also exhibit a **simultaneous/concurrent or sequential design** (characteristics that are also referred to as the *pace* of the design). While in simultaneous design, the core and the supplementary components are conducted at the same time, in sequential design, the supplemental component takes place after the core component has been completed. When a project is paced simultaneously, this is indicated with a plus sign (+); when pacing is sequential, this is indicated with an arrow (→) (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Morse & Niehaus, 2009) (Figure 5.8). By intersecting a research paradigm, theoretical drive and pacing, eight potential combinations emerge (see Table 5.6). Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) also equate the existence of qual-status simultaneous (QUAL + QUAN) or sequential (QUAL → QUAN, QUAN → QUAL) design (therefore not considering the existence of a core, dominant component).

Table 5.6 | Types of simultaneous and sequential mixed method designs

Different paradigms	Same paradigms
QUAL + <i>quan</i>	QUAL + <i>qual</i>
QUAL → <i>quan</i>	QUAL → <i>qual</i>
QUAN + <i>qual</i>	QUAN + <i>quan</i>
QUAN → <i>qual</i>	QUAN → <i>quan</i>
QUAL + QUAN	
QUAL → QUAN	
QUAN → QUAL	

Source: Own construction based on Morse (2010a) and Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007)

Table key: UPPER CASE – core/dominant component; *lower case* – supplemental component; (+) simultaneous design; (→) sequential design

Another fundamental concept in mixed methods research, according to Morse and Niehaus (2009), is the **point of intersection**, that is the point where the analysis of both the core component and the supplemental component meet. This corresponds to what the authors call *results point of interface*, in which the findings from the core component form the theoretical base of the results, and the results from the supplementary component add and complement to the former. In QUAN + *qual* and QUAL + *quan* approaches, there is also an *analytic point of intersection*, corresponding to the transformation of the results from the supplementary component from textual to numeric data, for subsequent incorporation with results from the core component (Morse & Niehaus, 2009) (Figure 5.8). A relevant note to consider for data analysis is that data sets from both components should be kept separate until the point of interface. In addition, “data from the core component are grouped for all participants, and analysed by content or thematic analysis, according to the method used. That is, these data are not analysed participant by participant. Rather, data from all participants are pooled as the categories or themes are constructed”. The same happens for the supplemental component,

with data being pooled for all participants (Morse, 2010b, pp. 486–487). Therefore, for sequential designs, integration occurs in the results interpretation phase.

In this thesis, the core component consists of in-depth and semi-structured interviews with three groups of participants, and the subsequent supplemental component consists of key-informant interviews developed from the participants' interviews. Therefore, the selected research design is **QUAL → qual**, meaning **inductive-sequential design**, where both components are **qualitative**. Interviews, which are one of the most common forms of data collection in qualitative research, were chosen for their orientation towards the recollection of first-hand, participants' perspectives (Saldaña, 2011). As far as research implementation is concerned, a two-phased structure is more straightforward, because the researchers conducts the two methods in separate phases and collect different data at a time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

A QUAL → *qual* design is deemed appropriate when different types of data (to obtain different points of view) or different levels of analysis (e.g., micro and macro) are used within the same project (Morse, 2010a). As mixed method research selects one of the several combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), this study adopts a somewhat distinctive approach to qualitative research and contributes to contemporary multi/mixed method research development.

The empirical research presented in this thesis is the outcome of the combination of three stages of data making and analysis, as depicted in Figure 5.9. An initial stage involved a preliminary research which informed the subsequent approaches, mostly based on informal conversations with different actors and collection of relevant press articles. As this preliminary research was mainly used for the purpose of assisting research design and developing the instruments for data collection in the phases that followed, this is not to be interpreted as a stand-alone research method and consequently does not fit in the notion of multi- or mixed method design. Developed and conducted at a second stage, Phase I refers to the core component of the empirical study, which data is used to address the research questions. This phase involved in-depth and semi-structured interviews with three sub-samples/groups of participants purposefully selected to take part of this study. Lastly, Phase II refers to the supplemental component, which data is incorporated with findings from Phase I, with the aim of more comprehensively understand and describe the phenomena being investigated (namely by adding a broader scope), therefore enhancing research's richness and practicability.

Multi-method qualitative studies are commonly adopted in other fields, such as nursing⁴⁵ and health care research (Phillips, Dwan, Hepworth, Pearce, & Hall, 2014), but to the researcher's knowledge, these are quite scarce in research on T&H careers and work-related phenomena. Some examples involving hospitality employees were found, although not explicitly described by the authors as having either multiple, multi or mixed method design. Dimitrov (2012) conducted a case study in a US-based hotel to explore sources of meaningfulness at the workplace, according to the perceptions of hospitality employees from different national cultures, involving personal statements, interviews, complete observations, and document analysis in the process of data gathering. Golubovskaya, Robinson and Solnet (2017) conducted

⁴⁵ Which is precisely the field of Janice Morse, one of the major advocates of this research strategy.

a dual-stage semi-structured interview study in Australia, to explore frontline hotel employees' perspectives of the meaning of hospitality.

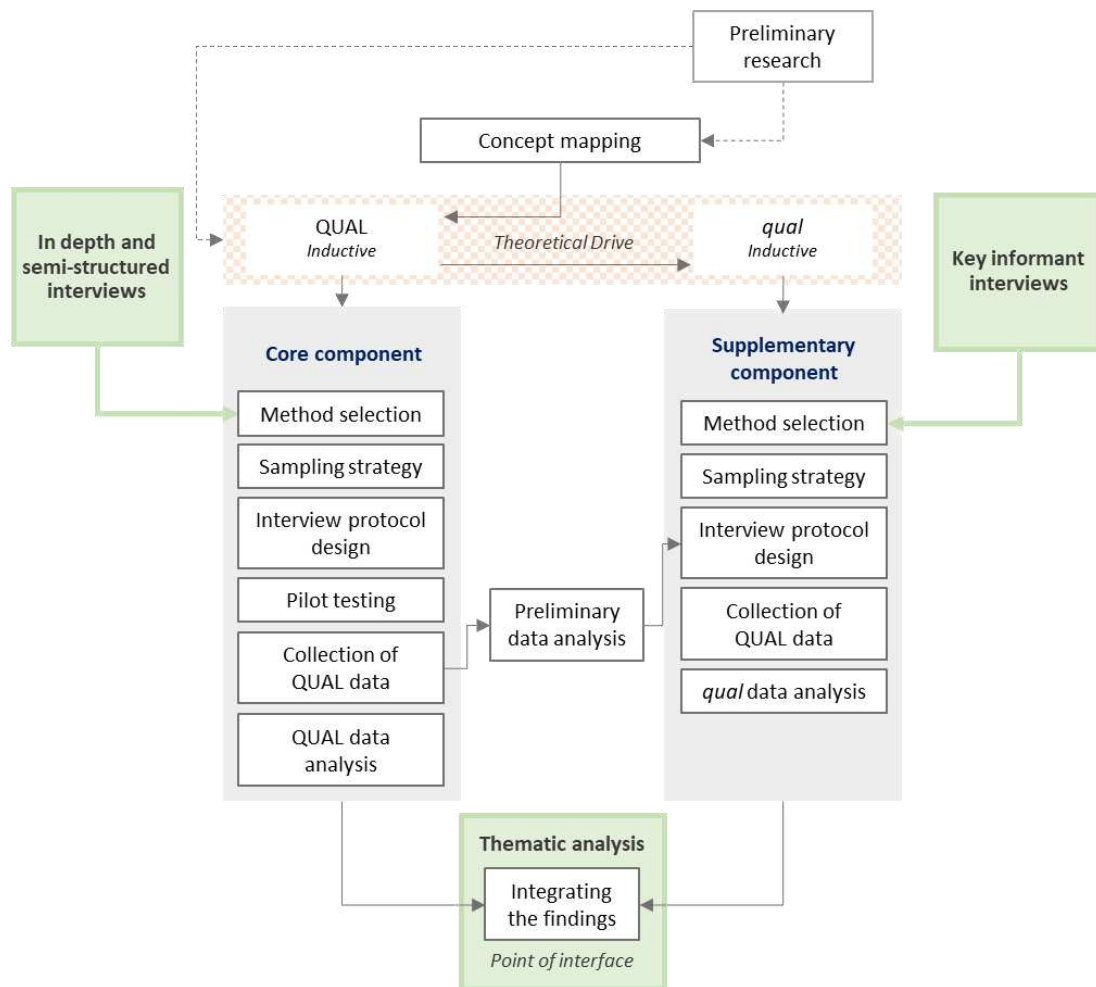


Figure 5.9 | Multi-method research design overview

Source: Own construction

Within the tourism field, in general, and following a systematic literature review of mixed methods research in tourism, Khoo-Lattimore, Mura and Yung (2019) found that around 61% of the 96 tourism research papers employing this strategy adopted sequential designs, and five of these adopted a QUAL → qual approach. The authors report that 88.5% of the analysed articles do not contain in-depth information about the paradigms underpinning mixed methods research (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2019). Among these five examples of studies employing qualitative multi/mixed approaches in tourism research, there are: Hanna and Rowley's (2015) two-stage mixed method study involving interviews with place brand practitioners in DMOs and web-page content analysis, aiming at building a Place Brand Web Model; Rishi and Gaur's (2012) multi-method study on emerging sales and marketing challenges in the hospitality industry, combining a focus group, personal interviews and a thematic analysis of web customer reviews; or Podoshen's (2013) examination of dark tourism motivation through participant observation,

nethnography and content analysis (including of documentary films). The following sections provide the rationale for each method hereby introduced as part of the multi-method qualitative strategy.

5.5 Research methods: Data generation

After stating the purpose and questions of the research, different data collection methods should be analysed to determine which are more appropriate and useful for each specific inquiry (Saldaña, 2011). “In QUAL-qual mixed method design, the design is dictated primarily by the method but also from the objectives or goals of the study, subsequently the study question, from what is known (the literature review), and from the research context, by the limitations/advantages of the research participants and setting” (Morse, 2010b, p. 486). In comparison with the stepwise design of quantitative studies, qualitative studies require a more **flexible research design** and iterative and cyclical approaches to sampling, data collection, analysis and interpretation (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2007; Marshall, 1996; Patton, 2014). Data collection constitutes a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering appropriate information to answer research questions (Creswell, 2007), such as those depicted in Figure 5.10. Methods of data generation are not only flexible but also sensible to the social context in which data are produced, typically requiring close contact between the researcher and the participants. The researcher is the main data collection instrument, examining why and how social phenomena occur, and what those phenomena mean to the people being studied (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

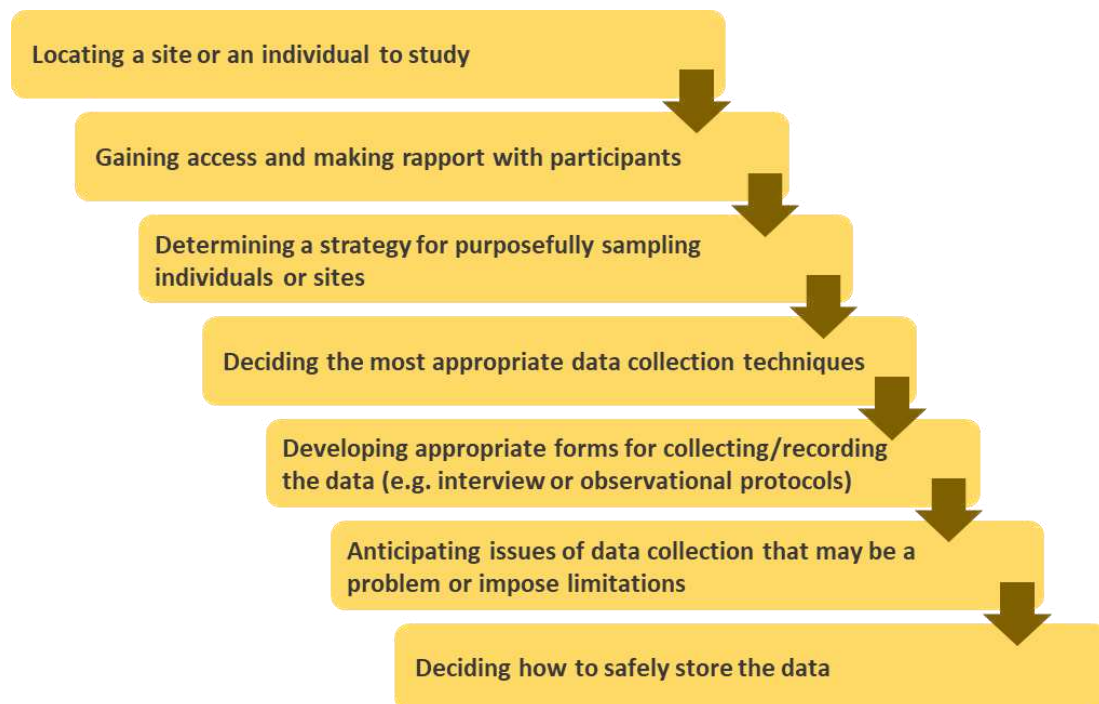


Figure 5.10 | Typical data collection procedures
Source: Own construction based on Creswell (2007)

The present section addresses the several design stages applied to this research project, describing data generation techniques and procedures, and the nature of the 'sample'. Although also part of the research strategy, for a more harmonious organisation of this chapter, data analysis techniques and details are described in the following section, 5.6.

Preliminary research

Aiming to improve the final research design, a brief exploratory, preliminary research was conducted. The main objective of this preparatory phase was to familiarise the researcher with the specific context in which the study was going to be developed, allowing her to acquire multiple insights on the topic, to better position and prepare herself as interviewer, to (dis)confirm some initial ideas, and to more precisely formulate the research objectives (Coutinho, 2011).

The development and refinement of the main data-collection methods and tools, as well as the selection of research participants, were informed by:

- i. Informal qualitative approaches, namely discussions and informal, conversational style, interviews with: T&H management specialists (professionals with extensive consultancy experience in the fields of hotel HR and financial management), T&H educators, hotel managers, and industry workers with variable tenure and different job positions;
- ii. Newspaper clippings (within popular and specialised press) of HR management, employment and labour market issues and challenges in the Portuguese T&H industry within the last four years (since around 2015).

5.5.1 Phase I – QUAL data generation (core component of the study)

Not only careers unfold differently for different people, as different reasons underly people's decision to leave or to remain with their organisations. Besides, not all aspects of a job are equally important to everyone. Therefore, information on career construction and development, and information on work-related well-being and attitudes, can be obtained by directly asking workers about these issues (Clark, 2015). Figure 5.11 provides an overview of the research strategy adopted in this thesis for data generation in Phase I, which consist of the core component of this investigation project.



Figure 5.11 | Research strategy overview for Phase I

Source: Own construction

Selecting the method: In depth and semi-structured interviews

Selecting a method means to choose the formal method that will allow the research question to be answered the most precisely as possible. According to Morse’s mixed method design framework, this is particularly relevant in the core component (Morse, 2010b). Most qualitative research studies rely on interviews with subjects, as this “data collection method is an effective way of soliciting and documenting, in their own words, an individual’s or group’s perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about their lives” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 32). According to Jennings (2005), interviews are a method of choice within the social sciences and, consequently, also within tourism research, being adopted as main method by more than 80% of qualitative tourism articles published between 2007 and 2017 (Wilson et al., 2019).

For Kvale (1996), the purpose of the interview is “to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (pp. 5-6). In-depth, one-to-one interviews provide an opportunity to obtain rich contextual accounts of individuals’ experiences and to understand the ways in which they make sense of, and create meanings about, these experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Qu & Dumay, 2011; Saldaña, 2011; Seidman, 2006). Interviews yield direct responses from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge, endowed with sufficient context to be interpreted (Patton, 2014). In-depth interviews seek to probe deeply than questionnaire-based interviews, therefore encouraging respondents to talk and explain their answers, instead of just recording simple answers (Veal, 2018). This tool was therefore considered the most suitable one to explore what subjective meanings the three selected groups of participants ascribe to their career experiences, and how they evaluate the quality of their work lives in some detail. This evaluation process is informed by their personal expectations and experiences. In-depth interviews are focused on specific themes and aim at obtaining a profound and thick descriptions of specific situations, rather than general opinions (Kvale, 1996).

The type of interview used in a given study will depend on the objectives of the researcher, who can choose from structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Jennings, 2005; Saldaña, 2011). **Semi-structured interviews** (Figure 5.12) are typically associated with the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm and involve the use of predetermined open-ended

questions. However, the researcher is free to vary the order or wording of the questions, to modify the style or pace, to seek clarification, to ask follow-up or probing questions, or to ask additional questions or to explore new paths that emerge during the conversation that might not have been considered initially (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Saldaña, 2011). This was the interview style adopted in this investigation.

In comparison to questionnaires, interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored, as in this thesis. Interviews stand out for their *flexibility*, as the direct contact between the interviewer and the interviewee allows the former to adjust the questions and/or request for additional information whenever it is considered to be important, but also make research more expensive, both in time and costs, thus limiting the number of participants (Coutinho, 2011). By asking open-ended questions, interviews are also more effective than questionnaires in eliciting narrative data that allows researchers to investigate participants' views in greater depth, disclosing important and often hidden facets of human and organisational behaviour (Kvale, 1996; Qu & Dumay, 2011).

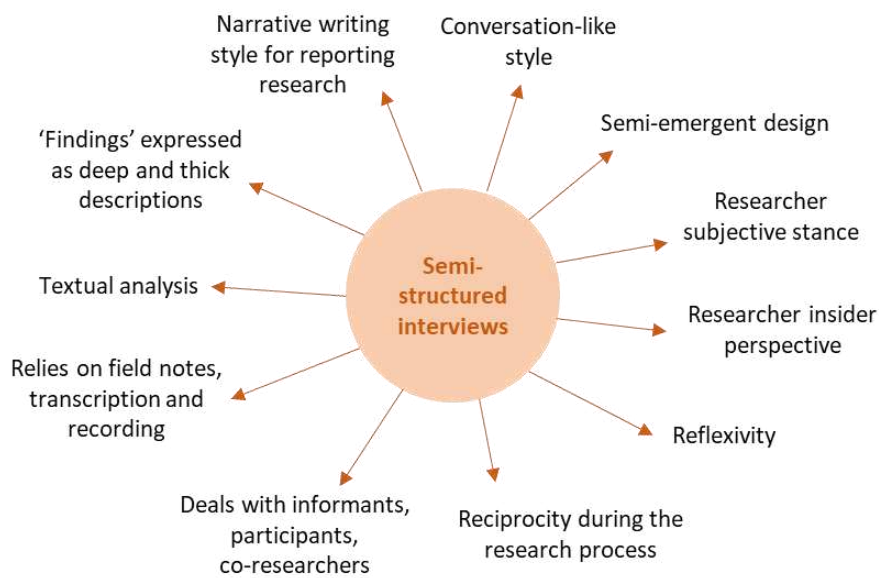


Figure 5.12 | Characteristics of semi-structured interviews

Source: Own construction based on Jennings (2005)

The OECD (2017), on their *Guidelines on Measuring the Quality of the Working Environment*, present qualitative interviews as one of the most suitable tools for assessing what aspects of the working environment are more relevant for workers in specific occupations. Interviews are described as “small-scale surveys of specific groups of the population dealing with a specific issue” that can also assist researchers in developing survey questions to be applied to a general-population survey (OECD, 2017, p. 174).

Selecting the research participants

In qualitative research, only a subset of the population is selected. Which, how and how many people are selected is dependent on the study's research objectives and the characteristics of the study population (such as accessibility, size, or diversity). In a qualitative approach the terms *sample* or *sampling* are commonly used, but it should be interpreted in a broader sense. *Sample* usually encapsulates the notion that the selected individuals are representative of the population, which is usually only observable in quantitative approaches (Guerra, 2006; Polkinghorne, 2005). *Selection of participants* or *selection of individuals* is more accurate; nevertheless, in the interest of simplification, whenever the term *sampling* is used in this thesis, it should be understood in a wider sense⁴⁶.

The sampling methodology applied in this research was chosen for being considered the best to assist the researcher in understanding the central phenomenon being studied and answering the research questions (Creswell, 2012). It was designed bearing in mind some concerns which have inspired the use of different sampling techniques. On the one hand, selection of participants was expected to afford multiple opportunities for comparative analysis, while on the other hand, the definition of some shared characteristics was expected to limit excessive variability within the participants' profile that could compromise finding commonalities in the patterns of people's experiences and perceptions. In qualitative inquiry, the purpose is not generalisation to a population, but an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

The sample for this study was selected employing a non-probabilistic, **purposeful sampling** method. This sampling strategy is typically used when the researcher wants to discover, understand, and/or gain insight of a specific population, and is therefore compatible with the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. In purposeful sampling, elements of the population are selected according to predefined criteria; these criteria are rather pragmatically and theoretically defined than probabilistic. The cases that make up the sample are selected according to the judgement of the researcher, who relies on cases that are considered to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena investigated, as in this study. The research process is also an iterative one; as data is being collected and analysed, new comparisons are made, and new elements are chosen to incorporate the sample (Coutinho, 2011; Marshall, 1996; Polkinghorne, 2005; Saunders et al., 2016). In this study, sampling also occurred both before and during data collection. Creswell (2012) classifies snowball sampling as a type of purposeful sampling that typically occurs after data collection has started to locate other participants that the researcher could not find directly. A purposeful sampling method combined with **snowballing techniques** was, therefore, used in this study to recruit three groups of individuals who had different types of working relationships with the T&H industry as participants. More specifically, snowballing techniques were used to find eligible participants (participants' recruitment is described below with more detail).

⁴⁶ The same should be considered for the term *data*, which has been adopted from quantitative practices, but in qualitative research would be more appropriately referred to as *accounts*, for example (Polkinghorne, 2005); or for the term *inquiry* in relation to *research*, as the latter is tainted by positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Nevertheless, in this thesis such distinction is not made, and the aforementioned terms are used interchangeably.

On-going interim analysis of the data being collected informed the subsequent sampling and data collection decisions, until data saturation/informational redundancy, which determined the final sample size (see following sub-section on *Constructing the data: Conducting the interviews* for a further description). Participants who were thought to fill in, expand, or challenge the initial description, were selected (Polkinghorne, 2005); for example, as it was considered relevant to recruit participants from different locations across the country, additional efforts were made towards regions with less representativeness.

Purposeful sampling can be done on the basis of extreme cases, heterogeneity (maximum variation), homogeneity (maximum similarity), critical cases, theoretical cases or typical cases. In this study, a **maximal variation (heterogeneity) sampling** was used both before and during data collection. Maximal variation sampling presupposes the identification of individuals that differ on some characteristics or trait, allowing the selection of individuals that display different dimensions of those characteristics or traits, in order to get variation on dimensions of interest (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). This is a type of purposeful sampling aimed at assisting the researcher in developing many perspectives over the phenomenon being studied (based on a broad range of subjects), describing both the uniqueness of each case while also looking for common themes across variations (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2014; Polkinghorne, 2005).

This choice of sampling techniques was believed to allow the researcher to capture a wider diversity of views, perceptions, and experiences, while balancing out the participants' demographic profiles, their work experience, and the roles they played within the hospitality industry. Typically, in qualitative research, events, incidents, and experiences, not people *per se*, are the objects of purposeful sampling. Therefore, sample size may refer to number of persons, but also to numbers of interviews, observations or events (Sandelowski, 1995).

Given the impossibility of conducting a longitudinal study, mostly due to calendar constraints, three groups of *highly educated* individuals at different phases of their careers were targeted, yielding therefore three groups of participants who were all differently positioned in relation to their career paths (Figure 5.13):

- i. Newcomers to the labour market, i.e., students majoring in T&H-related degrees;
- ii. T&H graduates currently employed in the hospitality industry;
- iii. T&H graduates former employed in the hospitality industry.

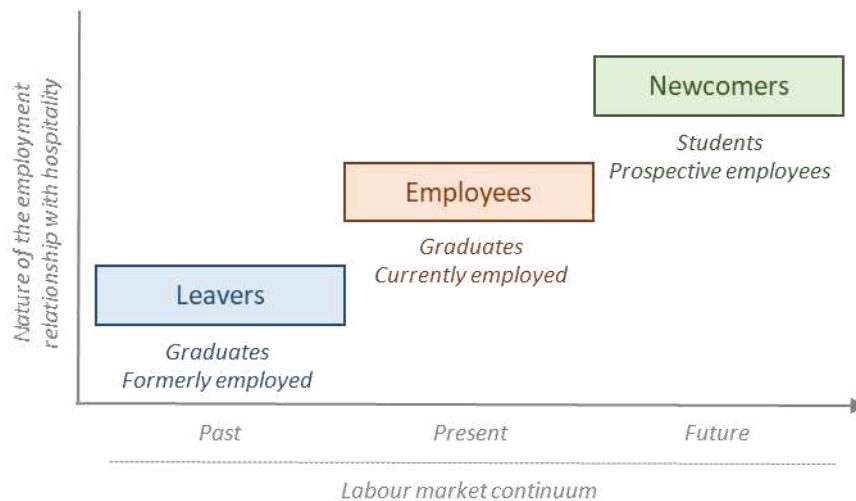


Figure 5.13 | Sub-groups selected to participate in the study

Source: Own construction

Within the hospitality industry, participants were chosen from the same occupational field: the **hotel sector**⁴⁷. Hotels were chosen as the research setting due to the pivotal role that accommodation plays within the T&H industry in terms of job creation (section 5.2.1). Besides, because the hotel sector presents one of the most structured employment sectors in terms of a hierarchy, making it easier to trace career patterns. “Medium to large hotel companies offer a range of different functions for employment (for example front office, food and beverage, human resources management, finance and accounting, sales and marketing, housekeeping etc.) and recognised job levels (for example, operative, supervisor, department section head, department head, assistant manager, deputy general manager, general manager)” (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017, p. 75).

The **screening criteria** described in Table 5.7 were used to select informants. As sampling in qualitative research should be oriented by the study purpose, research questions and fundamental theory, these selection criteria were also planned according to the recommendation of several authors (e.g., Flick (2007); Kvale (1996); Patton (2014); Polkinghorne (2005)) and examples from previous studies (e.g., Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp (2009); Nachmias, Walmsley, & Orphanidou (2017); Sturges & Guest (2001)). These characteristics intended to produce a varied sample, thus lending richness to the data, as valued in interpretive research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Within the hotel sector, only individuals with working experience in Hotel establishments (see footnote no. 3) were considered eligible; however these could be hotels with any classification (ranging from one to five stars, or *Pousadas*) and with any type of affiliation (independent hotels,

⁴⁷ According with the Portuguese Tourist Accommodation Legal Framework the following categories exist: Hotel establishments (which include Hotels, Apartment hotels and Monument and historical hotels (*Pousadas*)), Holiday villages, Resorts, Manor houses and country tourism, Tourism in rural space (including Agritourism and Rural hotels), Camping and caravan sites. In this study, only the Hotel establishments' typology was considered. In Portugal, this category of accommodation is mandatorily classified from one to five stars (except for *Pousadas*), which reflect the quality of facilities and service standards.

local/national chain hotels or international chain hotels), so that the existence of patterns associated with business scale of operations, and their corresponding human resource policies, could be eventually identified.

In addition to the selection criteria described above, an attempt was made to recruit informants all over Portugal, in order to have all country's seven regions (NUT II) represented: Norte (North), Centro (Central Portugal), Lisboa (Lisbon), Alentejo, Algarve, Madeira and The Azores (Açores)⁴⁸ (Figure 5.14). Different regions exhibit differences in terms of tourism development and destination structure, which is reflected in different patterns and challenges in tourism employment; by recruiting informants working in different geographical contexts, some valuable insights are expected to emerge from the collected data.

Table 5.7 | Selection criteria of participants for the study

Sample group	Cumulative sampling criteria
Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Informants must hold a university T&H-related degree, at undergraduate and/or post-graduate level (e.g., Hospitality Management, Tourism, Travel and Tourism); . Informants are no longer employed in the hospitality industry, but must have been employed at a hotel, regardless of their job position, for a minimum period of two years (consecutively or not) or for, at least, two employing organisations; . Informants must have voluntarily left their job, with the deliberate intent to get a job in a different occupational field (not hospitality).
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Informants must hold a university T&H-related degree, at undergraduate and/or post-graduate level; . Informants must be employed⁴⁹ at a hotel, regardless of their job position. . Job tenure was not a criterion for exclusion, but participants with a minimum of 12 months work experience were favoured⁵⁰.
Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Informants must be undergraduate or postgraduate⁵¹ students in a T&H-related degree; . Informants must already have had a first on-the-job experience while studying (e.g., internship, summer job, part-time job) in a hotel (no minimum or maximum time of training defined).

Source: Own construction

⁴⁸ Madeira and The Azores are Atlantic archipelagos of two and nine islands, respectively, and Autonomous Regions.

⁴⁹ For the purposes of this study, *employee* refers to a paid worker with a single employer. Individuals engaged in other types of working relationships, such as workers with more than one employing organisation (e.g., part-time contracts with more than one firm) or outsourcing/temporary agency workers, were defined as not eligible.

⁵⁰ Exception was made for three participants whose profile was considered of interest for the sample, by setting the minimum period of work experience at 6 months.

⁵¹ Postgraduate students were considered eligible as, mostly due to the offer of integrated master's degrees in many Universities, several students enrol in postgraduate studies before officially entering the labour market.

Once the eligibility criteria were defined, potential **participants were located and recruited** in different ways. Most of the respondents were directly invited to participate in the study (with a first approach by telephone and/or email), using several strategies:

- i. Some participants were personally invited by the researcher, as they were part of her personal and/or professional networks (e.g., former classmates, former co-workers, acquaintances, personal friends);
- ii. Members of the above-mentioned networks also acted as intermediaries in chain referral (snowballing strategy), introducing the researcher to other people who could potentially contribute to the study;
- iii. T&H course coordinators and professors were contacted in order to disseminate the researcher's invitation among their students;
- iv. Extensive searches were conducted on LinkedIn, analysing potential participants' profiles, and sending invitations to those complying with the selection criteria; quite time-consuming, this was however the least successful approach, but despite not gathering a significant number of participants, it contributed to increase variety (especially geographical) in the participants' profile.

Although not many, some respondents volunteered to take part in the study (i.e., took the initiative to contact the researcher), as a result of public posts in groups of T&H professionals on social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn).

Defining the overall themes: The interview protocol

Structuring the interview in a consistent and systematic manner, similarly to a checklist of topics, facilitates asking multiple participants the same questions and collect the same general topics of information from each interviewee. At the same time, the improvised conversation to which semi-structured interviews give room to, may also generate unexpected insights for further inquiry (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Saldaña, 2011; Veal, 2018).

An interview plan/protocol incorporating a series of broad themes to be covered, established prior to analysis, was the major research tool in this study. Open-ended questions pertaining to career construction and permanence in the T&H industry were derived from a review of the literature, the researcher's own experience, discussions with the advisory team, and a preliminary research (section 2.4.1), addressing a range of subjects. Three versions of the same interview were prepared, with minor adjustments, according to the three targeted groups (as seen in Figure 5.13 and Table 5.8): *Employees*, *Leavers* and *Newcomers*. Participants were engaged in a conversation focused in five major thematic areas/sections:

- i) The first area concerned informants' narratives on their career story and corresponding career paths since graduation (for newcomers, the focus was on their first hands-on experience); more comprehensive and detailed accounts were more likely to spontaneously address some of the subsequent questions.
- ii) The second area comprised questions based on identifying informants' career interests and motivations to pursue a T&H career, including the positive features that attracted them to the industry; the role of T&H Higher Education in career construction; and

- career expectations and plans, including expectations about desired job positions and extent to which pre-entry expectations were met.
- iii) The third area included questions focused on the determinants to pursue, move on from, or return to (as for *Leavers*), a T&H career; perceptions of alternative opportunities, employability and personal costs associated with leaving; and the perceived influence of social constructions such as gender and age on career development.
 - iv) In the fourth area, questions targeted informants' views on employee retention and future scenarios for the T&H, including: anticipated challenges; perceptions on employee turnover and image of the industry; and good practices regarding corporate human resource policies and measures aimed at encouraging retention and helping employees to effectively perform their roles that respondents were acknowledgeable about.
 - v) The fifth area concerned the informants' own conceptions of *quality of work life*, aiming to unveil the multiple meanings that this concept may have to different individuals.

Throughout these five areas, the focus on the participants' perceived QWL was kept, with the objective of identifying the dimensions that may have an impact in shaping individuals experiences and in employee retention. Therefore, in some cases, specific follow-up questions were made regarding issues such as job content, pay and other rewards, different forms of recognition, opportunities for advancement and promotion, job security, peer and supervisory relationships, job stress or work-life balance, following the dimensions identified by the researcher and described in section 3.4.

The last section of the interview aimed at profiling both the professional and/or biographical backgrounds of the participants. The former, included several items pertaining work-related characteristics, such as job position, years of T&H work experience, years working for the current employer, contractual situation or wage level; while the latter included several items pertaining to demographic characteristics such as gender, age, kinship relations and details on academic qualifications.

Table 5.8 (divided in three parts that should be interpreted as a single table) provides an overview of the underlying themes and groups to whom they are applicable to. Some questions were explicit in the interview guide, while others were in the form of topics. Due to the iterative process between deductive and inductive approaches used in this research, the order of the questions and the complementary/follow-up topics were under some changes along the interviewing process.

Informants who were working in a hotel at the time of the study, were asked both about their careers in the industry, focusing on both past experiences and experiences with the current employer. Former employees were asked similar questions, but with a focus on their previous experiences and perceptions when they were working in hotels. Newcomers were asked about their expectations and intentions to pursue a career in the T&H industry, building on their first on-the-job experiences.

Table 5.8-1 | Overall themes of the interview instrument(s) for Phase I – Themes I and II

Themes	Sub-themes	Applicable to	Content/Objective	Main reference authors
I. Career story		<i>Employees</i> <i>Leavers</i>	· Professional backgrounds and career paths	Ladkin, 1999; Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017; Mooney, Harris, & Ryan, 2016; Mooney & Jameson, 2018
		<i>Newcomers</i>	· First on-the-job experience	
	Career interests and motivations	<i>Employees</i>	· Motivations to pursue a T&H career	Kim, McCleary, & Kaufman, 2010; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Mooney & Jameson, 2018; O’Neill, 2012; Riley, Ladkin, & Szivas, 2002; Rodrigues, Guest, & Budjanovcanin, 2013
		<i>Leavers</i>	· Image of T&H as a first choice for long-term career employment	
		<i>Newcomers</i>	· T&H as a potentially attractive career option when compared with other fields/as an employer of choice	
II. Career planning and initiation	Education and training	<i>Employees</i>	· Importance of T&H Higher Education and influence in career construction	Costa et al., 2017; Costa, Breda, Malek, & Durão, 2013; Costa, Carvalho, Caçador, & Breda, 2012; Kasper-Brauer & Leischnig, 2016; Kong & Baum, 2006; Lashley, 2015; Nachmias et al., 2017; Nelson & Dopson, 2001; O’Leary & Deegan, 2005; Petia & Mason, 2004; Purcell, Elias, & Wilton, 2004; Wang, 2013; Weaver, 2009
		<i>Leavers</i>	· Importance given to T&H (higher) education by employers	
	Career aspirations and fulfilment	<i>Newcomers</i>	· Characteristics of a successful employee (perceptions on the qualities and skills employers are looking for; skills upgrading)	Blomme et al., 2009; Brown, Bosselman, & Thomas, 2016; Costa et al., 2012; Dewar, Sayers, & Meyer, 2002; Iverson & Deery, 1997; Jenkins, 2001; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015; Richardson, 2009; Robinson, Ruhanen, & Breakey, 2016
		<i>Employees</i>	· Employees’ expectations set and corresponding sense of fulfilment · Mismatch between pre-entry and post-entry expectations · Perceptions on employers’ concerns with employees’ career prospects and expectations	
		<i>Leavers</i>	· Former employees’ expectations set · Mismatch between pre-entry and post-entry expectations · Perception on employers’ concerns with employees’ career prospects and expectations	
		<i>Newcomers</i>	· Prospective employees’ expectations set · Impressions from first contact with the labour market	

Table 5.8-2 | Overall themes of the interview instrument(s) for Phase I – Themes III, IV and V

Themes	Sub-themes	Applicable to	Content/Objective	Main reference authors	
III. Career construction and critical moments	Determinants to pursue, move on from, or return to, a T&H career	Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons underlying employees' intentions to stay or to leave their job (with reference to current employer) and/or occupation (with reference to T&H) Frequency with which employees think about quitting their job-occupation Most enjoyable and satisfying features of the job-occupation 	Chew & Chan, 2008; Cho, Johanson, & Guchait, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015; Deery & Shaw, 1997; Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009; Mohsin, Lengler, & Kumar, 2013; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Rowley & Purcell, 2001; Sturges & Guest, 2001; Tracey & Hinkin, 2008; Williams, Harris, & Parker, 2008	
		Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons underlying former employees' decision to leave their job (with reference to last employer) and/or occupation (with reference to T&H) Intentions to return to a T&H career in the future 		
		Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intention to pursue a T&H career after graduation Likelihood and/or desire to be employed in a permanent position by the same organisation where first work experience took place 		
	Perceived costs and alternatives	Employees Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of alternative job opportunities Personal costs or implications associated with the withdrawal from the job (with reference to current/latest employer) and/or occupation (with reference to T&H) 		Feldman & Ng, 2007; Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Kaiser, 2013; Iverson & Deery, 1997; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Steers & Mowday, 1981
		Employees Leavers Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of job availability and mobility (ease of labour market entry/move and/or to find a desirable job) 		
		Job-occupational attitudes	Employees		
Awareness of gender and age-related influences	Employees Leavers Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of differences between men and women with regards to opportunities and constraints in workplace behaviour and career advancement Perceptions of the influence of age in workplace behaviour and career construction/advancement 	Barron, Leask, & Fyall, 2014; Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Kara, 2012; Lub, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2016; Morgan & Pritchard, 2019; Solnet, Kralj, & Baum, 2013		
IV. Employee retention and future prospects		Employees Leavers Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges and implications of employee turnover Perceived avoidability of employee turnover Insights on how to boost T&H careers' longevity Insights on how to improve the image of T&H as an employer of choice 	Baum, 2019; Chew & Chan, 2008; Davidson, McPhail, & Barry, 2011; Findlay, Warhurst, Keep, & Lloyd, 2017; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Sullivan, Carden, & Martin, 1998; Thunnissen, 2015; Ulrich, 2014	
		Employees Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of HRM best practices for effective high skilled employee retention Ways to promote employee engagement, organisational commitment, and other positive attitudes at work 		
V. Quality of work life		Employees Leavers Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptions of quality of work life/Identification of various aspects of working life that most matter to hotel employees (most important job resources) Conceptions of quality of the employee-employer relationship 	Kandasamy & Ancheri, 2009; Lee, Back, & Chan, 2015; Wan & Chan, 2013; Weaver, 2009; Zelenski, Murphy, & Jenkins, 2008	

Table 5.8-3 | Overall themes of the interview instrument(s) for Phase I – Theme VI

Themes	Sub-themes	Applicable to	Content/Objective	Main reference authors
VI. Research participants' profile	Professional background	Employees Leavers*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Work experience in the T&H sector (years) · Union membership · Organisational tenure/seniority (years) · Job title/position and department · Job level/supervisory duties · Frequency of customer interaction · Employment contract · Average number of hours worked per day · Working schedule characteristics: shift work, night shifts, frequent work at evenings, frequent work at weekends and holidays, frequent overtime work · Wage (6 response categories) 	Deery & Shaw, 1997; EUROFOUND, 2012; Iverson & Deery, 1997; Kim, 2014; OECD, 2017
	Socio-demographics	Employees Leavers Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Age and gender · Marital status and family responsibilities (number and age of children) · Nationality and municipality of residence · Level of education, type of educational institution, degree, sub-field within T&H and year of completion** 	

Source: Own construction

Table key: *With reference to the last hotel job; **When *Entrants*, expected year of completion.

Constructing the data: Conducting the interviews

Data collection started on November 2018 and was completed by June 2019, and a total of 56 interviews were conducted, either in person or by web conferencing (video call via Skype or Messenger). A **pilot test** was conducted in September 2018 with a view to identify any errors, to test the relevance and clarity of the questions and to refine them to avoid misunderstanding during data collection. A small test sample of three hotel employees, who were not included in the final sample, were asked to answer the questions, and provide feedback. Wording was slightly modified, and some additional answer options were added. As an example, the option ‘exemption of fixed working hours’ was included in the list of possible responses regarding *working schedule characteristics* (section VI of the interview protocol). It was also particularly interesting to note that respondents considered difficult and ambiguous to indicate the average number of hours worked *per week* (also in section VI), as due to rotating shifts, not all working weeks have the same duration, and the number of weekly worked hours and days-off highly varies. For the purposes of tool refinement, the question thus refers to the average number of hours worked *per day*. This pre-test also helped to anticipate the average response time, which was later transmitted to the participants.

Before starting the interview, the participants completed and signed a **consent form**, and received a simplified copy of the interview protocol, aiming to offer the interviewee a broad view of the questions to be placed, and an information letter (Appendix II) covering a set of

topics pertaining: i) the purpose of the research; ii) anonymity and confidentiality issues; iii) dissemination of results; iv) interview expected length⁵²; v) audio-recording consent; and vi) responsibility for the study (researcher contact details and supervisors' information).

In qualitative research, information is recorded on self-designed protocols that help the researcher organise information reported by participants to each question (Creswell, 2012). All interviews were conducted individually by the researcher and were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants, using the audio recorder *Audacity*. Handwritten notes were also taken. The interviews took a minimum of 25 minutes and maximum of 100 minutes.

After establishing rapport with the participants through a short introductory conversation, the interviews were conducted in a flexible and informal manner, to allow participants to be spontaneous, honest, and uninhibited to reveal their views. Questions were not asked in a standardised way; these were instead used as gateways for dialog that would reveal the participants' experiences. Whenever interviewees raised issues nor directly prompted by the questions, they were allowed, and even encouraged, to comment on them. Most of the interviews started with biographic questions (section VI of the interview protocol), proceeded with a more general request for a short description of the participants' career story (section I), and from there to the other questions. Following Braun and Clarke's recommendation, all interviews were closed with a 'clean-up' question (e.g., 'I believe all of my questions are covered; yet, is there anything else you'd like to say or any final thoughts you'd like to share that we haven't discussed?') as a means to obtain some unanticipated data or to identify further issues that participants considered particularly relevant for them.

Data analysis was carried out alongside data collection and an interim analysis informed adaptation of the topic guide and on-going sampling. The **total combined number of interviewees** was **56**, the breakdown being: **30 Employees**, **14 Leavers** and **12 Newcomers**.

The point of **data saturation or informational redundancy** – where no new insights, themes, patterns, categories or explanations emerge from the analysis of an additional case, or the information provided becomes redundant – determined the final sample size (Given, 2008; Kwortnik, 2003; Marshall, 1996; Mason, 2010; Sandelowski, 1995). Although there are not explicit guidelines for determining data saturation, it thus "relates to the degree to which new data repeat what was expressed in previous data". In narrative-type thematic approaches to analysis, as the one adopted in this investigation, more than focusing on analytical, recurrent *themes*, a specific focus on continuous *strands* within individuals accounts is also needed (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1897). Notwithstanding the interpretive perspective adopted in this thesis, which aims to obtain rich personal accounts, saturation was determined in relation to themes across participants' views; however, the point at which interviews was considered completed were also determined by data saturation within each participant's account. This implies that data collection and analysis should take place simultaneously to some extent, so the researcher can take data collection decisions accordingly (Given, 2008; Kwortnik, 2003; Sandelowski, 1995).

⁵² 45 minutes for *Employees* and *Leavers* and 30 minutes for newcomers.

Despite data saturation being more about the depth of the data, rather than about the numbers *per se*, **sample size** is an important issue in qualitative research. This is because qualitative analysis is case-oriented (not variable-oriented), aiming at maximising understanding of the one in all of its diversity (Sandelowski, 1995). Some authors advocate that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study will be the one that more adequately answers the research question (Marshall, 1996), while others refer to a number of issues that can influence it – such as background of the researcher, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the quality of interviews, the number of interviews per participant/the study design, the use of shadowed data, the sampling procedures, or the researcher experience (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Morse, 2000). For example, different kinds of purposeful sampling influence minimum sample sizes; the specific case of maximum variation sampling usually requires the largest minimum sample, as the more variability is desired, the more sampling units will be required to reach saturation (Patton, 2002; Sandelowski, 1995).

Ensuring that there is *enough* data is a fundamental precursor to credible analysis and reporting in qualitative studies, but there is little agreement on which sample sizes are needed (Marshall et al., 2013). Sample sizes should not be too small that informational redundancy or theoretical saturation is difficult to achieve and leave important views uncovered, neither too large that data becomes repetitive and superfluous, hindering the deep, case-oriented analysis that is expected from a qualitative inquiry (Mason, 2010; Sandelowski, 1995). Although the recommendations by qualitative methodologists highly vary with regards to the minimum interviews that should be conducted, a “large number of articles, book chapters, and books recommend guidance and suggest anywhere from 5 to 50 participants as adequate” (Dworkin, 2012, p. 1319). “Determining adequate sample size in qualitative research is ultimately a matter of judgment and experience in evaluating the quality of the information collected against the uses to which it will be put”, together with research method and sampling strategy employed (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 179), especially as there is limited practical guidance to show researchers when saturation has been reached – this is where the main weakness of saturation as a marker of quality in terms of methodological transparency in qualitative studies lies (Bowen, 2008; Mason, 2010).

Taking other qualitative studies as reference, Wan and Chan (2013) interviewed 40 casino employees (including managers, supervisors and dealers) from six major casinos in Macau to assess their perceptions of quality of work life; Knox, Warhurst, Nickson and Dutton (2015) interviewed 76 housekeeping workers in four hotels in the UK and 30 housekeeping workers in three Australian hotels (including department managers, supervisors and room attendants) to examine the objective and subjective dimensions of job quality for room attendants; Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh and Callan (2016) conducted 25 semi-structured interviews in full-service hotels in Australia, aiming to identify similarities and differences in attitudes between three frontline hotel worker groups (housekeepers, front office employees and food and beverage front-of-house staff); and Sturges and Guest (2001) conducted 50 interviews aimed at exploring what factors were most likely to influence graduates’ decisions to stay with or leave their first employer (five different organisations from different operation areas) in the early years of their career.

Besides the interview guide itself, a **post-interview protocol** was also conceived for application after each interview session. This was aimed at taking some additional notes and register any first impressions while the session was still fresh in the researcher's mind, for later comparison across all interviewees. This was also an 'insurance' procedure to be alternatively used in case of the audio recording fails. The following issues were covered by this postscript: duration of the interview, location and atmosphere, impressions about the interviewee (disposition to talk/motivation to take part on the interview, gestures/non-verbal signs, interaction during the interview/difficult moments) and main points discussed in the interview. Participants did not receive monetary compensation or other.

As data collection issues, the researcher acknowledges the occurrence of some of the constraints described by Creswell (2007), such as: (i) the challenging logistics of the interviews, which involved travelling to different locations of the country to meet the interviewees (the researcher privileged face-to-face meetings and most of the travels took place within the North, Central and Lisbon regions), and creative schedule management (some interviews needed to be re-scheduled owing to circumstances beyond the researcher's control); (ii) the extensive time-consuming process of *verbatim* transcription, which the researcher personally carried out as soon as possible after each interview (described below in section 5.5); or (iii) bracketing one's experiences, as it is difficult for many interviewees to stick to the most relevant facts or information when describing their personal experiences, which required the researcher to decide when to carefully lead the conversation towards a different topic.

Profiling the research participants

A short description of the three groups of participants in the study is provided in Tables 5.9 to 5.11 (see Appendix III for a more detailed version). The participants' region of origin and their socio-demographic profile, according to their gender and age group (generational cohorts), are pictured in Figure 5.14 and Figure 5.15.

Table 5.9 | Major characteristics of the study's informants: *Leavers*

Leavers					
Name (<i>alias</i>)	Gender	Age	Job title	Years in the industry	Years out of the industry
Alice	Female	35	Receptionist	5	1
Marco	Male	24	Receptionist	6	1
Julia	Female	39	Hotel/Unit General Manager	10	5
Laura	Female	35	Food and Beverage Manager	10	1
Cecilia	Female	26	Waitress and barmaid	2	1
Amanda	Female	44	Assistant Hotel Manager	16	10
Martin	Male	43	Hotel/Unit General Manager	11	6
Sabrina	Female	42	Assistant Hotel Manager	9	3
Clara	Female	33	Assistant Hotel Manager	7	5
Joel	Male	43	Purchasing Clerk/Executive	3	12
Olivia	Female	35	Assistant Hotel Manager	7	7
Clarice	Female	40	Receptionist	7	8
Virginia	Female	46	Guest Relations	5	23
Veronica	Female	46	Receptionist	2	18

Source: Own construction

Table 5.10 | Major characteristics of the study's informants: *Employees*

Employees					
Name (<i>alias</i>)	Gender	Age	Job title	Years in the industry	Years with current employer
Elisa	Female	33	Front Desk Supervisor	11	11 (7)
Lucas	Male	28	Receptionist	4	4
Angelo	Male	23	Receptionist	1	< 1
Barbara	Female	31	Web sales Executive	6	< 1
Rita	Female	32	Sales and events Executive	10	2
Miguel	Male	38	Receptionist	2	< 1
Eva	Female	21	Receptionist	< 1	< 1
Hugo	Male	24	Receptionist	2	1
Samuel	Male	31	Receptionist	4	3
Aurora	Female	31	Receptionist	3	3
Adriana	Female	36	Sales and events Manager	10	10 (8)
Maria	Female	51	Hotel Deputy Manager	27	27
Marisa	Female	35	Assistant Hotel Manager	13	13
Celeste	Female	39	Hotel/Unit General Manager	17	3
Victor	Male	53	Hotel/Unit General Manager	28	14
Benjamin	Male	33	Doorman	10	5
Gabriel	Male	35	Food and Beverage Manager	21	8
Amelia	Female	28	Receptionist	3	2
Thomas	Male	32	Waiter	9	< 1
Vincent	Male	37	Hotel Deputy Manager	7	2
Bruno	Male	43	Hotel/Unit General Manager	9	1
Octavio	Male	43	Hotel/Unit General Manager	21	7
Michael	Male	26	Purchasing Clerk/Executive	3	3
Valentina	Female	25	Sales and events Executive	< 1	< 1
Jaime	Male	24	Assistant F&B Manager	5	< 1
Daniel	Male	40	Hotel Deputy Manager	15	3
Manuel	Male	32	Hotel/Unit General Manager	7	6
Vera	Female	26	Reservations Clerk/Executive	3	1
Leticia	Female	24	Receptionist	2	2
Xavier	Male	42	Hotel/Unit General Manager	25	< 1

Source: Own construction

Table 5.11 | Major characteristics of the study's informants: *Newcomers*

Newcomers/Students					
Name (<i>alias</i>)	Gender	Age	Number of internships	Internships duration (months)	Education level
Rafael	Male	19	1	3	Undergraduate
Alexandra	Female	21	2	8	Undergraduate
Leonardo	Male	23	2	8	Undergraduate
Claudia	Female	20	1	5	Undergraduate
Mario	Male	26	1	3	Undergraduate
Carla	Female	21	1	3	Undergraduate
Emilia	Female	23	1	4	Postgraduate
Oscar	Male	22	2	3	Undergraduate
Edgar	Male	21	3	9	Undergraduate
George	Male	22	4	15	Undergraduate
Andrea	Female	25	1	3	Postgraduate
Abel	Male	20	1	2	Undergraduate

Source: Own construction

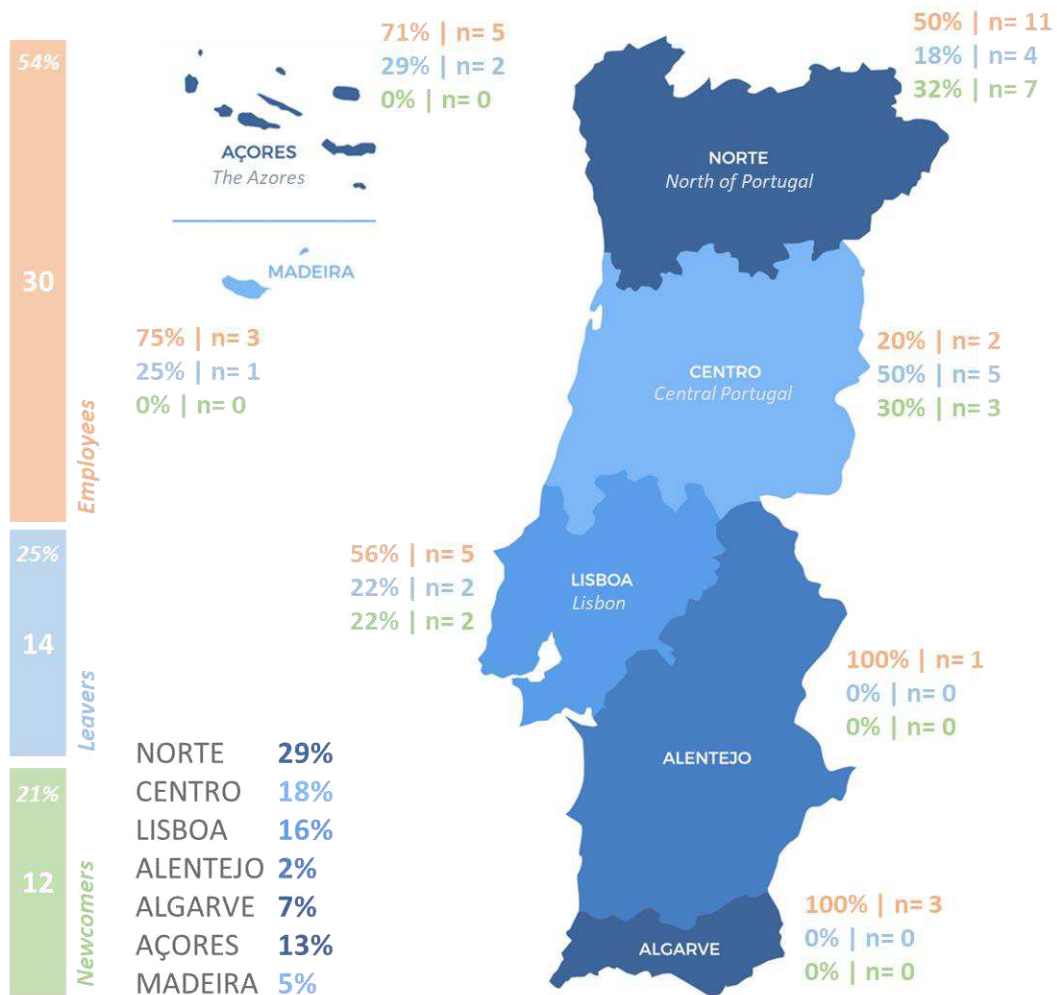
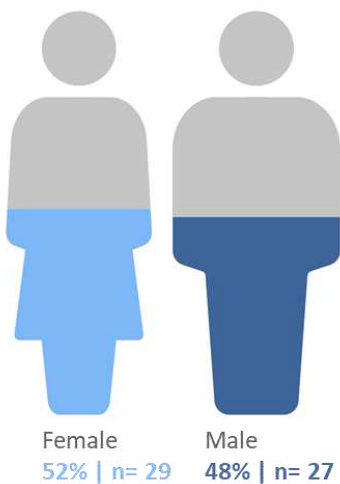


Figure 5.14 | Research participants distribution per region (regions in which participants work/study)

Source: Own construction

GENDER



AGE GROUPS (by 2019)

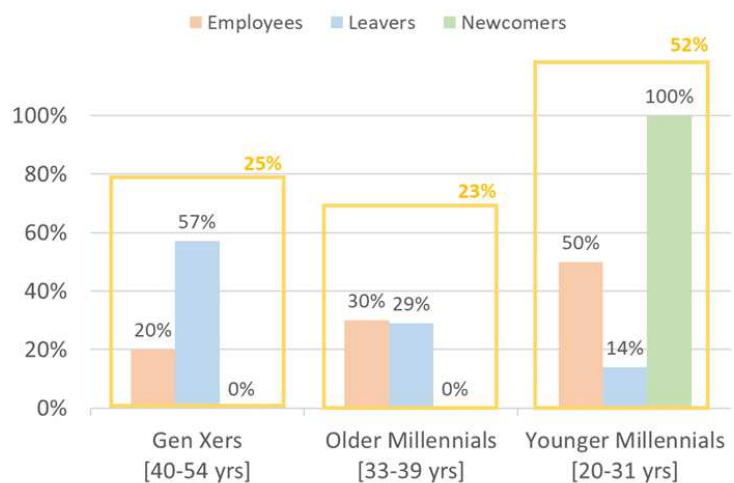


Figure 5.15 | Sociodemographic profile of research participants⁵³

Source: Own construction

The heterogeneity of the *Employees* and *Leavers* groups was also enhanced by the inclusion of both back and front-of-the-house staff in the sample, as well as a variety of functional levels (staff/operational, supervisory, and managerial) and job positions (15 different positions) (Figure 5.16). *Newcomers* completed from 1 to 4 different internships over their Higher Education programme, which were hosted by up to 6 different departments and ranged from 2 to 15 months of length. These internships characteristics and experiences are latter described in section 6.4.2 with more detail.

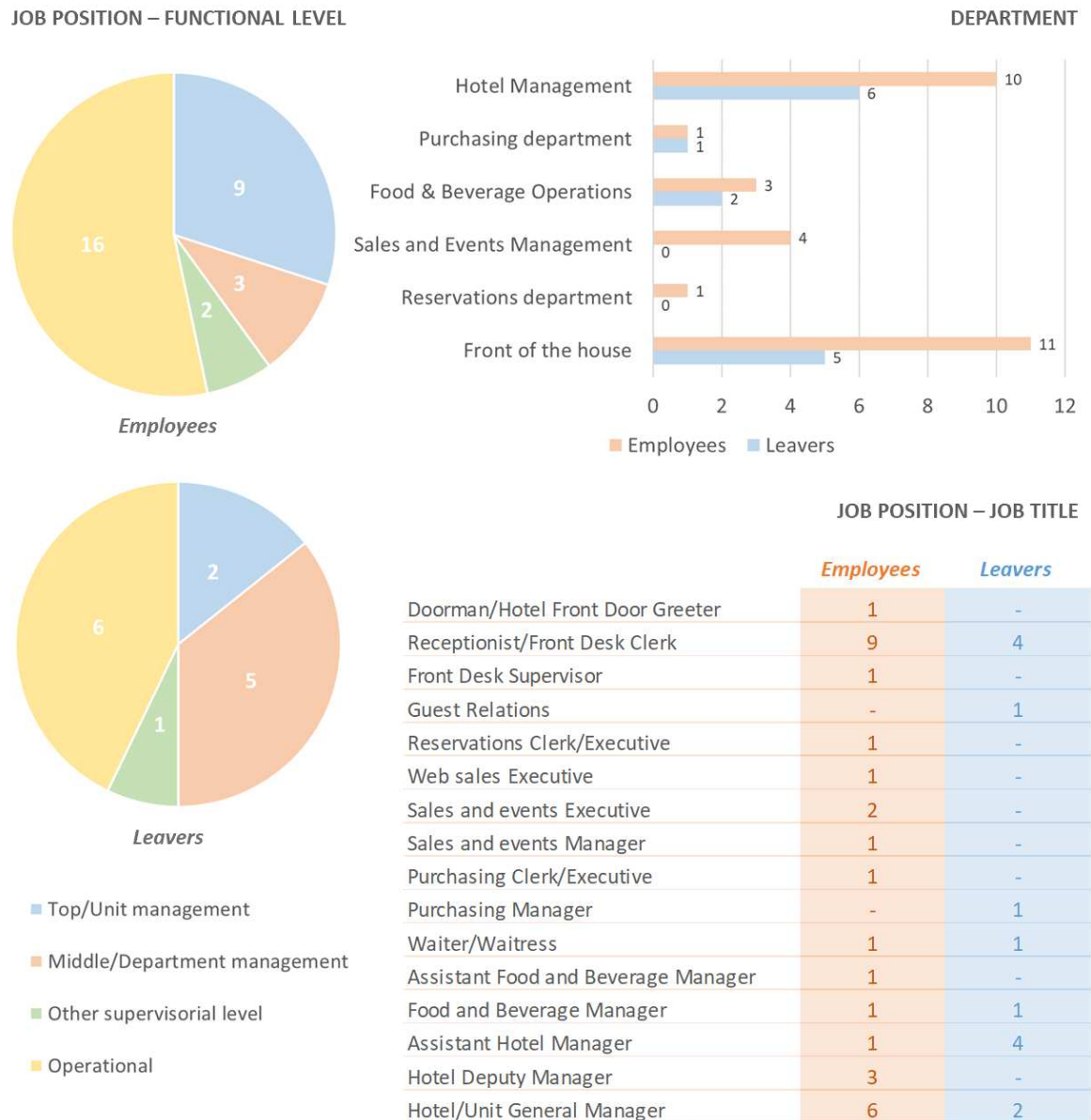


Figure 5.16 | *Employees* and *Leavers*' professional profile: nature of the job

Source: Own construction

⁵³ The distinction between Younger Millennials (born from around 1986 to 1999) and Older Millennials (born from 1979 to 1986) is based on the so-called *Millennials divide*: individuals who were born before or during 1986 were around 21-22 years old when the financial crash of 2008/09, which might have had a significant impact in their early careers.

5.5.2 Phase II – *qual* data generation (supplementary component)

Aiming at enhancing trustworthiness of the findings (a topic that is further explored in section 5.7) by combining more than one point of view or perspective of the same phenomenon, a second-round of data collection was carried out. A dialogic, conversational style, **key informant panel method** was used to extend the investigation. This strategy was not necessarily oriented at confronting the findings from Phase I – as this study privileged participants’ voices and accepted their accounts as reflecting their constructions of reality – , but rather at seeking for elaboration and clarification, as a way of achieving a more far-reaching and rigorous analysis, following a logic of complementarity (Coutinho, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Greene et al., 1989).

Phase II therefore involved the consultation of a set of **key actors in the T&H industry and experts**⁵⁴ from different disciplines, to reflect and comment on the various scenarios emerging from the preliminary analysis of the data collected in previous phases. Results from Phase I (and from the *Preliminary Research* phase to some extent) were blended with those from Phase II, thus consolidating the analysis of the findings and the formulation of conclusions. The researcher believes that this dynamic process of interaction with various stakeholders, would facilitate her interpretation of the data, maximising confidence in the research findings. Besides, this would allow to formulate a more holistic and complete picture of career construction and development in the T&H industry, while strengthening methodological validity, reliability and accuracy of the study (Denzin, 2009). Figure 5.17 provides an overview of the research strategy adopted for data generation in Phase II, which consists of the supplemental component.

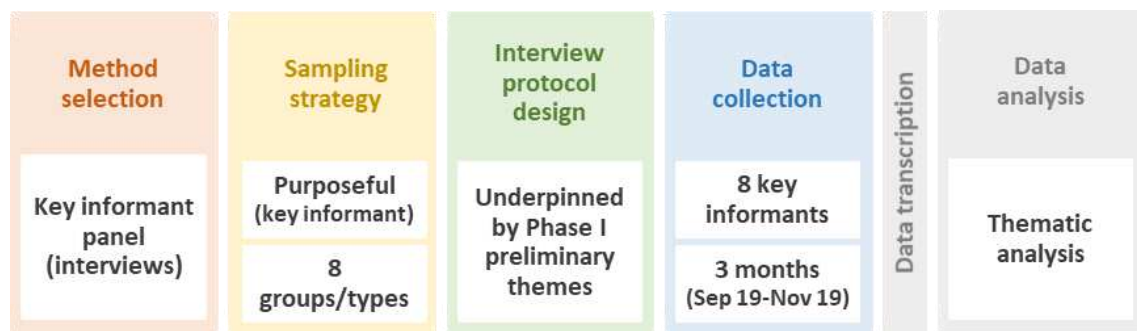


Figure 5.17 | Research strategy overview for Phase II

Source: Own construction

Selecting key informants

This approach involved a series of face-to-face interviews with individual experts and representatives of different types of stakeholder-organisations, who were invited to examine and share their thoughts on the preliminary findings from Phase I. This sampling approach,

⁵⁴ Which was announced to participants as *scenario discussion with expert panel*.

which is a type of purposeful sampling that is usually used in combination with other approaches, as it is the case here, is referred to as *key informants*, *key knowledgeable*, or *reputational sampling* (Patton, 2014).

Parsons (2008) describes a key informant as a “person with whom an interview about a particular organisation, social program, problem, or interest group is conducted” (p. 407). As in this study, key informants act as a *proxi* for their associates at a given organisation or group. Key informants for this study were not randomly selected, but rather chosen for their knowledge, experience, or expertise on the research topics. Their representativeness of such individuals is dependent on characteristics that are theoretically relevant (e.g., their status or position within an organisation) (Marshall, 1996; Parsons, 2008; Patton, 2014). As suggested by Parsons (2008), the mix of persons to be interviewed should reflect all possible sides of the issue being studied. As in Phase I data was obtained from three groups/sub-samples representing the *employees’* perspective (those who work, have worked and may work in the future in the hotel sector), it was considered that including other, more wide-ranging, macro-level views, such as the *employers’* perspective, would represent an opportunity to uncover deeper meaning in the data.

Remarking that this selection is inevitably subjective and judgmental, different individuals with special expertise in fields considered relevant for this study, whose contribution was believed to better complement and contextualise Phase I participants’ views, were chosen, based on: their extensive knowledge of the dynamics and challenges of HR Management in the T&H industry; their job position/role within the organisation they represent; and the type and degree of interaction with other key-actors of the industry. Selecting the key informants followed the identification of groups/types of stakeholders perceived as relevant for the discussion of the research topics, as those depicted in Figure 5.18.



Figure 5.18 | Groups of key informants participating in Phase II

Source: Own construction

After discussing and analysing several possibilities with the advisory team, the researcher has gathered a key informant sample of **eight expert panellists**:

- i) Two of the largest employers in the hotel sector, in Portugal (which are also two of the biggest hotel groups operating in the country);
- ii) One of the most influential business associations in the T&H industry;
- iii) One of the largest labour unions of the industry⁵⁵;
- iv) One governmental organisation that combines several institutional competences related to the potentiation of the T&H industry, including the education and training domains;
- v) One Human Resources expert with 25 years of experience in the hotel sector⁵⁶;
- vi) One expert in the field of T&H Higher Education with recognised experience in university teaching and research⁵⁷; and
- vii) One Organisational Behaviour expert with pertinent expertise and research applied to the T&H field⁵⁸.

Defining the themes for discussion

Key informants in the abovementioned fields, were invited to provide insights, share their experiences, and articulate their thoughts on the preliminary analysis of the findings from Phase I. The interviews did not follow a pre-defined script of questions and answers. Therefore only a few topics to be discussed existed, which served as a basis for guiding the interviews in order to allow further insights to emerge.

These topics derived from a preliminary analysis of the findings from the interviews with *Employees*, *Leavers*, and *Newcomers* in the hotel sector, and were sent in advance to the participants. Questions covered the major themes presented in Table 5.12.

Conducting the key informant interviews

The eight scenario discussions were conducted in the period from September to November 2019, all face-to-face, and data collection procedures at this stage were quite similar to those of Phase I. The participants received a six-page **presentation dossier** (Appendix IV) beforehand, covering a set of topics pertaining:

- i) The purpose and relevance of the research;
- ii) A description of the study's phases;
- iii) More detailed information about Phase I, namely the topics of the interview protocol and participants' profile for the three sub-groups;
- iv) Terms and conditions of participation, including the meeting's expected duration, audio-recording procedures, anonymity, and confidentiality issues⁵⁹,

⁵⁵ Despite the *employees'* perspective being already represented in the interviews from Phase I, it was believed that the view of an organisation representing a wider range of workers, with specific knowledge on collective bargaining, workers' rights, and other employment and legal issues, would add value to the discussion.

⁵⁶ Having worked in several widely reputable international and national hotel groups, as well as in other sectors.

⁵⁷ In fields such as curricula development, curricular internships, competencies and skills for the T&H industry or labour market integration and employability; with more than 20 years of experience in the T&H education and practice.

⁵⁸ Research related with topics such as organisational psychology, organisational customer orientation, leadership, HR management, emotional labour and quality of work life.

⁵⁹ According with the EU Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

- v) Dissemination of results;
- vi) Responsibility for the study (researcher contact details and supervisors' information).

Participants were also asked to complete and sign a **consent form** before starting the interview, with copies made available for both parties, and all key-informant interviews were anonymised due to confidentiality issues. As contextual data, only the gender, age, number of years working in the T&H industry (when applicable), and qualifications (level and educational area) were asked from the participants. All meetings were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants, using the audio recorder *Audacity*, and handwritten notes were also taken. The meetings took a minimum of 45 minutes and maximum of 150 minutes.

Table 5.12 | Overall themes of the interview instrument(s) for Phase II

Themes	Expert panellists					
	Employers represent.	Union	Institutional	HR expert	HE expert	OB expert
The role of Higher Education	X	X	X	X	X	X
Key competences and preparation for the labour market	X		X	X	X	
Turnover and retention of qualified staff	X	X	X	X		X
Career longevity and quality of work life	X	X		X		X
Contemporary work relations and careers	X	X		X	X	X
Structural constraints of the sector	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Own construction

5.6 Research methods: Data analysis and interpretation

Qualitative analysis involves interpreting data of qualitative inquiry – interviews, documents, etc. – to find meaningful patterns and themes that contribute to the understanding of how people and groups make sense of the world they live and work in (Patton, 2014). The chosen methods of analysis and interpretation should reflect the complexity, detail and context of the data, building explanations focused on meanings rather than on cause (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

Researchers should consider that different methods of analysis will result in different accounts of the same data, and consequently different readings of the same phenomenon. Inductive qualitative analysis, in particular, can follow very distinct paths, as interpretation develops mostly from emergent categories and theories from the data, rather than from a priori defined categories. The analysis process involves, therefore, careful and purposeful selection of methods for data analysis, which reconnect with the theoretical and strategic framework that guided

research design and the inquiry questions (Carter & Little, 2007; Patton, 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003).

5.6.1 Pre-analysis considerations

Transcription of the data

Transcribing “is the process whereby recordings of research conversations (interviews, focus groups) are turned into textual material (transcripts), which then become the primary data for subsequent analysis” (Poland, 2008, p. 884). This is an initial analytic and interpretative process in qualitative research, but researchers should keep in mind that transcripts are artificial constructions from an oral to a written form, which are highly influenced by the researchers’ theoretical assumptions, and interviews continue to be the core of the research. It is recommended that interviews should be transcribed as accurately as possible, despite some elements in oral speech being likely to be lost (e.g., irony) (Kvale, 1996).

Consequently, data analysis and interpretation in this thesis, especially when informing Phase II, started with the transcription of the interviews. Transcriptions were personally conducted by the researcher, immediately after each interview, whenever possible. Transcribing the interviews allowed the researcher to reflect about her interviewing style, improving it for the interviews that followed, and to become more familiar with the data, contributing to the preliminary analysis in which Phase II was underpinned on (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase I interviews’ audio records were transcribed essentially following an orthographic/*verbatim* style. Researcher’s comments and annotations (e.g., nonverbal or emotional elements of the conversation) were also added to the transcripts to facilitate subsequent data analysis and writing. All the 56 in-person interviews from Phase I produced around 47 hours of recording and 427 single-spaced pages of transcripts in Portuguese. Transcripts were returned to participants upon request, for comments; no modifications or corrections were suggested. Participants’ speech was identified by the *alias* assigned to each of them. Phase II interviews, with eight key-informants, were transcribed selectively, meaning that only the informants’ ideas were transcribed, conveying the message without altering the meaning but involving some slight paraphrasing. This process yielded around 11 hours of recording and 42 single-spaced pages of transcripts. These transcripts were made available for key-informants for review and further comment.

By using a transcription notation system, the researcher seeks to ensure that oral speech was clearly and consistently converted into written language, meaning that the process is thorough and meticulous (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The **transcription** notation used in this study was inspired in the Jefferson Transcription System (Jefferson, 2004). Despite this notation system being more commonly used in phonetic or paralinguistic styles (in which both *what* was said and *how* it was said are recorded) (Braun & Clarke, 2013), the researcher attempted to transcribe spoken words yet retaining some of the authenticity of the oral speech by registering intonation, hesitation and other elements that were considered relevant for interpretation, hence the *inspired* adjectivisation. Other symbols used (defined by the researcher) are described in the following notation key:

- word Underlying indicates emphasis in the speech
- ((word)) Double parentheses indicates additional comments (contextual or interactional) from the researcher/transcriber
- (LLL) Letter 'L' in parentheses is used to represent laughter within the talk
- word* Italics indicates metaphors or analogies
- 'word' Single quotation marks are used to simulate (real or hypothetical) speech pertaining to oneself or others
- Host** Name 'Host' was used to identify interviewer's speech (questions, statements).

All interviews were conducted in Portuguese, but data reporting was to be written in English. As it would be unnecessary, impractical, and probably detrimental for interpretation, to translate all transcripts, only selected excerpts (those featuring in the final analysis) were translated into English. These translations were double-checked by native English speakers, not only to verify their reliability, but also as an attempt to assure that the translations were fully conveying the original ideas and emotions.

Qualitative data were imported into the qualitative software package NVivo 12 – a QSR International's qualitative data analysis software designed to assist in systematically exploring large bodies of textual data –, and interpreted using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some specificities and implications of using a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) are discussed further below.

The use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)

When performing thematic analysis, or qualitative data analysis in general, researchers are required to be capable of managing large amounts of information and coding data in both flexible and robust ways, so codes and categories can be easily reorganised, searched, and retrieved. Several CAQDAS packages are now available and have thus become a growing choice for many qualitative researchers (Ayres, 2008b). These software packages act as data repositories that also allow researchers to code and index them, perform different types of basic functions (such as keyword searches, word count or searches for patterns of words, coding, or attributes), (re)organise categories and themes, display possible interrelationships (e.g., cross-references, relations with attributes such as demographic information), and even to more easily return to the data set in the future for additional questioning. Benefits of using these tools also include time saving, as analysis are likely to be undertaken more quickly when compared to manual analysis (Saldaña, 2011; Veal, 2006). The greater the volume of data, the more helpful such tool will be (Patton, 2014). Another advantage of CAQDAS is that major analyst decisions made by the researcher can be recorded, an audit trail can be left, and the analytic process replicated (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007)

Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that computer software does not analyse data at higher conceptual levels by itself; such responsibility lies with researcher. Therefore, computer software will only assist the analysis and be as effective as the researcher him/herself can be (Jennings, 2005; Patton, 2014; Saldaña, 2011), as systematic and mechanical analysis do not

replace the researchers' flexibility, creativity, insight, and intuition in interrogating the data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Working with computer software also implies additional precautions regarding backing-up procedures both for original and edited materials. Particularly for first-time users, learning complex instructions and multiple functions of CAQDAS while having to deal with coding and analysis, can be quite challenging. When using CAQDAS, it is recommended that "hard-copy printouts of code lists and coded data be generated occasionally to [enable the researcher] to work with traditional writing materials such as red pens and highlighters to explore data in fresh ways" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 22).

In this thesis, one of the most widely used CAQDAS packages, NVivo, was used to assist coding, categorising, organising the themes, data retrieval, analysis and reporting. Having considered its advantages and possible limitations, it was concluded that a computer software package would be useful in managing the large amount of interview data, thus yielding more rigour and transparency to the analysis and contributing to the validity of the study. The researcher already had previous experience in research projects employing both qualitative analysis and CAQDAS (in particular webQDA), but she has also had specialised training (two short duration courses of qualitative analysis with NVivo).

5.6.2 Methods for qualitative data analysis: thematic analysis with narrative elements

Thematic analysis in this thesis follows a descriptive approach with focus on lived experience, which implies understanding participants' experience meaning in their work lives; this is why many researchers refer to this method as a process of 'thematizing meanings' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis had a constructionist-interpretivist orientation informed by critical theory, since meanings were not interpreted as inherent to work experiences, but as socially (re)produced. **Thematic analysis** was chosen to analyse the data collected in this thesis due to its flexibility (it is compatible with different paradigms, although not all, and can be used to answer almost any type of research question or to analyse almost all kind of data), and to the fact that it can be useful to summarise key features of a large body of data while still offering a 'thick description' of the data set, to highlight similarities and differences across the data set, or to generate unanticipated insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

However, thematic analysis was not considered enough to fully capture the meaning of some concepts. There can be some contradictions and consistencies across individual accounts that may be revealing, that cannot be possible to fully understand just with thematic analysis (Carvalho, 2017). This was particularly relevant when looking at participants' accounts (typically narrative in form) of their career story, in which their experiences, career paths and decisive moments/critical events were narrated with a temporal coherence (i.e., chronologically). For this reason, **narrative elements** were introduced during data interpretation, with the aim of more fully capturing participants' experiences and perspectives within the broader context of their lives (Carvalho, 2017).

In sequential multi-method designs, such as in this investigation, data analysis begins before all the data is collected. In such designs, data collection, data analysis and data interpretation

processes are iterative and non-linear (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). A preliminary analysis of data from Phase I – resulting from the interviews with three groups of participants – was used to unveil some relevant patterns, which underpinned data making in Phase II. This preliminary analysis roughly corresponded to steps 2 and 3 of Braun and Clarke’s six-step guide for thematic analysis (see Figure 5.20, *Coding process*) but following a looser approach; themes that appeared of relevance and interest were identified. After the analysis of data from Phase II (second, ancillary stage), the third phase consisted of integration of findings from both approaches, anchored on existing theory and the researcher’s positioning (Figure 5.19). Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step guide, the researcher systematically analysed data in order to identify patterns, assigning significance to each pattern, and interpreting these patterns with a view to describe the studied phenomenon.

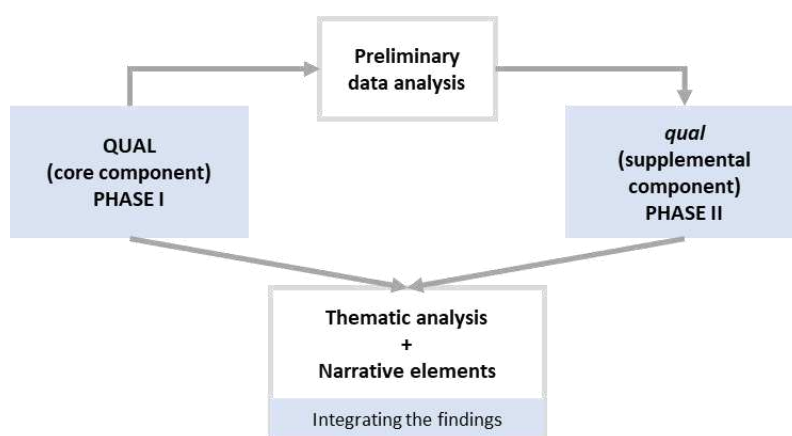


Figure 5.19 | Main steps of data analysis

Source: Own construction

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis “is a data reduction and analysis strategy by which qualitative data are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts within the data set” (Ayres, 2008b, p. 867). This is a pattern-based analytic method⁶⁰ which facilitates the search for patterns within data, that is patterns of meanings or **themes**. Such process requires high involvement and interpretative thinking from the researcher, who has to focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012; Morse, 2008; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). A variety of inductive and iterative techniques, including categorical strategies and contextualizing (holistic) strategies, are typically used in thematic analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Despite this method of data analysis being widely used, it was only ‘named and claimed’ as a specific method until quite recently (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013).

⁶⁰ Other pattern-based methods being: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Grounded theory, Pattern-based discourse analysis, Conversation analysis or Narrative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013); for an overview on other types of qualitative methods of analysis see also Jennings (2005, p. 109).

Thematic analysis may be employed as: (i) a realist/essentialist method, when simply reporting experiences, meanings and the reality of participants; (ii) a constructionist method, when examining the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society (which is essentially the approach adopted in this research project); or as (iii) a 'contextualist' method, when situated between realism and constructionism, and underpinned by theories such as critical realism, acknowledging both the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

Themes are the dominant features or characteristics of the phenomenon being investigated in a qualitative study. More specifically, themes are a "set of concepts, ideas, or narrative segments that are similar to each other (*similarity principle*) and are also different from comparable elements in other themes (*contrast principle*)" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, pp. 297–298). Themes are not present in the data *per se*, as characteristics (as it happens with *categories* in content analysis), but rather run through the data and represent the basic topic that the whole narrative is about. Identification of themes requires the reading of interviews, paragraph by paragraph, asking what is that narrative about, thus uncovering the meaning or the essence of the participant's experience (Morse, 2008). Even if two points of view seem to contradict each other, emerging differences and inconsistencies can be reflexively approached, which involves taking a second look at the data and trying to find an alternative explanation for such differences. This should be viewed as an opportunity to uncover deeper meaning in the data (Coutinho, 2011).

Therefore, the analysis began with a search for meanings, patterns of different meanings, and how these meanings relate to each other. More than measuring and reporting frequency, the product of a thematic analysis is to understand the complexity of such meanings on lived experiences (i.e., participants' descriptions of experiences related to the research question), thus determining how they can be organised into themes and a scheme of interrelated themes (Sundler, Lindberg, Nilsson, & Palmér, 2019). Theme development that reports concepts and assumptions underpinning the data is considered a *latent approach* to thematic analysis, contrasting with a *semantic approach* that only reflects the explicit content of the data. Although latent themes are predominantly associated with constructionist thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), in this study, the search was both for latent and semantic themes.

Introduction of narrative elements

Thematic analysis was combined with elements of narrative analysis in order to capture the fluidity and variability of individual career experiences, which occur over time and involve multiple and unfolding decisions and events, guiding a process toward achieving a goal (Carvalho, 2017). Not only themes were identified across the data set, but also within individual accounts, as some meanings can only be fully disclosed if the individual's life story is considered (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Such strategy also favours the respect the uniqueness of each case while conducting a cross-case analysis (Snape & Spencer, 2003) and has been previously employed in other studies to more fully understand the complexity of T&H careers (e.g., Carvalho, 2017).

Narrative analysis focus on each case, on the participant, and involves the interpretation of patterns of meaning of a participant's story, by describing the story or an objective set of experiences (placed it in a chronology), locating epiphanies and turning points, and identifying contextual materials (such as the settings of the participants' experiences or biographical data) (Creswell, 2007). These patterns of meaning are not only explicit, but also implicit in the content and structure of the narrative (Ayres, 2008a). "Narrative analysis helps to formulate an understanding of *how* people talk about experiences and situations as well as *what* they say" (Wiles, Rosenberg, & Kearns, 2005, p. 98).

"Narrative presents information as a sequence of connected events, having some kind of thematic or structural (usually temporal) coherence" (Wiles et al., 2005, p. 90). Throughout the interviews, participants related – mostly in chronological manner – a series of events, their consequences, and the relation between some of these events and other events that were instrumental in their career development (Ayres, 2008a; Ladkin, 1999; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). In this study, this narration of experiences happens naturally, predominantly as an outcome of questions from *section I* of the interview protocol, in which participants were asked to theorise about how their careers in the hotel sector, in terms of their development and most meaningful events.

The way participants build their story lines and plotting is influenced by their past and present experiences of career construction and development. "Informants often relate experiences in narrative format; that is, they select and order events in ways that both reflect their own meanings and convey those meanings to others" (Ayres, 2008a, p. 545). By unfolding their experiences in the hotel sector as a story, individuals assign meanings to their experiences. It was considered that narrative analysis would have a beneficial contribution in assisting the researcher in interpreting and understanding layers of meaning in participants' accounts and the connection among these, (Wiles et al., 2005), as well as to identify events or turning points that could have potentially lead to the decision to withdrawal.

Coding process

Coding data involves reducing and disaggregating data by breaking them into manageable segments, smaller meaningful parts, and naming these segments, categorising them. Codes are the most basic segments of information in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Different philosophic and methodological stances typically require different analysis approaches; for example, while in grounded theory research axial and open coding strategies are employed, in thematic coding, the researcher begins with a list of known/anticipated themes, which have also explicitly guided interview protocol design and data collection (Ayres, 2008b).

In this investigation, examination of the collected data took place in three major iterative phases (as depicted in Figure 5.19), using a mix of inductive and deductive approaches. Despite being responsive to the multiple meanings participants assigned to their experiences, hence inductively/data-driven, analysis was also guided: (i) by the existing theory and theoretical concepts presented and discussed throughout literature review in Chapter 2, (ii) the study's conceptual map (section 5.2.2), (iv) the preliminary research (section 5.5), and (v) the researcher's standpoint, professional experience, disciplinary knowledge and epistemology (and

therefore can be considered a ‘theoretical’ thematic analysis) (Ayres, 2008b; Braun & Clarke, 2013).

“At this stage of the analysis, coding categories are more heuristic than analytic; that is, coding categories serve as a receptacle for promising ideas [which later] become coding categories through a rigorous process of analytic induction that includes both within- and across-case comparisons. (...) Coding categories are reconceptualized, renamed, reorganized, merged, or separated as the analysis progresses; categories are seldom static and never inviolate, as they are subject throughout the analysis to the search for alternative interpretations or disconfirming evidence” (L. Ayres, 2008b, p. 867). Themes are broader categories developed after coding, i.e., meaningful groups that incorporate several codes that appear to be interrelated and seem to support an idea that is important to answer the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saunders et al., 2016).

Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed a step-by-step guide for *doing* thematic analysis, presented in Figure 5.20, which roughly correspond to the procedure that was adopted in this investigation.

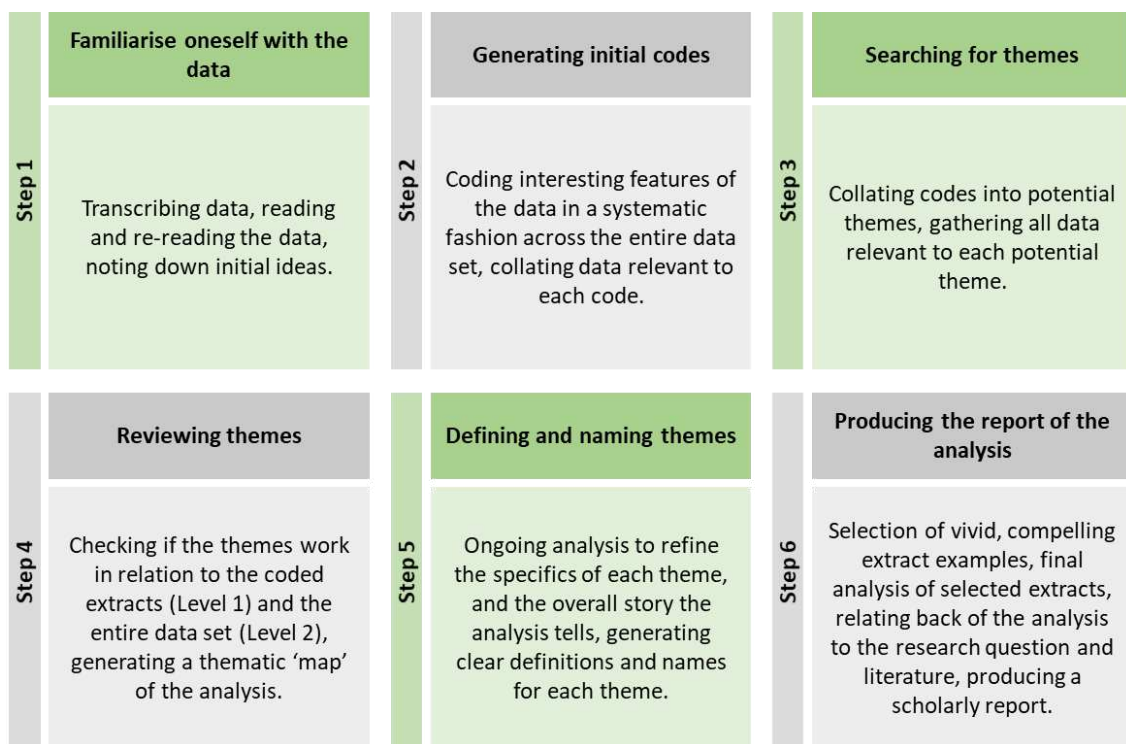


Figure 5.20 | Steps of thematic analysis

Source: Own construction based on Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87)

Despite coding, data management, development and refinement of themes, and identification of patterns across the data, are often described as though they occur sequentially, this is unlikely to be the case. Identification of themes and equation of relationships among categories occur simultaneously. The analysis develops in an integrative way, as the researcher considers the relevance of each theme to the research question and to the data set as whole throughout the

project. In thematic analysis individual stories are kept contextualised, and meaning is maintained through connection to its source account. The trade-off of this contextualisation is that the analysis end-product can only be case-based generalisable, hence less generalisable than decontextualized forms of analysis (such as content analysis, in which coded data segments are analysed without considering the account from which they were drawn) (Ayres, 2008b; Morse, 2008).

As previously described in section 5.6.1, the **first step** took place immediately after the interviews. Despite being quite time-consuming, transcriptions represented an opportunity for the researcher to start familiarizing herself with the data, which was accompanied by memo writing. A preliminary, superficial analysis was carried out while data collection was still undergoing (so the interview questions could also be gradually refined, and data saturation point could be easily determined), allowing for an initial identification of potentially relevant codes. In practice this step was recurrent, as transcripts from Phase I were read to support the development of Phase II, and were re-read multiple times for integration of findings.

As a **second step**, chunks of portions of the data that have interest for the researcher are assigned with a code and separated from their original context. Each chunk is labelled with a descriptive title or a *code*. New chunks of data are compared with previously created codes, so similar segments can be labelled with the same code and then inspected together (Ayres, 2008b; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). As abovementioned, an a-priori analysis framework guided initial coding, to which emergent codes/themes were then integrated.

Once all data is coded (coding was considered to have reached 'saturation' when no new code evolved from the data analysis), this means moving to a **third step**, when these codes are combined based on their similarity and linked with theory. This is when themes develop and can be described based on each grouping. Despite codes being decontextualized from their original source, they are recontextualised into a theme (Ayres, 2008b; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). In this study, this recontextualization is also supported by the introduction of elements of narrative analysis, as searches are also conducted within data items, namely individual interviews, to explore participants' experiences in the context of their personal and professional lives.

As per a **fourth step**, themes were also systematically verified, and word counts of key word families allowed to scan any ideas which were not captured in the initial reviews. Random pieces of text were systematically selected to test the codes for clarity and consistency. Due to the nature of this study, the researcher, as a PhD candidate, conducted the coding independently; however, in order to reconcile potential differences in the interpretation of the data, and ensure higher levels of consistency, the categories were discussed with the advisory team. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis maps grouping and relating potential relevant themes, were created along the process. Following the identification of the major themes (roughly corresponding to a **fifth step**), final overarching themes and sub-themes were described, and specific themes were more closely scrutinised, involving both interpretation and theorisation.

Organisation of findings

While **reporting** the findings, as per Step 6, the analytic process became more deductive again, as more literature review was conducted to support new issues and concepts resulting from data interpretation. Findings discuss the meanings of participants' experiences by addressing *what* they have experienced and *how* they experienced it (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Snape & Spencer, 2003).

When reporting the findings, meanings found from participants' experiences are described following the categories and themes identified; for each, a description and quotes to illustrate these meanings, are presented (Sundler et al., 2019). When considered pertinent, reference was made to the number of interviewees taking a given stance or exhibiting a given viewpoint, mostly to convey notions of consensus or to provide a comparative perspective. In order not to lose validity and ensure richness of interpretation, the challenge lies in linking the different themes to a full, coordinated and explanatory 'picture'. This includes integrating substantive literature to prompt deeper thinking. In qualitative research, a detailed, thick description of contextualised perspectives of the participants is expected. Therefore, "the product of a thematic analysis is more than a list of themes and their descriptions; (...) [it] includes both the important concepts and processes identified in the study and the overarching patterns of experience by which those concepts and processes are manifested" (Ayres, 2008b, p. 868). When quotes, i.e., excerpts of participants' accounts, are used, these are presented to illustrate key points and are referenced with each participant's alias, together with some characteristics that might be considered relevant within a given context or theme (e.g., *Alice, Leaver, Old Millennial; Lucas, Employee, receptionist, 4 years in the hotel sector; or Laura, Leaver, mother of two*). When using CAQDAS, codebooks aggregating themes and corresponding sub-themes and codes are also displayed.

Based on the thematic analysis, an analytical framework was developed that depicted the relationship between the codes and the themes (see Appendix V). Thematic analysis identified 6 overarching themes, which formed the basis for each findings chapter (see Figure 5.23). These themes were further broken into sub-themes and once all of these were identified and confirmed, it was possible to draw a complete picture of highly educated individuals work experiences in the hotel sector, and the extent to which these experiences defined their career development within the T&H industry. Figure 5.21 presents the main themes and sub-themes that are believed to best answer the research questions.

Among the several advantages of using thematic analysis, it is particularly noted that it can be useful to summarise key features of a large body of data while still offering a 'thick description' of the data set, to highlight similarities and differences across the data set, or to generate unanticipated insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

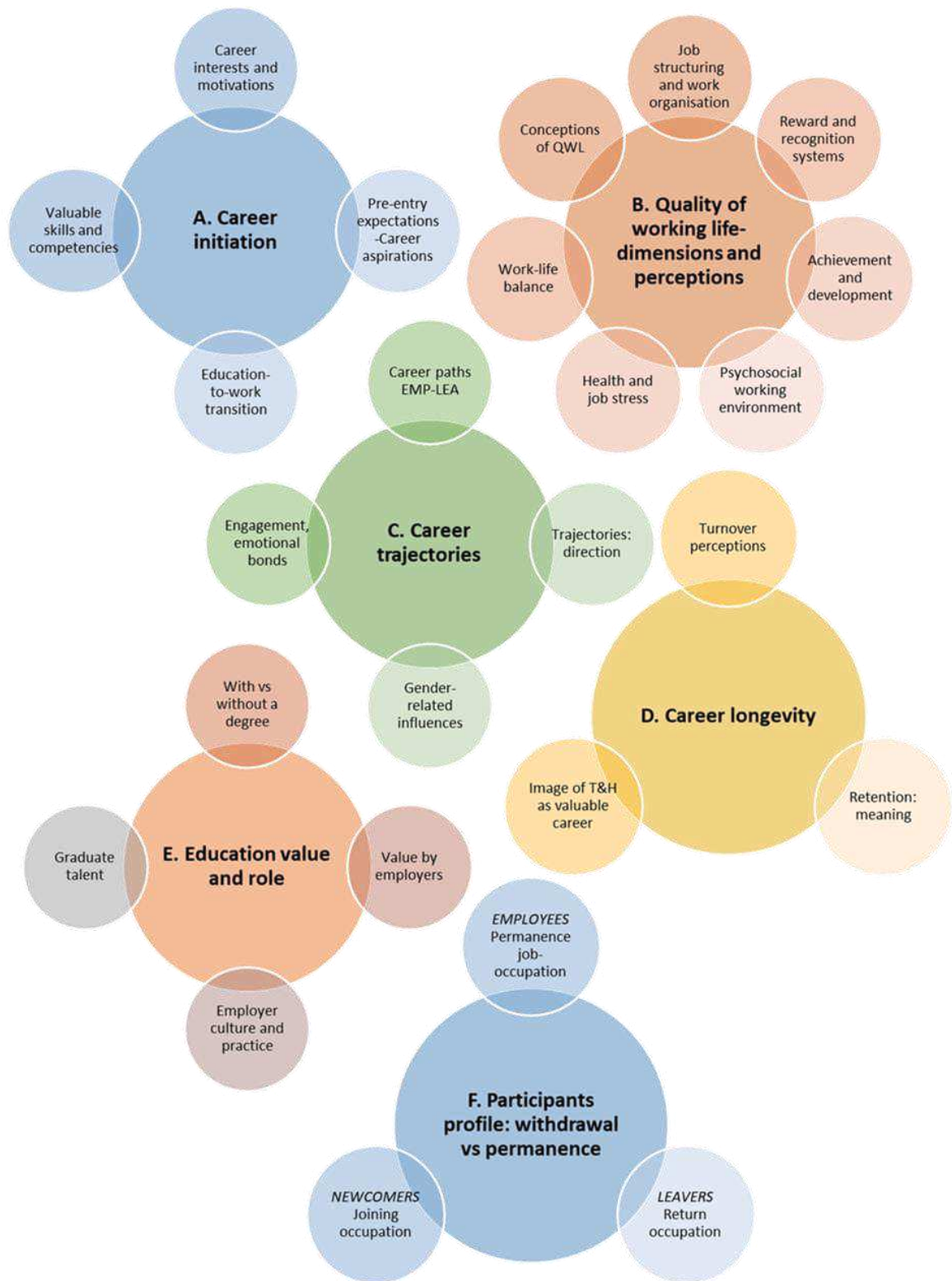


Figure 5.21 | Data codes (as defined in NVivo)

Source: Own construction

5.7 Research integrity concerns/issues

As flexibility and subjectivity typically orient research designs and procedures in qualitative research, research integrity is particularly relevant, meaning that the researcher's reporting of findings can be trusted as representing truthful positions and statements of research participants (Yin, 2011). Participant–researcher relationship, measures of research quality, and form, voice, and representation in analysis and writing are important methodological decisions informed by (but also evidence of) the research epistemological stance (Carter & Little, 2007).

This chapter explores issues orienting rigour and trustworthiness throughout the research process, researcher subjectivity and reflexivity, ethical concerns, and some specific limitations drawing on the methodological choices which have informed this thesis.

Rigour and trustworthiness of the research process

Trustworthiness of qualitative research is a highly debated issue in the methodological literature, as findings are expected to accurately reflect the situation being studied and to be supported by the gathered evidence. There is still little consensus on the most adequate criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research, and the same for most proper terminology, but there is a general agreement that the rigour and validity of qualitative research cannot be determined in the same way as for quantitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lincoln and Guba's (1985) widely cited trustworthiness criteria for qualitative research marked a turning point in defending qualitative inquiry from criticism and comparison with quantitative research, by suggesting not only a different, equivalent terminology, but also a set of techniques for establishing *trustworthiness*, instead of *rigour*. These criteria are, naturally, intertwined (Figure 5.22).

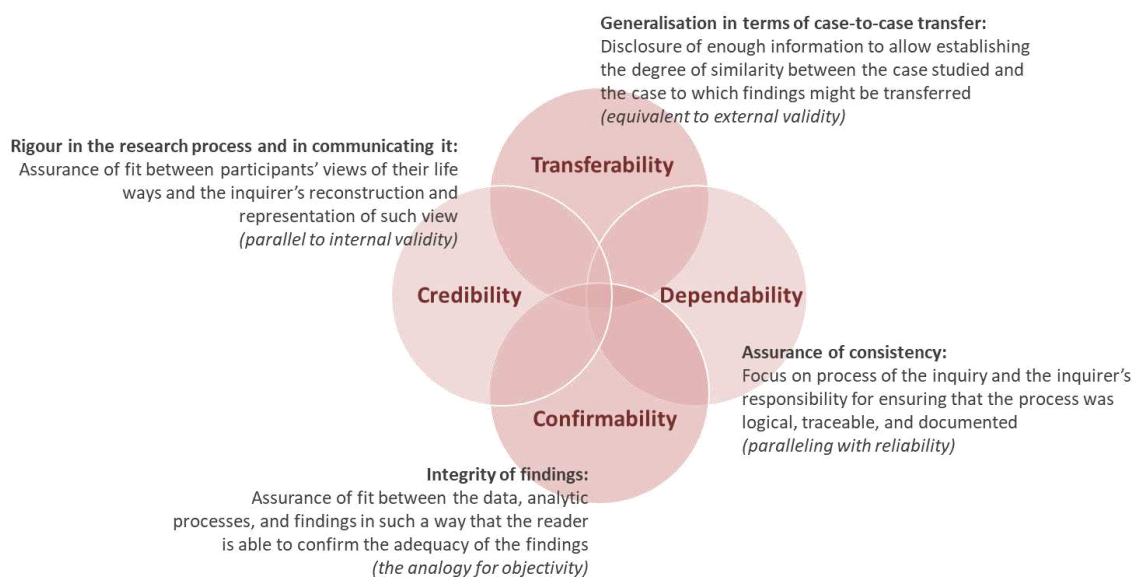


Figure 5.22 | Criteria for evaluating qualitative research

Source: Own construction based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) Patton (2014)

In order to establish **credibility**, which can be questioned due to the subjective and interactive nature of the research process, the researcher tried to ensure that all procedures are thoroughly documented. All the steps for data generation (section 5.5) and analysis (section 5.6) were described in detail. This was considered particularly relevant as this thesis adopts a somewhat novel multi-method QUAL → *qual* design that has not been adopted in many studies before. Seeking to enhance replicability and ensure transparency, a codebook was used along the analysis and reporting of findings, providing details on how codes were refined, and how conceptual themes were built. As described in more detail further below, analytic memos of the coding strategy were also kept.

Triangulation is one of the techniques suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to ensure credibility, but aligned with a constructivist-interpretivist stance. Instead of relying on triangulation for convergence and corroboration, this thesis's research design was aimed at complementarity. The purpose of a QUAL → *qual* design is to obtain different yet complementary data on the same topic to best understand the research problem, as methods complement each other to holistically understand a subject (Morse, 2010a). A complementarity mixed-method study aims at increasing "interpretability, meaningfulness, and validity of constructs and inquiry results by both capitalizing on inherent method strengths and counteracting inherent biases in methods and other sources" (Greene et al., 1989, p. 259).

Some qualitative research studies adopt more than one method to gather a broader spectrum of evidence and perspectives to enhance the credibility of the analysis (Saldaña, 2011). Choosing multiple data collection methods is generally the option when a single method would not lead to a comprehensive understanding of a specific phenomenon, therefore guaranteeing a wider variety of perspectives for analysis and representations through the combinations of methods. This will not only provide additional information but more importantly, additional dimensions to the phenomenon being investigated (Morse & Chung, 2003; Saldaña, 2011), assumption that was, therefore, embraced in this investigation.

Although the researcher had initially considered for member checks (i.e., participants' feedback, which is another credibility technique), transcripts of the interviews were only returned upon request, mostly due to calendar constraints. As a large number of interviews were conducted, yielding an average of eight pages transcription per interviewee, the decision not to request all participants for validation was made. This decision was reinforced by the fact that many participants had clearly mentioned time limitations to participate in academic research projects.

Considering **transferability**, and also given the constructivist-interpretivist nature of the research design, this study does not make claims of generalising findings to a broader population, neither to other contexts, even to the wider hotel sector, or to the wider T&H labour market, and aims instead deep understanding of specific cases within a particular context (Patton, 2014). To gain deeper understanding and knowledge of the phenomenon being studied and of the complex issues associated to human behaviour, both research participants in Phase I and key informants in Phase II were purposely selected, and the sampling approaches and procedures were explained in detail (Creswell, 2012; Marshall, 1996). Another technique to enhance transferability is *thick description*, which the researcher tried to employ throughout the interpretation and report of findings, through detailed experience account and rich descriptions. Thick description "is concerned with describing the data extensively and compiling them in an

orderly way so as to give other researchers the opportunity to appraise the findings and also the extent to which they could be transferred to other settings” because they share some characteristics (DeCrop, 2004, p. 161). Throughout the investigation process, the researcher also sought for other type of external validation, namely through *peer review*. This strategy involved asking colleagues experienced with the various themes involved in this study to discuss and comment the data and the process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Regarding **dependability**, and in order to research design can be replicated as much as possible, outlining a research plan (which in qualitative research tends to flexible and iterative) and documenting all the naturally expected changes. The idea is that other researchers with the same data and the same perspective could reach similar, comparable, but not contradictory results (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The techniques to guarantee dependability are also quite similar to those employed in establishing **confirmability**, which is based on the central tenet that research is never fully objective. In qualitative research, objectivity is bounded by the multiple dimensions and interpretations of the reality, which also makes the management of subjectivity essential (see next section on *reflexivity*) (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Morrow, 2005). Keeping an audit-trail of all research activities and processes is central in ensuring dependability and confirmability, but also important for general trustworthiness of any investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The description of the researcher’s reasoning and decision-making processes and the clear detailing of methods of data collection and analysis are key to enhance the value of qualitative inquiry, as ethical principles and practices are central to all activities comprising data collection analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher has seen these recommendations as a way not only to improve accuracy in her research, but also as means to assisting her in registering all theoretical, methodological, and analytic choices and procedures.

This assumption has oriented the level of detail of Chapter 5 and the systematic and regular documentation of the research process in general, and of the analysis process, in particular. For this reason, a **research log/journal** has been kept since the beginning of the project to document activities, decisions, thoughts and emergent ideas, dead ends, breakthroughs, fieldwork experiences and other important elements that the researcher wanted to remember at a later time. This research journal is also a fundamental tool underpinning researcher’s **reflexivity**, discussed below. This instrument, also called memo writing, was found particularly relevant for ‘producing’ bricolage, and in data analysis and interpretation stages, as it allows to record and track back initial ideas and reflexive thoughts while assembling and disassembling data through coding. Most research methodologists see memo writing as imperative in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2014; Saldaña, 2009; Yin, 2011). By keeping memo writing within NVivo, the process was highly simplified, as the software offers the possibility of adding notes and memos, which can be integrated in the analysis.

Positionality: Considerations on researcher reflexivity

In qualitative inquiry, there is no such thing as value-free inquiry, as the researcher’s values cannot be detached from the research process and should be acknowledged. In constructivist-interpretivist research, both researcher positioning and ongoing reflexivity are of paramount importance for research validity (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Lincoln et al., 2018). Reflexivity, naturally shaped by paradigm commitments, involves self-examination, evaluation and interpretation of own’s attitudes and beliefs, reactions to data and findings, and

interactions with those who take part in the research and acknowledgement of the way these affect both the processes and outcomes of the research (Saunders et al., 2016). The growing relevance of discussing researcher positionality and reflexivity is also a product of postmodernity and of the 'critical turn' that has also shaped tourism studies (Feighery, 2006).

Hence, the ways in which research was conducted and reported in the study was naturally influenced by the researcher's own subjectivity, beliefs, life experiences, personal history and identity as a female, white, Western, middle-class, academic researcher. Self-consciousness and awareness of the multiple contexts in which the researcher operates are central beliefs both in interpretivism-constructivism, as in critical research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003). Who the investigator is (or is becoming) determines to a large extent what and how one researches (Saldaña, 2011).

Qualitative inquiry is highly personal and judgemental, and the researcher him/herself is the primary instrument in data generation and interpretation. All methods employed in qualitative studies require cognitive and emotional involvement, such as inferring, intuiting, empathizing, and evaluating. Therefore, the investigator's background, qualifications, training and experience can also be regarded as criteria to establish credibility (Patton, 2014; Saldaña, 2011). When compared to other forms of research, qualitative approaches can be considered more time and mentally exhaustive (Marshall et al., 2013), and some procedures and processes such as identifying data saturation or in-depth interviewing can be quite challenging. Conducting interviews requires various skills, such as intensive listening and note taking, careful planning and preparation, expertise in the various topics to be screened, and also responsiveness and sensitivity to get the 'best' possible answers (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The researcher has extensive experience as junior investigator in broader-scale research projects, prior to enrolling in a doctoral programme, in which she had been actively involved in processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The researcher is experienced in conducting both individual and group interviews, and in performing thematic analysis assisted by CAQDAS.

In qualitative approaches, an interactive and co-operative **researcher-participant relationship** is central to knowledge production. Research encounters are more than opportunities for data transmission. These are also endowed with a pedagogical capacity, by potentially being instances for exchange, reflection, perspective enlargement, and personal growth, both for the researcher and the participants (Caton, 2014). Qualitative inquiry often has a transformative effect on the researcher him/herself, enhancing consciousness, thoughtfulness and perceptiveness (van Manen, 1990). In interpretivist-constructivist research, it is precisely the researchers' values that endow them with the capacity for empathy, for understanding participants' views of the worlds, for identification with the participants' accounts in some way (Caton, 2014; Ponterotto, 2005). The qualitative researcher is expected to adopt the 'emic' perspective, i.e., the perspective of the people being studied according to their frames of meaning (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

The researcher was, therefore, highly concerned with establishing rapport with the participants, which is fundamental in interviewing (Jennings, 2005), and in demonstrating openness and empathy with the stories being told. Considering the extension of the interviews (some exceeding one and a half hours), as the wide majority participants were extremely expressive and cooperative, willing to share their stories, spontaneously proving many details and

information, and making confidences about their employment relationships, the researcher considers to have been successful in interacting with participants.

Following the notion of reciprocity, the researcher has also engaged in active conversation, answering some questions herself, explaining her interest in this research topic, occasionally providing personal information so the participants could view her as capable of understanding the experiences they were describing (such as the fact, for example, that the researcher was familiar with the hospitality working environment and organisation, that the researcher shared a similar educational background in a renowned institution, or that the researcher was also a working mother). Unveiling power relationships/differentials between individuals and groups is central in critical research, thus allowing both the researcher and the participants to critique commonly-held values and assumptions (Willis, 2007). The researcher tried to use personal insight while taking a non-judgemental stance (Snape & Spencer, 2003), as well as to keep researcher–participant interactions balanced, so that her own voice did not interfere with participants’ voices and accounts.

Regarding the writing style, the researcher faced the doubt of using the first or the third person. Despite recommendations that qualitative studies benefit from being written in the first-person (Creswell, 2014; Saldaña, 2011), the researcher decided for the use of the third person, to which she is more familiar. Nevertheless, she strived to employ a personal, subjective point of view in order to show personal involvement and emphasise her role as a proactive researcher.

Special attention should also be given to language. With regards to thematic analysis, as already mentioned, it is very common to find accounts of themes ‘emerging’ or ‘being discovered’. Despite being data driven and this expression being commonly used in many studies, themes do not ‘emerge’ from the data. Such terminology denies the active role the researcher plays in a qualitative investigation, in identifying patterns/themes, selecting those of interest, and reporting them to readers; instead, themes ‘reside’ or ‘emerge’ in the researcher’s head (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, this is something the researcher tried to take in consideration, by viewing the analysis as an active process of developing themes through interaction with the data.

Ethical concerns

Careful consideration of potential ethical issues constituted an integral part of this investigation. Ethics is most closely related with data construction and reporting than with other steps of the research process, but it should be a primary concern of early research design, as it translates into compromise with research participants, and into the researchers’ integrity and moral responsibility when interpreting the reality (Creswell, 2012; Steane, 2004).

The phenomenon being studied, career experiences and decisions informed by cognitions of quality of work life in the hotel sector, was evaluated and although it was concluded that this was a non-overly sensitive topic that would require extraordinary precautionary measures, it should not be underestimated. This happens because individuals are reflecting on their past and/or present experiences, recalling critical and decisive events that have shaped their career decisions, and to some extent, anticipating their future career paths; this can involve dealing with and sharing sensitive, emotional or difficult memories and experiences, as well as sharing

with a stranger potential feelings of frustration or disillusionment with one's unmet career expectations.

The inquiry strategy adopted in Phase I (briefly described in section 5.5.1, *Conducting the interviews*), to which these concerns are mostly applicable, was aimed at making participants comfortable with the interviewing process and to leave more complex questions to the end. The researcher made an attempt to always go beyond surface responses from interviewees, looking for more detailed accounts, yet without being overly intrusive. Participants were told that they were entitled to withdraw at any time of the research process if they felt uncomfortable or worried with any issue. They were also assured that, during the interviewing process, they were free to tell the researcher that a given question was over-sensitive to them and should not be addressed, to take a break if feeling uncomfortable, or to even interrupt the interview and re-scheduled it to another time. Some participants expressed some sadness and melancholy when recalling some events or interactions, but a break was only deemed necessary for one participant that got more emotional. The researcher was sympathetic and tried to conduct the interviews in a sensitive manner.

Moreover, the researcher took some steps to address some of the anticipated ethical issues. These included providing participants with enough information about the study and its objectives, prior to participation, and to safeguard privacy and anonymity of both participants and their data (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2011). All interviews were given an alphanumeric code in order to identify the interviewee while still safeguarding anonymity to third parties, which was later replaced by an *alias*. All corresponding transcripts were then pseudonymised. The procedure was quite similar for Phase II, regarding key informants. The somewhat specific status and profile of these key informants means that retaining their anonymity can be jeopardised. Due to the number of players within the Portuguese T&H industry it is possible that third parties may recognise a given informant and/or his/her organisation. Participants were duly informed of this, and their explicit agreement was obtained. Although some expert panellists gave their consent to be referred to by their names in the outputs of this study, the researcher chose to keep this information undisclosed.

All participants in Phase I and II gave written consent prior to data collection. Among other issues, participants were specifically informed that interviews were recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis only. Both the consent forms and the procedures to ensure confidentiality for the participants in this study were compliant with the EU Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)⁶¹. Approval of the abovementioned tools was obtained from the Data Protection Officer (DPO) of the University of Aveiro and the GDPR's pivot of the Department of Economics, Management, Industrial Engineering and Tourism (DEGEIT)⁶².

The researcher was the only person with access to the recording and corresponding transcripts, as a way of safeguarding all participants' identities. All elements within the participants' accounts (e.g., hotel/employers' names) that could allow their direct or indirect identification

⁶¹ Regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, which would be later formally implemented by National Law 58/2019 of 8 August 2019.

⁶² Department to which the main investigator is affiliated.

by third parties were replaced by contextual information that would not hamper comprehension; for example, *Grand Hotel* would be replaced by *4* independent hotel, 74 rooms*. For this reason, full transcripts of the interviews were not enclosed in an appendix. Instead, a personal interpretation of the information collected is presented, complemented by short excerpts of the interviews, in the study findings.

Phase I in-depth interviews took place in several settings, according to the participants' availability, preference and geographical location, yet ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for both the researcher and the participants: at the researcher's office, in public spaces (such as coffee shops or libraries), at the interviewees' workplace (when they had access to a private room) or from the interviewees' homes (when by video call). Key informant interviews in Phase II took place in the key informants' work office, in a private meeting room or in semi-private places (e.g., hotel lobby bar), according to the interviewee's preference, convenience and geographical location. At each meeting, only the participant/informant and the researcher were present.

Confidentiality issues were also taken into consideration in instances when participants confided in the researcher specific events, perceptions or information which they wanted to share just to ensure a better understanding of their experiences or as justification for their decisions, yet to remain undisclosed. Despite knowing that the interview was being audio recorded, most participants still did share these thoughts during the conversation, while some preferred to comment only after the researcher confirmed that the recording was stopped. In either case, all confidences remained private and were not transcribed, although the researcher took them in consideration when contextualising and interpreting the data.

Limitations

As the ontological view of interpretivism tends to be subjective, research outcomes are affected by the researchers' own interpretations, belief systems or ways of the thinking. One of the frequent criticisms to qualitative research is that it is contextual, idiosyncratic and often experiences difficulties in capturing the whole of behaviour (Davies, 2003). However, recognising that "researchers bring their subjectivity (their views, perspectives, frameworks for making sense of the world; their politics, their passions) into the research process, [should be] seen as a strength rather than a weakness" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 24). The researcher interprets the patterns and meanings of the data in collaboration with the participants and creates an agenda for change or reform (Creswell, 2014). This is why, over the time, a stronger orientation toward the impact of qualitative research and its ability to transform the world has been thriving (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The challenge is, therefore, in engaging in social research that is reflexive, critically oriented, while still respectful of participants and their lived experiences at the same time.

Concerning the strategy of inquiry, the researcher acknowledges that the definition of the groups of participants to be interviewed is somewhat unconventional. The choice for these three groups was based on their positionality in what the researcher called the 'labour market continuum' according to the nature of their relationship with the hospitality sector, i.e., either these individuals were taking their first jobs in the sector after graduation (thus at the baseline of their careers in T&H), or if they were employed in a hotel at the present time, or if they have

voluntarily left the hotel sector (hence, withdrawing from their careers in T&H). Ideally, the researcher would prefer to interview the same subjects over time (Creswell & Poth, 2018), in three different moments of their careers – while being students, while working in the hospitality sector, and after deciding to leave – but too many constraints were likely to arise. Namely, the great difficulty in finding participants who would be willing to be interviewed three times (adding the risk of losing them over time), and the impossibility of predicting who would remain or who would leave the hospitality sector, without mentioning the extensive number of years that would be required and costs to be incurred to conduct such a research project (Ladkin, 1999). Longitudinal studies are often developed within the scope of broader, institutionally funded, commissioned projects (e.g., O’Leary & Deegan, 2005).

Referring to ‘life history work’, a technique that has been considered relevant for the study of labour turnover and mobility, Ladkin (2004) also advocates that this type of techniques has the potential to fill some of the gaps around longitudinal perspectives. Instead of being based on a snapshot approach that addresses a single moment in time, such approaches can cover wider temporal frames based on memory. A similar assumption has oriented the researcher’s choice for these three groups of participants, as this thesis is fundamentally based on participants’ accounts and recollections of their present and past experiences while working in the hotel sector. Nevertheless, other limitations regarding such techniques may also be noted, which are also applicable in this thesis. One has to do with the fallibility of human memory and the issue of selective recall, which may raise concerns regarding the reliability of the data, as participants accounts may be biased towards certain events or experiences that have been of importance to them for reasons that may not be relevant for the purpose of the study, and leaving aside others that would (Ladkin, 1999). Other concern, highly dependent on how long participants’ careers are or on how many career moves they may have taken, is related with error of recall, as people may not be likely to clearly remember all experiences over time (Ladkin, 1999).

Moreover, still regarding participants’ selection, some respondents were recruited from the researcher’s personal and/or professional networks, mostly due to the difficulty in findings eligible participants. Although it is acknowledged that this is not the most adequate option, due to the risk of social desirability bias (i.e., the tendency to respond in a way that is socially approved by the interviewer, or to conceal/fake certain perceptions and feelings to avoid criticism (King & Bruner, 2000)), the researcher felt that, by knowing her, participants were actually more keen to share their experiences and confided in her instances that have highly impacted their career pathways.

Regarding data generation in Phase I, it should be noted that some interviews had to be conducted by web conferencing. The researcher privileged face-to-face meetings, but considering that participants from all over the country, all regions represented, were interviewed, it was not feasible to engage in physical travel. Some authors consider online interviews as different types of interview method, with particular strengths and weaknesses (Braun & Clarke, 2013), but after careful consideration and discussion, online interviews were considered acceptable substitutes of the ‘traditional’ method. The decision to finally draw the line where data reaches saturation is not also consensually straightforward. By highly diversifying the participants’ profile, the researcher tried to maximise the representativeness

within each group of participants; however, this could also mean that some cases were too specific to yield convergency in cross-case comparisons.

In Phase II, the biggest challenge was, as in any study involving expert opinion, to account for the influence that the background, experiences and biases of each informant exerts over the information they are providing (Clayton, 1997). Moreover, depending on the specific field of expertise of each informant, it is possible that some may lack knowledge or experience to comment on all topics included in the discussion.

This chapter has presented the rationale for the adoption of a constructivist-interpretivist stance with a critical orientation, underpinning a qualitative, two phase multi-method design, and introduced the strategies and methods for data generation and analysis. The three chapters reporting the findings of such research process (Figure 5.23), interweaved with relevant literature that the identified themes have required, are presented thereafter, in Part IV.



Figure 5.23 | Structure of findings

Source: Own construction

Part IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS



6. Career interests and choice: entering to a T&H career

6.1 Introduction

The provision of T&H dedicated Higher Education has grown significantly in recent years, both fuelling and being fuelled by a growing interest of young students in this professional area. Increased participation rates in Higher Education endow people with different expectations regarding their careers and future achievements and will consequently shape work-related attitudes and behaviours.

As described in section 5.5.1, data generation in Phase I provided in-depth accounts of 56 participants with dedicated T&H high-level qualifications on their career experiences and decisions. In this chapter, the processes of career decision-making and antecedents of career decisions of these graduates (*Employees (EMP)* and *Leavers (LEA)*) and undergraduates (*Newcomers (NEW)*) are examined.

Although research focusing on T&H as career choice has gained attention, as described in section 2.3, little is still known about the circumstances in which graduates' career decisions are formed, and how these pre-entry decisions, expectations and experiences come to shape their career development in the T&H industry. This chapter is, therefore, specifically oriented to answer Research Question no. 1 – *What moves individuals towards a degree and a career in T&H?*

The first and second parts of this chapter (sections 6.2 and 6.3) are devoted to the identification and analysis of the motivations underlying educational and career choice, expectations, and career aspirations of these highly educated individuals. The third part (section 6.4) addresses interviewees' perceptions of preparedness for a working life in the T&H industry, the importance of on-the-job experience as an essential part of the curriculum in affecting students' preparedness, and the fundamental skill set for graduates' employability and successful career in the industry. The major theories of career development, choice, and adjustment explored in section 2.2, together with Vroom's Expectancy theory, were particularly useful frameworks for a better understanding of how career interests develop and of the processes and circumstances by which career and educational choices are made.

6.2 Preference and motivation to pursue a T&H career

Seeing that nowadays, qualification is seen as a factor of individual well-being and social, economic, and cultural development, most participants assumed the enrolment in Higher Education studies as a natural path that precedes entry in the labour market. Despite holding a higher education degree is not a mandatory prerequisite for entry in the T&H field (notwithstanding its value within recruitment and promotion processes, which will be addressed later in section 8.5), T&H has become a popular choice amongst the youth. This growing interest of students for T&H dedicated qualifications over the last years is also indicative that the pool of qualified workers is increasing.

Career choice and decision-making is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that includes a variety of individual, developmental, social, and environmental variables. As postulated by career choice theories such as the Expectancy theory – which is not only about motivation, but also about occupational and organisational choice, explaining the process underlying individuals’ choices (see section 4.3) –, occupations vary in their attractiveness to different people. Different individuals approach the career decision-making process in different ways.

All three groups of research participants were asked to describe how their career interest and preference developed and how these came to shape the underlying process of choosing a university T&H-related degree and, consequently, a career in the industry. The analysis of the interviews identified three groups of motivations for enrolling in a university T&H-related degree and choosing a career in the T&H industry. As illustrated in Figure 6.1 and described as follows, research participants’ accounts divide, almost at a fifty-fifty relation, into those who perceived T&H as a high-employability sector and those who conceived a more idyllic and glamorous image of this occupation.

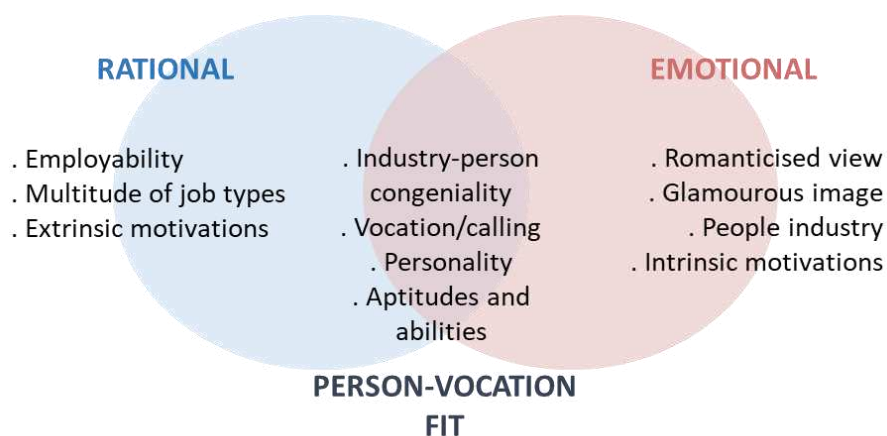


Figure 6.1 | Motivations underlying educational and career choices

Source: Own construction

Although these two spheres largely meet Ryan and Deci’s conceptualisation of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as presented in section 2.3.2, these individuals’ perceptions of the reasons

why they chose a career in the area should not necessarily be viewed as dichotomous. A third dimension has also emerged, as a result of interviewees' accounts which place more emphasis on individual's characteristics or agency and to what extent these individuals believe that T&H industry can offer a work environment in which they can be happy in their jobs and careers. As hypothesised by Person-Environment fit theories, such as Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice and Adjustment or Dawis and Lofquist's Theory of Work Adjustment (see section 2.2), personal attributes and interests are also important aspects in relation to job choice.

6.2.1 The *why*: development of career interest

Rational versus emotional thinking

About half ($n=27$) of the research participants' discourse on the reasons and circumstances which made them decide for a career in T&H largely address **intrinsic rewards and emotional elements**. This idea was reinforced by *Key-Informants (KEY)* involved in this research, who seem to agree that most undergraduates and new entrants are mainly driven by what can be labelled of a 'romanticised' vision of the industry. Interacting with people, which includes meeting new people (especially from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds), enjoying being service/customer-oriented (serving and helping people, contributing to guests' happiness and well-being) and not having an office-job (namely not having a routine, monotonous job), is the most relevant reason underlying interviewees interest in a T&H career. According to Riley (2000), working with people is synonym of variety and unpredictability, as an opposite pole to the rigidity that a factory, for example, would impose.

The opportunity to travel, to work in a foreign country, or to improve language skills – reasons commonly found in T&H literature (as seen in section 2.3) – were also mentioned but to a lesser extent. Similarly to the findings of Blomme, Van Rheede and Tromp (2009), the perception that hospitality is associated with an international career strongly shaped some participants' perceptions when enrolling in a T&H-related degree. This was, for example, Vera's (*EMP, 26 years old*⁶³) first impression: hospitality is the most international work of all, and she would belong to a global community. The desire for travel as a career attribute was not found in this research as so significant as in previous studies (e.g., Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, & Callan, 2016) (only five mentions). This can be attributed to the fact that nowadays, young people already benefit of countless opportunities to travel independently. As previously referred in section 4.3.3, *Expectations and experiences in T&H*, Generation Y (Millennials, who constitute 75% of the research participants in this study) are also found to highly value non-work time and do not want work to dominate their lives (Davidson et al., 2010; Wong & Ko, 2009) (see also Appendix VI for a brief overview on *Generational traits and views of work*). This may suggest that for many interviewees the desire to travel as part of work may not be very relevant, if this is already an important part of their non-work lives.

⁶³ Excerpts of participants' accounts are identified with each participant's alias, 'type' of participant (according with the titles assigned to each group of interviewees as presented in Figures 5.15 (e.g., Employee) and 5.20 (e.g., HR Expert) in Chapter 5) and other characteristics that might be considered relevant to that given context or theme.

Some participants also got interested by the scope and diversity of subjects contained in most T&H curricula, such as History, History of Art, or Geography, which are typically evocative of a globalized culture. Barbara (EMP), who experienced working abroad at the beginning of her career journey, voiced a combination of some of these motivations:

I believe I was attracted to this area by the fact that I love travelling. I like to discover new cities, new worlds. I deceitfully thought: "I love this area, I love travelling, I think I should graduate in Tourism so that I get the chance to work with people who are in harmony, they are happy" and this is quite true when you deal with tourists, we know we are dealing with people who are in a good mood and happy because they are travelling and on holidays. I get to know something new; I can connect to different people and different cultures.

For Alexandra (NEW, North of Portugal), Barbara (EMP, North of Portugal), Marisa (EMP, Central Portugal) and Cecilia (LEA, Central Portugal), graduating in T&H was perceived as a first, important step to obtain know-how and other relevant resources to pursue the dream of running a small accommodation business (for Marisa and Cecilia in particular, this idea consisted of renovating a family rural house). This connection to the interviewees' regions of origin was also emphasised by Xavier (EMP, General Manager), to whom working in hospitality was strongly associated with attachment to a given place and represented an opportunity for contributing to the region development as a tourist destination:

I've had many proposals to work abroad as well as other places within Portugal, but it was always my decision not to leave my Alentejo. I always believed I could make a career in this area, not having to leave the place where I live and where I am from. Up to now, this has been possible. The main reason is that I want to contribute to the Tourism development and growth of this region. I always believed that this region, sooner or later, would become an important tourist destination.

One of the reasons that has not been commonly found in existing literature, but was mentioned by four interviewees, is the curiosity and fascination for the hospitality 'world'. These participants, very likely influenced by their perceptions as guests themselves, expressed interest in knowing how hotels work, in understanding how service is organised, or in seeing the backstage of such glamorous businesses, as the next quotes reveal:

I always liked to visit hotels and get to know how they are managed. To me, this was some sort of enigma. I think it is very interesting and way more complex than what people might think, I truly believe it is fascinating. (Alexandra, NEW)

I always felt curious about how hotels worked and how the whole service was managed, and also the way that customer service was managed in such places. (Edgar, NEW)

The other half ($n=26$) of research participants choosing a T&H career are found to be driven by **perceived job opportunities and the propensity to obtain a job**. References are made to Tourism as the most important economic sector in the future, in which a job and other extrinsic rewards (such as fast career progression) are guaranteed. The sector is described as employing many people, having great public visibility, and being mentioned in the media almost every day: either by the infrastructures that are being created, or by the number of hotel openings, or by

the growing number of tourists. In Lu and Adler's study with T&H students in China, the top reasons (for 50% of respondents) for pursuing a career in T&H were also the opportunities for employment and career development. For six research participants, coming from or studying in high tourism-oriented regions, such as the Algarve, Madeira or the Douro region, T&H became the most natural career choice. For the interviewees, all these factors are associated with a high job creation potential and many different jobs to choose from, hence increasing the chances of finding a job that fits each person. For some, this could mean either working for others or self-employment opportunities:

I always believed I would have many opportunities in this area, regardless of whether I would be working on my own or for somebody else. (Clarice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

As presented in section 2.2, career choice and development are largely conditioned to the structural opportunities of an industry, although it is individual agency which makes one person's career different from others (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). Several participants also mention that this idea of wealth and variety of jobs is strongly conveyed not only by mainstream media, as also through social media:

I think that the Media has contributed a lot. According to the news, Portugal is now a worldwide touristic spot, there are now even more tourists on the Portuguese streets. On social media, we get to see many posts marketing news hotels and many job opportunities, and this attracts people. There are also many types of jobs within the tourism industry: from hospitality to tourism entertainment or tourist guides, the prospects of finding a job after finishing my course were very attractive. (Marisa, EMP, Central Portugal)

Participants' perceptions, however, appear to have developed without a deeper analytic process. Only one interviewee, Eva (EMP, 21 years old), mentioned having sought information about employability rates from different Higher Education Institutions (HEI) offering T&H-related degrees. The research participants' notion of employability is found not to meet their career goals (section 6.3), as it did not take into consideration the organisational levels in which most of these job opportunities are offered; this is something that they only became aware after starting their degrees and/or contacting with the labour market. Although this may suggest that these interviewees exhibit high career concern, by displaying attitudes of planfulness and optimism (Savickas, 2013), they may also be lacking career curiosity (see section 2.2, *Career Construction Theory*) and hence be developing unrealistic views of work in the industry (awareness of T&H job characteristics and potential career paths are further explored in section 6.3.2).

Most of the reasons for pursuing a T&H career that were identified across research participants' accounts largely meet those mentioned by other authors (e.g., Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Lu & Adler, 2009; Riley et al., 2002).

Vocation and personal interests

Perceiving hospitality work as a calling and an opportunity to make meaningful contributions to guests/customers or to the image of the country as a tourist destination, was also an important

driver into this educational and occupational domain for nine research participants, as the following quotes illustrate:

There are people who were born to do certain things, such as a doctor or a fireman; I cannot tell whether I was born to do something else, the only thing I know is that there [in the hotel sector], I felt very comfortable, almost like a fish in the sea. (Clara, LEA)

I like helping others and Hospitality allows me to do so. I know there are other jobs such as being a doctor or a fireman where I could help others; however, it was thanks to Hospitality that I was able to discover my passion. (Rafael, NEW)

For Miguel (EMP, Receptionist), more than just a job, T&H is synonym of 'hospitality', a trait that characterises Portuguese people, and it goes beyond professional duties. For this reason, having the opportunity to show the country's attractions to other people strongly moved him towards a career in T&H. 'Passion for hospitality work' was a quite common expression used in interviewees' discourse. As referred in section 3.4, allowing employees to perform meaningful jobs, which they believe to answer to their sense of calling, is an important form of recognition of their value. These arguments especially play an *intrinsic* motivational role, as postulated by Self-Determination Theory (that is, doing something because it is inherently satisfying) (section 2.2). This suggests that intrinsically motivated individuals are more likely to exhibit a natural inclination toward assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration, through which career satisfaction and fulfilment is more likely to be achieved (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). In contrast with Mooney and Jameson's (2018) study, in which some participants expressed doubts about their suitability for a hospitality career, this is not the case here in this study, as even indecisive interviewees ended up pursuing a T&H degree for believing that there was a good fit between this occupational field and their personality and abilities, hence showing good levels of career confidence.

The difference between performing service-work and servitude or servility is quite clear in these interviewees' mind. In their opinion, hospitality work does not carry such stigma, as their accounts reveal. Most of the research participants, do recognise that this is not the image that society in general has of T&H jobs (an issue that is further explored in section 8.4).

To me, the most noble job is the one where we can serve others and when we work in Hospitality it is amazing to see that we can actually leave a smile on our client's face. (Rafael, NEW)

People who feel ashamed of serving others cannot work in Tourism and when we realize this, we must act promptly so that we can avoid a negative impact in the magic of the service. This is something we cannot explain in a context such as a job interview, but we can try passing the message that serving others is a mission. (Victor, EMP, General Manager)

This set of motivations are also described by some research participants, as well as perceived by the researcher, as being linked to their personality traits/types, aptitudes, and abilities (meeting the concept of talent as characteristics of people (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013), as presented in section 2.4.2). According to Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice and Adjustment (section 2.2), individuals can be described in terms of their resemblance to one or more personality types. In line with the abovementioned participants' high interest in a career that allows them

to interact with people and helping people, it was not surprising that personality characteristics such as being sociable, communicative, friendly, empathic or a people-person were mentioned by 16 interviewees, as the following quotes exemplify:

I think this has a lot to do with the way I am; I am a people-person, and this is an industry made by people, for other people. I don't see myself working in other industries where you are supposed to work on your own. I love being part of a team. (Octavio, EMP)

I feel very comfortable when it comes to dealing with people; I am friendly and easy to reach whenever someone tries to talk to me. For this reason, I cannot imagine myself doing anything else apart from working in the Tourism Industry. (Daniel, EMP)

I always thought I related to this area, it was compatible with the way I am; nowadays I still think the same way. (Clarice, LEA)

Considering Holland's RIASEC Personality and Environment Types, such individuals fit in the 'Social' type (see Figure 6.2). Social types have a strong preference for activities that involve interacting with and helping people. Therefore, these individuals are often described as cooperative, helpful, empathic, kind, tactful, warm, sociable, and generous (Nauta, 2013). Most participants believe their personality is congenial to working in the T&H industry. Seven research participants also considered to have specific abilities to match T&H job requirements, such as problem-solving skills or having a knack for/being fluent in several languages.

For Olivia (LEA, *ex-Assistant Manager*) and Octavio (EMP, *General Manager*), the choice for a T&H career was perceived as a natural outcome of their family life experiences and lifestyle, as their parents had jobs that involved frequent travel and living in other countries.

6.2.2 The *how*: making educational and career choices

Control over and confidence in one's vocational choice

For most research participants, this career choice was made as young adults, after successfully completed Secondary Education, meeting the *exploration* phase in Career Development Theory (described in section 2.2), which Super (Super, 1957; Super et al., 1996) places between the age of 15 and 24, at the development stage of adolescence. It is during adolescence that the construction of the identity of the self occurs. It is in this transition stage that young adults are faced with a series of choices that set the stage for their future career directions. It is therefore not surprising that many participants refer being quite indecisive of their choice at that moment, as the quotes in Table 6.1 show. Many interviewees were quite indecisive (more than the double of those being certain) and for some of them, T&H was the most convenient, *available* option. This may be indicative of a lack of career control, often called career indecision, as conceptualised by Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2013) (see section 2.2).

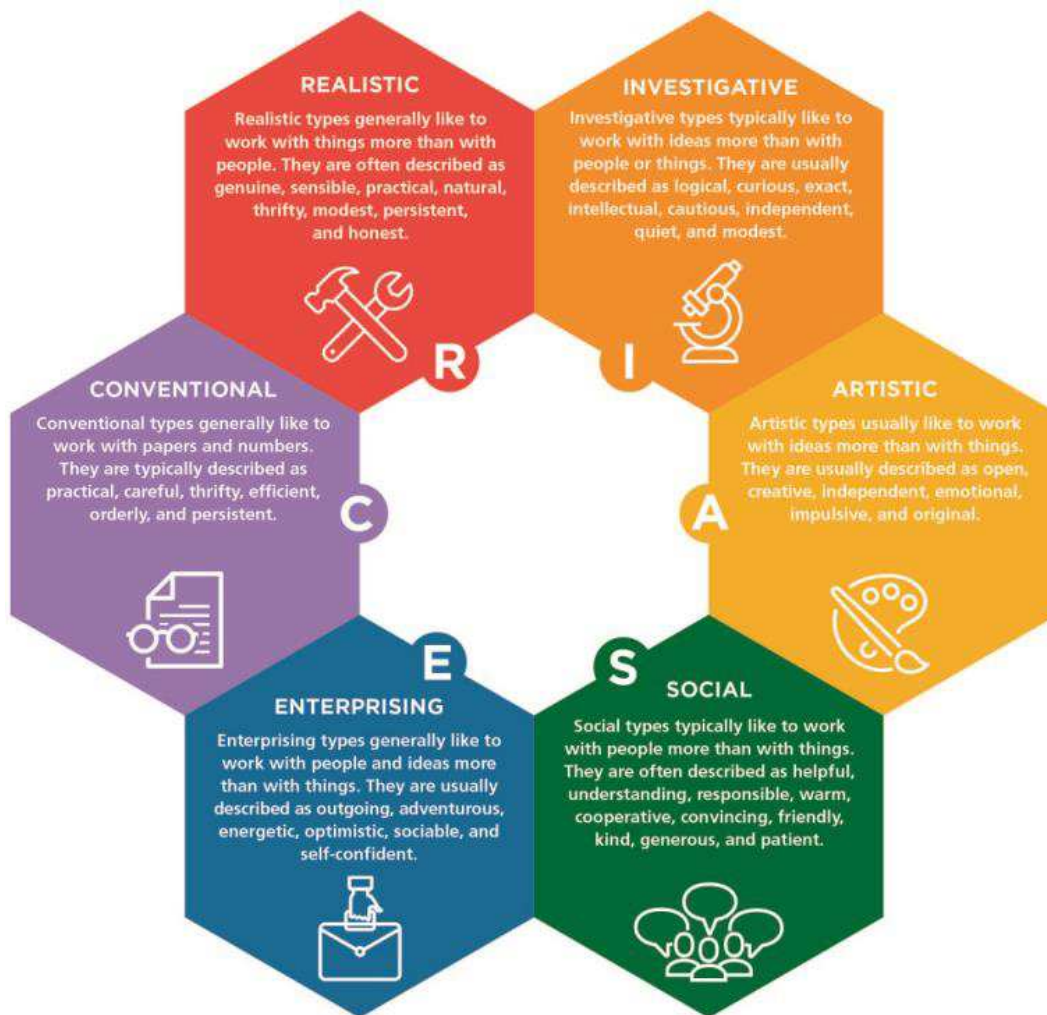


Figure 6.2 | Characteristics of Holland's RIASEC Personality and Environment Types

Source: Holland (1997)

For several reasons, individual's actual choice of an occupation may be different from one's preferences (Mitchell & Beach, 1976). Other studies have also found that, quite frequently, T&H degrees are not students' first choice (e.g., Lu & Adler, 2009). Some research participants ($n=7$) were frustrated in their intentions to enrol in their preferred fields for not having the minimum required final grades and had to think of an alternative option in a short period of time. Others, such as Clara (*LEA*) and Marisa (*EMP*), both Older Millennials, built their career plans in order to become teachers, but were confronted with potential negative scenarios, such as the rise of unemployment rates for this occupational group, mostly conveyed by the mainstream media, and saw in T&H a potential plan B (considering that T&H has proven to be one of the most resilient industries, by steadily growing despite economic downturns).

This suggests that these graduates were not significantly committed to a hospitality career. Participants may have not been forming clear, either short or long-term, career goals, hence lacking plans or strategies of how to achieve their aspirations (as approached in section 2.3.2). This also evidences the strong influence that the – increasingly volatile and unpredictable – macro-economic environment has on career decisions. At the present time, one question

floating round the upcoming years is precisely the extent to which the Covid-19 pandemic will have on current students' choices, as Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the outbreak.

Table 6.1 | Confidence and conviction when choosing a T&H university degree

Highly confident...	Wavering between options...	
<p><i>When I decided to go to university, I was already pretty sure that I would choose Tourism. (Lucas, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>I've been thinking that hospitality could be an option. Until today, I still have no clue where that idea came from. (Rita, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>It just happened to get into hospitality. I was looking for some solutions, so I didn't have a very clearly defined idea. (Maria, EMP)</i></p>
<p><i>When the time came, I had no doubt what I wanted to do (...) I always answered: 'I have no second option, this is the first option and there is no other option'. (Celeste, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>When I decided to choose Tourism, I had to fill myself with courage as I had graduated in Science and, for many years, I thought I would be a Marine Biologist. (Eva, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>I 'bumped' into Tourism by chance. Right up until the end of High School, I always thought I would be a teacher. This was a decision kind of like 'this sounds good so let's give it a try'. (Marisa, EMP)</i></p>
<p><i>I didn't consider any other area, this was my first option. (Octavio, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>I was leaning to another area but as my final grades were not high enough, I ended going for my second option. (Aurora, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>I wish I had followed Fashion Design. Tourism was really a last-minute decision. (Carla, NEW)</i></p>
<p><i>Still in High School I knew Tourism would be my first option. (Daniel, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>To be honest, it doesn't make much sense that I'm in this field. In High School I studied Art. (Vera, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>At the time, I chose that degree because I wasn't very sure about what I wanted. (Alice, LEA)</i></p>
<p><i>This was the professional field I wanted. (Amanda, LEA)</i></p>	<p><i>At the time I was a little indecisive about what I was going to choose. And I confess that this was not my first choice, it turned out to be due to circumstances. (Cecilia, LEA)</i></p>	<p><i>Of all the programmes I was looking into, Tourism caught my attention; at the time I thought: 'let's do this'. Supposedly it was an industry with good prospects. (Michael, EMP)</i></p>
<p><i>It has always been a fascinating sector for me. (Joel, LEA)</i></p>		
<p><i>I imagined myself working in hospitality, precisely because I love it and will always love it. (Clarice, LEA)</i></p>		
<p><i>I knew I would love to do something related to hospitality. (Emilia, NEW)</i></p>		
<p><i>In High School, I had already clearly defined what I wanted to graduate in. (Oscar, NEW)</i></p>		

Source: Own construction

On a more positive note, some interviewees enthusiastically referred not to have considered any other second option apart from T&H and revealed having more well-defined expectations and goals for their future professional lives (Table 6.1). Overall, 19 participants referred being quite certain of their choice for T&H studies. Some ($n=5$) even emphasised that their career choice was made some time before university, when enrolling in T&H dedicated Secondary

Professional Education⁶⁴, therefore evidencing their certainty when pursuing their higher education studies in the same area. Curiously, Octavio (*EMP, General Manager, 21 years in the Hotel industry*), Claudia (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*) and Edgar (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*), referred that despite their willing in pursuing a T&H university degree, they chose a broader-scoped field for their Secondary-level studies, such as Socioeconomic Sciences. This choice seems to be aligned with their aspirations for an administrative/ management position (which Octavio, for example, came to occupy), thus been interpreted as a strategy aimed at reinforcing their management skills (more than technical skills). For Claudia, this was also to safeguard her options in case she would change her mind and get interested in other careers in the meanwhile, considering how young she was at the time of such choice. Such accounts evidence not only career control over the participants' vocational future, but also a career-planning orientation that the researcher considers to be lacking in most participants' discourses on their career interests and decisions. In fact, previous research suggests that career planning is an important factor in career development and advancement.

It was also perceived that T&H was an **attractive alternative** for undergraduates who are unhappy with their university studies. This involves some risk-taking and if aligned with idealistic expectations may result in disillusionment (Mooney & Jameson, 2018). A significant number of research participants (Alexandra and Mario, *NEW*; Samuel, Victor, Manuel and Vera, *EMPs*; Martin, *LEA*) have started degrees in unrelated fields – such as Engineering, Computing or Graphic Design – and drop out on behalf of T&H-related studies, for considering that they had no sense of affinity with those fields of study. Manuel (*EMP, General Manager, seven years in the Hotel industry*) explained how such change came about:

My father was an Engineer and so I followed his footsteps and graduated in Electrical Engineering and Computing. However, I always felt that hospitality defined me; I am a very sociable and communicative person and for that reason I decided to join [a students'] association, where I started organising all sorts of events. [I think] this was the place where I discovered my passion for Hotel Management.

This suggests that displaying curiosity in exploring possible selves and future scenarios, can contribute to increased career adaptability (Savickas, 2013). However, only one participant (George, *NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*) mentioned to have looked for occupational information (i.e., talking to someone employed in the field of interest), by talking to the grandparents of a friend who own an independent hotel.

Similar findings are also presented by Mooney and Jameson (2018), whose study's participants have enrolled in a different degree before deciding for T&H instead; for some of them, the change happened after they contacted with hospitality work and enjoying the experience. A significant number of research participants in this thesis have gone through a comparable process, as they explained to have taken some part-time, casual and/or summer jobs – from restaurants ($n=13$) to tourist recreational activities, local accommodation services (for example, check-in guests in guest houses and B&Bs) and transfer services –, and these experiences ended

⁶⁴ In Portugal, Professional Studies are one of the branches of Secondary Education which favour a more practical approach, organised by training modules, and highly centred in a technical component which includes compulsory workplace training. *Tourism and Leisure* and *Hotels and Restaurants* are two of the 39 available educational fields (ANQEP, 2019).

up arousing their interest for hospitality and inspiring their career choice. This is also indicative that being aware of T&H job characteristics prior to educational choice, can positively contribute to more informed decisions, as well as to the definition of more clear career goals.

Considering the moment of career choice within the research participants' lifespan, Miguel (38 years old, two years in the Hotel industry) was an interesting exception. Miguel enrolled in T&H university studies after deciding to give up on a 15-year career in a completely unrelated field (as company owner), to pursue the *dream* of working in a hospitality-related innovative business. This means that, as also envisioned by Career Development Theory (section 2.2), Miguel had to go through the stages of *exploration* and *establishment* all over again; according to him, his previous business provided him with a safe and comfortable position that allowed to make such transition at his current life stage (late 30s, married, father of one young child).

Vocational guidance/educational counselling was barely mentioned, with very few references made to being engaged in educational/career counselling activities. Amanda (LEA, ex-Assistant Manager, 16 years in the Hotel industry) recalls that she was first introduced to this career option by the counselling service at her school:

I remember visiting the Psychology Office and I was told, after the tests, that I could do anything, especially languages and dealing with people. At the time, I thought they would suggest a degree on Translation or something, until a teacher gave me a booklet, and suddenly I was in love. 'This is what I want'.

This aptitude for foreign languages also determined Olivia's (LEA, ex-Assistant Manager, seven years in the Hotel industry) test results – as she speaks five languages –, which pointed T&H as a proper fit. For Laura (LEA, ex-Assistant F&B Manager, 10 years in the Hotel industry), being a 'people person' and predisposed for retail sales and customer service, weighted her test scores towards the T&H sector. In Amelia's (EMP, Receptionist, three years in the Hotel industry) opinion, who also used counselling services, these standard tests cannot fully capture aptitude and vocation and result in insufficient, relevant counselling. Career counselling services have gained wide acceptance in Portugal over the last decades but, mostly due to economic and financial restrictions, the number of counselling professionals falls short in responding to the demands. By granting schools more autonomy, current public policies on educational and career guidance leave this matter subject to the vision and orientation of each school, which means that a significant number of students do not receive relevant support regarding education-to-work transition and career development (Duarte, Paixão, & Lima, 2007; Taveira, 2017).

Some research participants have also highlighted parental influence on career interests and/or advice – both positively and negatively directed – on their career decisions. Having parents working in the industry resulted in a clear leaning towards a career in the sector, which can be interpreted as a form of career modelling (Turner, Alliman-Brissett, Lapan, Udipi, & Ergun, 2003). For Daniel (EMP, Hotel Subdirector, 15 years in the Hotel industry), for example, this family connection goes beyond more than one generation, as both his father and grandfather were hotel employees in the Madeira island, and he feels that growing up while spending his after-school hours with them largely influenced his interest for the Hotel industry. Celeste's (EMP, General Manager) parents were actually owners of a small independent hotel, but although this early and close connection has shaped her interest for the industry, Celeste did all her career journey in renowned international hotel groups and was never employed in her parents' hotel.

Although some studies (e.g., Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010) refer to the influence of friends or teachers on career choice, such references were not found in research participants' accounts.

Very few interviewees mentioned parents' advice or support (or lack of) through their career decision process. Coming from socially disadvantaged backgrounds is suggested to be linked to less family guidance. Parents' education and family income often mirror students' social and family background and previous studies (e.g., Akareem & Hossain, 2016) have shown that students who come from higher income families, as well as those who have higher educated parents, are more likely to place higher expectations in education quality, which influence career outcome expectations. These students and their parents are found to understand the long-term effect of their learning and the challenges of a globalised labour market more easily, and to exhibit a boundaryless career orientation. Vera (*EMP, 26 years old, Master's degree*) mentioned, more than one time, the decisive role of her father in her choices:

By the time I had to decide what university degree I should take, it was important to my father that whatever my choice would be – even if it was an Arts related degree – it should be one with good career prospects, moneywise. For this reason, I chose Graphic Design, which turned out to be a quite frustrating choice. (...) This was when my father advised me to focus on my strongest skills. I am fluent in various languages and so I started thinking of careers where I could put into practice my knowledge, but Translation was not even a possibility.

For Virginia and Amanda (both *Leavers*, who have graduated in the late 90s and kept connected to the broader Tourism sector), the choice for T&H dedicated studies was not well received by their parents, who considered their academic top performance 'worthy' of a more traditional degree. For both these women, their parents' decision not to pay for their tuition fees – therefore, depriving them of instrumental assistance – did not dissuade them and both took part-time jobs while studying to prove how determined they were about their choice, thus revealing extremely control over their vocational future. Although no differences were identified in participants' accounts that can be indicative of differentiated parental advice and support based on their gender, Raque-Bogdan, Klingaman, Martin and Lucas (2013) found that women actually perceive more career-related emotional support from parents than did men (despite they also perceive higher educational and career barriers). However, this particular study was not conducted with T&H undergraduates (with STEM students instead), and in this thesis, it was found that parents' opinion and subsequent support is reported to be more likely influenced by the image and status of T&H careers (section 8.4), than by their concern for gender-typing of careers. This does not exclude parents' potential pre-conceptions of T&H as an appropriated or unappropriated career choice for women.

Accessibility and ease of entry

T&H attractiveness in recruitment, which can be placed towards the industry as a whole or towards particular attributes of a given job within the industry, has both the power to attract suitable people and the power to deter these and attract the unsuitable, and its closely tied both to the notions of image (as seen in section 2.3.1; sub-section *The image and status of hospitality work*) and accessibility. As also seen in section 2.3.2 with regards to the accessibility of T&H occupations, although ease of access is mostly addressed in the literature as the T&H industry

openness to employ individuals with low skills or non-relevant skills, in this study, ease of access is analysed in reference to T&H as an educational choice.

For seven research participants, a T&H degree was associated to ease of access, as their choice was based on their university entry exam grade, a motive which has also been identified by previous studies (e.g., Farmaki, 2018). As mentioned before, for some participants, T&H became a second choice when they were unable to enrol in their preferred degree. In some instances, T&H was the first option, but the choice for a given Higher Education Institution (which have different entrance requirements, especially if they are public or private institutions) or for a specific degree depended on ease of access, as Rafael (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*) explained:

The decision for this degree, which turned out to be my first option, was somewhat conditioned by the fact that Hotel Management required a higher classification in order to be accepted into university. Furthermore, I also thought that by choosing Tourism Activities Management, I would have the chance to expand my range of knowledge and would be able to learn more about other areas such as Economics and Accounting.

Accessibility offers opportunity but simultaneously devalues an occupation, as the ease or difficulty of access affects the social and economic value placed on the occupation (Szivas et al., 2003). “This line of argument would be supported by Human Capital Theory in which people seek rewards from occupations that are appropriate to the personal investment that has been made in securing knowledge and skill”, and, so, easy access, for example, can mean that low value is placed on the occupation (M. Riley et al., 2002, p. 19). Some interviewees share the view that low entrance requirements for T&H-related degrees do not benefit the industry image and status, as prospective students may see it as the easiest path for obtaining a university degree. In their opinion, increasing such requirements could be a way to screen only the best students, hence potentially ‘producing’ higher quality graduates for the industry. George (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*), Abel (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*) and Eva (*EMP, Polytechnic HEI graduate*) were all looking for a degree in which Mathematics was not part of the curricula, although this seems somewhat inconsistent with their ambitions to pursue a Management-related degree, such as George mentioned:

I had always known that Management was what I wanted to do; Hotel Management was a recent decision. I am not very good when it comes to Maths, and when I realised that almost 90% of the Management-related courses required strong knowledge skills in Maths, I began to have doubts about what to do.

In Clara’s (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager, University HEI graduate*) and Mario’s (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*) opinion, a highly Mathematic-based curriculum is precisely what endows students of good business management skills and competencies.

6.3 Career expectations and aspirations

As described in section 4.3.3, pre-entry expectations refer to the expectations formed by prospective employees before organisational entry. In this study, this type of expectations is interpreted as those formed prior entrance in the labour market in general, typically while completing their studies programme. The role of expectations is both relevant for motivation – as postulated by process theories of motivation, such as Vroom’s Expectancy Theory (see section 4.3) –, and for perceptions of congruence, match or fit – as hypothesised by Person-Environment fit theories, such as Holland’s Theory of Vocational Choice and Adjustment or Dawis and Lofquist’s Theory of Work Adjustment (see section 2.2).

Choosing a career is a matter of balancing what one considers to be important, with what they expect from a career. “Career aspirations measure the strength of an individual’s intention and his/her ability to organise, initiate and carry out the course of actions required to achieve personal goals and make career decisions” (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015, p. 52). Hence, research participants were asked to describe their career goals both on the short-term, i.e., desired positions and/or achievements after graduation (or perceived as acceptable), and on the long-term, referring to career ambitions and end goals.

Many research participants expressed their preference for back-of-the-house jobs, which is found to be somewhat inconsistent with their argument of enjoying interacting with people as an important reason to pursue a T&H job. This is believed to be associated on the one hand with the ‘glamorous’ image that is frequently conveyed of some T&H jobs and, on the other hand, with the ambition of reaching a management-related position. Most *Key-Informants* agree that some job positions are particularly attractive. ‘Sexy job positions’ was a frequently used expression to describe positions such as Guest Relations, Lobby Ambassador, Sales Executive or Revenue Management, which are typically attractive for new entrants, such as Bruno (*EMP, General Manager*), who teaches in a Polytechnic HEI, states:

About 95% of the students have said that when they finish their degree they would like to get a Guest Relations or Sales Department job position, which are ‘sexier’ professions (LLL). I asked, ‘what about the others – the big – departments?’; ‘Oh Mister, that’s boring and it’s enslavement, it’s already enough that we have to do internships for free [they said].

Abel (*NEW, 20 years old*) seems to share the opinion of these fellow students, describing operational work as menial in comparison with more strategic management and planning positions, which he believes to better match the expectations of a prospective employee with higher formal qualifications:

With a degree, I’d rather work in the Sales Department instead of working as a receptionist, even if I was paid the same. It’s a different kind of work, and if we’re good at it we might have a different value for the hotel, whereas anyone can be a receptionist.

Three other research participants, Hugo (*EMP, Polytechnic HEI attendant*), Leonardo (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*) and Veronica (*LEA, ex-Receptionist*), stressed having built their expectations based on their university-level qualifications. As much of T&H work is frequently

described as low-skilled, “demanding few, of any, conceptual or knowledge-driven attributes” (Baum, 2008, p. 721), majoring in T&H was perceived by these interviewees as a valuable opportunity to reach a supervisory position. In their opinion, investing in a T&H degree would be indicative of their ambitions and a distinctive element in their CVs.

6.3.1 Perceived job status and the ‘General Manager’ ideal

As the sector encompasses a wide range of activities, the image of T&H as an employer may differ among different jobs, and occupations with higher pay levels and better working conditions can be found. As previously noted in section 2.3.1, *((Un)clear career routes)*, in the hotel sector, for example, managers and supervisors enjoy an improved status (partly due to the development of vocational education and training) when compared to lower level jobs (M. Riley et al., 2002). Research participants’ accounts suggest that students are highly attracted to the professional prestige/high status of certain job positions, higher job discretion/autonomy and opportunities to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities. As seen in section 3.4, increased challenge and responsibility are typically associated with supervisory or managerial positions, higher status and higher levels of pay. Considering these interviewees overall discourses, they seem to be disregarding potential downsides (see also section 7.2.3, *Promotion and opportunities for advancement*). In particular, individuals in top management positions face long and irregular working hours, work under pressure to meet budgetary and timeframe targets, and are responsible for coordinating work teams, for example. As for Sales and Events Executives/ Managers, which was found to be a popular desired occupation, they are expected to be endowed of strong sales orientation and negotiation skills, which can be challenging. Interestingly, interviewees who reveal preference for these job positions have not included such types of skills and competences in their ‘list’ of critical skills to succeed in the T&H industry (this issue is further discussed in section 6.3.3).

Five interviewees did not show preference for specific job positions, but emphasised that opportunities for advancement, development, and growth were at the core of their set of expectations when initiating their career in T&H. Although other participants may have not verbalised this type of expectations, many came to later refer that feeling stagnant would become a significant source of disillusionment with T&H work (see section 7.2.3). Except for Rafael (*NEW, 19 years old*), who comes from a modest family, and Leonardo (*NEW, 23 years old*), no references were made regarding expectations with remuneration. Leonardo states that higher pay is an important drive of his progression ambitions, while Rafael believes that only a leadership position can provide him with the possibility of a comfortable living (mostly related with the pursuit of a desirable lifestyle than with a breadwinner model).

The position of General Manager is widely seen in the industry as a target job (Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017), although in more complex structures (typically international hotel groups) other positions with identical or higher status can be found (e.g., Area General Manager, Cluster Manager, Hotel Director of Operations). This widespread preference for the General Manager occupation can be due to the somewhat structured career trajectory, with an easily observable developmental hierarchy. General Management and Sales and Marketing are the two most consensual target areas of activity within the hotel structure;

some examples of how appealing these jobs are to the study's interviewees are presented in Figure 6.3. Bruno (*EMP, 43 years old, nine years in the Hotel industry and seven as General Manager*) and Manuel (*EMP, 32 years old, seven years in the industry and one as General Manager*) also shared this ambition and clearly defined their career roles upon graduation. Both told their parents they would become Hotel General Managers by the age of 40 and 35, respectively, and so they did. According to Adele and Juwaheer (2000) defining an approximate time to reach a target job is an important factor in career planning.

*I'd like to become a **Hotel General Manager**, maybe in a sizeable hotel chain, but yes, I'd like to be in charge of one [hotel]. This is also a role that allows to contact with all hotel departments, and I really enjoy this management dimension. (Oscar, NEW)*

*What I like about working in the **Sales department** is that it's very much a back-office job with some strategic vision, it's part management, part sales. It's just like **Revenue Management**, something I wouldn't mind doing either. Though the schedule pleases me, of course. I think it's a job where it's easy to climb the corporate ladder and maybe also easier to get interesting compensation. (Abel, NEW)*

*After I finish my degree, I don't plan to be a Hotel Manager, but I'm excited about working in **Sales or Marketing** because I find it very interesting. I've also thought about **Human Resources**. It has been while studying for my degree that I have found other areas of interest. (Claudia, NEW)*

*Apart from General Management, because I know it's impossible to start at that level, **Public Relations** is without a doubt the job that interested me the most. Even though I'm always dealing with clients, this is the department – except from General Management – with the most responsibility. We are the face of the hotel. That's why I see myself starting there or in the **Sales department**. (Alexandra, NEW)*

Figure 6.3 | Occupational expectations

Source: Own construction

To a lesser extent, Assistant General Management, Human Resources, Public Relations, Purchase and Revenue Management, are also mentioned by research participants. For most of these departments, job descriptions contemplate skills and competencies which are transversal to other professional areas (see also section 6.3.2), which can be indicative of higher competition for the same entry-level management positions.

6.3.2 Awareness of T&H working characteristics and (un)realistic expectations

Employers often assign the hassles of education-to-work transition to new entrants' unrealistic expectations. However, as this section shows, the majority of the participants in this study seem to be aware and knowledgeable of the T&H industry norms, work characteristics and operating

modes. Although, as presented in section 6.2.2, a significant number of participants were indecisive about their career choice, this is not considered to definitively set their expectations toward their future careers in the industry, as needs and expectations are not crystallised and develop over time. Furthermore, both their study programmes, educators, and internships (which means that their hosting organisations take their share of responsibility) play a significant role in the formation of pre-entry expectations. Providing a realistic picture (which means both positive and negative information) of their future employment situation, a notion that lies at core of realistic job previews (described in section 4.3.3), is pivotal in levelling undergraduates' expectations, especially during the course of the psychological contract formation.

There is a widespread perception that newcomers bring unrealistic high expectations for their first jobs, believing they will be offered a Hotel General Manager position upon graduation (also perceived from preliminary research (described in section 5.5), informal conversations with several players of the industry, and literature review (e.g., Lefever & Withiam, 1998; Richardson, 2008, 2009; Wanous et al., 1992), as the quotes in Table 6.2 exemplify.

Table 6.2 | Unrealistic vs. Realistic expectations

Perceptions of unrealistic expectations	Accounts of realistic expectations	
<p><i>Nowadays, people finish their degrees, graduate, believing they will automatically become General Managers. (Olivia, LEA, ex-Assistant Manager)</i></p> <p><i>There's a simple explanation: everyone wants to do the same thing. People finish their degrees and think they'll start as Top Managers. That's just wrong, wrong. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)</i></p>	<p><i>I still like – within certain limits – the operational part, but the management part is without a doubt what interests me the most. But I also know that, if someday I want to have a management role and run a hotel unit, I'll have to be familiar with the operational basics. (Mario, NEW)</i></p>	<p><i>We've been warned a lot about that, even the School Principal has told us the work schedule is unpredictable. We have a strict time to start working but there's never a scheduled time to leave. I've always had that in the back of my mind, but I'm still here, it hasn't pushed me off. (Alexandra, NEW)</i></p>
<p><i>It's surprising to me that everyone that finishes their degrees has this notion they will start immediately as hotel managers. That's significant because there's a lack of humility and willingness to learn which is terrible. And instead of bringing more inputs and improving things, instead of helping the organisation grow and wait for their opportunity to rise, they bring arrogance. (Julia, LEA, ex-General Manager)</i></p>	<p><i>People can't expect to finish their degrees and start immediately at a management level. Just because we're studying Hotel Management we can't expect to start as General Managers, things don't work that way. We are studying so we can learn more and know how to find what's best for our future. (Benjamin, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>I believe it's easy to get a first job, but I'm aware that that job might not be what I'm expecting of it. I'm aware I'll have to start with something smaller, which I don't mind, and go forward from that point. (Claudia, NEW)</i></p>

Source: Own construction

Despite the ambition of reaching such type of positions, none of the research participants demonstrated to expect to progress straight into a hotel – general or other – management role. Many participants clearly expressed being aware that such position is not available for recent graduates and to know that they are expected to conform with hospitality career norms. This means starting at ‘the bottom’ and gradually make their progress all the way through different functional levels. Most interviewees anticipate having to go up the professional ladder:

No doubt I would like to move up to a management position, the management of the F&B department for example, or the management of the hotel itself – but I know that’s harder, it takes a lot of years to get to General Manager – or even Reception Manager. I don’t see myself as a waiter or bartender, it’s not what would keep me motivated for the future. But I know I might have to be there too because I also believe we should try a bit of everything, so we can be more competent managers in the future. And if we don’t follow that path, we might lose very important lessons. (Rafael, NEW)

In hospitality, one can’t manage anyone without the knowledge of the work one is managing, that’s why it is very hard to jump ranks or progress in the career. Therefore, to be F&B supervisor, we probably must start off as a waiter or bartender, a lower rank so we can understand how the operation works and how we can oversee it. That’s why I’m expecting to move up slowly. (George, NEW)

These accounts exemplify that occupying operational roles is not negatively perceived by newcomers. This is rather interpreted as part of a wider training process that will endow them with the necessary competencies for their advancement in the hierarchical structure that typifies hotel companies. Other studies (e.g., Jiang & Alexakis, 2017) have also verified that knowledge of the hospitality industry is one of the top three important knowledge/skills that students perceived as valued by the industry, which may contribute to the formation of more informed, realistic expectations. This is considered quite positive in comparison with results from previous studies, such as Richardson’s (2008), in which undergraduates expected to be offered positions such as Trainee Manager (27.1%), Assistant Manager (17.6%), Supervisor (16.5%) or Department Manager (15.2%) upon graduation. Only 10.6% expected a frontline job position. Nevertheless, only 28.6% considered to be well or very well qualified to assume an Assistant Manager position.

Overall, the number of interviewees whose views of the industry can be interpreted as accurate and realistic largely surpass those mirroring an over-inflated vision of hospitality work, as the quotes in Table 6.2 also illustrate. But although many participants consider to be, to some extent, informed about the reality of working in the sector, they recognise that only after starting to work they clearly understood some of the implications. Most of them did not anticipate the physical and emotional demands that many job positions would hold, especially those involving frequent customer interaction, as the following quotes reveal:

I think they [students] cannot imagine what it’s like. Students have a general perception as I did, but only when I started working I realised how it would actually be. (Angelo, EMP, Receptionist, Working student)

I think they [the teachers] mentioned several times how it would be working in hospitality and I didn’t take it seriously (LLL). And I only really noticed what the reality

was once I was in the job market. I had a high-level notion. Maybe it's not that I wasn't ready, it's that I had the expectation it could be different. (Eva, EMP, Receptionist)

Consequently, almost all interviewees who occupy top management positions emphasise the important role of HEI, not only in providing students with the necessary skills and competencies to enter the labour market, but also in shaping and managing their expectations as more accurately and realistically as possible:

I think it's essential that people don't create false expectations about the job market. And I think schools have a very important role here. Schools must let students know they won't be in General Management roles right after graduation. Back then when I was in school, they would tell us we could be Hotel General Managers after finishing the degree, but I never believed it. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)

A matter of timing and persistence

Following the notion of outcome expectations, as both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that career choices and goals are based on (Lent et al., 1994) (section 2.2), it was perceived that although research participants did not expect a management role upon graduation, they did expect that holding a university degree would give them with a competitive advantage, positioning them as good candidates once progression opportunities came up and/or ensuring them faster progression.

Individuals have different expectations and levels of confidence about what they are capable of achieving, and the young graduates seem particularly tenacious about working under extreme, less desirable conditions if they believe in the long-term prospects that such job can offer (Nair et al., 2017). Cecilia (*LEA, ex-Waiter, 25 years old when leaving the industry*) reinforced this idea, by stressing that although both teachers and older co-workers 'warned' her about the high demands of hospitality work, the youth is not easily persuaded:

We have been warned, that's a fact. All our teachers would tell us it was a crazy life. We had school mates, working and studying at the same time, and they would say: 'this is a crazy life, don't think it is nice', but we always embellish things. We always imagine things will be different when we get there but it's not exactly like that. I can't say it was a shock, but it was a bit different than what I was expecting.

This can also potentially explain why the T&H field remains so attractive to many young people, despite the general awareness of low salaries, no regular working hours and need to start with lowest positions. Similarly to the findings of Nair et al. (2017), many research participants were keen to work hard and make sacrifices holding on to better career prospects. Several interviewees believe that many promotion opportunities do exist, and recognition is possible, as long as one keeps perseverance and focus.

If this is really what we want, it's only a matter of time until we succeed. (Rafael, NEW, 19 years old)

One has to be available; one needs to be committed. It's like our teachers say, during Christmas, while others are with their families we'll probably be working. And for that you need availability, you need to like it, and you need the will to do it. Teachers have always told us it won't be as we're expecting it to be, that we'll have to work hard,

that probably our work won't be appreciated. But, deep down, I still think it will be worth it. (Alexandra, NEW, 21 years old)

This type of testimonies was, therefore, interpreted not as revealing mismatched expectations, but rather as revealing confidence on future outcomes as a consequence of effort and investment expended. One of the *Key-Informants* involved in this study (*Organisational Behaviour (OB) Expert*) reinforces this idea that undergraduates are generally aware that will be assigned entry-level, operational positions and a greater effort will be required to climb the organisational ladder and progress in their careers. Xavier (*EMP, General Manager, 25 years in the Hotel industry*) believes that this is due to the limited number of vacancies for middle and top-management positions, as compared to operational levels. Although most Higher Education programmes have management, knowledge-oriented curricula, and focus on preparing students for management positions, undergraduates are hardly perceived as fit to occupy such positions, when available:

While starting low, be it prepping rooms, attending the Reception, or another lower-level position, we can't keep them motivated enough to stay committed with this industry. It's also a matter of time: nowadays people think they'll reach the top rapidly, and by rapidly I mean 6 months to a year, but it will effectively take more than that. That is why we must tell them the truth and explain that the path may be longer. (Xavier)

Exceptions were assigned to hotel consortia and chained-brand hotels, as these organisations have more structured career routes, foster intra-organisational mobility are more likely to have career-oriented HR management practices (such as career development plans), hence being able to offer slightly more positive progression perspectives (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015). As most hotel chains have long-term expansion plans, some authors posit that employees can advantage of the high turnover rates, as the hospitality industry offers opportunities to move up into a leadership role as no other industry does (Walsh et al., 2011). As a result of their dimension, these groups benefit of special commercial positioning and notoriety, which influences public perception not only of their service quality, but also as employers-of-choice. Within the literature about talent management, as seen in section 2.3.2 and 2.4, the concepts of *employer-of-choice* and *employer brand/branding* have gain visibility over the last decades, precisely because employees want to work for the best employers and organisations strive to be recognised by current and prospective employees as desirable places to work. This also suggests that despite the changes in employment relations and the emergence of *new* career concepts, most research participants still hold a traditional view of the graduate labour market.

This may explain the short-term career goals that some interviewees have shared, exhibiting their preference for joining a hotel chain early in their careers. Curiously, despite the predominance of small businesses in the T&H industry, no intentions of working in these organisations were expressed. Emilia (*NEW*) and Edgar (*NEW*) have strategically looked for internships in national and international hotel groups, respectively. They believe that being familiar with the service and work standards would give them a competitive advantage when applying for a job in any of the hotels of the group.

Other *Key-Informants* are also of the opinion that career progression will not happen in the timings most new entrant have in mind. The challenge is, therefore, in managing their ambitions

and career goals and keep them motivated while promotion opportunities do not arise. The availability of T&H dedicated qualifications (i.e., the growing number of study programmes and diversity of degrees within this field and directed at the industry) is a positive sign that most employees will not have to follow the 'traditional' progression process that characterises hospitality careers, all the way from operational levels to top management. This has also increased newcomers' expectations towards the speed of progression in the industry. This can also be interpreted as a generational phenomenon (particularly for Millennials and Gen Zs), as stated by *Major Employer 01 (KEY)*:

There's nothing wrong about ambition, but that's not the same as rising far too quickly, and you can't be disappointed if by 26 years old you're not in charge of something. I don't think it is widespread, it's a generational and circumstantial trend and like everything in our lives it's faster now. That also accelerated our eagerness to get to the next stage. Before there was the expectation of reaching the top of our careers at 40, and that's possible earlier now. (...) Nowadays there are General Managers with 30 years old and Assistant Managers with 20 years old, recent graduates who didn't follow a traditional career path. Very often we find General Managers and Assistant Managers who are supervising Front-desk Supervisors or Chefs who are much older. It's not straightforward that only with a 20-year old wide work experience you'll get there.

Millennials are found in several studies to have prospects of rapid career advancement (e.g., Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; Richardson, 2010). This progression is often suggested to be expected in exchange of minimal effort, due to Millennials' excessive pampering as children, or to their ambitious and impatient nature (Ng et al., 2010). However, as described in the beginning of this section, most research participants are well aware of all the effort, hard work, and resilience that a T&H career requires, hence not being compliant with this image of Generation Y.

The right balance between arrogance, ambition, and humility

Some research participants, in particular those who occupy top-management positions, also highlight the relevance of a specific character trait or virtue in prospective employees entering the workforce: humility.

Humility is a socially defined virtue that consists in the willingness to view oneself accurately through interactions with others. Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez (2004) define it as a down-to-earth perspective of oneself and of the events and relationships in one's life. It is precisely this down-to-earth perspective that these interviewees consider to be lacking in some of the graduates and/or undergraduates who join their organisations as employees or trainees. Humility and willingness to learn are also suggested to be largely determined by parental education and family background.

Octavio (*EMP, General Manager*) considers that humility should not be mistaken with lack of ambition or lack of confidence, but the lack of it may be largely influencing candidates' expectations, defrauding them. Julia (*LEA, ex-General Manager*) mentioned that humility and openness to experience could highly benefit new entrant's integration in the labour market. Both Laura and Octavio also believe that such overconfident, arrogant attitude is related with

holding a Higher Education degree (combined with the awareness that many employees at the company do not have the same formal qualifications):

They show up demanding to earn X ((a certain amount of money)) right away. And don't get me wrong, don't think that I want to exploit people. I just think that there is timing for everything in life, and one cannot expect to start from scratch, with zero knowledge, while wanting to earn the same as people who might not hold a degree but have gained the 'life degree'. And it would make me a bad manager if I didn't defend the latter. So, I think that, regardless of whether or not the person holds a degree, he or she gets here and is equal to others; when holding a degree, however, one has – I would say – almost a duty and a responsibility to stand out from the others, for obvious reasons. If they don't, it's that person's problem. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)

In the *OB Expert's* (KEY, who also teaches in a HEI) opinion, this undermines new entrants' future opportunities, as many undergraduates do not see the educational benefit that some job/training experiences can provide them (see also section 6.4.2).

An interesting, opposite view was also presented by Vera (*EMP, 26 years old, Reservations clerk*). After reflecting upon her career initiation, Vera came to conclude that her initial low-expectations and reduced self-esteem constrained her early-career job opportunities. Vera does not consider lacking self-confidence, nor exhibiting a passive attitude; she thought that realistic expectations would necessarily have to be *low* expectations. Literature on women and work has shown that in comparison to men, women tend to show lower self-confidence in on their ability to thrive at work, less ambition, and less likely to take advantage of opportunities for professional advancement (Gino, Wilmoth, & Brooks, 2015).

When asked what I would like to do once I've completed my degree, I replied that I would go for the Front-desk. 'But don't you say you like Revenue Management, events and groups, the corporate segment, Vera?' they asked me. 'Yes, but I am going to apply for Front-desk'. Because it was ridiculous to me that someone with no experience in this field, who doesn't know anything about the operation, who didn't do an internship while studying because what they wanted was to have fun, then has a magic wand in their hand that will allow them to apply for an hotel management job.

Vera exhibited this attitude not only regarding initial career goals, but it also guided her job search behaviour, which she has come to classify as not effective. This can be associated with low expectations of efficacy, which can be detrimental to optimal career choice and development as individuals might avoid certain areas of work due to perception of low self-efficacy (Lent, 2013; Lent et al., 2006). For over a year, Vera only applied for lower-ranked, smaller independent hotels, for considering that she would not be qualified or experienced enough to apply for five star-hotels. Vera speaks several languages, was the best student of her class, the only to pursue post-graduate studies at the Master level, and the only to voluntarily do internships with one-year overall duration (in one of them as Deputy Housekeeper). This later made her realise that she could potentially have higher skills and competencies than she thought:

I think my low expectations have harmed me. It made no sense to have asked for so little. I found myself avoiding applying for five-star hotels because I had no experience. Had I been a little more confident, maybe I could have gone a little further, faster, like some of my colleagues did.

It therefore appears that the perceptions of what constitute entry-level hospitality management positions suitable to be occupied by T&H graduates, are still not clear. The debate between those who believe recent graduates to be overconfident and unrealistic about their real capabilities and performance in the labour market, and those considering that graduates' formal qualifications are undervalued, seems to be continued for some time to come. Figure 6.4 presents two opposing views on whether recent T&H graduates qualify or not for similar (ranking-wise) managerial positions.

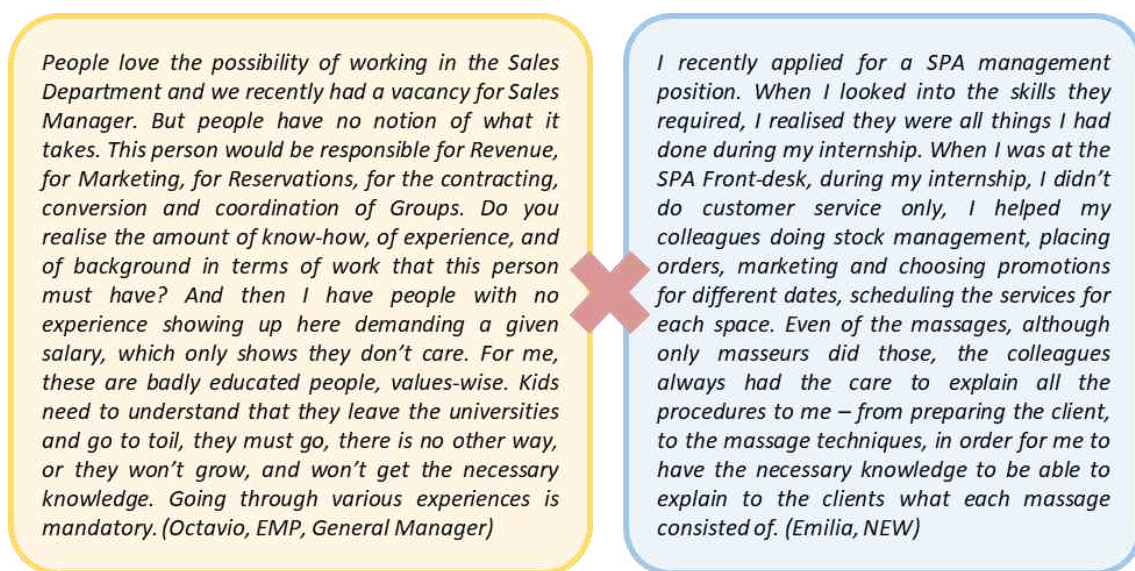


Figure 6.4 | Opposite view on new entrants' qualifications for management positions

Source: Own construction

The *HR Expert (KEY)* holds a very strong view on this matter, considering that if a university allows someone to graduate in Hospitality Management, that graduate will naturally aspire for a Hospitality Management position, such as the degree *promises*. Previous research in which the content of 64 Tourism bachelor programmes taught in English (covering six countries) was analysed confirms that 90% of the programmes providing information on career opportunities are found to imply an opportunity in a management position (Ring, Dickinger, & Wöber, 2008). The *Institutional Representative (KEY)* reinforces this idea by stressing that announced career prospects are often embellished to attract students, which can be associated to their disillusionment later on when confronted with the reality of job opportunities in the industry. The *HR Expert* stresses that by being highly reluctant in valuing this type of qualifications – a scenario discussed in sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.1 –, the T&H industry can be undermining itself, providing opportunities for T&H graduates to migrate to other occupations, reducing even more the pool of available qualified staff for the industry:

In many other Management domains, after a 4-year degree, a graduate is very likely to be deemed academic and technically prepared for an entry-level management position. In the Hotel industry, a graduate is hired and understands that will take him/her additional five years to get to some type of management position. Therefore, it becomes easier to be a manager in Vodafone, EDP or Brisa. (HR Expert)

6.4 Education-to-work transition: entering the labour market

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) play a pivotal role in the training and skills development of future T&H managers. Either in the classroom context or through curricular internships, HEI are expected to endow students with fundamental skills and prepare them for a successful career in the industry. Hence, these have been increasingly pressured to produce both marketable and market-ready graduates (Barron & Ali-Knight, 2017; Correia, 2017; Ruhanen, 2005). Marketability, in the sense that individuals' job security is anchored to their skill portfolio and employability, rather than to an organisation, is precisely at the core of 'new' career models such as boundaryless careers (section 2.2). The level of perceived preparedness of graduates when entering the labour market, the role internships as a key milestone of their education and training programme, and the composition of fundamental skill set for graduates' employability and successful careers in the industry, are approached in this section.

As presented in Figure 6.5, a higher proportion of research participants graduated in Polytechnic Institutions (73% of which were public Polytechnic HEI). In Portugal, this is also the Higher Education Subsystem with the highest offer of Bachelor degrees in the T&H field (52 out of 68, in 2016-17) (Salgado, Lemos, Costa, & Silva, 2017). Most of *Newcomers* (75%) finished their degrees by 2019, shortly after participating in this study. Considering both *Employees* and *Leavers* (n=44), 52% of the interviewees graduated less than 10 years ago (of which nearly half graduated within the last 5 years⁶⁵). A higher number of participants chose a more Generalist degree within the scope of Tourism, in comparison with those who opted for a Hospitality-oriented degree. Generalist approaches typically focus on educational programmes that cover different segments and activities within the T&H industry (e.g., degrees in *Tourism*, *Tourism Management* or *Management of Tourist Activities*), whereas specialist approaches tend to emphasise students' specialisation in a single segment of the industry (e.g., degrees in *Hotel Management* or *Hospitality Management*) (Cho, Erdem, & Johanson, 2006).

It was observed that six of the seven research participants (*EMP/LEA*) who enrolled in Hospitality Management degrees were not only more certain of their vocational orientation and career choice (as discussed in section 6.2.2), as they came to occupy the job position they aspired for in the beginning of their careers. Celeste (*EMP, 17 years in the Hotel industry*), Bruno (*EMP, 9 years in the Hotel industry*), Octavio (*EMP, 21 years in the Hotel industry*), Manuel (*EMP, 7 years in the Hotel industry*), and Martin (*LEA, 11 years in the Hotel industry*) became General Managers. Although Amanda (*LEA, 16 years in the industry*) left the industry as Assistant Hotel Manager, she emphasized that if she has decided not to leave, she would very likely reach that

⁶⁵ Calculations based in year 2019.

position⁶⁶. The only exception was Aurora (*EMP, Receptionist*), although she is in the industry for only three years, and working in a family-owned, independent hotel, which she considers to highly constrain any promotion opportunities. Except for Martin (who worked in The Azores for a single employer since his graduation, hence exhibiting a very traditional career route), all the other interviewees' career pathways were built upon high intra and inter-organisational mobility (a topic that is further explored in section 8.2.2).

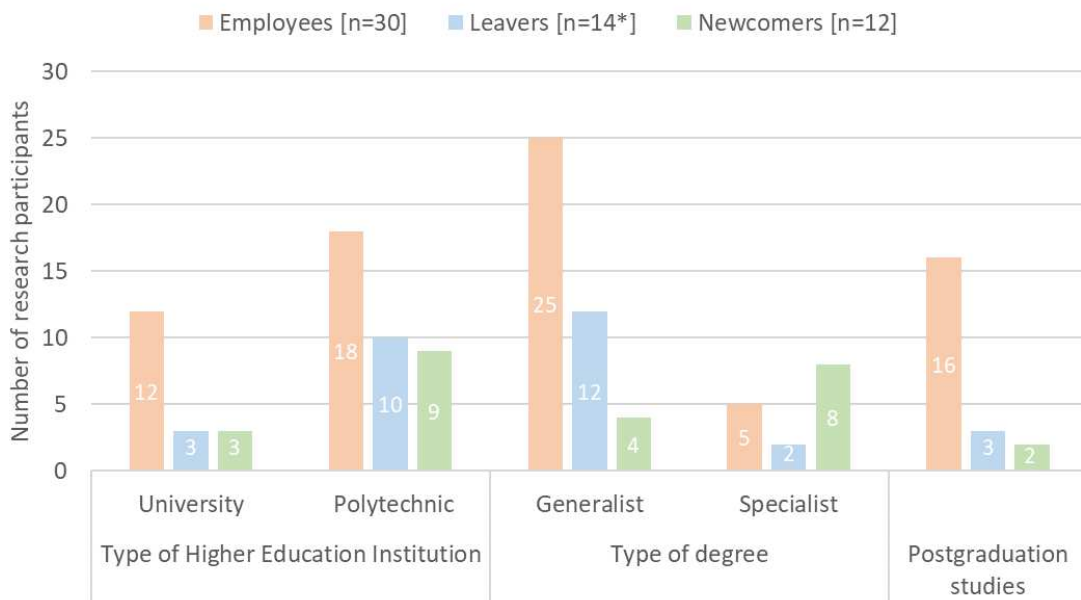


Figure 6.5 | Research participants' academic path: HEI type, type of degree and enrolment in Postgraduation studies

Source: Own construction

Table key: *One of *Leavers* graduated from a foreign Hospitality-specialised HEI, hence not accounted for in the Type of HEI

Surprisingly, research participants who decided to pursue postgraduate level studies showed a clear preference for University HEI (71%) (mostly public Universities) with Generalist degrees. One interviewee decided on studying abroad, by getting her postgraduation in a well-known international hospitality school.

6.4.1 Preparedness for the labour market

As presented in section 2.4.1, the role of Higher Education in meeting the needs of both the industry and the graduates has been receiving growing attention and it is not an exclusive concern of this occupational field. T&H Management education, in particular, is designed to

⁶⁶ As the reasons for her career change were not related with limited progression prospects.

prepare students for management careers in various segments of the T&H industry. Considering that employability and marketability constitute important attributes of the boundaryless career, research participants were, therefore, asked to recall their time as students at university and comment on the level of educational preparation that they expected and received for their future careers in T&H. It was found that participants held a variety of views regarding Higher Education learning outcomes and improvement needs.

A significant number of interviewees (five *EMP*, three *LEA*, four *NEW*) consider having received an **adequate preparation** for their working lives in the industry, emphasizing several positive aspects of their academic programmes. Their degrees were described as interesting and well-structured (despite some topics being approached quite superficially), comprising demanding assignments (including field work, industry-applied assignments) and contact with industry players (fostering networking), providing the necessary theoretical fundamentals, and contributing to their personal growth and development, as the quotes in Figure 6.6 exemplify. Some interviewees also refer that nowadays students are given many opportunities to improve their *resumes*, for example, by attending lectures with invited speakers, attending events and trade fairs, doing extracurricular internships, visiting to local T&H companies, or by doing a study or a placement period in another country with Erasmus programmes. References were also made to the important role educators play in shaping students' expectations and competencies for the sector, as many research participants and *Key-informants* consider that being told and made aware about the specificities of the industry is an important requirement in Higher Education.

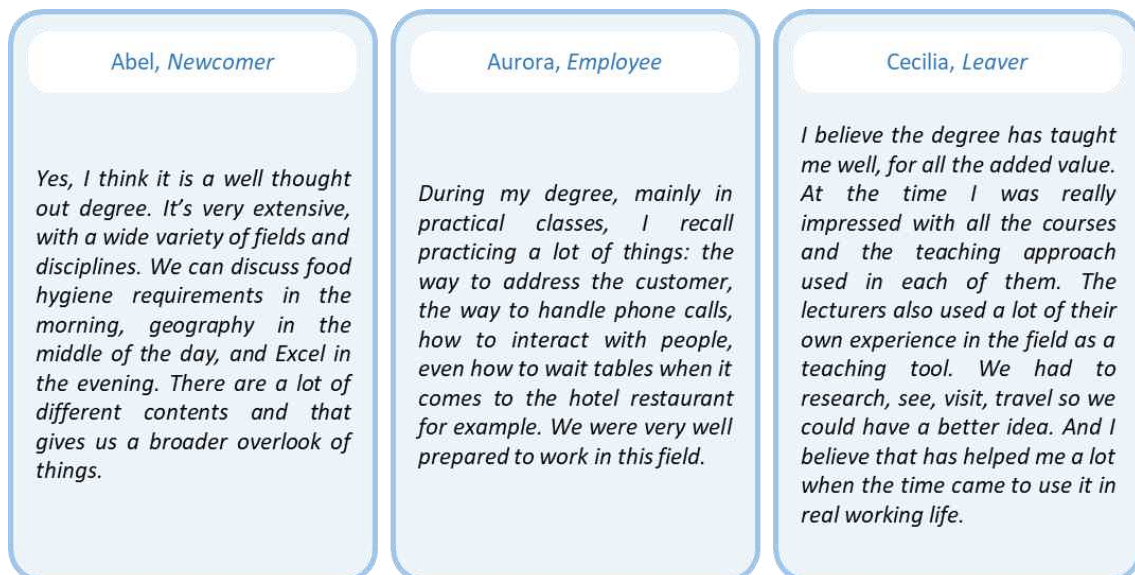


Figure 6.6 | Positive perceptions of preparedness to enter the labour market

Source: Own construction

From a less positive perspective, a second set of research participants ($n=16$) considered their study programmes to have inadequately or insufficiently prepared them for the labour market, by lacking enough **practical knowledge and experiential learning**. Several interviewees referred

that although the theoretical component is valuable, the practical component is clearly insufficient (see also section 8.2.1, *Previous industry experience at entry-level jobs*). This divide between academic knowledge and practical skills is a persistent condition and challenge in T&H management education (Ruhanen, 2005; Thompson et al., 2017). For this reason, when starting their internships, many of them felt lost and unprepared. Within-degree internships – which are more specifically addressed in section 6.4.2 – are, precisely, one strategy for embed active, on-the-job learning experience into the curriculum, and for this reason, this is an important feature of most T&H degrees. Coinciding with findings from previous research, some interviewees questioned the validity of some subjects/courses which they did not perceived as relevant for their future jobs in the industry (Mooney & Jameson, 2018). It should be noted that most of the participants opted for a Generalist degree, which is aimed at widening students' understanding of the various facets of the Tourism sector, this offering them a more comprehensive picture and a wider range of employment prospects (not limited to the Hotel industry). Nevertheless, either participants with Generalist or Specialist degrees referred to this limitation.

It is also interesting to note that, again, perceptions regarding the value of a Generalist versus a Specialist degree for those aiming at a future career in the Hotel industry, are mixed. Clara (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*), for example, does not regret holding a more Generalist degree, as she believes that it endowed her with a broader management perspective which she found useful when working in hotels. On the other hand, Emilia (*NEW*) considers to be missing some necessary, thorough knowledge on hospitality that she now needs to compensate for, due to her Generalist degree. Both Celeste and Victor (*EMP, General Managers*) also held the view that Generalist degrees may not be the most strategic option for those who aspire to a career in hotel management.

Although in a smaller number, five research participants were highly critique of the ability of their study programmes in successfully preparing them for their future working life. More specifically, references are made to inappropriate or missing contents and tools (such as, for example, Hotel Management Software training). With this exception, and although Millennials are described as extremely technologically literate (Barron, 2008), almost no references were made to the adequacy (or inadequacy) of the digital tools and educational strategies used in the participants' study programmes. Only one *Newcomer*, Carla (*Polytechnic HEI attendant*), described the degree programme as outdated, considering that teaching should accompany students' needs for innovation and dynamism more closely. When asked to exemplify which features of the degree she would change or what practices she would like to be introduced, the interviewee was a little hesitant and not able to point an alternative direction. Previous research does corroborate that students lack confidence in their employability, as well as in their career planning and development skills (Wang & Tsai, 2014).

Some recent graduates such as Vera (*EMP, three years in the Hotel industry/three employers*), took a very assertive stance toward the value of her degree. Vera contends that the contents, tools, and methods which made up her formal higher education are much more advanced than many of the practices of the industry. Despite her short experience in the industry, she stresses that organisations are highly resistant to change and innovation, and still hold on to the same practices and procedures as in the past 20 years. This idea is reinforced by the *OB Expert (KEY)* who posits that although quite innovative and cutting-edge with regards to service

development, T&H organisations are highly prescriptive, standardised and resistance to change with respect to work processes.

Another interesting topic stood out from participants' interviews, to which references were made by three research participants. The vast majority of T&H degrees, and very likely most of the Higher Education degrees, do not foresee any course contents directed as preparing future graduates for their roles as *workers*. Graduates are, therefore, left to deal with issues such as work contracts, employment legislation, collective bargaining, employment categories, wage policy or tax-related issues, solely when first contacting with the labour market, with little exempt advice and guidance. Most of T&H degrees include some type of legislation-related courses, which focus exclusively on implementation and classification of Hotel establishments. Even HR Management courses typically do not approach these topics, or at least, not with the desired depth. Veronica (*LEA*) exemplified such limitation when referring that was only in her first job that she first saw the content of a work contract or of a payslip. This topic is further explored in sections 8.2.1 (with reference to lack of transparency in exchange relationships) and 7.2.3 (with regards to job security), but it seems quite revealing that many graduates are not fully conscious and well-informed of their legal duties and rights as future workers, which automatically puts them in a vulnerable position, especially in their first employment relations. Still as far as HEI shortcomings in graduates' preparedness for the labour market is concerned, the *OB Expert (KEY)* makes a relevant remark:

The University teaches people how to think. Obviously, those who finish a Management degree are not fully prepared to work at that level; they have to learn, adjust themselves to each company's way and culture, they need to consolidate the technical side of it.

The lack of adequate training and on-the-job guidance during curricular internship experiences, which are the central objective of any internship programme, has been highlighted by many research participants (see section 6.4.2). This naturally leads to the questioning whether T&H organisations are fulfilling their 'part of the deal' in workforce training (which becomes particularly relevant considering their frequent accounts of shortages of qualified staff and skills gaps), or just assigning this responsibility to HEI.

Bridging the gap

Although significant differences on perceptions about T&H education exist between HEI/educators and the industry/employers, several *Key-informants* consider that the Higher Education system has been showing greater concerns in bridging the gap between students' competencies and the expectations of the industry. One of the ways this has been done is by gradually introducing some changes in curriculum design, increasingly promoting soft skills development. In addition, some level of industry practitioners' involvement is also stressed as important in T&H curriculum assessment. Literature on curriculum design for the T&H largely emphasises the importance of acknowledgement and integration of stakeholder's needs (Thompson et al., 2017). Several participants who hold managerial positions within the industry (e.g., Octavio or Bruno, both General Managers, or the *HR Expert*) mention to be regularly invited to provide inputs and to speak on behalf of the industry, hence actively assisting HEI and educators in curriculum design. The connection with HEI is not limited to this consultation, but

also with increased proximity activities with undergraduate students, either as guest speakers in thematic lecturers and academic events, or as by setting challenge assignments about real organisational/workplace problems.

Several *Key-Informants* are great supporters of study programmes (which already exist in several HEI offering T&H degrees in Portugal) that allow students to develop their own projects and research work within and in cooperation with T&H organisations. The *HE Expert* reinforces this idea that students can provide valuable inputs if heard and given the opportunity to contribute. According to *HE Expert*, more than just supplying companies with labour force, HEI play a pivotal role in promoting change and introducing innovation and good practices, and this is not always duly valued.

Some authors contend, however, that proximity and cooperation with the industry in curriculum design should not be a synonym of excessive subservience to the industry needs (Cockburn-Wooten, 2012; Lashley & Conrad, 2011). Skills and managerial views should not be perceived as stable and unlikely to change over time, while at the same time questions can be raised to whether employers' needs are also unchanging and uniform (considering, for example, that big hotel groups are not likely to have the same needs and interests that small independent units). It should not also be assumed that employers know what they want or will want in the future, especially if considering the bad reputation of the industry as having organisational cultures that often result in hostile workplaces and bad employment practices (Lashley, 2013; Lashley & Conrad, 2011). This notion is reinforced if considering that a significant number of hotel managers do not have themselves formal qualifications (Guerrier & Deery, 1998). Lashley (2011) asserts, therefore, that academics and educators are the professionals who must retain control of the educational experiences and curriculum presented to T&H students.

Among research participants' accounts, not all the responsibility in bringing Higher Education and the T&H industry together is assigned to HEI. Supporting this claim, three research participants and other three *Key-Informants* also hold T&H companies responsible for graduates' mismatch perceptions. *Major Employer 01 (KEY)* explicitly voices that hotel companies need to stop complaining that T&H degrees do not adequately prepare graduates in accordance with the needs of industry, but should rather try to understand which role they should play themselves in this process. This *Key-Informant* stresses that employers cannot assume that a degree will automatically prepare young people to such a very challenging and diverse labour market in a 3/4-year period:

A lot of companies think students should leave school ready to work, but each company is different. That's why it's up to the schools to teach them how to think, how to better develop work skills; in turn, companies have to complement that with everyday, on-the-job training.

This reference to on-the-job training is again closely related to the role, form, and content of curricular internships, such as discussed in the next section. The *Employers Association Representative (KEY)* also emphasises companies need to be prepared to yield both time and space to trainees, more actively taking responsibility for their training. This view is also shared by the *OB Expert (KEY)*, who advocates that not only HEI need to find internship opportunities that fit their students' expectations, but also T&H organisations should take more seriously their responsibility in preparing and offering internships opportunities that match the students

profile. As is shown in the next section, although students aim for managerial career possibilities, most of internship programmes are designed solely to include learning experiences in operational functional levels.

6.4.2 Internships and learning experiences

Higher Education internships represent an active learning experience which is seen as a valuable route to enter the labour market. According to the Social Cognitive Career Theory (section 2.2), learning experiences influencing people's career exploration and career development process. Taking on-the-job training, working face-to-face with customers, and taking on a variety of tasks is as a valuable way to complement classroom learning. Through internships, students have the opportunity to develop and apply the skills, theories and concepts learned in their study programmes, as well as to gain industry-specific knowledge and competencies, hence enhancing their employability. The value of internships is particularly relevant in a dynamic and multidisciplinary industry such as T&H, which requires a workforce with a wide variety of skills (Correia et al., 2017; Farmaki, 2018). Internships are also perceived as critical experiences in influencing students decision as to join the T&H workforce (Correia et al., 2017; Robinson, Ruhanen, & Breakey, 2016).

As discussed in section 4.3.3, perceptions and attitudes built on direct, first-hand experiences can give students a stronger and more realistic view of the industry, playing a decisive role in shaping their future behaviour. For five research participants who were indecisive of their career choice, the internship was critical in confirming their orientation towards hospitality, hence improving their perceptions of occupational fit. This may positively contribute to more realistic expectations, more informed career choices, and more effective job search behaviours. Previous research has found that students who have some type of work experience in the industry before graduating hold more realistic expectations. These are also more likely to lead to negative perceptions of the industry (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Richardson, 2008, 2009). Most of the research participants who actively embraced these experimental learning opportunities, even by voluntarily enrolling in extracurricular internships, consider having been given a more clear view of the different job positions and functional departments they would like to (or not) work in the future. Carla (*NEW, Polytechnic HEI attendant*) was one of the interviewees whose internship has contributed to a redefinition of career goals: her initial aspirations of becoming an F&B Manager, were replaced by a resolute decision not to look for a job in this functional area.

Most of the study programmes in HEI include at least one mandatory internship experience, while some even have a one-per-year ratio. Ten of the 12 of the *Newcomers* enrolled in curricular internships and five opted for extracurricular programmes to broaden their experiences and build a stronger *resume*. Curiously, several research participants, as the following quote exemplifies, report that many of their degree colleagues did not show significant interest in this type of work experience, especially if not paid (performing only the minimum required curricular internships for evaluation purposes). This can suggest that many undergraduates may be undervaluing this opportunity to see, at an early stage, if they are actually 'cut out' for the hospitality industry.

Our study programme does not include an integrated internship, but the professors have always encouraged us to do an internship, in whichever area, in order to get a sense of what it means to work in T&H. It is encouraged, but not mandatory. And half of the class did not participate in this. Not being mandatory, people don't want it because they do not receive any money. (Michael, EMP, three years in the industry)

Figure 6.7 sets the context for *Newcomers'* internship experiences, regarding the number of internships, their overall duration, and the number of departments these students were given the opportunity to contact with.

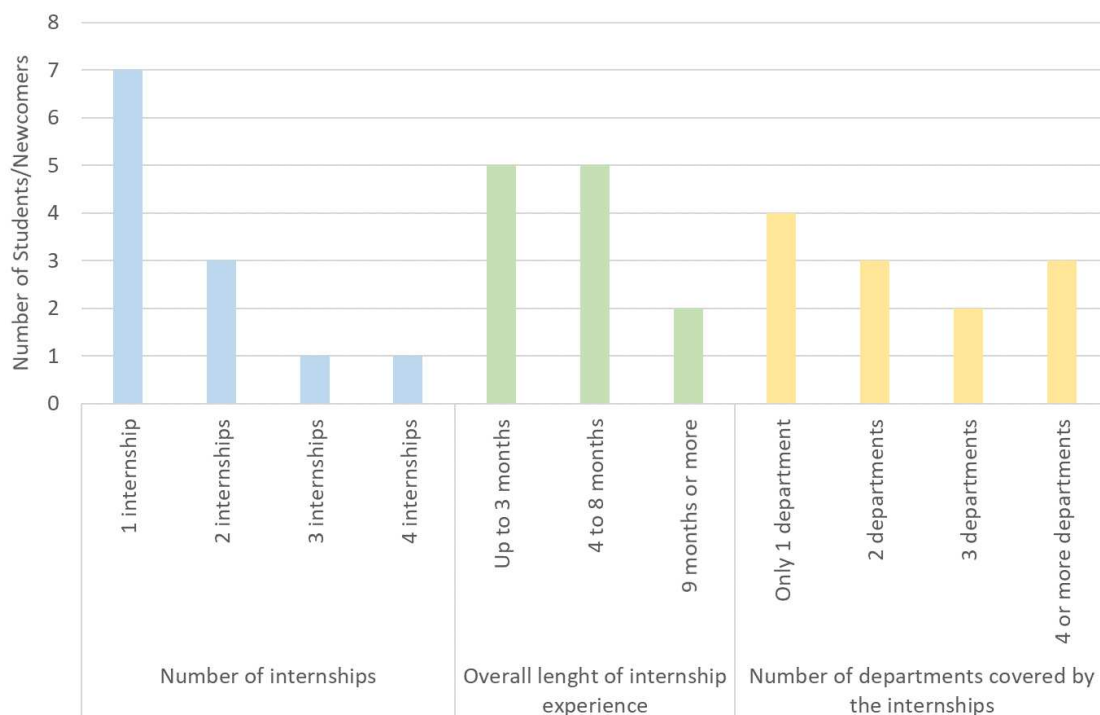


Figure 6.7 | *Newcomers'* internship experience description

Source: Own construction

Overall average duration of *Newcomer's* internships was six months. Some *Newcomers* did more than one internship, and if the number of internships is considered, their average duration drops to only three months each. Some organisations do not consider this time frame for a more complete and more efficient cross-training programme, which may explain why so few *Newcomers* enrolled in this type of internship.

The duration of the internships (typically defined according with the HEI requirements) is, according to several *Key-Informants*, a determinant issue in employers' perceptions of undergraduates' worth as future professionals. Considering that all internships have (or should have) an integration phase, if the internship is too short, when the trainee is ready to independently perform tasks, the training period is over. Short internships do not allow organisations to get a return on the investment in training and staff time, neither do provide trainees with a meaningful experience (Calvo, 2011). The *HR Expert* posits that the longest the

internship, the higher the adaptability to a new job will be, which may positively impact the recognition of the trainees' competencies:

Short-term internships also convey to companies the idea that the student does not know enough about the role, and assumes no experience, and as such, the company will put trainees in operational roles only. They do not distinguish between those who come from a vocational school, and those who come from higher education. Those with a university degree tend to not have the practical training, it takes longer to learn the job and they do not prove themselves so quickly.

As pictured in Figure 6.8, the F&B department hosted most of the trainees. Both in the F&B and in the Front-of-the-house departments, all the trainees were assigned specific tasks, but none was offered the possibility of accompanying the respective Manager/Supervisor in his/her daily routine. The only exception is the Housekeeping, in which trainees are typically tutored directly by the Housekeeping Supervisor, together with part of the staff. For almost all *Newcomers* in this study, internship plans were designed solely to include operational functional levels. As previous research also suggests, "the work experience components that are common to many hospitality degrees are primarily, or even exclusively, comprised of operational experiences and rarely do students get any exposure to management activities" (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005, p. 212). Only Mario (*Polytechnic HEI attendant*) was offered an internship in Revenue Management. Rafael (*Polytechnic HEI attendant*) also confessed himself disappointed with the lack of opportunities for internships in which he could become more familiar with management-related positions; for example, by observing/accompanying an Assistant Manager. As shown in Figure 6.8, only three *Newcomers* (Alexandra, Leonardo and Emilia) were given this opportunity. This raises some doubts on whether most internships actually suit T&H management trainees, as it would be expected for future T&H management graduates.

Although many hotel companies offer rotational internship programmes⁶⁷, only two interviewees among *Newcomers* (Emilia and Leonardo) were offered such opportunity. Leonardo (in his five-month internship) received specific training in the Kitchen (including Pastry), Housekeeping (including the Laundry), F&B Operations (Restaurant and Bar) and Assistant Hotel Management. Emilia (who did a four-month internship), received specific training in six different departments: Front-of-the-house (Front-desk), F&B Operations (Restaurant and Bar), Purchasing department, SPA (Front-desk), Housekeeping, and Assistant Hotel Management.

These two *Newcomers*, who aspire for a management position, described this internship plan as the most appropriate for any future manager. This plan was described as allowing them to become familiar with the specificities of almost all departments of a hotel. Cross-training pre-employment experiences endow them with an overall, operational vision that T&H graduates are supposed to have when entering the labour market, as seen in section 6.3.1. Some interviewees contacted with different roles but only within a single department (for example, Restaurant, Bar, Room Service and Special Events within F&B Operations), which can also configure a type of rotational internship (Calvo, 2011). In the researcher's opinion, this type of

⁶⁷ Sometimes called *cross-training* internships, these are internship programmes in which the trainees rotate between various departments of the host organisation for a pre-defined period of time each (Calvo, 2011).

experience is particularly interesting if the students have the opportunity to enrol in several single-department rotational internships across their academic preparation, so as when graduating they benefit of a global, in-depth view on hotel management. Rotational internships allow new entrants to experience a diverse range of roles and responsibilities, which can help them “assess their skills and interest in a number of positions” (while employers can also evaluate their potential future employees while performing various roles) and improve their adaptability when joining the labour market (although the transferability of skills form one context to other should not be taken granted) (Calvo, 2011, p. 8).

I think it's important to know several ways of working, because each company works in a different way. It's the same as being familiar with more than one department in a hotel; when we are in only one department, we might know a lot about it, but we only know about that one. And I am already able to work at the Kitchen, the Bar, the Restaurant, or at the Front-desk checking-in and checking-out guests, doing public relations. And I know that, when I get to another hotel, things will work in a different way, but at least I've already got the bases. This might make it easier to get a job. (Alexandra, NEW)

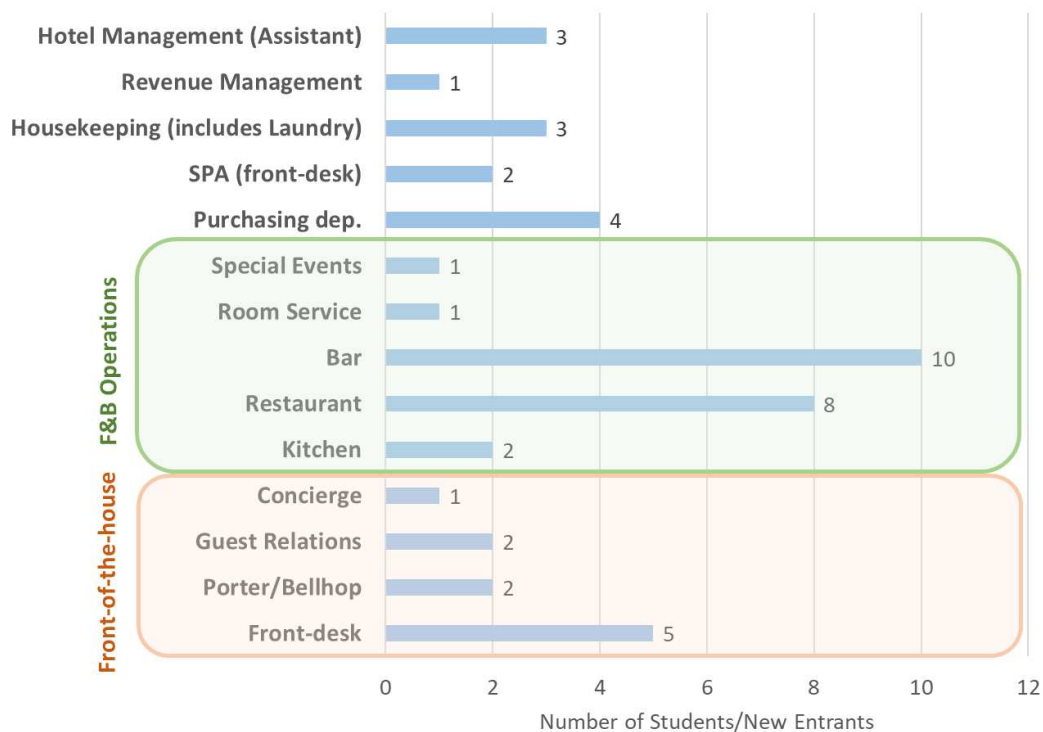


Figure 6.8 | *Newcomers'* internship experience description: sections covered by the internship(s)

Source: Own construction

Figure key: 'Restaurant' refers to the hotel's main restaurant and/or breakfast service, and includes enrolment in job positions such as Server, Host/Hostess and Busser.

Some research participants such as Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager in a national hotel group*), the *Higher Education (HE) Expert* and the *OB Expert (KEY, who also teach in HEI and coordinate*

undergraduate internships), stress that some students are highly resistant to the idea of having an active learning experience in some areas, namely the Housekeeping. By exhibiting such attitude, they are ignoring the potential that such experiences could have in provide them with a deeper understanding of the whole management dynamics of a hotel business, especially regarding inter-departmental interactions. For example, a trainee who have started his/her internships in Housekeeping would be more familiar with all the room typologies and characteristics when transitioning to the Front-office, as well as with communication routes and work processes between these two sections.

In Leonardo's (*NEW*) and Edgar's (*NEW*) opinion, trainees' attitude is a distinctive feature that largely impacts the success of an internship. Both mentioned being aware and concerned with the fact that, more than their knowledge, their attitude was being evaluated. Showing interest and commitment to their roles granted them special attention from colleagues and supervisors, considering to having been treated as '*more than just a simple trainee*' and assigned with tasks and responsibilities perceived as relevant.

Only one *Newcomer*, Alexandra, was offered a paid internship (George also benefited of a paid internship but in the US). This was an in-service training experience with a 3-month duration, from June to September (peak season) in the Algarve, clearly interpreted as an exception⁶⁸. Although the issue of payment is quite controversial, several *Key-Informants* are in favour either of full or partial payment of trainee's work. Not only this could improve the image of T&H jobs, as it could contribute to an employer's mindset change:

If we continue to interpret internships only as a matter of manpower, companies will continue to look only at what people can do and not what people know. (Institutional Representative, KEY)

For organisations, internships can be akin to an extended interview, which allow a more accurate identification of young talent. Internships make possible to determine whether a candidate will be the best fit prior to formal hiring. Unfortunately, as reported by several research participants and *Key-Informants*, in T&H organisations, internships are also synonym of free labour.

Trainees as manpower

According to several participants, internships as free labour became the reality of many organisations. As the T&H is facing severe labour shortages, coupled with other HR management issues as addressed in section 2.4, organisations frequently use trainees (not only from HEI but also from vocational schools) to leverage the gap in some critical functional areas in which manpower lacks. This may partially explain the reasons why most trainees are assigned to operational-oriented (only) internships. F&B Operations are largely mentioned as one of, or even the most critical department with regards to employee turnover. Therefore, it is not surprising that this is the department hosting a more significant number of trainees. Laura and

⁶⁸ Common practice being solely the provision of meals and accommodation (for trainees displaced from their area of residence). The issues of accommodation may have two different readings, as in the one hand it increases the changes of attracting trainees from other regions or countries, especially in popular tourist destinations, but on the other hand it conveys the notion of full availability, often resulting in excessive working hours.

Clara, holding supervisory duties in their organisations, acknowledged that this was a common practice:

Over the years, I have taught many trainees, especially in F&B, restaurant and kitchen service. They accepted many trainees, because it was cheap labour, which they later invited to stay, as they did with me, a few more months to gain experience, but at zero cost. The preference was for the summer months, and they were required to do almost as much as a regular employee: to be on time and to know how to do everything. (Laura, LEA, ex-Assistant F&B Manager at an independent hotel)

How many times I have received trainees to work in the F&B Department? It is true that they were seen as one more person to serve at the tables. We didn't need many of them in the back-office, there we accepted only one, but for the Restaurant we accepted about four or five, for the Kitchen too. We needed manpower, so opportunities at the functional levels were high and this diminished opportunities at medium and higher levels, undoubtedly. (Clara, LEA, ex-Assistant Manager in a small national hotel group)

Such claims are largely supported by most *Key-informants* participating in this study, including *Major Employers (01/02-KEY)*, who recognised the existence of a 'mixed' reality, as the capacity of some departments to receive trainees is more limited than others. The capacity – in terms of dimension, structure, and scope of duties – of operational areas, such as F&B or Front-office, is much greater to accommodate trainees. On the other and, if one hotel has one Assistant Manager, he/she will only be able to mentor and supervise only one trainee. *Major Employer 01 (KEY)* emphasises that in attempt to control abusive situations in the numerous hotels of the group, the organisation came to define ratios of trainees per functional area. This was the result of a continuous consultation and improvement process, as the organisation came to understand that both students' training and customer service were being jeopardised. Emilia (*NEW*) did her 4-month, rotational internship in one of the biggest hotels of this group, which she came to evaluate very positively. One of the reasons thereof was that Emilia specifically asked for a rotational internship, which the organisation only accepts in low season, for considering not being able to adequately implement this training programmes in peak season.

Weighing up the pros and cons

Internships have the general goal of providing a positive learning experience that supplements classroom learning, hence helping students in their transition to the labour market (Calvo, 2011). When analysing *Newcomers'* accounts of their internship experiences, it was observed that eight interviewees referred to both positive and negative aspects; Table 6.3 provides an overview of most of these pros and cons. Alexandra (*two internships*), Emilia (*one rotational internship*) and George (*four internships*) only had positive things to say about their internship experiences, whereas only Carla (*one internship in F&B Operations*) could not list other than negative perceptions of her 3-month experience. When recalling their experiences as trainees, several *Employees* (such as Marisa, *Assistant Manager*, or Octavio, *General Manager*) and *Leavers* (such as Clara, *ex-Assistant Manager*, or Joel, *Purchasing Clerk*), also chose to solely highlight how the positive perceptions of their internship experiences prepared them for their future jobs, contributing to an easier adaptation to the industry.

Table 6.3 | Newcomers' positive and negative perceptions of their internship experiences

Positive perceptions	Negative perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . More clear view of/perceptions of fit with different jobs and functional areas within Hospitality . Gaining valuable – technical and practical – knowledge and skills . Gaining valuable soft skills (e.g., autonomy, resourcefulness, confidence) . Opportunities for practicing/improving foreign languages and customer service aptitude . Rotational internship programmes . Guidance and support from fellow employees . Increased guidance in smaller departments . Provision of meals and accommodation (when applicable) . Opportunity to be 'signalled' by the host organisational for future hiring needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Being assigned with tasks with low potential for knowledge acquisition . Few opportunities for experiential learning in management levels (operational levels only) . Few opportunities to accompany/observe managerial/supervisory work . Almost inexistent opportunities to take paid internships . Lack of interaction with and follow-up from on-site supervisors (no mentoring and feedback) . Derogatory treatment towards trainees . Seeing trainees as free labour . Non-compliance with agreed work schedules . Lack of appreciation or retribution for overtime hours

Source: Own construction

When recalling their experiences as trainees, many *Newcomers*, as well as some *Employees* and *Leavers*, complain not having received appropriate **training and on-the-job guidance**, being left to themselves or relying on fellow employees' generosity, as quotes in Figure 6.9 illustrate. *Newcomers* also report that internship agreements are not always implemented, often resulting in the recurrent need to work additional hours without any compensation, lack of feedback, lack of appreciation for their efforts, or the complete absence of follow-up meetings with the on-site supervisor assigned by the organisation. Previous studies, such as Dagsland, Mykletun and Einarsen's (2015) (although reporting the perceptions of upper secondary school students), have also found that unacceptable treatment, lack of interaction with supervisors and lack of follow-up, were reported as having negatively impacted the learning process. It is important that trainees, identified as such, are given responsibilities and allowed to independently perform the agreed roles and corresponding tasks, beyond simple observation. Most of the internship experiences take place solely 'in-service' since almost any interviewees refer to have gone through a duly structured or especially designed integration process. Trainees are often left to be automatically hands-on, active on the job, as if they were already familiar with work procedures. This raises some concerns regarding the extent internships are being effective learning experiences for most T&H new entrants.

This type of practices does not only not promote students' professional growth – failing to meet the inner objectives of any internship – but can also irreversibly undermine undergraduates' career intentions, as also seen in section 4.3.3, *Expectations and Experiences in T&H*. The *HR Expert* (KEY) corroborates these accounts, emphasising that although some organisations do have good practices, these are the exception, not the rule. He further recognises that the number of trainees who are given an authentic learning opportunity, highly increasing their chances of occupying an entry-level management position, is very small.

As students, we had gone there to learn but we were under a lot of pressure to work as a normal employee. Nobody gave us training; they only spoke to us to assign work. They treated us like kids and ruled over us. (Carla, NEW)

What I felt at the Restaurant and Bar is that I was just there to work, to perform the duties. Many times, no one took the time to explain what I had to do and how I had to do it; I just had to get it done, because there was so much to do. At F&B, we were eight or nine trainees at the same time, and I believe it's not possible to provide training to all of us in the same way. (Claudia, NEW)

On the first day, the internships' coordinator showed us the hotel and where we were going to work. But from then on, I had no further training. I had to learn on my own, nobody taught me how to do things, I had to roll with it, I saw others doing it and did the same. No person was assigned to give me training and the colleagues who were helping me and showing me some things, did it because they wanted to. Maybe they had common sense, or maybe they went through the same, and they were available to help (...) Many times they didn't even call me by my name, they just called me 'trainee'. (Edgar, NEW)

I felt that here in Portugal, they were abusing the role of the trainee. In the US, whenever I was asked to work overtime, I was paid 1.5 times the hourly wage. For example, someone who receives \$10/hour would receive \$15 for each additional hour. This extra money was a huge incentive. (George, NEW)

Figure 6.9 | *Newcomers'* negative perceptions concerning organisational integration and training during their internships

Source: Own construction

Mario (NEW) reported the major exception with respect to training and mentoring, describing the investment his hosting organisation (a renowned international hotel group) did in his integration in the Revenue Management department. Mario benefited of a one-week formal training before being assigned any job tasks. During that week, Mario studied basic concepts, analysed practical cases, and analysed the hotel functioning in the context of the national Hotel industry. After three months, Mario was already performing his tasks independently. This situation can be justified on the one hand by the short duration of many internships. It is also considered to evidence the differences trainees perceive between entry-level management positions and exclusively operational positions. Many operational jobs (such as waitering) are associated with 'easily' performed job, which anyone – qualified or not – can do, when in fact these jobs highly impact service quality, much more significantly than other back-office jobs. Some *Key-informants* share the view that qualification is pivotal for improving the image and status of T&H jobs:

Usually, in a travel agency, a trainee doesn't start right off selling vacation packages. It takes a long period of adjustment. In a restaurant, on the other hand, if you give them an apron, anyone can start waiting tables even if that's all they can do. It doesn't matter if they say something wrong to the customer or if they get the bill wrong. As opposed to other tourism businesses, in the hotel and restaurants sector there's the notion anyone can do that kind of work. (Institutional Representative)

The insufficient training and support that several *Newcomers* account for is perceived as symptomatic of the extent to which organisations resort to internships as an alternative to formally hire employees. If organisations rely on a reduced core pool of employees (considering that under-staffing is a well-documented practice of the industry (Baum, 2002; Poulston, 2009)), this may constitute a disadvantage not only for trainees, who receive limited coaching and guiding (considering the low availability of mentoring staff), but also for these core employees, who are given the additional burden of supervising trainees while performing their usual tasks. According to the *Labour Union Representatives (KEY)*, this a frequent situation, particularly in peak season and in highly visited tourist destinations, often reported to supervisory authorities, yet largely overlooked. This is reported to result in trainee high drop-out rates, particularly in some tourist destinations such as the Algarve.

6.4.3 Perception of valuable graduate skills and competencies

The term *employability* may have different interpretations (cf. Harvey, 2001; see also section 4.2.2). In section 6.2.1, it was presented as an important factor of the T&H's attractiveness, when associated with the employment opportunities that the industry offers. In section 6.4.1, employability was explored from a different perspective: to what extent do university degrees in T&H have been able to endow potential future workers of the skills and competences that make them 'employable' (that is, marketable skills in the form of occupation-specific human capital).

In the present section these skills and competences, interpreted as individual characteristics that result in effective or superior performance, are analysed. Following the notion of talent that was presented in section 2.4 (i.e., talent as skills, competences, abilities and knowledge that can be acquired and developed through formal education and specialised training), these employability skills are expected to ensure that graduates are able to effectively and innovatively apply their expertise in the workplace (Jackson, 2014). More specifically, research participants were asked to identify, based on personal work experiences and knowledge of the sector, which skills and competencies they perceived to be valued by employers when selecting and recruiting new graduates (i.e., what T&H companies are looking for from potential employees).

The skill portfolio for the T&H draws on a bundle of hard and soft skills, which Figure 6.10 illustrates, which are largely transversal to other disciplinary fields. Hard skills include learnable and certifiable task-oriented skills, knowledge, and qualifications. Soft skills consist of personal and interpersonal skills, attitudes, emotion, and character traits. These are naturally more difficult to define, identify, and measure. A review of previous research show that soft competencies are considered the most important for success in hospitality management (Sisson & Adams, 2013). Both research participants and key informants in this study share this view, also placing special emphasis in the importance of soft skills, particularly at entry-level.

One of the key elements to build a successful career in this area, is the ability to develop emotional skills, as this industry is made by people, for people. Soft skills must be enhanced. Technical skills can be acquired whereas emotional skills cannot;

however, they can be enhanced, can be improved. (Human Resources (HR) Expert, KEY)

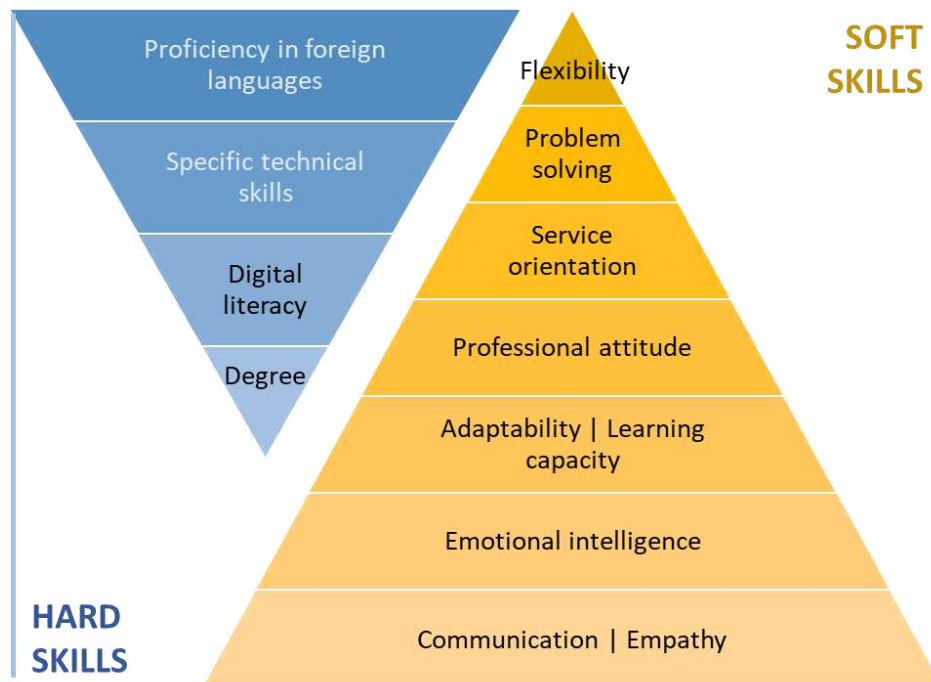


Figure 6.10 | Skill portfolio for the T&H industry

Source: Own construction

Soft skills

Communication skills (mentioned by 10 participants) were described as highly important in a people-industry as in the case of T&H. Such skill set encompasses the ability to orally communicate with all type of customers (e.g., politeness, oral expression, negotiation), to generate empathy (also by listening and relating with others), and easily contact with other people. This has been mentioned in previous research as one of the most desired graduate employability skills, although graduate oral communication skills are frequently reported (by employers) not to adequately meet the industry expectations (Jackson, 2014). Having good communication skills is an important relational tool at the workplace, not only with customers but also, and more significantly, with managers, peers, subordinates, and other external stakeholders. Hence, all relevant managerial activity requires good communication skills. This is particular relevant when operating in different cultural contexts and in face of a diverse workforce (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2005; Kirton & Greene, 2015).

Emotional intelligence, which can be defined as the ability to understand one's own emotions and the emotions of others, was perceived by eight interviewees as involving self-control, behavioural flexibility and discipline, and ability to deal with the pressure/stress tolerance. Mario (*NEW*) refers to this emphasis on an appropriate emotional display as follows:

To be able to work in customer service, it is very important, without any doubts, to have strong emotional skills, as well as the ability to understand the customer. We

must do our best to look happy and available. One of the key aspects is to understand that the client is always right, no matter the circumstances.

Some interviewees refer to this characteristic as one's ability not to 'lose their head' regardless of the nature of customer's demands, whereas one participant specially mentions one's ability to perform *genuine* and *authentic* interactions. This reinforces the notion that the T&H industry is highly prone to emotional labour. As seen in section 3.4, this need to maintain a positive emotional state while working can be emotionally draining. This can be a cause of work stress and further health issues, especially if employees need to frequently engage in surface acting (faking feelings). As suggested by other authors (e.g., Harris, 2009; Lv et al., 2012), research participants' discourse on this matter suggest excessive reliance on employee's self-regulation, that is, the employee as the solely responsible for emotional labour management, benefiting of little organisational support in this regard. This is particularly relevant if considering that the work of a significant number of research participants (71% of *EMP* and *LEA*) involved dealing with customers during most of their time at work (this topic is further explored in section 7.2.4).

Adaptability was also considered an important individual characteristic (with seven references), referring to one's ability to understand and accept change and to positively adapt to new scenarios and constantly changing workplaces. Associated to this, it is also the willingness/openness and the capacity/agility to learn. Professional attitude (mentioned by six participants) refers to a skill set consisting of body language, etiquette and good manners, hospitable personality, and presentation. Problem solving (mentioned by five participants) includes characteristics like being resourcefulness, finding ways around difficult situations, and confidence to provide creative solutions.

Other skills and competencies, some not included in Figure 6.10, were also mentioned, but to a lesser extent, such as flexibility, open-mindedness, responsibility, or collaboration/team orientation. It should be noticed that, mostly due to the nature of the question (which focused on skills *Newcomers* think employers most value), *flexibility* should be interpreted as 'employer-friendly flexibility', which is meant to benefit the employer following an increased competitiveness and profitability rationale (Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão, et al., 2017). The modest references (only two) to team orientation were quite surprising, considering both the relevance this characteristic has been given in previous studies and general literature (e.g., Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Filipe & Aleixo, 2017; Jiang & Alexakis, 2017), and the high importance research participants place in interpersonal and supportive relations at work (section 7.2.4). Curiously, although Millennials are typically described as being more team oriented in comparison with other generational cohorts, both references came from Gen Xers (Victor and Octavio, *EMPs*, both General Managers).

With regards to skills more specially oriented to leadership and people management (such as, for example, critical thinking, conflict management or analytic ability), only one interviewee (*Clara*, *LEA*, *ex-Assistant Manager*) emphasized the relevance of assertiveness and firm attitude in interactions both with work teams and customers, which she believed to be a decisive trait in defining a successful leader.

Hard skills

There is strong consensus that foreign language proficiency is a key, highly valuable skill (referred by 19 research participants). In most participants' opinion, very few employees are fluent in more than one language. English is not only regarded as the most relevant, but also as the minimum required. Other languages (especially other than Spanish or French) are highly valued, especially because these are considered resources that organisations lack. Several *Newcomers* report to still need to improve their mastery of English, believing that internships in other countries can highly help them to overcome this limitation.

Occupational and job-specific technical skills are mentioned only by three interviewees. Technical knowledge and skills are associated with the specific work that a given organisation does and its different functional levels. These three participants held supervisory/managerial positions and share the view that a prospective employee's skill set must be aligned to the job position to be occupied. Maria (*EMP, Subdirector*) exemplifies, in reference to front-office jobs:

The employees' profile must match with the job role, correct? For instance, in the Front-office, the employee must know how to talk, to smile, but the technical and administrative skills are also very important. It's not just talk; the whole invoicing procedure is also part of their job. Any error can jeopardize the information given to the Back-office and other departments.

Some interviewees (also in supervisory/managerial positions) suggest that having such technical skills when joining the organisation are not that relevant in comparison to other types of skills. Many companies are now willing to provide specific training to fulfil this limitation, as long as the prospective employee positively matches other relevant recruitment criteria. Bruno (*EMP, General Manager*) even assigns such responsibility for technical training to the companies, rather than to universities.

As long as the person has got the right attitude, motivation and soft skills required, we [the organisation] are the ones responsible for the training. The market is responsible for providing the necessary training, it must be prepared to receive and train potential candidates according with the corporate culture.

Although George (*NEW*) is still an undergraduate, his already significant experience in the industry (in comparison with other *Newcomers*, George already did four internships with an overall length of 15 months, both in Portugal and in other countries) seem to have shaped his clear vision on this matter:

There are certain skills which are valued and must be within us, but I do believe that emotional skills are highly valued. It is easy for a company to provide technical training on how to set a table, make a bed or do the inventory, but teaching a person how he/she should smile, when to smile, or understanding when and how to approach the client, that can be quite challenging. It is harder to teach a person to be welcoming, to know how to talk or to be available to listen to customer's needs. It is easier to find someone with the so-called soft skills, and then give them the right training you want them to have. A person can graduate with the highest scores but that does not mean they have the required profile. (George, NEW)

George's last statement seems aligned with other participants' notion that holding a Higher Education degree is not a critical attribute, relevant, yet not critical (the role and value of T&H Higher Education is explored in more detail in section 8.5).

Digital competencies are also highlighted, with regards both to hotel-specific software (training which some study programmes provide), and to channel management, social media management or other digital tools proficiency. On this matter, Vera (*EMP, 26 years old*) strongly believes that these are perceived as 'natural' competencies of her generation:

There are requirements that people in my father's generation ((Gen Xers)) demand from people in my generation, such as the fact that I have to know things because I belong to this generation ((Younger Millennials)). I don't have the right to say that I don't know how to do things concerning the Internet and the digital world; they think that because I am young it is my duty to know these things.

This idea is based in the assumption that, as portrayed by early theorists and the popular press, Millennials are 'intuitive', effective, and efficient users of technology. These theories largely rely on the fact that Generation Y was born into technology and never new other reality. Millennials are found to be confident in their digital abilities, daily users of technology, and more knowledgeable of the digital world than their parents. However, many are found to dislike using technology and a significant number do not know how information-seeking, or even the web, works (Combes, 2009).

Transferability of skills

The wide majority of these skills, both hard and soft, is associated with general human capital, hence transversal to other professional areas. This is perceived to constitute both an advantage and a disadvantage for individuals with dedicated T&H Higher Education qualifications, as well as for the industry itself. On the one hand, this transferable skill set allows these individuals to move across the labour market more easily, by enhancing their employability potential (Baruch, 2009). This can be perceived as an opportunity to get a higher quality job elsewhere, particularly in the services sector, if the T&H industry fails to meet their needs and expectations. Many participants believe that other sectors highly value the type of skills and competencies that T&H employees typically possess, making it easier to enrol in a new, different occupation. However, the chances are that workers from other sectors can also easily migrate into the T&H industry, hence increasing competition for the same job positions:

When we talk about company activities, areas such as Marketing, HR, IT, they are similar across all industries, they are not just specific to Tourism. I employ both: people with specific degrees in these areas and people with other type of degrees, because it depends a lot on the profile of the job and the proof of their skills. If we hire someone to manage promotional campaigns across online platforms, perhaps their university degree is not very relevant, but more their understanding of how to sell our type of product. (Major Employer 01, KEY)

Barbara (*EMP, Web Sales Executive*) confirms that she is the only employee in her department with an educational background in T&H (most of her co-workers graduated in Economy). In her organisation, this is also observed across all back-office, including in General Management.

Both the above-cited *Key-informant*, as well as other employers in the industry, are redirecting their attraction and recruitment efforts towards graduates from other fields rather than T&H (many of them with more focused, specific qualifications for the hiring departments (e.g., Social Media Management, Finances, Economy)). According to these employers, the difficulty is solely in convincing more people that hospitality is an attractive career option. Naturally, this poses more challenges for candidates with T&H dedicated qualifications.

Some caution is necessary with this employability rhetoric that connects skills acquisition to certain employment outcomes, as many of these skills typically develop over time, with work experience. Practical training in a work environment, such as that provided by internships, contributes for the development of such skills, but recent graduates tend to face resistance in seeing their skills recognised as ‘enough’ to meet the requirements of certain job positions due to employers’ perceived lack of experience (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). The topic of *previous work experience* as an important factor in recruitment and in validating graduates’ talent is discussed in section 8.2.1.

Lastly, references to the importance of age are also made, in particular to youth and physical appearance. T&H work typically demands aesthetic labour, which refers to “particular embodied capacities and attributes that favourably appeal to customers”; in other words, look and/or sound good (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007, p. 104).

6.5 Summary

Oriented to answer Research Question no. 1 – *What moves individuals towards a degree and a career in T&H?*, Chapter 6 addresses the processes of educational and career choice, expectations, and career aspirations of individuals with dedicated T&H high-level qualifications. Career choice is a complex phenomenon, hence difficult to predict and understand. This chapter aimed, therefore, at providing an understanding of highly educated individuals’ motivations and expectations regarding a future career in T&H, which may offer useful insights for addressing the high employee turnover in the industry.

The T&H industry has been the choice of a growing number of young adults and research focusing on T&H as a career choice with undergraduate students has gained some attention. This research does not exclusively focus on undergraduates’ accounts – which in this study make up the group of the *Newcomers* – but also on the views that *Employees* and *Leavers* have of their choices and expectations when reaching this decisive moment of their lives, setting the stage for their future career directions.

As section 6.2 explores, the choice of T&H as a study programme and anticipation for a long-term career in the industry was found to be motivated by three major groups of attributes. One is associated with intrinsic rewards and an emotional dimension that tends to reflect a more subjective, romanticised view of hospitality work. Working with people is perceived as synonym of variety, non-routine tasks, and intercultural dialogue. The hospitality ‘world’, to which is inherent a certain degree of curiosity and fascination, is associated with interesting and stimulating jobs. Many are influenced by their own leisure experiences, their social milieu, and the media. The second refers to the promising employability prospects that the industry offers.

Generally, participants describe careers in the T&H as offering a wide diversity of jobs in a broad number and type of organisations, extensively growth and progression prospects, and international career prospects. The emphasis on employment opportunities is believed to be more significant in the Portuguese context due to the industry's growth, performance, and awards in recent years. Both perceptions of employability, as well as the 'romanticised' view of T&H jobs, are naturally related to the image of T&H as employer, which was also addressed with more detail in section 8.4. A third group emphasises industry-person congeniality, perceiving hospitality work as a calling and an opportunity to make meaningful contributions either to improve guests/customers' well-being (hence contributing to a positive tourist experience) and the image of the country as a tourist destination. Generally, interviewees exhibit good levels of career confidence, believing that there was a good fit between T&H occupations and their personality, values, and abilities. Several career theories converge precisely at the belief that personal attributes and interests are an important attribute in educational and career choice.

Section 6.2 focused not only on the reasons and circumstances which made them decide for a career in T&H (the *why*), but also on the process of decision-making (the *how*), with a specific emphasis on the control and confidence over their choice, and the accessibility of T&H degrees. A considerable number of interviewees were quite indecisive about their choice, and for some, T&H was the most convenient, *available* option, and previous research also shows that quite frequently, T&H degrees are not students' first choice. Participants referring to evidencing indecision and low confidence levels in their decisions are mainly the same who are driven by the *rational*, extrinsic motivations, largely driven by the perceived job opportunities and the propensity to obtain a job. This suggests that these graduates were not significantly committed to a hospitality career. Taking into account these findings, about the influence that macro-economic environment has on career decisions, future research and tourism industry stakeholders have to consider the fact that Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of such unstable context on careers is still to be seen. In turn, participants who were certain of their choice tend to converge with the remaining two groups of career attributes, being more emotionally driven to this occupation and holding strong perceptions of good fit with it. This suggests that these participants have more successfully developed a Hospitality identity. Successive references to Hospitality work being perceived as a calling, as a passion, as an innate talent, or as honourable occupation were found. The perceived vocation for hospitality work has been identified as a factor influencing the participants' judgements of their QWL, as it is observed in Chapter 7.

Section 6.3 is dedicated to the analysis of the research participants' expectations and ambitions regarding their future careers. This is done by exploring interviewees' preferences, perceptions on the status of different hotel jobs – with particular emphasis on the 'General Manager' ideal –, and their awareness of T&H working characteristics, which could be underlying mismatch of expectations. This analysis revealed that there is widespread preference for management work, despite the varying levels of familiarity with the industry. Apart from the intention for a fast progression, most participants revealed not having very clear career goals and evidenced little agency. Perhaps somewhat as a reflection of the degree choice process itself, the importance given to career planning still seems to be very diminished, and it is not very clear to most interviewees that they will be expected to be proactive agents in managing their own career as new career theories posit. Few are those who set short, medium- or long-term goals or outlined

a strategy to orient their future employment exchange relationships. Despite the importance that is given to vocational guidance/educational counselling in careers literature, this issue is fairly omitted in participants' accounts; when present, is essentially limited to parents' advice or support (or lack of) through their career decision process. It was also observed that the participants' socio-economic background and family support were important in career choice. Participants' accounts also suggest that women tend to receive less family support, with the choice for T&H studies not being well received by their parents, who considered their good academic performance 'worthy' of a more traditional, higher status degree.

Career goals are naturally linked to pre-entry expectations. Besides from the recognition that there are many professions and functions associated with the hotel sector, generally perceived in a logic of job availability, it seems clear that participants, as students, did not have a very clear picture of the profile/description and demands of the different existing positions. Many aspired for job positions with which they had no previous contact with, in their internships or by ever had talked to someone in that job position before. There also seems to be a consensus that the maximum ambition lies with the management of a hotel unit, with a certain image of success and status associated with the Hotel General Manager position. However, when looking at the skills and competencies which are listed by the interviewees as important for career success, there are not as many managerial skills as it would be expected for a future Hotel Manager. This seems to support the fact that T&H careers often lack clear paths. However, and in contrast with widespread views in the industry, the researcher considers that it should not be interpreted as a synonym of unclear or misaligned expectations, as career ambitions should not be necessarily understood as inflated expectations.

Although participants views on their future career options may not be very clear at this early stage – which can be perceived as associated with youth, a certain degree of naivety, and a certain inexperience concerning the labour market –, the majority of the participants in this study seem to be quite aware and knowledgeable of the T&H industry norms, work characteristics and operating modes. Employers often assign the hassles of education-to-work transition to new entrants' unrealistic expectations, and previous research does posit that inflated expectations are found to often result in negative organisational outcomes, including increased turnover, low satisfaction, and a lack of organisational commitment. Many participants reported their desire to progress and take on a management position, but none demonstrated to expect to progress straight into a managerial role, especially due to their little working experience when joining their first employer after graduation (even interviewees who completed their degrees later in life). Many participants emphasised their understanding of hospitality career norms (also discussed in section 8.5), which implies starting their careers at lower hierarchical levels, performing exclusively operational roles, and make their route step-by-step up the career ladder (despite eventual organisational moves).

Section 6.4 is dedicated to the education-to-work transition process, focusing on participants' academic paths and active learning experiences in the form of internships. Not only T&H study programmes are generally perceived as offering challenging and exciting career opportunities, as most participants also make a very positive evaluation of the curricula, considered to have been well prepared for their working lives in the industry in so as far possible. HEI are perceived, by most participants, as gradually making efforts to adjust their delivery models. Solely with

regards to their condition as workers (i.e., labour law, terms of employment, workers' rights) there seems to be a generalised lack of preparation for future new entrants. Those holding a more negative perspective tend to focus on the lack of enough practical knowledge and experiential learning, although none of interviewees (*Employees, Leavers and Newcomers*) have started their careers in the Hotel industry without having been, at least, enrolled in a curricular internship.

In view of a such diverse labour market, the role and responsibility of employing companies in preparing new entrants to the labour market is also discussed, as a 3/4-year degree is little likely to prepare graduates that could automatically fit any organisation. If companies' role was to be assessed based on participants' active learning experiences in their internships, the overall view is not very flattering. A more profound analysis of the design and implementation of curricular internships is deemed necessary, as many organisations are considered to be failing, to some extent, in meeting internships' goals. Training and on-the-job guidance, which are the core of any internship programme, are recurrently referred as missing. In addition, most trainees are assigned to solely operational-oriented internships, instead of actually becoming hospitality management trainees. Section 6.4.2 also addresses the recurrent issue of internships as free labour, to which companies resort as a means to face labour shortages. Trainees are expected to be productive workers, more than to be thought how to 'labour'. Although this may not necessarily hamper their employability or stop them from access more permanent jobs, it does not promote students' professional growth, and it can irreversibly undermine undergraduates' career intentions. This study did not targeted individuals who have quitted on hospitality careers after internships failed to meet their expectations, but it can be perceived from participants' accounts on their internships, that negative experiences made them enter into their future employment relations with greater distrust of their employers' ability to reciprocate at some future movement, as the norms of reciprocity that form the basis of psychological contracts presuppose (as it is addressed in Chapters 7 and 8).

Section 6.4 is also devoted to the identification of skills and competences which are perceived by research participants as individual characteristics that result in effective or superior performance. As previous research also emphasises, the skill portfolio for the T&H draws on a bundle of hard and soft skills, which are largely transversal to other disciplinary fields, and higher importance is placed on soft skills, particularly at entry-level. This highly transferable skill set allows individuals to move across the labour market more easily, by enhancing their employability potential. This is perceived as positive when making it easier to get a higher quality job elsewhere, particularly in the services sector, if the T&H industry fails to meet people's needs and expectations. Although workers from other sectors can also migrate to the T&H industry, the high employability potential of individuals with dedicated T&H high-level qualifications may result in the irreversible loss of valuable and talented employees.

7. Quality of working life in T&H careers

7.1 Introduction

Quality of working life (QWL) is a multidimensional construct that is linked to employee well-being, informed by people's needs and expectations and leading to considerations of work as meaningful, fulfilling, exciting, and other positively perceived experiences that spillover to other spheres of one's life. It is about how a set of work and employment-related factors are perceived and evaluated by each individual. Just as every person will exhibit his/her own and distinctive career path, so as distinctive will one's assessment of the positive and negative factors influencing work life be. Meanings are constructed based on subjective criteria that are expected to change over time and that are influenced by specific work/organisation-related factors, individual factors, and external factors.

Subjective experiences of QWL, as an essential dimension of employee retention and career success, have been gaining visibility within HR management literature, but studies focusing on T&H employees are still scarce. Although analysing some characteristics of the research participants' jobs, this chapter essentially draws on the subjective dimensions of QWL by examining the experiences and perceptions of these individuals, informed by their characteristics and preferences. This chapter is, therefore, oriented to answer Research Question no. 2 – *How do highly educated individuals conceive quality of working life in the hospitality industry?*

As explored in Chapter 3, eight dimensions emerged from the extant literature, both generic and industry specific. The first part of this chapter is aimed at examining how individuals perceive these different aspects of their work, while trying to understand how these have been informing their career development decisions (which are then further explored in Chapter 8). Following data generation and analysis, six 'new' major dimensions emerged as domains of job and organisation-related aspects that are composed of twelve more specific sub-dimensions. By focusing on the meanings that individuals construct around the concept of QWL, the second part is aimed at identifying the dimensions that most impact individuals' work experiences and retention, hence underpinning career longevity in the T&H industry.

7.2 Dimensions of quality of working life in the Hospitality industry

This section is based on research participants' subjective assessment of quality of working life (QWL), which allows to uncover how certain job characteristics are valued and impact overall perceptions of QWL and, consequently, retention and career permanence. Although some objective measures are presented for several dimensions and aspects of work, to set the context for the participants' narratives, this section is predominantly built upon subjective measures.

Research participants' accounts of their career and work experiences were analysed according with the eight main conceptual dimensions identified from literature review (see section 3.4), which have informed protocols for data generation in the empirical study: (i) job content and work organisation; (ii) pay and fringe benefits; (iii) recognition and appreciation for work; (iv) opportunities for advancement, development and growth; (v) job security; (vi) interpersonal and supportive relations at work; (vii) health, job stress and emotional demands; and (viii) work-life balance. Following data generation and analysis, these eight dimensions were subject to reinterpretation, subdivided into more narrow categories and regrouped into six new dimensions, outlined in Figure 7.1 and detailed along this chapter. These dimensions are also aligned with the negative and positive aspects that typify T&H work, as presented in section 2.3.1. Four of these QWL dimensions and retention factors are associated with the 'job' level, while other two are clustered in the 'organisation' domain. These two groups are believed to influence individuals' views on their permanence and withdrawal in the T&H industry.

The theoretical basis of psychological contracts draws on social exchange and on the norm of reciprocity (section 4.4) – hence the centrality of reciprocity as a unifying element, as presented in Figure 7.1. The fulfilment or positive experience of each one of these dimensions/'obligations' would lead to reciprocation through positive work attitudes and behaviours. Overall, it is observed that the evaluation that research participants make of the different QWL dimensions presented thereafter, are largely underlined by how they evaluate the exchange relationship.

In employment relations such as those explored in this study, there are two parties in the exchange relationship: the employer and the employee. Shore and Barksdale (1998) proposed that the exchange agreement between employers and employees can be categorised in four types, as both their obligations can range from high to low. When the employee perceives that the relationship between the two parties consists of high levels of both employee and employer's obligations, the exchange relationship is balanced (hence called 'mutual high obligations'). This type of relationship reflects a strong social exchange in which the employee perceives that they owe the organisation a great deal and the organisation is also highly obligated to them. When both employee and employer have low to moderate obligations ('mutual low obligations'), the exchange relationship is also balanced, but on a weak way. The employee with a mutual low obligations exchange feels that with limited effort they can maintain the employment relationship and they expect a limited amount in return from the organisation. Additionally, there are two types of unbalanced exchange relationships, which seem to represent the majority of the cases reported by the research participants. When employee obligations are perceived to be higher than employer obligations ('employee over-obligation relationship'), individuals feel indebted to the organisation due to the good treatment by the company. In the other hand, there are unbalanced relationships that consist of low

employee obligations and high employer obligations (the ‘employee under-obligation relationship’), in which employee are likely to view they own part of the exchange having been fulfilled in past, whereas the organisation has not reciprocated. As a result, not only employees believe their current obligations are low and the organisation owes them a great deal, but they are also likely to perceive that their psychological contract has been violated. As it will be addressed for each QWL dimension, most employment relationships in the Hotel sector are described as unbalanced; more in particular, ‘employee under-obligation relationships’ recurrently configure the assessment of most research participants (*Employee and Leavers*).

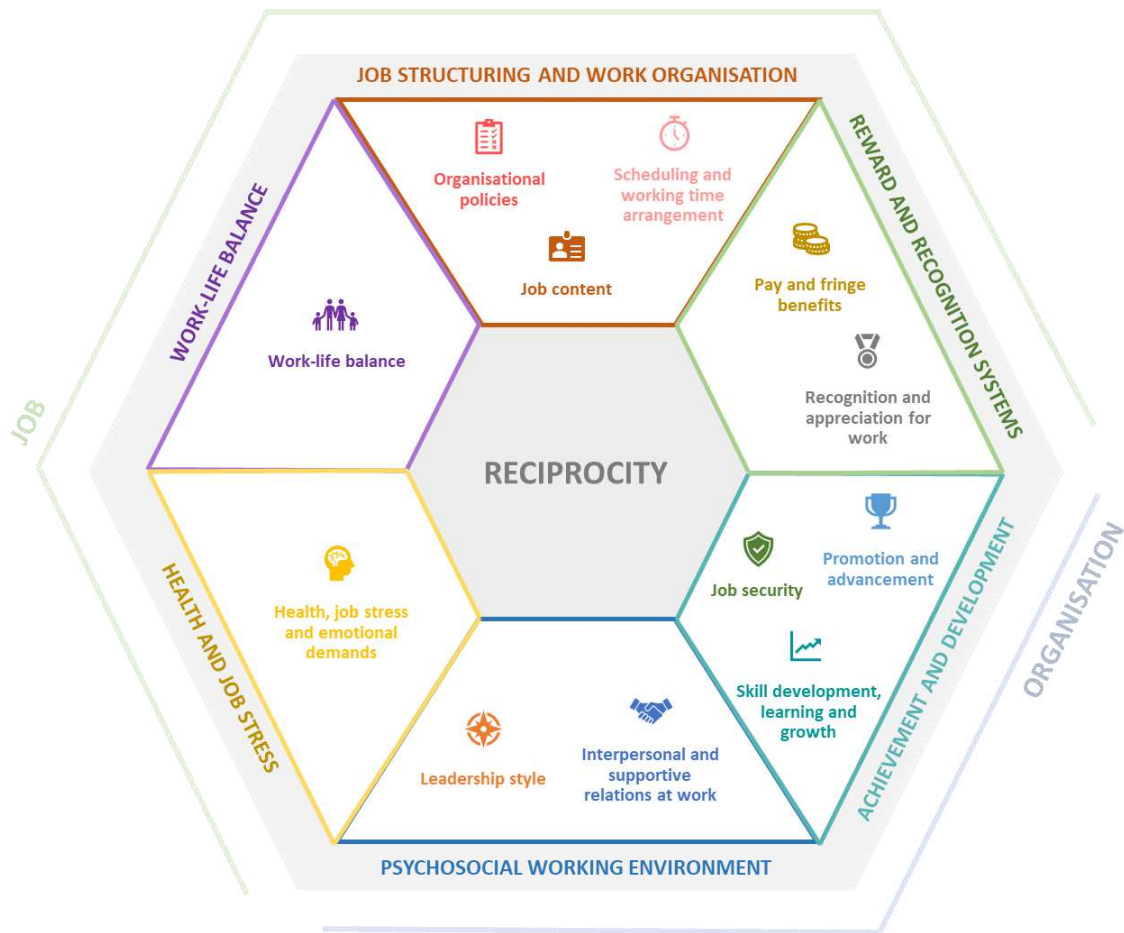


Figure 7.1 | Dimensions of QWL in the Hospitality industry: a revised perspective

Source: Own construction

7.2.1 Job structuring and work organisation

Drawing on the different aspects of work examined in section 3.1, *Job content and organisation*, three main subdimensions stand out as characteristics of the role/job (Figure 7.2). **Organisational polices** concerning job structuring and work organisation are interpreted, in this study, as relating to role clarity, communication processes, feedback, and performance appraisal. **Job content** is, in turn, interpreted as the constituents of work tasks and activities in

the form of workload, interesting and challenging work, and autonomy. The third subdimension, **working time organisation** is focused on how work is planned and organised via production processes and work scheduling. Workload is, however, to some extent a shared feature between these two latter subdimensions, considering that it is contingent on work scheduling and work pace (although not exclusively).

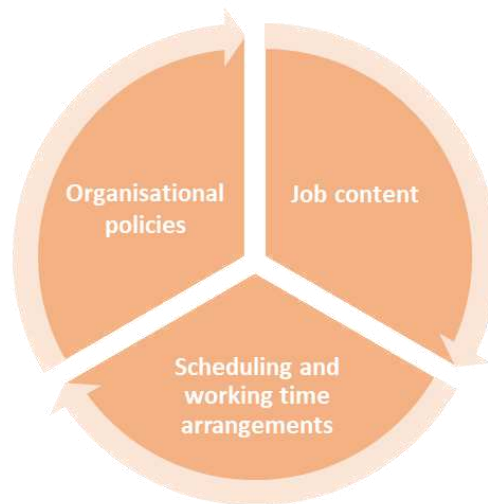


Figure 7.2 | Job structuring and work organisation: subdimensions

Source: Own construction

Organisational policies

Goal clarity is one of the factors that influence employee retention (P. Ghosh, Satyawadi, Joshi, & Shadman, 2013). However, the T&H industry is described as endowed with high levels of informality and ambiguity, particularly when it comes to small and independent businesses – which made the majority of the Portuguese T&H businesses –, run under autocratic and often ‘amateur’ management styles due to the lack of adequate or industry-specific qualifications (Guerrier & Deery, 1998). This means that many employees are not given detailed **job descriptions** and the output of their work is subjectively defined (M. Riley, 2019), as the following quote reveals:

There is often no communication, no dialogue about what is expected of people, what their responsibilities are. I have job descriptions for some functions, but I am aware that there are many companies that do not have that. I think there is still a long way to go at that level. (Celeste, EMP, General Manager)

This ambiguity concerning the definition of **objectives and expected results**, to which performance appraisal/evaluation is naturally inherent to (M. Riley, 2019), is frequently reported. Several participants refer that the definition of achievable and measurable objectives impacts their perceptions of QWL and career success. Mostly research participants who work(ed) for hotel groups refer to be given somewhat clear directions regarding their role, responsibilities, and objectives in terms of expected results. Victor (*EMP, General Manager*) emphasises that in his organisation, not only they have very detailed job descriptions that both

the General Manager and the new entrant must agree and sign upon hiring. Although a highly structured description and strict boundaries of tasks may be perceived as constraining employees' autonomy and control (Blomme, van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010), role clarity allows employees to well understand their job role and expected results, hence being related to employees' likelihood of leaving their job (OECD, 2017; Walton, 1973; Warr, 1999).

In most cases, interviewees refer that quantifiable objectives are not established or properly communicated to the staff, which is closely related to the lack of transparency that was previously explored in section 8.2.1. Even when objectives are communicated, employees often lack the resources and tools to achieve them, which leads to higher frustration. In fact, only Octavio (*EMP, General Manager*) highlighted such concern with providing employees with concrete guidance on how to achieve the proposed objectives, rather than just evaluate them. Only nine *Employees* and six *Leavers* mention to be given specific objectives. It is also noted that in some departments the definition of objectives is more easily implemented, as it is the case of Sales and Events. Nine of these interviewees hold/held top and middle managerial positions, which may suggest that organisational objectives are not fully communicated to operation-level employees, at the base of organisational hierarchy. This suggests that neither employees are involved in decisions that directly refer to their work, neither organisational commitment is being fostered. Previous research suggests that employees' favourable perceptions of internal communication has positive effects on job outcomes, including enhanced job satisfaction, job performance and productivity, as well as good relationships among staff (and between staff and managers or other organisational members) (Cockburn-Wooten, 2012; Goris, Vaught, & Pettit, 2000; Harris, 2009). Communication is also of paramount importance in building trust, which is a central premise of psychological contracts (Robinson, 1996).

Not only the definition of objectives is related to **performance evaluation**, but also allows the creation of individual indicators for promotion and meritocracy, so career progression is not reduced to organisational tenure or subjective criteria. Without establishing performance goals, no objective and fair metrics can be used to measure and reward achievements and service performance. According to the *Institutional Representative (KEY)*, at the basis of the definition of achievable and measurable objectives lies a great potential for improving both employee motivation and organisational performance. As many organisations do not define performance-related objectives, there is both no way to motivate neither to evaluate. The payment of salary supplements according with objectives fulfilment (i.e., the employee receives a share of the revenue), which is not a common practice, is suggested by several participants as an interesting solution to both stimulate and control productivity, yet contingent on transparency.

Comparisons are also made between independent and chained-hotels, as Amanda (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*) recalls that even at top management levels, she worked for a hotel where only ambiguous numbers were defined; no budgetary goals were defined, nor what she would gain if those goals were reached. When working for a national hotel group, forecast meetings were frequent and strategies on how to reach the targeted budget were discussed, she also reports. Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager*), also referring to a national hotel group, states how communication follows two distinct routes in her organisation, both in reference to expected objectives and feedback:

We all have well-defined goals. Towards the end of the year, we are all subject to evaluations, everyone including Management, Front-office, and Back-office employees. All of us are evaluated by our supervisors and the supervisors are evaluated by the General Manager. We also do our self-assessment, we evaluate, and we are evaluated. At that time, the objectives for the following year are defined. We have qualitative objectives – such as increasing the Booking.com score or maintaining the HACCP level – and quantitative goals, related to monthly financial targets. The General Manager communicates the values to the departments and everyone in that department has information on what the goal is. It also helps people to remain interested in knowing how much we have already earned, how much is missing, what additional effort is needed. And, of course, there is a reward when we hit the targets.

As described in section 3.4, receiving **performance feedback** can contribute to reduce role ambiguity as well as to increased job performance effectiveness, provided that is useful and constructive (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; OECD, 2017). Good communication practices with staff members also contributes to increased perception of recognition, respect and staff involvement in decision-making (Kusluvan et al., 2010). Traditional performance evaluations are being increasingly replaced by 360-degree feedback evaluation, in which the employee evaluates him/herself (self-evaluation), as well as both evaluates and is evaluated by other organisational actors, including peers, supervisors, subordinates and customers. However, in the *HR Expert's (KEY)* opinion, the Portuguese Hotel industry is still lagging as far as such type of practices are concerned, as only few hotel groups implement improved evaluation methods, hence portraying the scenario describe above by Marisa an exception rather than the norm. Amanda (*LEA*) and Barbara (*EMP*), for example, refer to the fact that most employees in non-managerial positions are merely *the evaluated*, but never *the evaluators*, thus being given little opportunity to provide feedback on organisational measures and practices. Moreover, few participants receive proper feedback on their performance assessments, which may suggest that many organisations have access to important information about employee performance and organisational climate, but do not make full use of this information. This is corroborated by the *OB Expert (KEY)*, who states that in most cases employees are not provided with the tools and resources to achieve the proposed goals and the desired performance levels; it is not just about what to improve, but how to improve it:

When you do organisational climate studies, more important than the studies themselves, is to understand what you are doing next, to see what aspects have deserved Management's attention. Because if these metrics are applied and then have no effect, it loses credibility with employees.

Role ambiguity is pointed out by several studies as one of the most common stressors for both employees and managers (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, 2008; Cho, Choi, & Lee, 2013; Mohamed, 2015). For two *Leavers* and one *Resolute Job Leaver* (a category that applies to *Employees* and is further described in section 8.3.1), task/role clarity was highly determinant in their withdrawal decisions. Aurora (*EMP, Receptionist*), working for a four-star independent hotel, mentions how the absence of task boundaries negatively influences her well-being at work, gradually contributing to growing levels of dissatisfaction with her current job and increased desire to leave, by exemplifying:

Since I've been at the Hotel, I have been at the Front-desk, but we do a little bit of everything, we make breakfasts, when necessary we help in the rooms. Just yesterday, which was Christmas Day, we had a lot of people in the Restaurant and I had to go and clean the restrooms because the Chambermaids were all off duty (LLL). My problem is not with actually cleaning bathrooms, that's no skin off my nose, but we do a little bit of everything, nobody really defines who does what, and that becomes... ((hesitation)) confusing. Receptionists are the ones who have to clean the Lobby and the Front-desk, because the Chambermaids are entitled to not have to clean our workspace too.

Laura (LEA, ex-Assistant F&B Manager), who also worked for a four-star independent hotel for 10 years, describes how she was kept hopping around different job positions across multiple departments, according to the hotel staff needs at a given moment. Overall, she has moved across five different sections, yet officially maintaining the same professional category and wage scale over seven years (hence not fitting the notion of a job move as this has been interpreted in this study). The 'correction' only happened when she pushed her manager to do so, and the salary differential came in the form of an overtime exemption allowance.

After 3 months ((of internship)) I signed a contract and started in F&B, but for seven years there my professional category remained as Sales Promoter, which I rarely did. I was never asked what I wanted to do or what I thought, they simply moved me between sections as needed. (...) When my contract was renewed, I went to Front-Desk (...) Then I went to Sales Department. Then I went to Reservations, because the hotel had been restructured, the Front-desk Supervisor was changed, and a Reservations Department was created. But as the problem was always the lack of personnel, sometimes I was at Reservations, sometimes I was at the Front-desk. Then I went to F&B again, because the person in charge there was leaving, and the General Manager wanted to prepare me better to take on these tasks.

According to other testimonies, Receptionists seem to be particularly prone to multi-tasking, i.e., **functional flexibility**, especially in smaller-sized organisations, mostly by supporting the Porter, the Housekeeping, or the Bar/Room Service. The multi-tasking ideal typifies much of hospitality work, and together with job rotation is described in previous research as positively influencing job satisfaction, strengthening team-work, contributing to a deeper understanding of the business and its objectives, and increasing employee commitment (Rowley & Purcell, 2001). It also facilitates employee movement across departments, which is particularly important to meet potential labour shortages due to demand fluctuation or unforeseen events (S. Park, Yaduma, Lockwood, & Williams, 2016). Although there is evidence suggesting positive effects of job rotation, Oldham and Jimeno-Ingrum (2015) highlight that it merely means changing assignments, thus not being the same as job entrenchment, which implies a change in the nature of the job itself, such as increased autonomy. Following her above-cited testimony, Laura recognises that job rotation allowed her to acquire new skills, yet not bringing her any other desirable consequences, as other aspects of her job (e.g., autonomy, salary, official job category) were not subject to change.

Xavier (EMP, General Manager) posits that multi-skilling is an important hiring criterion – aligned with the notion of employer-flexibility, as described in section 6.4.3 –, as the more knowledge an individual has beyond his/her function, the better he/she will understand the organisation's

dynamics. However, according to participants' accounts, as exemplified above, multi-tasking acquires double interpretation consonant one is an employee or an employer/manager. "Functional flexibility enables multi-skilled workers to perform various jobs (...) according to demand, thus maximizing labour productivity. [But] multi-skilling differs from multi-tasking, because the worker is trained in different skills" (Lucas, 2004, p. 42). Participants' accounts suggest that functional flexibility is mostly perceived as following a HR management approach focused solely on meeting staff shortages and/or inadequate staffing in operational departments (hence being frequently associated with work overload), rather than a logic of multi-skilling that would benefit the employee through the acquisition of transversal skills and enhanced marketability, while still benefiting the organisation.

Job content (Intrinsic features of the job)

Functional flexibility is closely related to heavy **workloads**, as employees are required to assume multiple roles to face the growing requirements and staff shortages. Overload is the most frequently discussed Area of Work-Life (a theoretical framework shortly addressed in section 3.3) as it is consistently associated with burnout, especially with the exhaustion dimension.

Many T&H organisations resort to outsourcing and/or casual workers in order to manage peak demand, but several participants refer that cost management has becoming stricter and middle managers are left with little room to reinforce work teams when necessary. Budgetary goals are referred to increase every year while work teams are kept with the same size; eventually people are able to achieve the expected goals but become gradually worn out. Clara (*LEA*), recalls the difficult staffing management that she was expected to perform as Events Manager:

We had a rule of one employee for every 20 customers, but there came a time when it was one to 30. The Head Waiter would ask for three extra ((casual)) staff, when we had a big dinner, for example, because we didn't have enough people in house, and I would said 'no, sorry, but there will only be two casuals'. And it is not easy to manage this, because on the one hand, I had pressure from above to try to reduce the cost of extra staff, but on the other hand, I had a team that was, in some ways, unmotivated, tired and already working at their limit.

Work overload can be either quantitative or qualitative and occurs when people cannot meet the demands of their job by having few recourses; in other words, having too much to do in little time with too few resources (Leiter & Maslach, 2004). Laura and Clarice, both *Leavers*, mentioned to be asked to work several days without any time-off – up to 15 days – in order to replace for colleagues on holidays or sick leaves, by accumulating tasks and work shifts. It is consensual that heavy workloads and increased responsibility and commitment with customer service – considering that customers have been gradually become more demanding – highly increase job demands. Most interviewees in non-managerial positions, including *Newcomers*, report that there are few people working, which is congruent with previous research, which has also found that employees believe their workplaces to be under-staffed (Poulston, 2009).

The definition of objectives and expected results is also associated with **job challenge**, with several research participants referring to prefer interesting, enjoyable, and intellectually challenging work (Figure 7.3). As seen in previous sections, a significant number of participants are highly driven by the opportunity to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities (6.3.1)

and, for some, this was the main reason for changing employing organisations (7.2.3/8.2.2). Previous research supports that the greater the extent to which individuals find that their jobs include challenging, comprehensive, and diverse work the less likely they are to search for alternative employment and desire to leave their organisation (Blomme et al., 2010; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). The opportunity to perform intrinsically challenging work is a central tenet of contemporary careers theory, and some studies also suggest that this aspect of work is particularly important for Gen Xers and Millennials (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Challenging work is linked to autonomy and employee empowerment, which are also a function of social support and an appropriate style of leadership (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). For the research participants in this study, performing challenging and interesting work represents an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained at university, as well as a chance to prove themselves as talented individuals. This is congruent with interviewees expectations that a higher education degree could be a differentiating factor in the labour market. This view is shared by the *Institutional Representative (KEY)*, who posits that due to being largely assigned with operational jobs which required a less complex skill set, recent graduates tend to find their tasks of little interest and challenge and thus feeling that their skills are being under-utilised (see also section 8.5). The perception that the job utilises one's skills and talents well is one of the assumptions of fit with the organisation proposed by the job embeddedness construct (Mitchell & Lee, 2001). As most participants do not consider this to be truth, it is likely that poor perceptions of compatibility with the current employers are being formed, hence hampering their desire for remaining with the organisation.

On a personal level, I would like to do something that would stretch me and demand a little more from me. Because what I do now is always the same, [I would prefer] something that would compel me to give a little more than I do in my day-to-day. (Benjamin, EMP, Doorman)

I think what is missing is the power to know more. I would love to know more about how prices are set, for example, what it would be like to work in Revenue Management, which is very interesting. I'm just a Receptionist here, we are blinkered, and nothing is in our hands. (Amelia, EMP, Receptionist)

It is not to underestimate the job, because I learned a lot while I was a Receptionist (...) But when there's a strong likelihood that you stay as a 2nd Receptionist for 10 years, then I say 'No, thank you!' Because, personally, I believe that I have the capacity for more and the ambition for more. I did not take a five-year degree, just to stay in the Hotel Front-desk, for that I would have just taken Professional Studies. Not that my colleagues with Professional Studies were not very good at their job, but I had other skills that were of little benefit there. (Veronica, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

Figure 7.3 | Perceptions of lack of job challenge

Source: Own construction

The recognition of graduates' competencies is also associated with the degree of **autonomy** they are granted to act in their day-to-day work (a theme addressed by nine participants), by giving

the employee freedom of action, opportunity for independent thought and the possibility to make decisions about issues which they perceive to be within their professional domain. Amelia (*EMP, Receptionist*), who has worked for several hotels, believes that T&H graduates tend to be interested in understanding how different types of organisational policies and procedures (e.g., pricing policies) are designed and enjoy having some leeway when dealing with customers, but are rarely given that opportunities when working at entry-level, operational positions. Autonomy may also involve a certain degree of flexibility in decisions involving workload and work time arrangements, i.e., decisions which impact on the immediate circumstances of their job, which most interviewees in non-managerial positions report as clearly absent, as described further below. Autonomy in job design is presented in previous research as a career development strategy that would affect employees' perceptions of QWL (Li & Yeo, 2011). Karasek (1979) highlighted that although many jobs are characterised by high demands, differences in job satisfaction and strain between executives and line workers can be explained by differences in decision latitude. This is also observable in this study, with operational-level employees reporting how the lack of autonomy negatively influences their job satisfaction, whereas for managers this is not perceived as a problem. Both as per the Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model and Karasek's Job Demands–Control model (section 3.3), autonomy is one of the core job dimensions underpinning motivation at work and positive individual and organisational outcomes.

Scheduling and working time arrangements

Long working hours, irregular and family-unfriendly/unsocial work schedules, are probably the most cited characteristics of T&H work. This aspect of work is also highly associated with work/life balance and work/non-work conflict due to negative spillover and lack of time out-of-work. From the perspective of the spillover theory, employees expending great physical effort and time at work are less likely to have available time and disposition for family and other non-work activities (J.-H. Lin, Wong, & Ho, 2015; Sturges & Guest, 2006) (see also section 7.2.6). When questioned regarding the average number of **weekly working hours**, the participants of the pre-test (described in section 5.5.1) found extremely difficult to indicate an weekly average due to the unpredictability of their work schedules (i.e., not only different work days had varied length, as the number of weekly off-days were not always fixed); as a result, this is one of the questions that had to be changed in the interview protocol, which was already illustrative of participants' work schedules.

Research participants are found to work, on average, 10 hours per day. As exhibited in Figure 7.4, more than 65% of *Employees* and 85% of *Leavers* work more than the contractual eight hours and report to frequently do overtime. The participants who claim to work an average of 12 or more hours a day occupy middle/top management positions, namely as General Managers, Assistant General/F&B Managers and F&B Managers. This suggests that although managers typically enjoy of higher schedule flexibility, they are also more prone to be working more hours due to inherent role responsibilities. The maximum number of daily hours was mentioned by Clara (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*), who explains how this was a common feature of her workday:

For the first few months, I lived in the hotel, and I say 'I lived' because I did live there, they gave me a room. I would wake up, start work at 8:30 am and go back to my room

at midnight or 1 am. This was daily, five days a week, with days off on Monday and Tuesday. I achieved a work rhythm that no one can imagine.

These findings are supported by the work of Costa, Carvalho and Breda (2011), which using data from the nationwide Employment Survey, found that Tourism workers have the highest amount of weekly working hours in the whole economy.

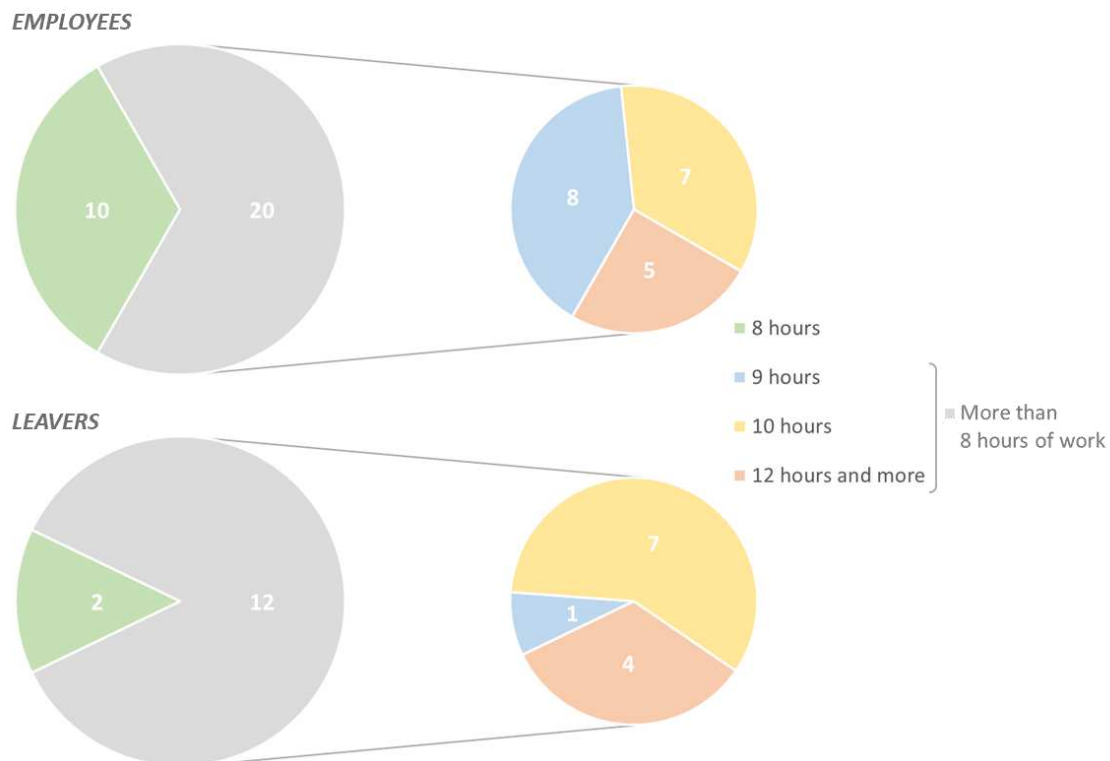


Figure 7.4 | Worked average hours per day
Source: Own construction

At the beginning of the interview, *Employees* and *Leavers* were asked to choose from a set of scheduling options applicable to their current/last job, which are presented in Figure 7.5. All *Employees* and *Leavers* were full time staff members performing shift work ($n=19$, mostly Receptionists and Waiters), having a fixed working schedule ($n=13$) or having flexible working hours ($n=12$). This exemption of fixed working hours/overtime is typically assigned to employees who because of their job duties and responsibilities or level of decision-making authority, are required to work an uncertain number of hours to accomplish the goals of their job position, mostly General Manager and some Departmental Managers. This scheduling arrangement is usually monetarily compensated through the payment of an overtime exemption allowance.

For about a third of the interviewees ($n=35$), working on weekends and holidays on a regular basis is a core characteristic of their work schedules. This is applicable for the same proportion of managerial and non-managerial positions. In common these participants have, instead, the fact that many of them are in permanent contact with customers, hence in frontline service. The

interviewees who do shift work are also prone to be working on evenings ($n=25$) and/or night time hours ($n=8$). All interviewees who work night shifts are Receptionists with rotating shifts (two women and six men). Two of these *Employees* have been previously employed as Night Auditors, but changed jobs at the earliest opportunity precisely due to the fact of having fixed night shifts, which they consider to negatively impact their sleep routine and consequently, their general health (see also section 7.2.5). Overall, only eight participants report to only work weekdays, six of each with a fixed schedule. All these interviewees work in the Sales, Reservations and Purchasing Departments or as Deputy Managers.

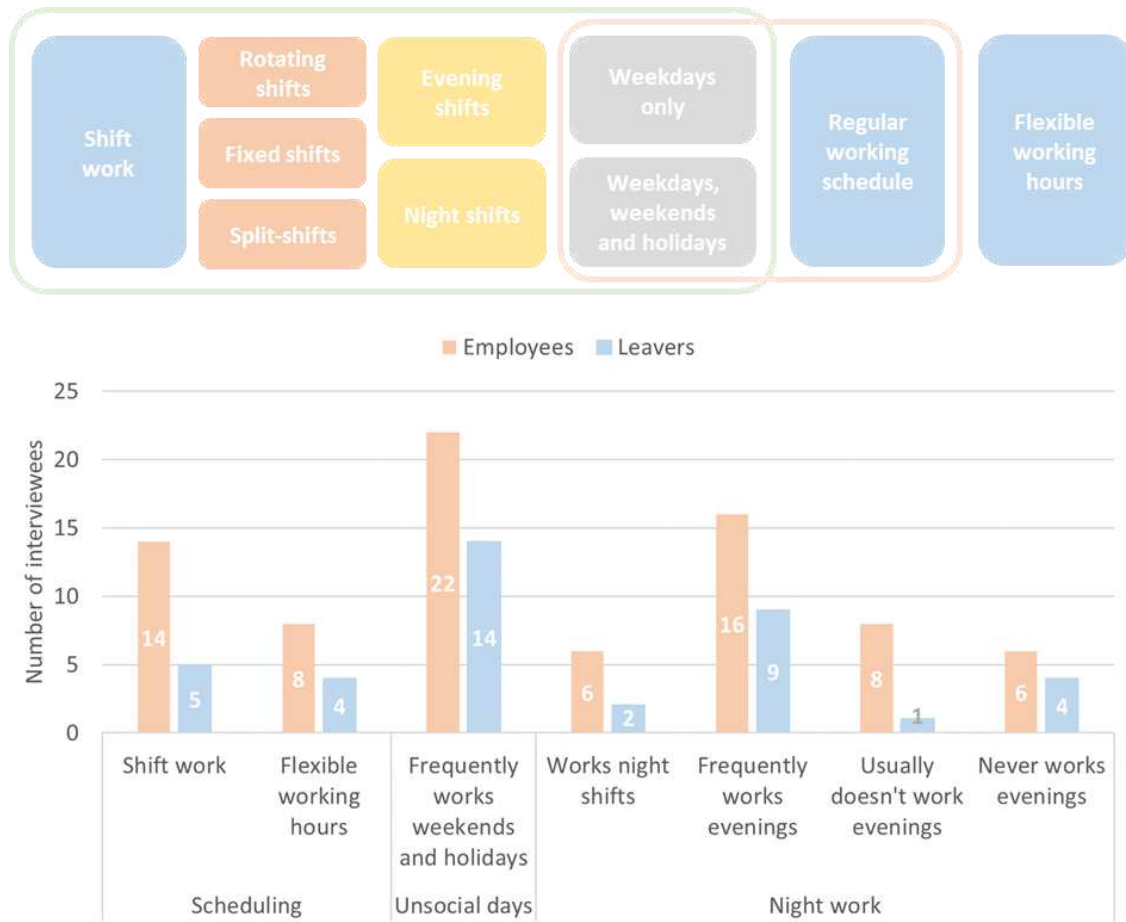


Figure 7.5 | Working schedule characteristics

Source: Own construction

Numerous references to the excessive working hours on a constant basis are found in participants' accounts, either when working in regular schedules or in shift work. Excessive working hours are naturally associated with overload, as previously addressed, due to the assignment of excessive tasks and/or insufficient staffing. Several participants refer to have a time of entry but never a time of exit due to a variety of reasons, so far that there a common expression is used by several interviewees:

In Hospitality, the time is set in stone, we arrive at the agreed time, but God knows when we leave.

To more fully understand this issue, **frequency** has also to be accounted for. When overtime becomes very frequent, interviewees tend to interpret this situation as a psychological contract breach. People are aware, and generally being told when hired, of the need to occasionally work overtime, especially due to demand variations, and are overall willing to do so; conflicts arise when staff feels that this is a recurrent practice, not limited to peak season, and their rights are not being respected. Overtime compensation is typically regulated by General Labour Law, with few Collective Bargaining Agreements addressing this issue. In most cases, overtime is not paid (only above a certain threshold) but rather banked to be taken as time-off or additional holidays at a time in the future that is agreed between managers and staff. However, most participants complain to never be allowed to take that leave on days of their choosing and several interviewees, mostly working for independent units, report that overtime is not even accounted for and compensated. According to the *HR Expert (KEY)*, this system does benefit the employee but is often undermined by employers. In his opinion, most employees are not satisfied with banked hours, because managers put too many obstacles concerning the enjoyment of these days-off.

Several interviewees refer that mostly due to events, clients showing up/leaving latter, or unforeseen problems (either internal to the organisation, either external, as in the case of hotels that typically host last-minute guests due to flight delays and cancellations), overtime is frequent – at a daily basis. In preliminary research, reference was made to the under-staffing practices of most organisations; for example, the *tournant* is the employee in charge of replacing colleagues at the Front-desk in their days-off, as well as covering shift change. However, organisational structures became flatter and, mostly due to cost management, staff is limited to the bare minimum, which led job positions such as the *tournant* to practically disappear, obviously putting additional burden on the core staff. Even *Newcomers* point working schedules as one of their biggest concerns, based on their internship experiences:

I worked 10 days in a row, and on the 10th day I worked from 9 am to 3 am of the next day, because there was an event at the hotel. (Alexandra, NEW)

I always did nine or 10 hours of work. It got to the point, where in a single day, I worked hours that were equivalent to almost three days of normal work. (George, NEW)

Beyond excessive working hours, the major constraints identified by research participants as far as their working time arrangements are concerned, are associated with **irregular working hours**, as the testimonies in Table 7.1 allude to.

For almost all participants shift work was an expected feature of hotel work and no major problems are associated with shift work *per se*, as Virginia (*LEA, ex-Guest Relations*) accounts for while emphasising the impact such work organisation practices have in the management of employees' personal, non-work time:

I already knew that in tourism you work in shifts and that these shifts will be varied, and sporadic events will appear. But another thing is not to even know what our schedules for the week or month ahead are. I worked both day and night, sometimes I worked eight days in a row, sometimes I had four days off; you can't organise a life

like that. Another thing is when you know your shifts, when you know that you will work four days and take two days off, that there will be a month when you won't take the weekends off, but then you will have a Sunday the next month. And so, we can plan our personal lives and manage our daily necessities.

Most participants acknowledge both positive and negative things about shift work, typically the same benefits and constraints found in the literature, as described in section 2.3.1 (e.g., having off-time in weekdays). Although some participants refer to have preference for not having a routine, monotonous job, as seen in section 6.2.1, this routine is applicable to their job role and tasks, not to working schedules.

Table 7.1 | Irregular working schedules

<p><i>You work in the morning, and then the next day at night, and then the next morning, this does not allow you to have a routine. Doing these types of schedules, my sleep patterns were all over the place and that made it hard to be in a good mood, which, ultimately, reflected in our work. (Carla, NEW)</i></p>	<p><i>We all know that in Hospitality there are no easy schedules and we have to work during the holidays. But the fact that the schedules are not fixed, that they vary a lot, from week to week, schedules and breaks were always changing... I don't think I ever got used to it. (Oscar, NEW)</i></p>
<p><i>There is no fixed schedule, no fixed days off. Even as a trainee, I only had a weekend off on my 3rd month at the hotel (Emilia, NEW)</i></p>	<p><i>It is exhausting not to have a routine. Many people complain about the routine, we don't have a routine here. In one week, we work from 7 am to 4 pm, the next week from 5 pm to 2 am, and not having a regular sleep pattern makes things very complicated. (Elisa, EMP, Front-desk Supervisor)</i></p>
<p><i>Working in the Bar was not quite what I saw myself doing in the future because those jobs require too much sacrifice. The Bar closes at midnight, but if we have a customer, we cannot close on time, we cannot tell customers that they have to leave. So the bar is always open until later, until 1 or 2 am, until the customer wants to go to the room, and until then, we can't leave. (Michael, EMP, former Waiter at the Bar)</i></p>	<p><i>I do 3 days and 2 nights in the Front-office, because I have to cover the Night Auditor. I have a fixed schedule for my days off. But it is a bit unfair because my days off, in theory, would be Friday and Saturday, but Saturday night I'm already coming in at midnight. Therefore, I never have 2 days off, it ends up being a day and a half, because although I have the whole Saturday off, I have to organize my time to come in at midnight. (Samuel, EMP, Receptionist)</i></p>
<p><i>We had a day off per week and I only worked in the morning shift; I would come in at 8 am but had no fixed time to finish my shift, and with one day off per week you have no life. As much as you like doing what you do, there is no life, it is very difficult. We are not even given the weekends that we are entitled to, because there aren't enough people to do the work. (Amelia, EMP, Receptionist)</i></p>	<p><i>In this role, if the guests arrived at 3 am, I had to be there at that time. I might not do a full shift, but I had to be there to receive customers. I used to do more than one shift, because there was a customer arriving at one time, but another was arriving I don't know how many hours later, and I had to be there to greet both. (Virginia, LEA, Guest Relations)</i></p>

Source: Own construction

Most participants working in shifts, work with rotating shifts and rotating days-off. It is claimed that working in fixed shifts may be either positive or negative, depending on which shift people are working. Typically, fixed night shifts, evening shifts (up to midnight) or early shifts (e.g., starting at 5am) are perceived as detrimental to people's health (due to routine and interference over sleeping hours) and work-life balance (when incompatible with other family members' schedules), considering that in organisations with such type of work time arrangement there is no flexibility to change shifts if necessary. However, criticism is considerably higher when split-shifts are concerned. Although this is a common practice in F&B Operations, mostly in the Restaurant (and in the overall Restaurants sector), several Key-Informants consider that this paradigm is changing, mostly due to the difficulties in recruitment for such job positions (as such working schedules are typically combined with low wages). In addition, many employees with rotating shifts have their working hours set on a monthly, or even weekly, basis. This means that employees only get to know their working schedule for the following month only a few days before the current month ends. Particularly those working in F&B Operations refer that their working schedules are defined just a week ahead and it is frequently subject to changes according to demand variation.

Some participants ($n=8$) also mention that many of the abovementioned constraints are due to the fact that many organisations fail to comply with the law. This is highlighted by many participants with reference to weekend days-off or insufficient rest time between shifts (e.g., time-off when rotating from an interim shift for an evening shift) and work weeks (e.g., just on day off after a six-day work week), which, as further explored in section 7.2.5 (*Health, job stress and emotional demands*), are highly associated with occupational stress.

Excessive working time can be interpreted as a matter of **workplace culture**, which is not exclusive to the T&H industry. This aspect of work is particularly highlighted by supervisory/managerial staff and participants who had work experiences in other countries from which the Portuguese culture highly stands out. Employee engagement and performance is still highly associated with the number of hours at the workplace, which is congruent with the foregoing observation that many organisations do not define goals and objectives for most job positions. Without other metrics to evaluate employee performance, the number of hours spent at the workplace become the most frequent indicator, despite the fact that it cannot be linearly associated with productivity. Hence, employees may not feel comfortable leaving early/on time or to demand the enjoyment of time off (even if entitled to, as the result of banked hours) (Mulvaney, O'Neill, Cleveland, & Crouter, 2007). The culture of *presenteeism*, i.e., being at work without being productive or fully functioning, is rooted in both employers and employees. Typically associated with masculine work cultures, both managers and employees are instilled into spending many hours at work if they want to thrive in that organisation and in their careers (Deery, Jago, & Stewart, 2008; Doherty, 2004). However, in the 2015 reprise of a meta-analysis of relevant literature on talent management, work-life balance and retention strategies in the hospitality industry, Deery and Jago (Deery, 2008; Deery & Jago, 2015) found that presenteeism was a more significant area of concern in the review of 2008. This may suggest that more than staying at work merely 'to be seen', as the authors posit, long working hours may be due to actual work overload and/or to a poor organisation of work processes that leads to inefficiency and poor time management.

Celeste (*EMP, General Manager*), who works in the Hotel industry for 17 years and has worked for seven different hotel companies, many of them renowned international hotel groups, sets the comparison:

In countries like Germany, the philosophy of work is very much at the basis of planning, there is a rule that people must be productive, which in Portugal they are not. They are not productive. People get lost in what is not essential, they are not focused. In Portugal, if we look at international hotel chains, they are much more productive than national ones, because international ones instil their working practices, a set of procedures that are boring, but they make things happen. They create a pattern, a consistency; things are not exactly automated, but everything functions faster and more fluid.

Reporting to the UK Hotel industry, Barbara (*EMP, Web Sales Executive*) shares the same view, highlighting that if the staff needs to spend more time at work, it is because managers are failing in work processes planning; however, very clear productive indicators exist to measure and improve process efficiency. This idea is also reinforced by most *Key-Informants*, who concur that very often this is indicative of a desire to show that one is giving his/her best and is always available:

*Generally speaking, as companies have no way of evaluating each person perfectly, they limit themselves to evaluating two or three aspects that are easy to determine: their attendance record, punctuality and how late they stay compared to others. There is an excessive valuation on hours and the culture of working more than 8 hours a day.
(Major Employer 01, KEY)*

This work culture not only drives employees' job stress, as it also negatively impacts work-family conciliation and drives role conflict. It is, therefore, not surprisingly that several studies focus on the impact of this long working hours culture on work-family dynamics, specifically when it comes to managerial roles (Cullen & McLaughlin, 2006; Mulvaney et al., 2007).

Excessive working time can also be interpreted as a trace of workaholism (i.e., working beyond what is required) (Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008), yet this is not a prevalent feature of hotel work as reported by the research participants. Four participants, three male General Managers and one female Assistant Manager, refer to spend/use to spend more hours at work than those needed by choice, both due to work enjoyment and desire to oversee certain work processes. However, if considering that this justification to spend more time at the workplace and endorsing a greater focus on work is provided by top managers (who enjoy of higher job discretion and autonomy at work), who are in their majority men, it may be likely that many women do not share this same perception of their own workaholism. Not only women take the bulk of domestic activities, such as housework and caregiving for children or other families, as they are more likely to be pressured by societal norms, hence rating workaholism traces lower than men usually do (Beiler-May, Williamson, Clark, & Carter, 2017).

Many research participants, when initiating their careers, shared the desire of reaching supervisory or managerial job positions, which as seen in section 6.3.1, are not only associated with higher status and pay, but also with increased autonomy, challenge, and responsibility. Twenty-three research participants hold ($n=14$ *EMP*) or held ($n=9$ *LEA*) a supervisory/managerial

position. Given the relevance that the 'General Manager' ideal has in new entrants' conceptions of their future jobs (as explored in section 6.3.1), some **pros and cons of supervisory/managerial positions** were also identified within participants' accounts.

These interviewees do confirm that the higher the hierarchical level, the greater one's flexibility in managing their own job tasks and, most importantly, their working schedule (noting that 11 participants are/were exempt from overtime/a fixed working schedule (Figure 7.5)). They acknowledge the relevance that such type of working arrangements or just their authority level have in the management of their personal and family lives, which is one of the most significant challenges in T&H work. However, as the Hotel industry operates on a 24/7/365 basis, these benefits are not so linear and full availability is also required. This because it all depends on the level of responsibility associated with each job position. Some interviewees also stress that is common practice in many organisations that supervisors are also expected to substitute colleagues who are absent (for taking sick leaves, parental leavers or any other reason) or on their days-off/holidays (thus compensating for short-staffing in their departments), in addition to their usual duties, hence resulting on increased workload. Mostly Assistant Hotel Managers (both *Leavers* and *Employees*) report the biggest difficulties in managing their workload and responsibilities despite flexible scheduling. "Management positions tend to require long working hours – often 60 hour work weeks – thus usually demanding "total devotion" as a sign of loyalty" (Wahl, 2011 as cited by Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, Torres, & Wahl, 2018, p. 399). This was, in fact, the main reason that made Olivia (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*) decide for a career change. She was being groomed to become the General Manager of a four-star family owned hotel (namely by being offered specific external training). Her workload was continuously being increased and she was offered a room at the hotel where could stay permanently, which would mean being available 24 hours a day. The perspective that the situation would become more severe with the increased responsibility of a job promotion was a decisive factor in the withdrawal decision.

Mulvaney et al. (2007) present hotel management jobs as particularly challenging when it comes to work-family dynamics. Hotel managers' work-family interface is described as influenced both by the industry and the organisational context, as some characteristics are common in this business as a whole (e.g., long and irregular hours, face time, 'paying your dues' culture or relocation) but are present to different degrees across different organisations. As addressed in section 7.2.6 and 8.2.4, work-family reconciliation is also influenced by traditional gender roles and stereotypes. All General Managers highlight that when problems or unforeseen circumstances arise, at any time of the day or night, they must be available. General Managers are also expected to be present at all important moments, such as the testimonies in Figure 7.6 exemplify. This means that work-life balance can either being facilitated and hampered due to flexible work. These and other issues of the work and family/non-work relationship are discussed in section 7.2.6.

In both Sales and Events or General Management positions, we are given more responsibilities and are on call at all times; however we also have the possibility of being in charge of our own lives and not waiting for a manager to make our schedules or tell us which days we are allowed to take off. We can plan our private lives. We are offered 'flexi-time', which is interesting, it is really the only way to compensate the extra hours. We have some scheduling decisions in our hands. But at the same time, these are positions of responsibility, so if something happens, we also must be present and have to help, to solve problems. But yes, I believe that the higher you are in the hierarchy, the greater the possibility of owning your destiny and your time. (Xavier, EMP)

For many years I had the habit of arriving at the hotel between 8 am and 9 am and only leave after dinner; it wasn't every day, but sometimes it was for even more hours. I had flexible working times but ended up going to work every day. On Saturdays and Sundays, it wasn't normal to be there all day, but I would go in the morning or for a few hours. We just get so used to this rhythm. Even on New Year's Eve, I used to insist on being there to close the annual accounts; because of the transition from one year to the next, I wanted to be there to check all the reports. I dedicated a lot of my life to that, and I'm happy for doing so, everyone I know who works in Hospitality is very dedicated. These are areas where you have to look very closely at details, which requires us having our 'radars' always working. (Martin, LEA)

It depends on the responsibilities associated with each position. As a Receptionist, my working hours were ok, sometimes I would do an extra hour, or an hour less, but the scheduling was good. As an Event Manager, it was more complicated, because events have a time to start, but don't have a time to end, and we just can't send customers away. As a General Manager, there is greater freedom in time management, because I can schedule meetings for more convenient times. But the responsibility in management, in the back-office, is much greater, which even makes us to, even after we get home, spend many hours organising working plans, team vacation calendars, etc. I don't see any advantages in terms of time management; there is greater freedom, but there is greater responsibility, which often requires us to take work home. (Julia, LEA)

Figure 7.6 | General Managers' accounts on the pros and cons of holding a managerial position: special focus on working time arrangement and availability

Source: Own construction

7.2.2 Reward and recognition systems

Reward and recognition systems are central to the HR Management function, typically addressing two sets of areas: pay/compensation and benefits – largely defined as monetary return that employees receive in exchange of their work – and recognition and appreciation. The main purpose of such areas is to attract, motivate, and retain talented individuals. These are, therefore, the two sub-dimensions explored in this section. Although initially considered separately, as when described in section 3.4, these dimensions are found to be highly related and mutually influential, hence interpreted here as an important combination of employee motivators. Not only these dimensions strongly influence perceptions of career success as also constitute important tools that organisations can use to promote positive job-attitude and retention (Choi, Cheong, & Feinberg, 2012; Nickson, 2012; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015; Walsh, 2016).

Some literature suggests that promotion opportunities and job security can also be considered a form of reward, and although linkages to recognition and higher pay are also mentioned in this study, these two other dimensions are analysed together with a third one in section 7.2.3, under the label *Achievement and Development* (Figure 7.7).



Figure 7.7 | *Rewards and compensation systems and Achievement and development: sub-dimensions*

Source: Own construction

Pay and fringe benefits

Pay – adequate, fair, and enough to meet one’s needs – is a recurrent constituent of models of quality of life and well-being at work, and probably the most controversial topic within HR management in T&H. Although this job aspect was not pointed out as highly decisive when choosing a T&H degree and career – as seen in section 6.3.1, only two references were made regarding expectations with high pay – a considerable number of references to remuneration are found in participants’ accounts. Pay defines a worker’s status and standard of living, and can affect motivation and commitment to work (Lucas, 2004). Pay levels are regulated by labour market forces, but also by internal organisational policies. As is to be seen in this chapter, perceptions of inequity in reference to organisational policies are largely addressed by participants. Employee turnover is therefore typically indicator of problems with pay differentials (M. Riley, 2019)

Starting with a more objective stance, more than half of *Employees* indicate their gross monthly remuneration to be placed between 581 and 1,000 Euros, whereas more than half of *Leavers* were being paid between 751 and 1,500 Euros when working for their last employer (Figure 7.8).

Although the same number of female and male interviewees ($n=9$) indicate having a salary of more than 1,000 Euros/month, a slightly higher number of female participants are found in the lowest three salary levels (14 women in comparison to nine men earn up to a maximum of 1,000 Euros/month). The major differences are perceived at the highest level of pay, considering that only one woman is paid more than 2,500 Euros/month when compared to four men. All these five interviewees naturally hold top-management level positions. As presented in section 2.3.1 (*Gendered nature of employment*), women in the T&H sector are consistently found to be paid less than male workers for comparable jobs (Bakas, Costa, Breda, & Durão, 2018; Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2014; ILO, 2010). The Tourism sector is found as being one of the widest gender pay gaps, with women earning up to 26.3% less than men (Costa et al., 2011). Despite

overt discrimination is pointed out as the main determinant for gender pay gap (Carvalho, 2017; Santos & Varejão, 2007), when directly questioned about this, a very limited of female research participants do actually acknowledge the existence of gendered pay discrimination (this and other forms of gender-based influences on the workplace are discussed in section 8.3). These women see this as ‘this is how things are at the labour market’, normalising it, and not seeing it as an indicator that their careers are subject to gendered stereotypes’ influence. In fact, Carvalho (2017) suggests that this type of perceptions are largely due to individuals’ own conceptions of what constitutes discriminatory behaviours or not.

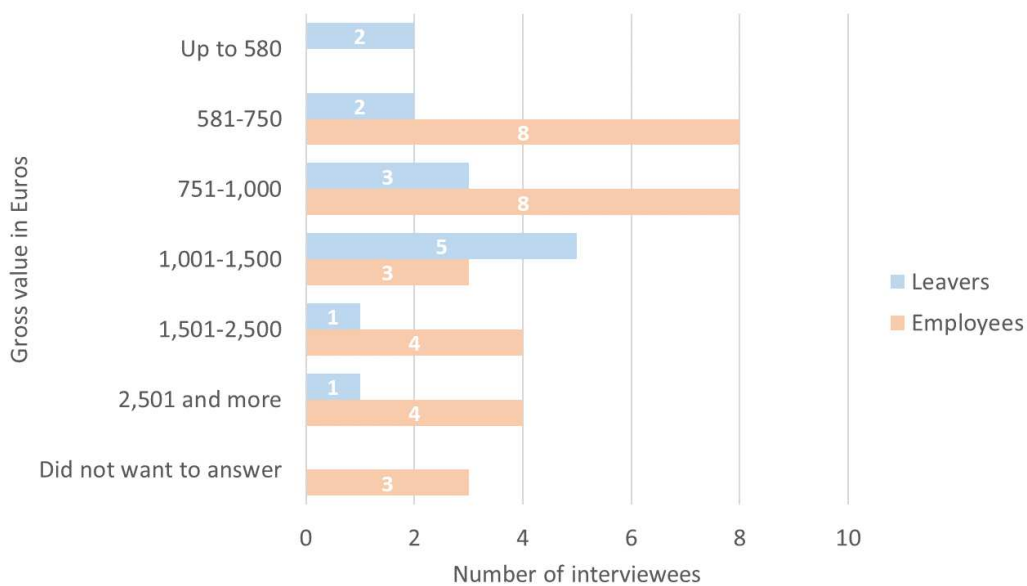


Figure 7.8 | Gross monthly remuneration

Source: Own construction

All the eight General Managers participating in this study indicate to be paid more than 2,500 Euros/month, except for two who are/were based on Central Portugal and the Alentejo. The other top managers were based in Lisbon and in the Azores. Regional wage differences, including at higher hierarchical levels, were specifically mentioned by one participant Julia (*LEA, ex-General Manager, seven years in the Hotel industry*) as one of the main reasons to be dissatisfied with the hotel sector. According to Mercer Consulting’s *Total Compensation* (2019) study, in comparison with Lisbon, salaries in the hotel sector are about 11 per cent lower in the North of Portugal and eight per cent lower in the Algarve. In Julia’s opinion, even if the differences in the cost of living in different locations are considered, the gap is quite significant, considering that a General Manager’s attributions and responsibilities are not that different. Although tourist demand may not be as high as in urban/coastal regions, such as in Lisbon, she argues that there are already many upscale/luxury hotel units in the countryside/inner regions applying higher rates and with high levels of occupancy. In addition, she believes that General Managers in destinations with lower tourist demand face increased challenges in financial and HR management while in attracting new customers.

When looking more closely at departmental differences, it is observed that wages in the Front-office hardly surpass the 1,000 Euros/monthly level. From the 11 *Employees* at Front-of-the-House positions, only one (*Samuel, Receptionist, working for a national hotel group*) reported to be paid above average, which was naturally referred as one of the most positive aspects of his job, in addition to also be rewarded with a share of the RevPar when the hotel is fully booked. The lowest wage level (up to 580 Euros/month) was reported by two *Leavers*, who after two years in the industry considered this remuneration standard to not adequately meet the high demands of their jobs and the terms of their psychological contracts regarding salary progression.

From a more subjective perspective, all research participants concur on the fact that the T&H industry is, as a matter of principle, a low paid professional area. As seen in sections 3.4 and 4.3.2, literature suggests that satisfaction with rewards largely depends on the perceived discrepancy between what one believes one should receive in exchange for their effort and contribution, and what one really receives. This is precisely the core tenet of the Effort–Reward Imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996, 2017) (see section 3.2), which posits that the imbalance between work efforts and the rewards from work violates the norm of reciprocity that constitutes psychological contracts, thus having negative consequences for workers' performance and well-being. Some interviewees also mention that there is substantial and disproportioned pay variation between the lower and the higher levels of the organisational hierarchy, which they believe to be associated with operational employees' perceptions of low and unfair pay. Individuals compare the ratio of their own inputs and outputs to the ratios of others, and although pay dispersion may increase effort and boost higher performance levels (though increased competition for better paying positions), if pay differences are perceived as very large and unequal, this may yield a negative impact on motivation and satisfaction (Downes & Choi, 2014). From a fairness perspective, pay differentials lead to feelings of inequality, injustice, and dissatisfaction, being likely to harm performance levels and hamper group dynamics (Bloom, 1999). The popular business press has consistently focused on the growing disparity in wages between top managers – typically described as 'overpaid' – and lower-level, but there is still limited research examining intrafirm, interrank (i.e., vertical) pay dispersion between the highest and lowest organisational levels and its implications for individuals and firms (Connelly, Haynes, Tihanyi, Gamache, & Devers, 2013). To the researcher's knowledge, research on this issue in the T&H industry is even further limited. Previous research suggests that a real or perceived lack of fairness in the distribution of pay (i.e., distributive justice) has a more significant impact on job satisfaction, organisational commitment or turnover, than low pay *per se* (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2005; Gaertner, 1999; Sirgy, 2012).

Starting with a more **positive outlook**, four *Leavers* and three *Employees* do classify their wages as appropriate to their tasks and responsibilities (only three hold managerial responsibilities). Some note they would obviously like to receive/have received a higher pay, but do not negatively rate their remuneration level. In addition, it should be noted that several participants ($n=12$) commented on the remuneration standards of the industry but did not want to develop their insights on their own wages. With this regard, Manuel (*EMP, General Manager working for a national hotel group*) argues that no person is ever fully content with his/her salary and no person would ever say not to desire a higher pay. This idea is referenced by the two *Major*

Employers (01/02-KEY), who acknowledge that salary is always the job feature with lower rating. In Manuel's view, many of the people who complain about their remuneration, do it for not having properly negotiated conditions when being hired. However, after being questioned directly by the researcher about what the real power of negotiation of operational employees would actually be, Manuel admitted that such employees' control over their hiring terms is quite lower than in supervisory and managerial levels. In preliminary research, several references were made to the fact that General Managers typically enjoy higher flexibility in wage negotiations and the industry would face high difficulties in hiring, especially at top-management levels, if just sticking to official wage scales.

In Portugal, salaries for the hotels and restaurants sectors – as well as other terms and conditions, rights and duties of both parties – are fixed by Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) which are negotiated between employers' associations (on behalf of the employing organisations) and trade unions (on behalf of workers), either with national and/or regional scope (an example of a CBA's wage scale for the hotel sector is presented in Appendix VII). Several General Managers interviewed in this study, as well as some *Key-Informants*, namely the two *Major Employers (01/02)* and the *Employers Association Representative*, highlight that most hotel groups and many other hotel units are already applying their own, internal wage scales, which are quite higher than the values defined in CBAs, as the following quotes reveal:

We pay, on average, at least 100 Euros more than our competitors do. We pay more in order to attract workers easily, because we are a large hotel chain, we have a good annual income, so we have some financial flexibility to make this decision. (Manuel, EMP, General Manager).

In my group, I may pay the minimum wage to about five people. I don't have any chamber maids earning, even close, to the national minimum wage. Not only are we paying more than what's defined by CBAs – so the Government can increase the national minimum wage, it wouldn't make a difference –, as we also give other benefits. There is also a big discrepancy depending on the location. In Lisbon or Porto, if we paid the CBA minimum agreed wage, we would not be able to hire anyone; everyone is paying more than this minimum value. (Major Employer 01, KEY)

Both the *Major Employers (01/02, KEY)* and the *Employers Association Representative (KEY)* do not fully share research participants' opinion on the low paid standards of the T&H industry, that is that wages are low, but not as bad as most people believe. *Major Employers 01 (KEY)* stresses that in Portugal wages are generically low and, when in comparison, there are many other professional areas with much lower pay levels than the T&H industry. Both the *Employers Association Representative* and the *Institutional Representative (KEY)* believe that the compilation of statistics combining the hotel, the restaurants and mass catering sectors does not benefit the former, as wages in the restaurants and mass catering sectors tend at lowering the average publicised wages for the overall industry. In addition, statistics very often refer to basic salary and do not include several allowances that are due to many employees, mostly frontline, such as food allowance, foreign languages proficiency allowance or cashier allowance; although, as seen in section 7.2.1, not all these conditions are always upheld even when due. The *Trade Union (KEY)* also remarks that the above-mentioned justification may be truth for higher job positions and higher pay levels but is not applicable to operational roles. This

viewpoint is shared by the HR Expert (KEY), who refers that statistics do not allow to accurately analyse pay differentials, stating that if salaries above 3,000 Euros are isolated, average pay drops significantly.

In fact, when analysing salaries and earnings in Tourism jobs, Carvalho (2017) verified that earnings and hourly earnings in the hotel sector are lower than in rest of the economy (even when accounting for bonuses, allowances and remuneration for overtime work). The same was also observed for graduates, who enjoy higher salaries in the economy as a whole than in the hotel sector. This reinforces the notion that higher education degrees are not particularly valued in the T&H industry (Costa et al., 2012; Petrova & Mason, 2004). When examining the origin of wage differences in the hospitality sector, Casado-Díaz and Simón (2016) also verified that highly educated employees are the most penalised, by earning lower wages than they would obtain with similar jobs in the rest of the private sector.

References are also made to **fringe benefits** that are offered by many organisations, but which are commonly overlooked. One of these benefits relates to food, considering that employees are typically allowed to do more than one meal at the workplace (although in most cases food allowances are not paid due to the existence of dining areas/services for staff; only one interviewee referred that his company pays for food allowance while still providing a basic food service at the workplace). The extent to which the provision of food at the workplace is perceived as a benefit is not consensual, as several participants refer to the poor quality of the food as a major source of dissatisfaction in many hotels. *Major Employer 01 (KEY)* also mention health insurances for employees and their families, reduced rates at the hotels of the group, or gifts/special programmes for employees' children. Yet, only four *Employees* and two *Leavers* refer to have been granted such type of benefits. Vera (*EMP, Reservations Clerk*) was, at the time of the interview, starting the process of changing jobs, mostly motivated by a benefit package that her future employer was offering (both the job tasks and wage were similar), which included: Easter and Christmas monetary bonuses, health insurance, discount in health insurances for family members, sick leave allowance, discounts in gyms, laundry allowance, reduced rates at the hotels of the group, training courses (beyond the minimum required by law), day off on birthday, among others. All the foregoing benefits were being offered by national and international groups or luxury independent hotels. It is therefore not surprising that some *Newcomers* refer to perceive extra benefits to be mostly associated with large hotel groups.

Considering the **negative accounts** on remuneration issues, it is observed that 13 research participants negatively rate their wages, mostly due to the reasons pictured in Figure 7.9 and described further below:

"I believe I am low paid because my salary is not..."

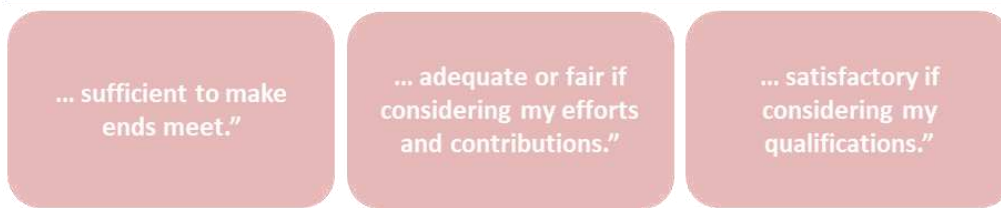


Figure 7.9 | Main reasons underlying negative perceptions about remuneration

Source: Own construction

- i. The salary is **not sufficient to make ends meet**, either when employees are working outside their region of residence or when costs of living are too high. Riley (2019) presents pay as an aspect of work that people reflect through comparisons, with absolute value of pay being one of the facets to which pay is compared, in particular the extent to which it accompanies cost of living. Vera (*EMP, Reservations clerk*) and Joel (*LEA, ex-Purchasing clerk*) recall that Lisbon is a very expensive city and it is highly expensive to buy or rent a house. This was, in fact, one of the reasons why several *Leavers* opted for a career change, because while money was not the most important factor, the hotel sector would never allow them to earn 'enough' to follow a satisfactory lifestyle. Joel (*LEA, three years in the industry*) was invited to enrol in a different job position in Lisbon, implying higher responsibility and workload (mostly for being associated with a hotel opening), and thus tried to re-negotiate his pay grade; the organisation was neither open to consider a monetary increase, nor to support housing or commuting expenses. Elisa (*EMP, Front-desk Supervisor, 11 years at the industry*) reinforces the idea that it takes a long time until an employee reaches a more comfortable position, money-wise, which often leads to comparison with other professional fields:

When I started working here, it was in a much more precarious position. Now I can't complain much, but it takes a long time to reach a level that is reasonable, so that you can support yourself financially. And with such a volatile profession, with such remuneration, it is normal for you to think about other jobs in which it would be easier for you to live your life.

- ii. The salary is **neither adequate or fair when considering efforts and contributions made**, as well as the high job demands, as the following quotes exemplify, especially when considering: the circumstances described in section 7.2.1, such as long working hours, shift-work, work at weekends and holidays, and work overload; the physical, psychological and emotional demands described in section 7.2.5; and the lack of leisure and/or family time, reported in section 7.2.6. Expended effort, as in the form of how hard one has been working for, is another facet to which pay is usually compared (M. Riley, 2019).

It is not enough to work only eight hours, it has to be 10 or 11, but to receive only for eight. Because this is different from working 10 and receiving 10, and

then we shut up, that's how it is, we say nothing. When we sign a contract that says we are going to work five days a week, eight hours a day, which is 40 hours a week, and we are told that, exceptionally, there may be a day when they need us. But these cases become daily and then the person begins to tire and think: 'my salary is the same, I don't have time for my family, I don't have time for my hobbies'. (Hugo, EMP, Receptionist).

Having a basic salary and also the possibility to work nights or overtime, one can always earn a little more, but if you are on a fixed shift, from 7 am to 4 pm, not having overtime or the night shift allowance, the salary turns out to be a little low, knowing that we have to work Saturdays and Sundays. And then there are results that we have to achieve, there is pressure to reach those goals, but we receive nothing extra when we attain them. I have been here since the hotel opened, the hotel has grown and continues to grow, but we have stagnated in terms of salary. (Lucas, EMP, Receptionist)

In addition to being there many hours, they still called me when I was at home and expected me to work outside my hours and solve problems for the hotel, and still only receive the wage of a 2nd Receptionist. They never considered promoting me to a 1st Receptionist position. Staff were not paid allowances for foreign languages or for handling cash; we were never offered food allowances. I did not receive more than the minimum wage, stipulated by law, there were no increases over the years, there were never bonuses or incentives. (Clarice, LEA, Receptionist)

Some *Key-Informants* share this view and stress the need for companies to re-think their working times and processes, in order to reduce job demands, mostly regarding personal and working life mismatch.

- iii. The salary is **not satisfactory if considering the employees' level of formal qualifications**, especially when considering the influence that holding a university degree has in expectation formation regarding future career outcomes, as previously discussed in sections 6.3.2 and 7.2.1. Six participants point out this reason as highly influencing their satisfaction with pay. This naturally leads to comparisons with other professional fields in which job demands are perceived as not so high (especially the fact that are not required to work weekends and holidays or to constantly do overtime) and employees with higher qualifications also receive higher wages, even if with less work experience. In addition, participants also refer to earn the same as colleagues with lower qualifications, while performing similar (or the same) tasks and holding the same responsibilities. Still according to Riley (2019), the pay of selected others is a facet of particular interest, given that it is dependent on the criteria they been singled out for comparison; in this case, holding inferior educational qualifications.

Whether the remuneration I currently have is fair and adequate? No, it's not. Especially for those with Higher Education. So where is the difference in taking a 3-year degree? I don't think there is any differentiation. (Eva, EMP, Receptionist)

Wages are completely disappointing. On top of that, I'm in a hotel where, in most departments, we have highly educated people, who have Master's and Postgraduate degrees, and who feel they cannot earn in order to get return on what they have invested in their education. (Valentina, EMP, Sales and Events Executive)

[I don't think the remuneration was adequate] because I graduated, I did a lot of extra specialised training, to then always receive little more than the minimum wage, which is worthless. So, you don't have any motivation to continue working. (Alice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

As referred in section 3.4 (*Pay and fringe benefits*), the country's tax system largely also has implication for employees with different employment conditions (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011), as Jaime's (*EMP, Assistant F&B Manger, Waiter for five years*) testimony evidences:

Even as an Assistant F&B Manager, [the salary] is not very high, but as a Waiter is really, very low. In this hotel group, all the extra hours we worked were listed on the pay slip. This means that sometimes this could imply a change in salary tax steps and would fail to compensate, it would be better if we did not receive those extra hours. There were months when I made 300 Euros in overtime, but then they ended up being deducted from me in taxes, so I didn't even receive the pay. I felt I was being penalised, I was working more, but the extra money never came.

Given the foregoing, it is not surprising that employees comply with practices such as evasion of payroll taxes, by formally declaring a lower salary than what is actually paid; this issue is also supported by preliminary research and other participants' accounts (and addressed with more detail in section 7.2.3, Job security).

It is also important to bear in mind that "at macro level, as part of the tourism sector, hotels share common characteristics which affect career opportunities. They are vulnerable to global threats, suffering unpredictable as well as seasonal fluctuations in revenue and return on investment" (Mooney et al., 2017, p. 361). T&H-related businesses are historically-recognised as extremely volatile and susceptible to events (natural, political, social, economic, etc.) which are difficult to control; the COVID-19 outbreak being the most vivid and recent example. There is why VUCA has become a trendy acronym to portray Tourism activity in general, standing for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity. Pay structures naturally become one of the most affected. Several General Managers confirm that although the sector is performing at its best (prior to the pandemic), average prices and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as RevPAR or GOPPAR are still very reduced in comparison to other equivalent destinations, which conditions pay structures.

We have a problem with the average price, although it is better than ever, but if the number of hotels continues to grow as it is, we will never be able to place the average price at a level that gives the investor enough return to keep looking at the business and thinking 'this gives money, then I will pay more to my workers or I will give better conditions'. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)

As seen in section 3.4, recognition can assume either the form of tangible/monetary rewards and/or socio-emotional/non-monetary rewards. In reference to **tangible rewards**, these are mostly aimed at performance appraisal in view of the achievement of budgetary targets and other objectives (e.g., customer retention, customer evaluation), which typically consist of annual monetary bonuses. Only six research participants (three *Employees* and three *Leavers*) refer that this is/was common practice in their organisations, and with regards to one participant it only happened once in six years. In such cases, beyond the bonuses that are exclusively directed at managerial staff, all employees in the interviewees' organisations are/were granted the bonuses. Celeste (*EMP, General Manager, 17 years in the industry*) was the only to refer being awarded by her achievements as Area Sales and Manager when working for one of the most renowned international hotel groups. As previously mentioned, at the operational level, Samuel (*EMP, Receptionist, working for a national hotel group*) not only describes his pay as satisfactory and above average, as he and all his colleagues are rewarded with a share of the profits when achieving sales objectives (booking all rooms).

Although referred to less extent, other form of tangible reward is to offer small gifts to the employees or their families, especially when having young children; however, such practices are not regular, just limited to special occasions such as Christmas. Previous research suggests that such type of rewards are highly valued by hotel workers (Hassan & Na'el, 2020). Although monetary rewards have the power either to motivate staff or to mitigate the adverse effects of job burnout (Choi et al., 2012; Lucas, 2004), such rewarding schemes were mentioned by a reduced number of participants, which may suggest that very few benefit of further monetary incentives apart from their salary. None of the interviewees in non-managerial positions refer to be paid salary supplements based on the fulfilment of performance objectives.

Curiously, and although not necessarily having an associated cost for the organisation, as seen in section 3.4, **non-tangible/non-monetary rewards** are mentioned even less often as being positively experienced. These rewards are the most frequently mentioned by research participants as being of utmost importance/the most important of all, yet largely missing in the large majority of organisations. When existing, not all interviewees perceived them as truly genuine, mostly due to the inconsistency of managers' behaviour regarding other issues in HR management. Moreover, these participants claim to actually feel disrespected when recognition and appreciation is not perceived as honest and heartfelt. Especially when considering that some forms of rewards are not frequent or consistent, some interviewees emphasize that just one-off initiative is not perceived as enough. These situations are particularly referred with respect to independent, family-owned hotel businesses, such as the organisation to which Aurora's (*EMP, Receptionist, classified as Resolute Job Leaver*) testimony refers to:

At Christmas, they always offer us a gift, good gifts, and also they give gifts to our children. On our birthday, there was always a cake. But these are situations that happen once a year. During the course of the year, a simple 'thank you' or 'good job' or 'you had a good attitude' is always nice to hear, but rarely forthcoming. Because we strive to always give our best. It does not mean that they have to give us constant praise, but from time to time, a 'thank you' can go a long way! It gives us more incentive to do better. We feel something is missing, we lack an incentive.

Often the guests would congratulate me, mention me by name in the book we have on the reception desk and in the Booking.com comments, saying that I am very friendly. But directly from the employer, they never came to speak personally to me to say 'thank you, congratulations, you really are a good employee'. I never had that kind of gratification ((disappointment voice tone)).

Similarly to Aurora, several participants compare the level of perceived recognition from guests to that from their employers, with the former being more frequent. All participants who worked in other countries not only recall more positive experiences regarding recognition and appreciation when working outside Portugal, and mention being awarded with different types of benefits every time they were positively evaluated in guest reviews. Miguel (EMP, Receptionist) recalls some of the practices he has benefited of when working abroad, either regarding positive guest evaluations or promotion of innovation, strongly emphasizing how the lack of recognition undermines employees' commitment and discretionary effort:

When I was working in London, if my name came up in a Trip Advisor review, the company would give me £50. Here in Portugal, not even a 'thank you'. If we implemented a good working practices in the hotel, we would get £100 for that suggestion, and if the idea was so good that it could be in other hotels of the group, we would get a £1000 bonus. Here, the Director doesn't even say to the Board whose idea it was, just presents it as his own. In other words, when people want to run that extra mile, if we believe having competencies and want to make good use of it, we do not feel that recognition in terms of remuneration. And we all work for money.

Guest reviews as an indicator for individual performance is a little consensual issue within Employers' Associations and Trade Unions' negotiations on the update of current CBAs. Amelia (EMP, Receptionist) offers an example of how such indicators can easily be perceived as unfair, as the annual bonus attribution criteria was changed to assign higher weight to guests' evaluation: all indicators must be achieved in order to receive the bonus, what means that if guest evaluation is not as higher as it should (which can only be influenced by staff performance up to a certain extent, hence the perception of unfairness), bonuses are not reduced but totally cut off.

On the other hand, there are some one-off initiatives that seem to be valued. A common practice that can be easily identified is that several organisations celebrate employees' birthdays, either on the actual date or by combining all in weekly or monthly celebrations. Many participants refer that although thoughtful, it seems consensual that practically all employees would prefer to be offered that day off, as a free day (not by scheduling the employee's day-off in the same date), but only a limited number of companies actually do this. Two interviewees recall different positioning of both organisations and employees regarding this form of prize:

On our birthday, they wanted us to be there to sing 'Happy Birthday' and celebrate all together, but I didn't see it as a prize, because I wanted to be with my family instead, away from work. (Clarice, LEA)

Every year there is a colleague who asks our Manager for the staff to be entitled to take a day of leave on our birthday, she has asked for this for many years, and every year she receives the same answer 'No'; the Manager doesn't even stop to listen when she approaches him about this, he just walks by and says 'No'. We all feel that if we

ask for anything we will hear: 'You are not happy? Then the door is over there'. (Vera, EMP)

Amelia (EMP) refers to a similar situation, by describing how her company organises team-building activities every six months. However, these activities are scheduled on employees' days-off, which comes with a bittersweet taste, as most people would prefer not giving up on their off-time, but still do it out of fear of reprisals and out of consideration for the other colleagues who participate. Joel (LEA) posits that companies that adopt such type of practices without a more comprehensive and structured retention strategy, are being quite naïve in believing that this will contribute to increased employee satisfaction.

A significant number of *Employees* ($n=8$) and practically almost all *Leavers* ($n=11$) consider to do/did not receive adequate or sufficient recognition and appreciation for their work. In line with the previously described regarding wages adequacy, many interviewees even reinforce not experiencing any additional form of recognition at all, which, given the high levels of effort and contributions made, is perceived as one of the major flaws of the industry. Hugo (EMP) and Daniel (EMP) refer to the importance of not feeling as a just one more person among all the staff in the organisation, as a cog in the wheel:

There are only 2 people for my job, me and another colleague, but I feel I am just a number. I don't feel valued enough in accordance to what I believe I am worth and to what I give to the company. Because I have many references from guests, I try to provide people with something more than a simple stay. But little is done to make me think 'they know I'm Hugo, I'm not employee no. 150, and they know I'm a valuable asset'. (Hugo, EMP, Doorman)

É preciso ter a sensibilidade de que trabalhamos aqui com pessoas e não com máquinas, porque não as toneiras nem os colchões que fazem a experiência do cliente. Eu faço questão de conhecer bem todas as pessoas, para que elas saibam que eu me importo com elas e com o seu trabalho, para que se me disserem que o Manuel caiu e se magoou, eu nunca tenha de perguntar 'Quem é o Manuel?'. (Daniel, EMP, Deputy Manager)

Major Employer 01 (KEY) contends that although this topic is widely debated and transversal to all professional fields, it assumes especial relevance in T&H due to the high physical effort that most jobs entail (mostly in F&B Operations or Housekeeping) and to the low social value that most of these jobs are also given (the exception being the Chefs) (see also section 8.4). Kuslivan et al. (2010) also ascribe employees' complains "about being under-valued; unappreciated; and not recognised, respected, or rewarded on par with their efforts" (p. 198), to the low status typically associated with T&H jobs. Such perceptions on how one's job is important, useful, and socially valued, and is recognised as such by others, are described by several authors as strongly impacting individuals' evaluations of their jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, 1980; Kahn, 1990; OECD, 2017; Warr, 1999).

Finding value and purpose in one's job is referred by a few participants as a very important aspect of well-being and happiness at work, especially when considering that many interviewees highlight their vocation and passion for hospitality work (see also section 6.2.1). Feeling of receiving return on investments of one's self in role performance (i.e., meaningfulness), is precisely one way to justify engagement or disengagement at work and to protect people from

psychological exhaustion. This partially explains the extent to which individuals invest or not themselves in their work role performances (Kahn, 1990; Warr, 1999; see also section 4.3.1), such as the following quote addresses:

In the two hotels I have worked in, there is no concern to motivate staff; there is no concern to bring a greater purpose to the person than their basic duties. People work merely for the salary they receive. (Angelo, EMP, Receptionist)

Considering *Leavers'* accounts on their reasons for career change (section 8.2.2) it is observed that recognition and appreciation – in this case, the lack of it – is one that weighted the most in their final decision to withdrawal. Even *Newcomers*, when reporting on their internship experiences, share this same view, as most of them not only did not receive adequate support and training (as already described in section 6.4.2), neither were properly complimented for their efforts or good performance. Cecilia (*LEA, Waitress*) posits that managers who believe not owing a simple 'thank you' to an employee who performs unpaid overtime on a daily basis is symptomatic of a total absence of humility and care for others that contributes to a negative image of the T&H industry as an employer.

As described in section 3.4, recognition can also assume the form of representation and voice, although – when considering non-managerial/supervisory levels – only Lucas (*EMP, the only Receptionist in his hotel with a permanent contract and longer organisational tenure*), mentioned to perceive the fact that his organisation values his opinion when making decisions regarding operational issues. Other four interviewees hold an opposite perspective, providing examples on how employees are not consulted regarding measures and procedures that directly affect their jobs and their well-being at the workplace, or on how they are consulted, yet ignored without justification. For example, Amelia (*EMP*) recalls a moment when the hotel's staff dining area was renovated and employees were asked for inputs; despite there was total consensus on some issues (such as the existence of a microwave), none of the staff's suggestions or requests were implemented. This can be perceived as disrespectful or disregarding, as employee consultation is viewed merely as a formality, rather than real concern for employees' needs or opinions.

On a more positive note, five *Employees* consider their work to be duly valued and appreciated both by their immediate supervisors and employing organisation, in general. Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager, working for a national hotel group*) highlights the positive effect that socio-emotional rewards have on herself and on the team's mood, making positive references to team building events, team meetings, symbolic/funny awards. Marisa not only positively describes her hotel groups' policy and practices regarding employee appraisal and recognition, as well as her General Manager's role in promoting staff well-being:

Our General Manager is very good at recognising people, sometimes just a little token gift bought at the local home-furnishing store. Sometimes it is as people say 'a pat on the back is all we need to keep our spirits up, a simple thanks'. She is exceptional at that! Every year, at the Christmas party, there is an award given out to the manager of the year and to the employee of the year, they both receive an extra month's salary. It is our General Manager who decides, based on our performance that year. Every year the company organises team building and socialising activities – we can't all go,

so different people go every year – and people like it a lot, they are always asking when the next one will be.

Appreciation may also take other forms, such as those exemplified by Michael (EMP, Purchasing Clerk), which are closely aligned with supervisory support:

We manage purchasing for four hotels, so you can imagine in the summer, the more hours the day had, the more hours we worked. But I am often told: ‘Michael, you’ve already worked a lot this week, I notice you’re tired, you can take this Friday off and have an extra days’ leave’. This extra day off is given as a free leave day, it is not discounted from my annual vacations or something. Even when we make mistakes, and sometimes there are mistakes, the management do not immediately point fingers at us. They gather us together, talk it through and move on. When someone does something very good or does something well, it reflects well on the whole team.

Several *Employees* ($n=6$) posit that a good or a bad (or even inexistent) culture regarding employee appraisal and recognition is heavily dependent on managers’ leadership, a topic that is further explored in section 7.2.4. Although Miguel (*EMP, Receptionist*) acknowledged that many General Managers are ‘suffocated’ by budgetary targets imposed by the Administration, hence having few room for manoeuvre, he believes to be the manager’s role to maintain employees motivated. Adriana (*EMP, Sales and Events Manager*) not only considers that her performance was always acknowledged and rewarded (which allowed her to quickly progress with the hotel group), as she strongly praises her fellow middle-managers for being responsible for the good staff morale within the group, an attitude that she believes to be rooted in the whole organisational vision and culture towards HR. The senior managers who were interviewed naturally focused more on their own practices towards their staff (see also section 7.2.4), then in themselves as employees. Three General Managers recognise that not only employee recognition is key, as it requires time – in the sense that managers need to spend time to know their staff and be close to them –, and respectful treatment – in the sense that people do not want to be treated as ‘just numbers’.

7.2.3 Achievement and development

Strongly associated with good prospects for career advancement, this dimension can be perceived as an indicator of employee retention. Promotion and opportunities for advancement are, in particular, one of the most complex issues within participants’ accounts of their work experiences. These are a means of rewarding employees who show commitment, dedication and alignment with the values and mission of the organisation. At the same time, promotion and advancement opportunities tend to be synonym of increased earnings, higher job status and more desirable job attributes (e.g., higher autonomy, access to flexible working arrangements) (McGinley et al., 2017; Richardson, 2008). Two other sub-dimensions are explored in this section due to their close relation with career development (Figure 7.7): employee development, particularly in reference to new career theories that emphasize the transferability of skills and self-development, and job security, especially when considering that promotions, salary increases and stability are still highly contingent on job tenure in most organisations. According to research participants’ accounts, development opportunities are

essentially related to training and skill enhancement, whereas job security is related to contractual stability and, to a lesser extent, psychological safety.

Promotion and opportunities for advancement

Closely aligned with research participants' career trajectories, described and categorised in section 8.2, professional development is perceived to be strongly dependent on organisations' promotion opportunities and succession planning, with only three *Employees* and one *Leaver* not fitting such pattern.

Recalling research participants' job positions and functional levels – pictured in Figure 5.18 (*Employees and Leavers' professional profile: nature of the job*), in section 5.5.1 –, it is observed that *Employees* are to some extent polarised, as they predominantly occupy operational ($n=16$) and top/unit management ($n=9$) job positions. The vast majority of these operational jobs are concentrated in the Front-of-the-house ($n=11$), among which nine interviewees are Hotel Receptionists (predominantly 1st Receptionists). As far as *Leavers* are concerned, most of these research participants hold middle/department management positions ($n=6$) and operational positions ($n=5$). Seven *Leavers* were Hotel General Managers ($n=2$) or Assistant Hotel Managers ($n=4$) when they terminated their careers in the hotel sector.

As far as **progression opportunities** are concerned, it is consensual that big hotel groups have more advantages than independent units. *Newcomers* also claim to believe that hotel groups, in particular if international, not only offer more progression opportunities (either at the national or international level), but also other benefits (e.g., health insurance, sales commissions) and better pay. Such benefits are also typically associated with four and five-star hotels, in which wage scales are also higher, as seen in section 7.2.2. Hotel groups are usually geographically dispersed both over the country and/or several countries, hence offering more opportunities for people to move between hotel units. Unless there is an opportunity for the company's expansion (through new hotel openings, which will not also easily happen), independent hotels do not have a hierarchical structure with many levels that allow workers to aim for many higher-level positions. Teams are relatively settled down and supervisory/managerial positions do not easily become vacant; the position of General Manager is usually the highest one can aspire in an independent hotel. As mentioned in section 2.3.1 (*(Un)clear career routes*), small hotel businesses are not able to make available the same management career opportunities that multi-layered organisations, such as hotel groups, typically do (Lashley, 2013).

One of the most significant factors influencing hotel staffing is the occupancy rate, but the wider variations are felt not in managerial positions, but in the operational levels. As *Major Employer 01 (KEY)* highlights, a hotel with a higher occupancy rate will need more Receptionists or Chambermaids, but it will still just need one Front-desk Supervisor and one Housekeeping Supervisor. This is truth for both independent and chained-hotels. Independent hotels constitute the majority of the Hotel establishments in Portugal and the number of hierarchically-defined levels are expected to be lower in these organisations.

Employees were asked to where do they see themselves progressing in their jobs, and a third of the interviewees ($n=10$; nine of which already holding supervisory/managerial positions), all

working for national or international hotel groups, consider that their employing organisations are capable of providing them with further progression opportunities, either at their current hotel or in other unit of the group. Four of these participants even highlight that their companies offer interesting and structured career development plans, as the next quotes reveal:

We do staff reviews twice a year, we sit down with employees and have a face to face meeting. We have a career development plan and at that meeting we review the performance of each person in their first 6 months of employment, but before we say everything that needs to be improved, we praise, we build them up. We don't just focus on areas that need improvement, we explain and demonstrate how they can improve, because it is essential for people to be given guidance. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)

Once a year we meet [with our employees] and discuss objectives, to see what they have successfully achieved or not. We make an analysis of weaknesses and highlight opportunities for each person. We believe this personal analysis is essential because we do not only work with number-based results. For our colleagues who are in career development programs, we are able to identify opportunities for career development specifically for them. Sometimes, due to staff density, we are unable to promote everyone, but if the opportunity arises, we can move them to another hotel within the Group. A short time ago, we opened a new hotel and several managers from here were moved there. This gave me the opportunity to promote people here, who fit the profile and the required competencies. (Victor, EMP, General Manager)

Although recognising that more significant difficulties in managing employees' expectations and motivations, Celeste (EMP, General Manager) also posits that such types of HR management strategies are also possible in small organisational structures, yet always involving a lower number of opportunities:

Having only 35 employees in the winter, with such a small structure, I have to focus the responsibility on five pillars, transferring people to functions that are more suited to their profile and they accumulate responsibilities. The person who was responsible for the Front-office, for example, is now responsible for the Front-office and the Housekeeping. Gradually, I give more responsibility to the person in question, accompanied by a salary increase.

Depending on the organisational structure, in view of the dimension of certain hotels, many research participants (seven EMP, three LEA) accumulated multiple job role and responsibilities, all at middle and top management levels. For example, for three years, Celeste (EMP) was both the General Manager and Sales and Marketing Manager of a four-star independent unit. Also for three years, Amanda (LEA) was both Assistant Manager and Assistant F&B Manager at a small-sized national-chained, four-star hotel, while Xavier took the responsibility for coordinating the Front-office and the Sales and Events departments for more than two years in an independent five-star hotel.

Establishing a link with the preceding mention to succession policy, a significant number of research participants ($n=12$) refer their organisations' preference for inside succession as a very positive and encouraging aspect. Many participants describe that recruitment inside the organisation for potential candidates is a way of recognition staff's value and talent. Although

outside succession may bring fresh perspectives and innovative practices, as well as to 'break' the homogeneity of accommodated teams (which is one of the benefits as employee turnover, as seen in section 4.2.1), inside successions is perceived as more beneficial for staff morale (Staw, 1980). Some organisations do, however, have different policies concerning inside succession, in order to avoid potential conflict situations. Some of these involve encouraging job moves within the hotel group, but not within the same hotel or within the same department. Two participants recall past experiences when colleagues from a given department were promoted to supervisory positions and it became difficult to command respect from other team members.

It is also found that when communication and transparency do not exist, that is when no criteria is defined and people do not know what to expect or when decisions are not shared with the staff, conflict is also very likely to happen and to lead to employees' frustration and discontent. This is what Clarice (*LEA*) felt after seven years working in the same job position as Receptionist, yet holding many other responsibilities within the hotel, while new Front-Desk Supervisors were always recruited outside the organisation. This was one of the main reasons underlying her decision to leave, as the Management never offered the team a justification for such choices. Considering that Clarice and her colleagues at the Front-desk held Higher Education degrees, this was perceived as a lack of recognition of their competencies. A similar situation was also reported by Laura (*LEA*), who also worked for a four-star independent unit in which Front-desk Supervisors – described as the job position with high turnover rate – were always recruited outside the company, no Receptionist was ever promoted, but again the reasons underlying this management strategy were never disclosed to the staff, undermining their morale and expectations regarding potential promotion opportunities.

Despite the previously-mentioned positive examples, most organisations are described as not having a formal, structured, or effective professional development system in force, which contributes to make employees feel uncertain about their organisational careers and complaint about the existence of few promotion opportunities – surely less than they anticipated and less than those which were 'promised' when hired, hence the importance of realistic job previews. As described in section 4.3.3, realistic job previews are intended to provide the individual with realistic pre-employment expectations about what type of job environment one is entering, including both positive and negative aspects of the job, such as the nature of the job, expected roles, type of rewards or likelihood of career advancement and progression (Dickerson, 2009; Porter & Steers, 1973; Wanous et al., 1992).

Lucas (*EMP*) and Hugo (*EMP*), both Receptionists working for independent hotels, still believe that opportunities can come up in a near future, as their hotel companies are planning to invest in an additional hotel unit. These plans are, however, very likely to have been thwarted by the economic downturn triggered by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Four other interviewees acknowledge that although their employers' structure could accommodate potential promotion opportunities, they do not believe they will be likely to benefit of them, while three other participants recognise that in order to progress in their careers they would have to leave their current organisation. The following quotes illustrate such assertions.

I feel that within the present management structure there is not much space for expansion. I feel that, due to the structure itself, the length of time people have

worked in their position, and given the existing hierarchies, it is not likely that I will be able to progress. There is already a very-defined hierarchy, so there are certain people who are a 'shoe in' to fill the posts that may become available. (Eva, EMP, Receptionist)

We don't have a Front-office supervisor, and yet none of us ((three receptionists)), has been appointed as Supervisor. Which for us, is a little hard to stomach because we have goals and we can't reach them. My ambition would be to become a General Manager, but I think in this company I will never succeed. Especially because there are employees who are family members of the hotel owner and they will get there more easily. At this hotel, I will not have great opportunities of progression. (Aurora, EMP, Receptionist)

Perceptions of **stagnation** also stand out from participants' viewpoints on career development in the hotel sector (see Table 7.2), especially from half of the *Leavers* ($n=7$) and four *Employees*. For these *Leavers*, this reason highly impacted their choice for career termination. Not only participants with crystallised career trajectories associate their disillusionment with the lack of opportunities for career advancement in their organisations, although this trace is particularly relevant in these participants' careers. According to Riley (2019), the Hospitality industry is endowed of occupational rigidity, as it becomes easier to change employers to change the type of job one performs than to change type of job with the same employer. In consonance with contemporary career perspectives that postulate a more transactional nature of employment relations and skill acquisition, it seems natural that individuals expect to experience more challenging and diversified roles across their careers. Jobs with poor prospects for career development are found to be associated with psychological distress and stress-related health problems (OECD, 2017). Most of participants' complaints are precisely concentrated in functional levels such as the Front-office.

Most *Employees* working in the hotel sector for more than 10 years concur that progression opportunities do arise, but not as frequently as many people envision. Despite exhibiting linear upwards or ascending careers trajectories, many of them were in the same job position for several years before benefiting of any type of promotion. Interviewees' accounts and career paths suggest that progression speed tends to be higher in early careers stages and in lower levels of the organisational hierarchy. Moving on from middle management levels or even within top management to higher positions may require a significant investment of time. Other participants also highlight that it may be easier to progress within a given department (for example, going up through the different job categories in the Front-desk until becoming Front-desk Supervisor), but it is significantly more difficult to move from that level to a next one. This is also due to the narrowing of organisational structures, with fewer positions existing the further one moves towards the top. Hence, it is natural that staff turnover is higher at the lower levels of the hierarchy. In Gabriel's (*EMP, F&B Manager*) opinion, most importantly than offering promotion opportunities, as these are limited for the aforementioned reasons, it is key that organisations do not fail to encourage and reward good professionals by other means. Amelia (*EMP, Receptionist*) reinforces this idea by stating that progression does not have to necessarily mean taking the next step in the hierarchy, but just a different position; she aspires for a more challenging position that the one she occupies now, preferably in a different department.

Table 7.2 | Reasons underlying perceptions of career stagnation

Unrewarded sacrifices

- . *It's very demotivating, working so hard, working overtime, doing everything, especially when you always have that expectation you will get promoted, and one day become the manager of a hotel or maybe of a department. Being stuck in the Front-desk forever working just as a Receptionist, was not what I wanted for me. (Alice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)*
- . *In the beginning, when we really want something, we have to make sacrifices. But I realised that I was making sacrifices but not evolving. I would be stuck in the same position for three to three years more. People feel disillusioned, stagnant; the margin for progression is so small. People start at a given position and take a long time to climb up the ladder, or they do not climb at all. (Marco, LEA, ex-Receptionist)*

'Great' for that job but not good enough to be promoted

- . *I decided to leave when my bosses told me that I was very good at doing what I do and they would rather keep me there waiting tables and running the bar, rather than have me working on the Front-desk. I know that working at the Front-desk is also demanding, but hearing that from their mouths made me think 'what's the point in being good at this? So it's better not to be good'. What's the point of being good if there is no chance of moving to other positions, what is the point of continuing? (Cecilia, LEA, ex-Waitress)*
- . *I have always worked in F&B Operations, as a Waiter, but I've also had a little experience in the Purchasing Department. When a colleague left, I wanted to try it, because it is related with stock management and purchase for all the hotel. But they thought I suited more the Restaurant, since I had already been at that hotel for two years and they thought it was easier to hire someone else for the Purchasing Department than for waiting tables. (Thomas, EMP, Waiter)*

Staff is required to multitask, yet are limited by departmental boundaries

- . *I was hired as a Receptionist and that never changed, though that I ended up doing other jobs and having different responsibilities. My case wasn't unique, nor was it the only hotel to keep people in the same position indefinitely, despite doing a lot of other duties as well. (Clarice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)*
- . *People spend endless years petrifying in the Front-desk or in Reservations, always doing the same thing. And if they manage to leave, they probably leave that hotel for another one, but to do the same thing. Although people are required to multi-task, they are still strongly bounded to their specific department. (Virginia, LEA, ex-Guest Relations)*

Source: Own construction

Although the sample of participants in this study cannot be perceived as representative of a broader population (as addressed in the Methodology, section 5.7), research participants (namely *Employees* and *Leavers*) mirror, to some extent, previous research findings on women's career paths in the T&H industry in Portugal, in particular that men are over-represented in senior, key managerial position (Carvalho, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2014; Costa et al., 2011; Costa, Durão, et al., 2015; Santos & Varejão, 2007). Only three women occupy top-management positions (in comparison to eight men), yet being more represented in middle-management, with reverse propositions (eight women in comparison to three men). All Assistant Hotel Managers who were interviewed in this study are women, which are portrayed as highly

demanding job positions, as it is further described next. At operational levels, no differences are found in the number of female and male interviewees. The Sales and Events department is the only exception, with only female employees.

In the *Major Employer 02's (KEY)* opinion, promotion opportunities within a given organisation follows from the combination of two desires: that of the organisation and that of the employee. This *Key-Informant* stresses that, very often, geographical mobility and/or availability to travel are important job requirements, and not always employees are willing or interested in a job move. It is precisely for this reason that three interviewees, already holding General Manager positions, do not aim for a job in a different organisation or a higher position involving frequent need to travel or disconnection with their current region of residence. Xavier (*EMP, General Manager*), in particular, voices an umbilical connection to the Alentejo region where he lives and where he has always worked, hence looking for a balance between professional growth and the opportunity to maintain the geographical link. Although several participants had work experiences in other countries (see section 8.2.1, *Working abroad*), very few are interested in building their career abroad. *Newcomers (n=6)*, in particular, express great openness about working outside Portugal, either for short or longer periods of time.

Similarly to what is observed in other professional fields, the critical role of predisposition and availability for functional and/or geographical mobility in promoting career advancement is supported by *Key-informants'* inputs, in particular *Major Employers (01/02)* and *the HR Expert*, as well as by some General Managers (Figure 7.10).

Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager working for national hotel group for 13 years*) also does not envision to occupy a higher position than her current one, considering to be satisfied with the balance of duties and responsibilities and rewards of her job (also in light of the pros and cons of holding a managerial position were previously explored in section 7.2.1); in her annual evaluations she is thus frequently portrayed as little ambitious:

I love what I do, I love working in events, being in meetings and I like supporting the General Manager. I've seen from the Managers who have worked here, that it is not an easy task, so I think 'ok, I would like to be recognised and one day be a Hotel Manager', but I don't see this as a big ambition, because I am very pleased to do what I do. Maybe it is really a matter of not being ambitious enough, but I do not plan to do anything else, at least for now, at this point in my life.

This suggest that individuals may be driven and motivated by other factors rather than extrinsic rewards such as promotion and salary growth. Managers frequently overlook that their ability to motivate may be somewhat limited, considering that what motivates employees may originate outside work and coming from home, family, social life or other aspects of non-work life (M. Riley, 2000).

The role of leadership becomes, once more, key in identifying talented employees who may be interested and have what it is needed to progress within the organisation (see also section 7.2.4). According to *Major Employer 02 (KEY)*, either these employees share their expectations and ambitions with the organisation HR structure, or their immediate supervisors should be capable of spotting talent and willing. The former is perceived not to happen as often as desired, as most organisations still hold a very reactive position (instead of pro-active, hence not existing

a very open communication policy with this regards) in getting to know their employees' motivations and expectations. The importance of latter becomes then reinforced.

Opportunities arise, but each one has their constraints. The tighter each person's career criteria, the fewer opportunities there are. If I want to work in a hotel close to my home, and I'm not flexible about geographic mobility, the fewer my opportunities will be. (Major Employer 01, KEY).

We have many examples of staff who have advanced in their career, both in Portugal, within the hierarchy, and abroad, if they are available for mobility. We have people who moved from Lisbon to New York, or from Cape Verde to Rio de Janeiro. However, many people – for family reasons, for being concerned with cultural adaptation, or for other personal reasons – are just not interested in mobility. (Major Employer 02, KEY).

At the moment, my goal is to become Area Manager, that is, I want my boss's shoes (LLL). So, of course, I think I have the opportunity to grow. And I am open to all kinds of possibilities both inside and outside the Group. Just as I have no problem of working abroad. I enjoy working in other countries as much as I do in Portugal. Even to get so see my parents, a flight from the UK is faster than driving from the South to the North [in Portugal]; that's not an issue (Manuel, EMP, General Manager)

We offer good opportunities here ((to grow)), but it's easier if people are willing to be internationally mobile. We have people who moved to Madrid, Amsterdam, Cape Verde, advancing in their careers. And in a company like ours, which is all over the globe, it's easy. If a good Receptionist tells us that either he/she has the chance to progress or he/she will end up going to another company, we say 'no, you won't, because you are a talent and we will help you find an option for you to pursue your ambitions; if that's not possible here, it is possible in other units of the Group'. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)

Figure 7.10 | Training and skill development opportunities

Source: Own construction

Opportunities for skill development, learning and growth

Physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that have the potential to stimulate personal growth, learning, and development are important job resources and play an intrinsic motivational role (Demerouti et al., 2001) (see also section 3.3). When questioned about skill development, learning and growth opportunities within their employing organisations, practically all *Employees* who are currently employed or have been employed in national and international groups ($n=13$) positively underline their organisations' positioning. The majority of these interviewees provide examples of formal training to which they had access in their workplaces, such as those pictured in Figure 7.11.

At our hotel, at the Senior Management level, we are given Neuro-linguistic Programming and staff coaching trainings. At the level of employees, we have training, for example, on how to serve the customer, the importance of smiling, how to deal with more demanding customers. We don't really have initial training, but then the company gives it to us along the way. (Eva, EMP, Receptionist)

I have already taken a Food Safety Technical Course and did a specialisation in Hotel Management. These were trainings that the company gives us; thank God, it is a company that offers many training programmes: general skills, marketing, management, sales. Some are specifically for managers; others are available to all employees. (Maria, EMP, Deputy Manager)

The company invests a lot in complementary training to value employees, not only in languages – we already had Spanish, French, English –, as well as management training, leadership, Excel techniques – which is a tool we use a lot –, marketing, sales, customer service. The hotel group ((national)) invests a lot in this, as does the brand ((international hotel brand)), although their courses are often more about new products and procedures: new hotels, new loyalty cards, and these training programmes are all online. (Marisa, EMP, Assistant Manager)

Figure 7.11 | Training and skill development opportunities

Source: Own construction

Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager*), who works for a national hotel group (with an international brand), not only provided some examples of formal training (as seen in Figure 7.11) but also highlights her organisation's commitment in promoting a **multi-competence** culture, seeing that employees from different departments have specific training from other functional areas – for example, not only Restaurant staff receives training for serving food and beverages, but also any other interested employees. This perspective on the concept of multi-competence is also mentioned by other participants and by the *HR Expert (KEY)*, who claim for staff to be allowed to choose what additional competencies they would like to join to their skill portfolio. The widest and diversified this portfolio is, the higher employee's adaptability to other functional areas within the industry and understanding of different organisational dynamics, will be. According to the *HR Expert (KEY)*, the multi-competence concept requires the design of an individual development plan, which is precisely an investment aimed at retaining the best staff:

It is about having a 360-degree career perspective, in the Back and in the Front-office, which allows the employees to think about evolving in the company and designing their own career. In the medium/long-term, three to five or more years, through systems of assessment and recognition of the skills acquired in other areas, the employee may gain genuine appreciation of his/her work, reflected in real promotions.

Martin (*LEA, ex-General Manager*) also stresses the role that top-management has in employees' skill development, especially thought mentoring and guidance, by recalling how his General Manager groomed him to latter occupy his job position. Clara (*LEA, Events and Assistant F&B Manger at the time*) shares this same view on how her organisation promoted her skill

development since the moment she joined the hotel as a trainee. Functional mobility is also used by some organisations as a way to identify and develop potential managers (Verbruggen, 2012), as it happened with Octavio (*EMP, Receptionist at the time*) and Manuel (*EMP, Front-desk Supervisor at the time*). Both were working for national hotel groups at entry-level jobs and were chosen to integrate internal training programmes aimed at preparing them to take the lead of hotels of the group as General Managers. All these interviewees stress, however, the decisive role of their attitude at work, which distinguishes them as valuable assets.

Some research participants believe that employee retention is highly influenced by skill development, learning and personal growth opportunities, even if this is reflected or not in job promotion to a higher hierarchical level (not excluding other forms of rewarding). Highly interested in developing this subject during the interviewee, Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager*) reinforces:

I don't know if on the part of these companies ((who claim to have difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified professionals)) there is a failure to train their existing staff, and help them rise through the ranks. I started in the Reception and was promoted to Events, and from Events to Assistant Manager, because I was trained here internally.

Xavier (*EMP*) and Martin (*EMP*), both with General Management responsibilities, not only share this view, but also underline that not all careers can be developed through job promotion, seeing that some job positions have limited hierarchical growth potential. This does not mean that these employees' growth needs should not be addressed, and their professional dignity respected. Xavier recalls, in particular, one of his employers' (an independent, internationally-branded, luxury hotel) policy toward talent retention:

In seven years, we had a staff turnover of only 10%, which is extraordinary, and this was achieved by offering the employees one of the things they most want, which is to grow. The employee doesn't just want to earn a little more, they want to feel that they are being valued as a person and as a professional. And this is done with a lot of training, giving and paying for training, letting the employee take courses. It involves giving them tools that open up other possibilities, backing them. When a lot is invested in staff training, they feel grateful for it, they feel they want to give back somehow, they feel more committed to the job, even if the salary is not the best in the world.

Although these foregoing assessments are quite positive, most participants' accounts reveal that training is limited to the minimum annual hours defined by Labour laws, and very often not adjusted to their job duties and tasks, hence hardly perceived as valuable. This suggests that training and skill development is not evenly promoted in the hotel sector, especially when independently-owned companies are considered. Merely belonging to a hotel group may not necessarily be an advantage, if other conditions are not ensured by the management. Amelia (*EMP, Receptionist, working in the North of Portugal*), for example, highlights that although her hotel group offers several training opportunities, these are mostly limited to Lisbon, which makes difficult for employees from hotels in other locations to attend. If considering that many hotels are not fully staffed, it is difficult for employees to be given additional time off to undertake these courses. A similar view is shared by Valentina (*EMP, Sales and Events Executive*), who was offered two training moments a year, despite the hotel having its own Training

Department, which she believes not to be enough to keep staff updated on the constantly evolving markets and new developments of the hospitality industry.

Several participants stress the importance of staff training in businesses' competitiveness, by referring to the speed of change and innovation, and the unpredictably and challenging nature of T&H (not so high in other professional fields). This becomes particularly relevant when considering people's accounts of low pay and very few off-work time, which evidences that employees may find difficult to invest themselves in external training courses; only three participants (one *EMP*, one *LEA* and one *Newcomer*) mention to have made this type of investment.

Both Barbara (*EMP, Web Sales Executive*) and Hugo (*EMP, Receptionist*), who had more than one work experience outside Portugal, largely compare how training is more highly valued in countries such as the UK. Both share the view that in comparison to Portugal, new entrants receive intense training over the first weeks at work before taking up their job duties. Not only training opportunities were also constant, so different team members could join at different moments, as organisations are flexible in offering extra free time so employees can attend external courses.

Job security

Considering a more objective dimension of job security, all research participants' employment relations were of full-time employment with a single employer⁶⁹. As exhibited in Figure 7.12, similar proportions of permanent and fixed term employment relations are found both among *Employees* and *Leavers*, which mirrors people's contractual stability, the objective dimension of job security. Contractual stability is closely connected with organisational tenure, as it is also a strong determinant of promotion and career advancement opportunities. Among *Employees*, no differences were found regarding their seniority, as several participants have been offered permanent contracts despite being with their organisations for only a short time (less than three years), either holding supervisory or non-supervisory positions. Although job security is reported in previous research as being marked by gender differences, as seen in section 3.4, with men being more likely to benefit of permanent contracts, in this study, the number of female interviewees (*EMP/LEA*) with both permanent and fixed term contracts is quite similar to that of male participants.

Job insecurity is described in the literature as probably the most eminent feature of precarious work (Siegrist, 2015). As addressed in section 2.3.1 (*Seasonal and short-term nature of employment*), perceptions of insecurity are inherent to lower levels of loyalty and higher likelihood of switching jobs (Maden, 2014; Stacey, 2015). In this study, when considering the subjective dimension of job security, by assessing research participants' mentions and perceptions, it was found that job insecurity is not a burning issue. Interviewees appear to be resigned with the transactional nature of contemporary employment relations, do not envision the idea of a job for life (see also section 8.4), and this aspect of work is rarely mentioned. Previous research in the Tourism sector, conducted in Portugal, has also found that other

⁶⁹ The few part-time employment situations mentioned for participants took place when they were still studying, before officially joining the labour market as employees.

professional areas are not necessarily more secure, when it comes to employees' contractual situation, with Tourism graduates reporting poorer contractual relations when working outside the Tourism sector in comparison to those working in the Tourism sector (Costa, Breda, et al., 2013).

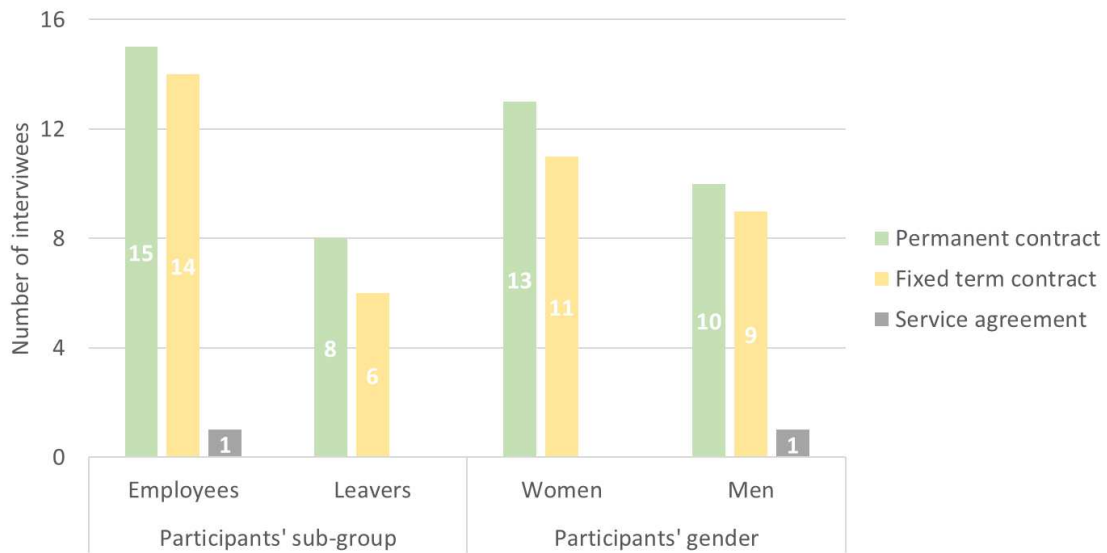


Figure 7.12 | Type of employment contract by research participant's sub-group and gender

Source: Own construction

After a career shift to the T&H industry (as previously described in section 6.2.2), Miguel (*EMP, Receptionist, 38 years old, two years in the Hotel industry*) highlights that despite being older than his co-workers and having a stable family situation (married, with one child), contractual stability it is not a significant driver, as he believes that companies do lay off employees regardless of the type of contract, if they intent to. Contractual stability is not only a relevant strategy of employee retention, but also a work stress reducer (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2009). Contractual instability and fear of job loss may significantly impact employees' mood and morale, and is reported by three participants as a source of anxiety and stress, as the following quote exemplifies:

We never knew if we would continue to work when the contract ended, it normally starts as a six-month contract and then it is renewed. Everyone was super insecure; we never knew if we would continue. And that ends up affecting us and our mood. (Alice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

Lucas (*EMP, four years with current employer*) and Samuel (*EMP, three years with current employer*), both Receptionists with permanent contracts, point out their permanent tie to the organisation as a positive aspect. Both these interviewees even mention that losing this stability would be the most negative thing if they would leave their organisations, in particular the fact of being quite familiar with their work roles and duties:

(...) until I overcome the challenge of feeling comfortable in a new job, then yes, maybe I would miss this safety net. (Lucas, EMP)

I think [I would miss] the fact that I am already at ease in my current job. Moving to another hotel would always be a change, so I think there's always some fear of change. Here you already know everyone, you already know how the hotel works and what your tasks are. If you go to a new job, you don't know if you will have your contract confirmed after the trial period, and also, you will have to start all over from the beginning, and that weighs on my mind a little. (Samuel, EMP)

This perceived security is found not to prevent alternative job search behaviour, as both admit to be attentive to jobs on offer and have been interviewed for several jobs in other hotels; the only reason for not moving being the fact that offered working conditions did not match their current. Samuel even reinforced this idea by stressing that being stable in one's job allows people to canvass for good opportunities without the pressure of feeling desperate for a job and being willing to take whatever comes up.

Looking at *Employees'* with permanent work contracts ($n=15$), as also discussed in section 8.2.2, it is found that about half ($n=7$) have been engaging in active or passive job search behaviours. This suggests that holding a stable employment situation may not be enough to convince employees to stay with their organisations, especially if considering that two of these interviewees were profiled as *Resolute Job Leavers* and two others as *Potential Job Leavers* (categories that are described in section 8.3.1). For eight *Leavers* (Figure 7.12), holding a permanent contract did not detract them from leaving, especially considering that five of them had an average job tenure of eight years, and six of them hold supervisory/managerial positions.

Moreover, beyond contractual status, job security is associated with businesses' financial stability and capacity to meet their legal obligations. For several participants, to be paid according to plan and on time or to have all their rights as workers guaranteed, was pointed out as a positive aspect of their employment relationship. For two interviewees in particular, Maria (*EMP, Deputy Manager*) and Gabriel (*EMP, F&B Manager*), both working in the industry for more than 20 years, this factor highly moderates their satisfaction with pay. This belief is also supported by *Major Employer 01 (KEY)*, who, based on their organisational climate survey, states that:

People like to be in a company they believe in, a company they feel confident in, that will fulfil all its obligations towards them and does not fail them. People seek more this kind of trust and security rather than long-term stability. They like to identify with the service we give, knowing that we did not fail them, that when they tell someone they work here, it is valued.

Others also perceive higher security to be associated with bigger hotel groups, due to consistency in procedures, decentralisation of power, increased monitoring and oversight mechanisms, and existence of specialised HR Management departments. Some interviewees report the use of subterfuges to avoid effective hiring and/or due payment as common practice in several independent hotel units, which are associated with the industry's casualisation and include:

- i. The use of subsidiary/associate companies to (re)hire the same employee: for example, by signing 3-month contracts with different companies while still holding the same job position at the same hotel unit, and non-compliance with the practice implies non-renewal of the contract.
- ii. The declaration of a lower salary than what is actually paid: this is aimed at reducing companies' tax burden and undermines overall protection of workers' rights (although mutually beneficial to some extent, hence counting with workers' agreement). It also implies that employees must trust the organisation to keep their side of the bargain, as no formal guarantee is provided. Considering the proportion of small, family owned hotels in Portugal, this is, according to preliminary interviews with several stakeholders, a common practice in the industry.
- iii. The attribution of a different job category⁷⁰ than what is actually performed by the employee: this is aimed at controlling minimum rates of pay or limiting promotion opportunities (considering that tenure is a key criterion in category advancement). This particular situation was reported by Laura (LEA) who worked for the same employer over 10 years under the same job category. Although the interviewee's contractually-define job title never changed, her roles and responsibilities were changed several times.

When addressing issues of job security and employee retention, several *Key-Informants* concur around the notion of **stability**, which is however found to have different interpretations. Both *Major Employers (01/02)* and the *HR Expert* posit that job security is deeply associated with each person's life stage and family formation, something that is not exclusive to the T&H industry:

When people have their own family and responsibilities to fulfil, they are more likely to be subject to conditions they would not be subject to if they did not have these family responsibilities. What I notice is that the vast majority of young people are not very concerned with this issue of job security and if they have to change, they change, as well as if they have to leave a job to take a trip, they also leave, although it depends more on the family and economic context of each person. (HR Expert, KEY)

Stability has only been referred by research participants with respect to working hours stability and not necessarily their contractual status. This may be related to the availability of alternative job opportunities and self-perceptions of employability in the industry, which are addressed in section 8.2.2, so participants' do not perceive contractual stability as key to their QWL.

As depicted in section 3.4, job security may also be interpreted as psychological safety (Kahn, 1990) of freedom of speech (Walton, 1973), which were mentioned by Alice (LEA, *four employing companies*) and Vera (EMP, *three employing companies*) as significant drivers for job changes. Both interviewees considered these perceptions to be strongly associated with being university-degree holders and their inputs (typically related to the identification of problems and limitations of work procedures) were interpreted as exhibitionist behaviour.

⁷⁰ Following the job categories and levels defined in Collective Bargaining Agreements.

7.2.4 Psychosocial working environment

Psychosocial working environment pertains to interpersonal and social interactions at the workplace. As previously described in section 3.4 (*Interpersonal and supportive relations at work*), social interactions at work cover various types of workplace relationships and different types of social support. In the literature, these interactions are simultaneously described as stressors and as buffers or coping mechanisms to deal with high job demands. Social integration in the work organisation is a fundamental dimension of employees' identity and self-esteem (Walton, 1973). The role of leadership is also key in influencing career development and perceptions of QWL, in reference to multiple work dimensions, such as work organisation, recognition and appreciation for work, interpersonal relations at work, job stress, and work-life balance.

Interpersonal and supportive relations at work

Of all QWL dimensions, this is the one with the greatest consensus on a **positive perspective**. For the majority of research participants, good interpersonal relations are one of the most positive aspects of working in hospitality. Overall, only two participants consider that this is not a relevant issue in their work lives. When research participants were asked how they conceived QWL (section 7.3), the relationship with their co-workers and supervisor/managers, teamwork, and support, were described as highly valued. Work group relationships, in particular, are also described as being related with employees' social needs, which Sirgy et al. (2001) describe as the need of positive interactions, friendships, membership and being-in-the-know in a significant social group. Also as described in section 3.4, social support may have multiple foci, which were all referred by the participants in this study. Figure 7.13 exhibits the proposition of positive mentions made to three social group relationships and main sources of support – peer/co-worker, management/supervisor, and customer support – illustrated by Barbara's (*EMP, six years in the Hotel industry*) accounts of her different interpersonal relations at the workplace.

Peer relationships are by far pointed out as the most important among all workplace relations: 15 participants describe this relationship as positive, whereas only four reported negative experiences. Three other participants do not evaluate peer relationship neither as positive nor negative, by considering that high staff turnover does not give them enough time to bond with colleagues. Not only working with people, in general, is mentioned several times as one of the best aspects of working in the industry, as co-worker support is described as fundamental to improve individual performance and to cope with other workplace stressors such as workload or extensive working hours, mostly due to under-staffing practices which are referred as very common in the industry. Clarice (*LEA, ex-Receptionist, seven years with her last employer*) largely emphasized how companionship allow her and her co-workers to deal with some shortcomings of their workplace:

There were not enough staff so if we all left on time or enjoyed certain flexibilities with shift times, etc., everything would fall on the other colleagues. There was no compensation for working more hours, or if we had to work straight for 15 days because someone got sick. We were the ones who respected each other and helped each other. If a group arrived at the end of a shift, we would no longer leave, we would

be there for an hour or two helping, so as not to leave other colleagues dealing with things alone.



Figure 7.13 | Perceived peer, supervisor, and customer support at work

Source: Own construction

Although the **relationship with managers and supervisors** is not so extensively mentioned, nine interviewees described their relationship with their immediate managers as very good, whereas five refer to it as negative. One of the most mentioned facets of supervisor support has to do with ease of communication, constructive criticism and encouragement, openness to dialogue, and disposition to take their side or ease their burden when necessary. Overall, most of the positively described experiences with managers and supervisors are configured as supportive. The most negative account came from Laura (*LEA, ex-Assistant F&B Manager*) who described how the relationship with her supervisor (General Manager of the independent hotel in which they were working) has deteriorated over the years. Laura describes her former supervisor as insecure (considering the organisational tenure and qualifications of both of them, Laura often felt that she was seen as ‘competition’), authoritarian, highly critical and focused on absolute control, devaluing the competencies of other, which created tensions, resentments and demotivation of the staff. Laura’s description of the relationship with her supervisor – which ultimately became her main reason to leave – configures what Kara, Kim and Uysal (2015) refer to as manager mobbing behaviour. Although extremely critical of her co-workers’ job attitudes, Vera (*EMP, Reservation Clerk, three years in the industry*) expresses her great admiration for her supervisor:

I was very blessed to get my supervisor, she is outstanding, she is in the trenches with us. She works like us, takes calls like us, talks to customers like us; she does everything we do and more. She gives us a lot of support. There are days when she leaves at 10 pm and she has a little daughter. The woman is really outstanding, and I will be very sorry to lose her [when I change jobs]. As for my colleagues and my Manager, I think

it says a lot about the working environment if I tell you I'm terrified to have that conversation with them ((that she is leaving the company)). I'm sure the narrative will be 'she screwed us, because now it's high season and she's leaving, and we're going to be in the weeds', instead of being happy for me, thinking she's is looking for what's best for her'.

Mentoring relationship is frequently found in literature as an important determinant of career development, but only one participant mentioned how receiving such type of support contribute to his personal and professional growth. However, the interview guide did not focus more specifically on this type of support, which would be interesting to explore in further research. Despite several interviewees consider that promoting a good working environment is largely dependent on leadership (a topic that is addressed further below), Miguel (*EMP, Receptionist*) believes that people should look at interpersonal relations at the workplace as something that is not merely experienced or acquired but should be cultivated by each employee:

The working environment must also be built between colleagues. Talking of cultivating, it is all in the details. For example, if I receive a tip, I share it with my colleague and my colleague gets surprised, but the next time, he also shares his tip with me. Or in relation to work schedules, like shift changes or sometimes exchanging vacations, before, there were very big constraints, but now there is greater openness. Why is this? Well, someone asked to swap shifts with me, so I did. Things went well, and now others do the same. This is how everything starts to improve.

According to some participants, when existing, **conflict** is mostly due to high competition between co-workers, especially if supervisory roles are envisaged. Conflict is also mentioned with regards to the relationship between different departments' work groups, typically between the Front-office and the Housekeeping, or the Restaurant and the Kitchen. According to two participants, tipping can be a source of conflict, especially in low-paid departments. Abel (*EMP*) recalls how tips cause friction between regular and causal employees at his hotels' F&B operations, leading to a bad working environment, with the former describing the benefiting of tipping as not fair (as causal workers are paid an higher hourly wage in comparison with regular employees, whose overtime is not fully paid but rather banked). Mixed feelings are found regarding the role of supervisors in managing tip distribution, with participants believing that oversight is needed, whereas other prefer that these issues are left to employees' discretion.

As seen in section 4.2.1, conflict, whether hierarchical (e.g., between workers and supervisors) or lateral (e.g., among workers in the same department), is pointed out as a pertinent cause of turnover. This happens because when differences cannot be resolved and one of the conflicting parties leaves or is driven to leave (Mobley, 1982; Staw, 1980), as it happened with Laura.

Three other variables are presented by interviewees as influencing interpersonal relations at work, both at horizontal and vertical levels:

- i. **Gender** – is mentioned by some participants as the reasons underlying certain attitudes and behaviours at the workplace. Both male and female interviewees ($n=5$) consider women to be more competitive than men, which is at the basis of conflicts with peers – exacerbated when these peers are also women. Several female participants reveal some

concerns in view of the possibility of joining exclusively female teams. Three interviewees consider that there is a certain degree of animosity in teams formed exclusively by women, pointing out jealousy, gossip, and stressful working environments as the main reasons thereof. Vera (*EMP, Reservations Clerk*) states that women are highly judgemental of each other, an attitude that she does not find so often in male co-workers; at the same time, she acknowledges that the poor working environment in her department is more likely to be due to the work values of the people who work there, than to their gender or to the fact that it is a team mostly formed by women. Martin (*LEA, General Manager*) believes that this phenomenon is not exclusively to women-only teams, as teams made up exclusive by men are also not as productive and functional as mixed teams. Clarice (*LEA, ex-Receptionist*), despite concurring with the competition-driven conflict thesis, highlights that women are simultaneously more proactive than men in getting together and stand out for each other when necessary, exhibiting a strong feel of friendship and mutual support, either to solve a common problem or to improve women's rights at the workplace. Both Sabrina (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*) and Maria (*EMP, Deputy Manager*) report, instead, instances when customers exhibited sexist attitudes, asking to 'speak to the Director', assuming that the company's representative was a man and feeling disregarded when brought before a woman in a supervisory position. Four other female participants, all in supervisory/managerial positions, report difficulties in dealing with subordinates who they felt to question their authority and management skills due to the fact of being women (although some of them also believe that such attitude was due to the intersectionality of their gender and age (Holgate, Hebson, & McBride, 2006; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012), as they were both women and quite younger than some or most of the staff reporting to them). One of these interviewees admits having adjusted her leadership style in order to be better accepted. Such type of testimonies strongly support findings from previous research which as demonstrated the existence, in T&H organisations, of gender discrimination, gender stereotyping, and delegitimization of women as leaders (Costa et al., 2012; Mónica Segovia-Pérez et al., 2019; Walsh, 2016).

- ii. **Age** – is referred by participants in three different perspectives. On the one hand, older age is associated with lower predisposition for training and openness to welcome younger members in work teams. Eva (*EMP, Receptionist*), for example, recalls how much willing younger colleagues were to share their knowledge and guide her through organisational procedures when she joined the organisation, when compared to older co-workers. Thomas (*EMP, Waiter*) offered the 'other side' perspective on this issue as, according to him, it becomes excessively tiring and stressful to be constantly training new entrants, either trainees or new staff. As mentioned in section 6.4.2, with regard to trainees' mentoring, this happens because not only turnover rates are high, as he is assigned this role cumulatively to his regular duties. Age is also referred as influencing interpersonal relations at work, when the supervisors are younger than those they supervise. Vera (*EMP, Reservations Clerk*) recalls her experience as Deputy Housekeeper when she was 21 years old, when having to supervise a group of employees much older than herself. She recalls how difficult it was to 'be heard' and having to struggle to prove her team that she was knowledgeable of the job and capable of holding a supervisory position despite her lesser operational experience. Previous research also posits that

young workers (in terms of youthful body-age) in hospitality are not valued by older workers and frequently the target of discriminatory practices.

- iii. **Educational level** – in the opinion of five female interviewees, the higher the academic qualification, the smoother interpersonal relations are. According to these participants, conflict tends to be higher in lower-skilled departments (such as the Housekeeping) and even between these departments and others. According to Sabrina (*LEA*) and Vincent (*EMP*), both in supervisory positions, it is also more difficult to keep the divide between professional and personal spheres, as less qualified people have more difficulty in not be confused between sympathy/openness and permissibility/lowering of job requirements. As previously mentioned in section 7.2.2, Alice (*LEA*) also attributes the origin of conflict with her peers to the fact that she was only employee with a university degree in her department and her co-workers always made the point that attending university does not make people more knowledgeable than work experiences do.

Although referred less often and being also described as a source of workplace stress (see next section, 7.2.4), **customer interaction** was positively mentioned by five research participants concerning workplace interpersonal relationships. Previous research supports that creating trusting relationships with customers can strengthen organisation commitment and reduce turnover intentions (Walsh, 2016). Several interviewees refer to frequently host regular guests, mostly travelling on business, which became old acquaintances, knowing the staff names, asking about their families, or even offering them small gifts. For several interviewees, invitations to leave and join a different organisation were made by regular customers (section 8.2.2).

When research participants were asked about what they would have to sacrifice if they left their jobs (*Leavers* were asked about the most significant loss when changing jobs), 18 interviewees mentioned their work group relationships, i.e., the people they work with, as pictured in Figure 7.14.

Both the constructs of Job Embeddedness (section 4.2.2) and Organisational Commitment contemplate dimensions associated with the **perceived costs of leaving** the organisation: *sacrifice*, in the former, which refers to the ease with which links with the organisation can be broken; and *continuance commitment*, the latter, referring to both financial and non-financial costs of leaving and side-bets individuals make. Although some participants refer to the lack of alternatives that at least match their current employment terms and conditions, social relations at the workplace are extensively mentioned as the aspect of work life in which high investments were made and their loss would difficult the decision to change jobs. This is closely aligned with the fact that a significant number of participants conceive QWL as a good social/workplace atmosphere (see section 7.3). Despite not all interpersonal relationships are positive or free of conflict, these still configure of the most valued sources of support and motivation at work, as the next quote reveals:

[The thing I would miss the most if I left the job would be] some of the people I work with. Companies are the people who work there. And you have to be lucky to be in the right place at the same time as the right people. We never get along 100% with everyone, but if we are lucky enough to meet, at that moment, with X or Y, and we are able to work well with these people, it is half way to making you want to go to work every day. (Rita, EMP)

Several research participants highlight, directly or indirectly, the role of leadership in influencing many other dimensions of work and career development. As a management tool, leadership style is associated with a wide range of organisational processes and outcomes such as organisational climate, interpersonal relations, work attitudes, acceptance of innovation and change or service performance (C. George, 2015; Kara et al., 2013). Managers are pointed out by several interviewees ($n=8$) as the main parties responsible for promoting a good working environment and building a strong work community. Especially intermediate-level managers, i.e., immediate supervisors, are perceived as primarily responsible for mediating interpersonal relationships and avoiding situations of potential conflict, yet without a very tight supervision. Most participants seem to agree on preferring to be granted autonomy to make decisions regarding their daily work (e.g., rostering, tip distribution); some remark that is very positive for team spirit, especially in small teams, to be allowed to choose their working schedules, or to decide who works on Christmas or New Year. This should not be, however, interpreted as *laissez-faire* and abdication of responsibilities, but rather as increased empowerment, considering that supervisors are still expected to oversee and intercede when necessary in order to ensure fairness and equity among team members, or to make decisions when consensus is not reached.

Supervisors are also expected to mediate employees' relationship with customers, particularly when in face of eventual complains and disrespectful attitudes. Alice (*LEA, ex-Receptionist*) and Michael (*EMP, when working as Bar Waiter*) report repeated situations when they lacked proper supervisory support when dealing with difficult customers, which they consider to ended up influencing the working environment in their departments.

Many interviewees, mostly all in managerial/supervisory positions, reinforce the importance of communication among and within work teams as a means to obtain better results, which conveys a message of planning, organisation, concern with employees' well-being, and confidence in the organisations' management style.

I think the day-to-day management of the hotel, with the purpose of improving quality of the working environment, has a lot to do with planning, with organisation, with anticipation, to create a feeling of well-being and dedication to daily work. The managers themselves must have that serenity to be able to pass it on to employees. Every morning, we meet with the managers. We sit at a round table so everyone can see each other. And each manager, then, meets with their own team. (Victor, EMP, General Manager)

If there are regular meetings, where people can express their concerns and ask questions with their managers, then people will not be raising their concerns in the corridors. But for this, confident and fearless leaders are needed. Therefore, the hotels have to think about training their managers and changing this culture. (OB Expert, KEY)

T&H literature on managerial styles has been indicative of an insufficient use of participatory decision-making, "leaning toward autocratic, authoritarian, and command and control based supervision" (Kusluvan et al., 2010, p. 197). The *OB Expert's* (*KEY*) opinion is aligned with these considerations, posing that in Portugal, there is a very widespread predominance of style of autocratic leaderships. The middle management itself is under great pressure to achieve results,

established by the Board and/or Investors, and frequently overloaded, hence being extremely demanding with employees and lacking time to provide guidance and develop.

On a more positive note, and although several interviewees do report to experience/have experienced such autocratic leadership style at their workplaces, either from immediate supervisors or top managers (mostly in independent hotel units), multiple references are also made to supportive, participatory, closer leadership styles, such as the following quote reveals:

We have a very horizontal hierarchy. Here there is no mystery surrounding the leader, the Director is not seen as an inaccessible person, that strikes fear into the employees. This culture does not exist. We always try to understand the profile of each employee, in order to adjust our practices to the way each one speaks and understands things. (Adriana, EMP, Sales and Events Manager)

The notion of 'living by example' (i.e., acting in accordance with the proclaimed values), which typifies a supportive leadership style, is also highlighted by several interviewees (see Figure 7.15 for some of these testimonies), as very important in a context such as the T&H industry, in which job demands are extremely high and job resources are somewhat limited and difficult to leverage. This notion is supported by several *Key-Informants*, who believe that anyone in a leadership position must lead by example and be capable of inspiring and influencing others through ethics, transparency, and fairness.

I am very strict and very demanding; in this occupation it is all down to the details. But to achieve this, we must have a philosophy of living by example. I have always set an example, although this often requires working many extra hours. I like to treat people with a lot of dignity, whatever position they occupy. I know that sometimes we pull a little too much, we ask them to work more hours, to work through breaks, but I always knew how to compensate. Although it is very difficult to negotiate because the company does not allow us to pay overtime, it leaves us no margin. Even when there was no official banked hours system, I would offer them time off as compensation. (Amanda, LEA, ex-Assistant Manager)

I was in great conflict with the Heads of Department. I couldn't accept that a Front-desk Supervisor blocks her team from taking a vacation at Easter, but then she takes a vacation at Easter herself. Where is the justice in this? I couldn't allow it. The Receptionists liked me because I was the first to try to set an example. How can I demand it if I don't set an example? The Hotel industry, in its various aspects, is still very formal, the bosses assume a whole set of acquired rights, like always taking a break at the weekend. And it's always the same employees who work on Christmas Eve, Christmas day and New Year's Eve, people don't feel it is fair. (Clara, LEA, ex-Assistant Manager)

I tell the managers that my own success is the last thing to rise, because the team's success always comes first. I am the last one whose success is recognised, and they must be aware of it. Obviously, I have to get the message out, but that motivation has to start with them. For sure, if they don't see certain examples in me, I don't accept they have it with whoever is below them. Because behaviour breeds behaviour. (Bruno, EMP, General Manager)

Figure 7.15 | Supportive leadership: living by example

Source: Own construction

As discussed in section 7.2.1, progression into higher hierarchical levels represents an opportunity to enjoy higher flexibility in managing one's working schedule, hence being one of the reasons why so many people aspire for such positions. In light of the foregoing, it all comes down to the leadership style each person adopts, considering that in many departments, middle managers are not only in charge of supervisory duties but are also part of the core team and are integrated in the same rostering system. As Clara exemplifies above, if these managers claim their right to always take their days-off on weekends and holidays, just because they are older team members and perceive this as an acquired right – a situation that she reported to happen with all middle managers in her hotel, including the Chef even when special events were taking place at the hotel at weekends – it is likely that this attitude will undermine employees' satisfaction and perceptions of fairness.

Managers' ability to "motivate their employees to reach their maximum potential, to be engaged, to embrace change, and to make good technical decisions" is a key element of success for a hospitality firm (Kara et al., 2013, p. 9). There is even a widespread saying by Marcus Buckingham that 'people leave managers, not companies'. Bruno and Xavier (EMP), both General Managers, emphasise the importance of intellectual stimulation – a trace of transformational leadership (Bass, 1990) – by promoting the use of employees' capabilities and rationality, and giving them autonomy in problem solving, not being afraid to make decisions.

Recognition and appreciation are largely contingent on middle management supervisory style, because even if organisational guidelines exist with this regard, it all comes down to the immediate supervisor one is working with. Several participants refer to this as 'luck', that is being lucky in meeting the right supervisor. As exemplified in section 3.4 (*Recognition and appreciation for work*) and addressed in section 7.2.2, recognition can be used to sustain employee motivation via the demonstration of the link between performance and rewards, hence contributing to higher commitment and satisfaction levels (Luthans, 2000). Recognition of good performance and positive attitude also reinforces the role of leadership in identifying talented employees who have the potential and interest in progressing within the organisation:

Middle-management ability to recognise high-potentials and identify key functions is imperative, and we need to ensure that leaders have analysis capacity and the resources to do so. As a leader myself, it is up to me to disclose the value and potential of my team members, my subordinates, so they can grow. Only then it will be up to the company to recognise and reward such potential. (HR Expert, KEY)

The *OB Expert (KEY)* adds that less positive leadership styles are often driven by resistance to change, which she believes to be quite high in Hospitality with respect to HR management policies and practices. Innovation is often seen as a means to make acquired statutes vulnerable. If there is a culture of flexibility, acceptance and humility, all organisational members understand, value and benefit of the contributions a new member can bring, especially when this is a highly educated person (the value of graduate talent is further discussed in section 8.5). Still according to the *OB Expert*, closed cultures strive to maintain their habits, and when no shared and collective values exist, this is reflected in people's behaviour; organisational leaders are those who shall be responsible for building organisational culture and promotion changes in this culture. When it comes to a General Manager, the change can be made easier, because

he/she is acknowledged with such power, while a recent graduate, newly hired, has very little power of negotiation and influence despite his/her competencies.

Overall, a significant number of *Employees* ($n=15$) and *Leavers* ($n=8$) believe that many organisations do not have a good policy concerning human capital. Organisations with top-down approaches and clear HRM strategies, and transformational leadership are expected to have an important impact on employee work engagement, as these tend to make leaders aware of the importance of providing the necessary job resources to their employees, or encourage employees in proactively mobilising these resources themselves (Bakker, 2017).

7.2.5 Health and job stress

Occupational stress research has been consistently demonstrating many negative effects of work-related stressors on employee's health, well-being, and job-related attitudes. Although the immediate and vast array of consequences of occupational stress are found at the individual level – which are addressed in section 3.4 (*Health, job stress and emotional demands*) – costs may also arise to organisations, mostly regarding loss of productivity. This issue is particularly highlighted by research participants, who several times stress that high pressure and job stress affect their performance to the extent that it is impossible to maintain a positive attitude towards customers and the same productivity levels at all times.

Hospitality work is characterised both by high physical and psychological job demands which strongly increase the risk of job strain and impact well-being at the workplace (see sections 2.3.1 and 3.4). This claim is supported by most *Leavers* ($n=8$), a significant number of *Employees* ($n=11$) and even by *Newcomers* ($n=4$) who got such perception from their early experiences on the job. Different scenarios of physical, psychic, and emotional exhaustion are described by the interviewees. Although individuals' responses to stressful situations vary (essentially due to their own perceptions of what constitutes a stressful situation, job experience, social support, and personality traits), common stressors can still be identified. The most relevant causes of occupational stress and job strain mentioned by research participants are systematised on Figure 7.16 according with their level of importance and described as follows.

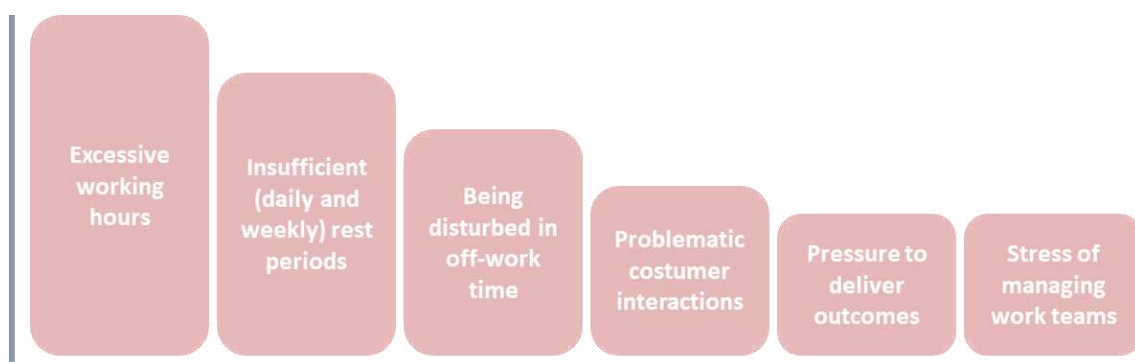


Figure 7.16 | Most relevant causes of occupational stress mentioned by research participants

Source: Own construction

As presented in section 6.2.1, interacting with people, enjoying being customer-oriented or not having a monotonous work-life, are all relevant drivers of people's interest for T&H jobs. **Customer interaction** is both a source of joy and a source of strain for many research participants. Interestingly, all accounts of *Newcomers* regarding work stressors related to the difficulty in managing relationships with customers, which they categorise as highly stressful and emotional demanding. Previous research also found that hotel restaurant frontline service employees rate interactions with customer as sources of both positive and negative emotions (C.-E. Yang, Wang, & Yang, 2020). Mostly for contact staff, such as Receptionists or Waiters, normal job duties involve dealing with customers with diverse profiles, moods, and attitudes, hence being prone to emotional labour. Two interviewees specifically refer that working in hotels that typically host last-minute guests due to flight delays and cancellations is highly stressful, as the customer is already with a bad mood due to something completely alien to the hotel staff.

Described in section 3.4, emotional labour can be emotionally draining when employees are expected to express feelings such as enthusiasm, friendliness, and cheerfulness despite negative emotions that they may experience when dealing with angry or uncivil costumers. Customer incivility was also found to have a positive relationship with restaurant frontline service employee job burnout. The same study also observed that organisational and supervisory support moderates the relationship between customer incivility and burnout (Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016). The importance of supervisory support – or as in this case, the lack of – in alleviating negative impacts of customer service problems, was mentioned by three interviewees, who felt to constantly be left alone with complaints' settlement or to not count with adequate support from other departments (considering that complains are typically vented in the Front-desk and not necessarily refer to Front-desk service and performance).

F&B Operations are described as physical and emotional draining, as F&B frontline jobs involve many technical skills, heavy physical work (e.g., setting-up event paraphernalia, restocking), extreme time pressure, and constantly on-the-move tasks. It is not surprising that Front-office is described as the department where work is more particularly stressful with regards to the psychological and emotional domains, as it is typically the department's attribution to deal with complaints and malfunction from other departments, and to provide solutions for all type of travel and accommodation-related hassles, as the following quote reveals:

The Reception is the heart of the hotel, that is, everything goes through the Reception. The phones are always ringing, there is always someone with questions, you are in constant communication. It's very complicated when you work with the public, there are a lot of complaints, and sometimes you can't manage certain guests. (Alice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

The *OB Expert (KEY)* thus reinforces the need for adequately prepare employees for service work and self-regulation of emotions:

When we have a customer in front of us, we have a person with expectations, in a state of mind and a mood, both very specific and highly variable, and who often expresses emotions that have nothing to do with that hotel. The employees may not be prepared to deal with conflicts, disagreements, or the unexpected, and have to self-regulate their emotions.

Only Amelia (*EMP, Receptionist*), who works for an international hotel group referred to have received special (and specifically oriented for the hotel sector, hence perceived as quite useful) training to deal with *difficult* customers and emotional self-regulation.

These pressures are reported as being exacerbated by seasonal demand variation, due to the need of dealing with new members in the team who typically require training and with sudden and increased workload in peak season, as many hotels are not fully staffed (Baum, 1999; M. Riley, 2000). This constraint is not only observed in peak season, as many participants refer to always be working in short-staffed teams, which forces them to **work longer hours than they should**. Very often, overtime is reported by participants as not even being accounted for banked hours, hence not receiving any form of compensation that could buffer the negative emotions resulting from such inconvenience. These excessive working hours are frequently associated with **insufficient rest periods**, either on a daily and/or weekly basis. “Both qualitative and quantitative work overload contribute to exhaustion by depleting the capacity of people to meet the demands of the job. The critical point occurs when people are unable to recover from work demands.” This is exacerbated when overload is a chronic job condition, not occasional (e.g., limited to an event, to a critical situation or meeting a deadline), giving people “little opportunity to rest, recover, and restore balance”. Workload is, therefore, one of the correlates of job burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008, p. 499). Most frontline staff work with rotating-shifts, and consequently, with a rotating system of days-off (which classifies weekends as regular working/weekdays⁷¹) ranging from one to two days-off per each seven workdays. Several interviewees refer to, very often, only been given four or five hours of sleep between shifts (as commuting time has also to be accounted for), which was clearly insufficient to recover for such demanding workdays. This becomes even more relevant if considering that the majority of frontline staff are standing or walking the entire day. Several Receptionists refer that even without the presence of guests in the Front-desk or at the hotel lobby, they are not allowed to seat (not even chairs or stools are available nearby) while performing other administrative tasks. In addition to recurrent overtime, shift assignment is perceived as a source of conflict with employees’ non-work life, particularly when it comes to rotating shifts, split shifts, and evening/night shifts.

Sleep disturbance is mentioned by three participants as a direct outcome of this type of work organisation and one participant disclosed to have been diagnosed with depression as a consequence of night-shifts. Therefore, it is particularly difficult for Night Auditors to adjust to night-shifts, either on permanence or in a rotating system mostly between male Receptionists⁷². Not only these three participants describe hours of sleep as insufficient, but also the difficulty in dealing with constantly changing biological routines, as the following quotes exemplify:

One week we work from 7 am to 4 pm, and the next week from 5pm to 2am. It is difficult for me not having a regular sleeping schedule, and this complicates my work a lot. (Lucas, EMP, Receptionist)

⁷¹ Different CBAs entail different norms regarding rotating days-off. Employees with rotating-shifts can be offered, for example, one weekend off a month or every six weeks, depending on the CBA in force in their employing hotel.

⁷² Night auditor is a typically male occupation mostly for security reasons as most hotels do not have additional staff and security during the night period.

Sometimes it's more because we don't even know what day of the week it is, if it's Tuesday, if it's Thursday, there is total lack of control on weekdays. (Miguel, EMP, Receptionist)

Three other participants refer to usually have to spend one of their days-off just to sleep and physically recover from fatigue, hence seeing their non-work, leisure time greatly reduced. Several interviewees also refer to be repeatedly disturbed in their off-work hours, in their rest and leisure periods, either to deal with pending work issues or being asked to change working schedule arrangements (e.g., to change shifts). As seen in section 7.2.1, the unpredictability of typical temporal demand variations (mostly seasonal and weekly) and event scheduling, make weekly rostering a common practice, which poses great difficulties in personal and family life planning. Boundaries between work and non-work time can become even more blurred when employing organisations provide accommodation for employees at the hotels they are working. This was the case for Clara (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*), who recalls being disturbed in her room, any hour of the day or night, to deal with any upcoming problem. This constant availability that means to be constantly 'on call' even when not physically present at work is particularly felt at higher hierarchical levels (Carvalho et al., 2019).

The constant disregard for employees' working hours and rest periods can even contribute to a negative image of employing organisations, as several interviewees refer to guests commenting on the fact that some staff members were working evening shifts, late at night, and they would meet again the next day, early in the morning. Today's customer (more significantly if a regular customer) evaluates hotels based on a growing number of parameters and are becoming increasingly aware of organisations' responsibilities at multiple levels, including with HR.

According to three participants, work-related stress is also associated with the **pressure to achieve objectives and delivering outcomes** (mostly at a high level and within tight timeframes), typically with limited Human Resources. Two other participants holding Assistant Manager positions, also refer the challenges in *managing working teams*, as they have to oversee and/or coordinate different functional departments and levels (both operational and supervisory staff), push them towards results attainment and deal with possible conflictual situations.

For several *Leavers*, the reasons underlying their career change are found to be strongly associated with this dimension of QWL, as the testimonies in Table 7.3 exemplify.

Table 7.3 | *Leavers’ accounts of career change due to high occupational stress*

Clara, ex-Assistant Manager

I never expected to have an 8-hour schedule – which curiously I have today – but another thing entirely different is that we have to work twice as much as a normal person. For some reason this is regulated by law. I'm sure I stretched the rope too far at that point and my brain was never the same. It may seem a little dramatic, but I felt it in me, my mental dexterity was never the same. It was not just a week of peak work, this you can handle, but it became a health issue.

Marco, ex-Receptionist

Too much work and too little time for myself, to do the things I like. In hospitality it has to be this way, it is not 100%, it is 150%. I often left work and I couldn't be relaxed because I was always wondering if something was missing. (...) Everywhere companies always want as much revenue as possible, with a minimum of employees. They always think it's possible to get more. Year after year, the [budgetary] goals are increased, and they always find it possible to do it with the same people and with the same resources.

Amanda, ex-Assistant Manager

Although I'm very workaholic, when it has to be, when there is a goal or a mission, I try not to fail, but everything has a limit. At Hotel X, where I was accompanying the hotel opening, I had a breakdown or was on the way to. Besides the pressure and the disorganisation that was working with those people, it was the work overload and the [long] hours. Besides, my youngest daughter was not yet one year old, my husband was with a new professional project in hands and was spending whole weeks away, and I was alone with two small children.

Source: Own construction

7.2.6 Work-life balance

Relationships off-the-job, including a myriad of personal, family and community commitments, are likely to impact an individual's likelihood of staying on or leaving a job (Holton et al., 2006; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Family relationships, kinship responsibilities and other links within one's community are one of the most significant forces, hence being suggested as antecedents of employee turnover by several turnover theorists (Mobley et al., 1979; Price, 2001; Price & Mueller, 1986). Not providing employees with flexibility to deal with non-work issues is one of the main reasons underlying individuals' perceptions of jobs as bad (Kalleberg, 2011). Several references are made, more generally, to the high demands of hotel jobs in terms of time availability and dedication to work, hence portraying a form of time-based work-life conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), as the following quotes exemplify:

You no longer have time for yourself, your family, your friends, so you stop living. You exclusively live for work, you live for hotel work. Even if you leave work, you are never fully rested, because someone calls you with some problem or other. (Alice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

I think it is very complicated, nowadays, for a person who works in Hospitality, to be happy with their personal life. (Marco, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

It does not exist. I could be here telling you stories, but personal life doesn't exist.
(Manuel, EMP, General Manager)

Both single as married research participants report the same type of constraints in reference to work-life balance. All *Newcomers*, all below 27 years old, are single. However, the vast majority ($n=9$) anticipate some type of negative work-life interference, either due to their own first-hand experience of work duration, intensity, and scheduling in the sector, or to witnessing some of the challenges faced by other fellow employees, as Edgar (*NEW*, 21 years old) reveals:

That's why I'm a little reluctant to pursue a career in the operational area, because it's very difficult to have a family and work in shifts. I met people who work from 3 pm to midnight and the next day have to wake up very early to take their kids to school, who didn't have weekends off, who missed birthdays, who weren't there for Christmas... and that's not healthy either, because I saw those people distressed and sad. There may be people who don't care so much about being with their family at certain times, but I do. Since I want to start a family, if I have the opportunity do this differently, that's what I'm going to do.

When measuring the factors that undergraduate event management students perceive to be important in choosing a career, Stone et al. (2017) found that 'a job that can easily be combined with parenthood' was the least important factor. However, *Newcomers* participating in this study revealed an opposite attitude, more closely aligned with the fact that Millennials highly value work-life balance (Ng et al., 2010). Non-work activities consist of a broad range of activities that go beyond traditional family responsibilities, such as sports and social activities, which makes work-life balance important for individuals with such interests.

Respondents' ages range from 19 to 53 years old. About a third of *Employees* and *Leavers* are in their early 30s, the mean age being 33 years old for *Employees*, 31 for *Leavers*⁷³, and 22 for *Newcomers*. As far as *Employees* and *Leavers*⁷⁴ are concerned, approximately half of the research participants are single, whereas the other half are married (or unmarried partners) (Figure 7.17). Although only a somewhat small proportion of respondents have/had children (eight *Employees* and four *Leavers*), a constant reference to the incompatibility with family, non-work life due to work conditions in the Hotel industry is found within participants' accounts.

⁷³ *Leavers*' age refers to the date of career change. Considering the date of the interview, these participants had, on average, 37 years old.

⁷⁴ *Leavers*' marital state and number of children were analysed with respect to the date of career change, as some got married ($n=3$), got divorced ($n=1$) and had children ($n=4$) only after leaving the hotel sector.



Figure 7.17 | Employees and Leavers’ kinship responsibilities

Source: Own construction

Figure key: *Leavers’ marital state and parenthood refer to the date of career change

Considering the number of children, three *Employees* are parents of one (all aged 10 or younger) and five are parents of two (with only one interviewee with children aged 10 or younger). Although only one interviewee is divorced (a woman, parent of two), a few participants ($n=5$; four men and one woman) refer to a widespread recognition that the hotel sector is highly prone to divorces, due to the incompatibility with family life. Women are widely recognised as more likely to experience work and non-work conflicts due to gendered norms that reinforce women’s role as ‘housewives’ and care-givers (see section 8.2.4).

Figure 7.18 illustrates some of the difficulties faced by research participants when trying to reconcile their working and family lives, particularly when it comes to the few time they have available to spend with their family and to the mismatch of their schedules. Changes in family structures and lifestyles have been placing stronger pressure on today’s parents, mostly deal-earner couples or single working adults, to participate in their children’s school life, sports and other social activities. Coping with family activities thus require employees to have more control and flexibility over their work scheduling (Kalleberg, 2011), something that, as seen in section 7.2.1 and discussed in section 2.3.1, is quite limited in most hotel jobs.

I had no life, I had to always be available. I already lived with the person who would become my husband, but we didn't have children back then, and for that reason I was able to balance this busy lifestyle; he had a regular schedule at his work, so many days and weekends passed when we weren't together. In times of events, there were months when I didn't even see my husband, because of my very intense schedules. (Virginia, LEA, ex- Guest Relations)

There's no time to be with the family when you take shifts in the morning, afternoon and evening. It's very complicated. If you work the night shift, you have to sleep when your family is at home, but awake. Sometimes you don't sleep at home because you have to go to work. And sometimes your days off aren't on the same days as your wife's or as school breaks. And that gets difficult to manage. (Miguel, EMP, Receptionist)

In the other hotel where I worked, only men were given shifts after 4 pm because the Management thought that women, especially Receptionists and Chambermaids, would be better able to manage their lives at home with their children. It is not that we were unable to do this work, but it is not easy to get home at midnight. Sometimes I see my son only one hour a day, which is just enough time to dress him and take him to school. At 4 pm I go to work and at midnight, when I get home, he is already asleep. (Aurora, EMP, Receptionist)

My girlfriend was studying in the morning and I would get home at 2 am, so when I arrived she was already asleep and when I woke up she had already left. But we have reached a stage in our life where we would like to have some stability, and I told the company that I would like to have a new project, work at another time, more in the mornings, from 7 am to 3:30 pm, leaving the rest of the day free to be with my girlfriend, or for my hobbies, or to have dinner with the family. And on top of that it is a continuous schedule ((not split-shifts)), that a person can work better with. Because at night time you enter at 3:30 pm and there is no certain leaving time, especially in some hotels. (Thomas, EMP, Waiter)

Figure 7.18 | Negative experiences of work-life interference

Source: Own construction

Aurora's reference to 'female-friendly' policies at the workplace, such as presented in Figure 7.18, can be a double-edge sword and should be interpreted with some caution. This type of policies, aimed at favouring female employees, seem in this particular case well-meant and show concern with the female employees' needs, hence being positively evaluated by Aurora. However, policies specifically directed at women, more than providing them with more flexibility at work, may be actually perpetuating stereotyped gender roles that connect women to primary childcare responsibilities, and should then be analysed taking into account the context and other organisational policies (Costa, Bakas, et al., 2015). Furthermore, both women and men consider the long hours culture of the Hotel industry as detrimental, as well as both women and men highlight work-life balance as strongly influencing their QWL. This suggests that not only women seek for more opportunities to reconcile work with their family lives and parenthood, but so do men, and this type of measures should not be exclusively directed at female employees.

Some participants are of the opinion that if one's spouse also works in T&H there is higher acceptance and mutual understanding about the vicissitudes of hospitality jobs. Many also remark that when one of the members of the couple is in a management position, the reconciliation of working and non-working life becomes easier, as one of the members can more

easily adjust to the other's work schedules. Victor and Octavio, both male General Managers (EMP), recognise that family support has been key to their career development and advancement, although both their wives are also working outside home. However, having autonomy and control over their job tasks, and flexibility to define their own schedules, was mentioned as a decisive factor. Miguel (EMP, Receptionist) also stresses that as his wife is the General Manager of a different organisation, they are able to better balance their time together with their young daughter. On the other hand, Gabriel (EMP, F&B Manager) exemplifies how his wife was forced to sacrifice her career on behalf of their family well-being, as neither of them were able to control work scheduling despite having supervisory jobs:

If I didn't have family support it would be very exhausting. That is why we have many cases of separations or divorces, because there is a lot of disruption, a lot of absence in family life. My wife was a Maître'd at another hotel. With our first child we were able to manage everything for a few years, until we realized that our son often slept at his grandparents' house, we were missing out on a lot and even he complained. With our second child, we had to analyse the situation and we tried to find a more compatible schedule. My wife made this proposal ((having flexible schedules)) to her company, but it was not accepted, so we decided that, in the first few years, she would stay at home.

One of the reasons underpinning this type of situations and enhancing the role of having a support network, especially when having children, is related to the nature of hospitality work, which typically takes place when most people enjoy time off work, either on weekends, school holiday periods or special dates, and when many support services, such as schools and kindergartens, are also closed. Again, being in a managerial position endows employees of the necessary leeway to overcome some limitations. Both Maria (EMP, Deputy Manager) and Celeste (EMP, General Manager) stress how difficult it is, transversally to almost all professional areas, not just T&H, to accompany their children in their school lives, if considering that parents' meetings are scheduled on weekdays, at working hours, which requires people to leave work in order to fulfil their parental obligations. Having flexible work schedules was decisive for them to reconcile these two spheres of their lives.

Martin (EMP, ex-General Manager), who still equates a return to the Hotel industry in the future, despite leaving for feeling somewhat tired and that his job was not being able to keep him intellectually challenged, stresses that he would more clearly draw the line between his professional and family life. Martin considers that family life always loses out in face of the constant availability that top level hotel jobs require. During nine years as Deputy Director he was required to travel frequently and for long periods and, with some hesitation, admits feeling guilty for not spending enough time with his family. Yet, Martin stresses that this naturally comes with the job's inherent responsibilities and people's life stage strongly influence their view on work-life balance:

In some things it may be different ((if returning to the hotel sector)), but the commitment will have to be the same. Sometimes I think I could have spent more time with my children, accompanying them more in this or that activity, but I'm not hypocritical to say that others will have to ensure everything for me. We must have the required availability if we want to take on certain responsibility in the business. At the time, I was also younger and had that eagerness, wanted to make the most of it.

Today, I do what must be done, of course, it's not that I've lost the will, but I value other things the most, I consider these things more carefully. This has to do with the stages of our life, with our evolution, both in terms of age and experience.

Similarly to Martin, and also as General Manager, Xavier (EMP) feels that what he 'gives' at home is much less than he should, thus always feeling that he is at fault with his family. Although he always tries to compensate but taking some days-off, the Hotel industry is highly prone to unforeseen events that often require employees, either with managerial or non-managerial duties, to change their plans and cancel/change personal commitments. Although some studies point out that women are more especially subject to subjective work-life conflict, i.e., feeling guilty and stressed for not spending enough time with family (Carvalho, 2017), such feelings were equally expressed both by female and male participants in this study, such as the above-named examples reveal.

Although having children poses more challenges for all working individuals – as productive labour is assumed as of superior value and importance to social reproductive tasks (Costa, Bakas, et al., 2015) – work-family conflict is a strong constraint to women's career progression in the T&H industry (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, Torres, et al., 2018; Doherty, 2004; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007), and the results of this study prove no exception, with most references to the impacts of having children in one's work life and career development being made from female participants. As the following quotes reveal, some women had to/consider having to make changes in their current professional situation in order to accommodate it with motherhood. Mooney and Ryan (2009) also found that both women, either at the start or more established in their careers, express concern regarding the compatibility between their long hours of work and having children. Childless women not only acknowledge to be aware that other women with children in the Hotel industry find difficult to reconcile their careers with their family lives, as they also admit the existence of work-family conflict when it comes to their spouses, and anticipate further difficulties when they decide to have children.

It would be very difficult to find a balance. As I was thinking about being a mother, I started to ask for another role that did not require so much time, to be able to coordinate the two things in the future, knowing that it is always very complicated. A colleague of mine got pregnant a second time and had to tell the company that the pregnancy had not been planned, that it was an accident, and had to make a commitment not to breastfeed, not to 'abuse' the benefits she would be entitled to, in order to continue in her role. She would cry so much, she had health complications and she couldn't call in sick, because she really wanted to progress in her career. Careers in Hospitality, for women, are built on a lot of sacrifice. Tears too. (Amanda, LEA, ex-Assistant Manager)

I still don't have children because I would need to change a lot of things in my professional life. Because it is not possible, at this pace and with these working schedules, to make that happen. I know, it comes with habit, but it's also been many years of leading this life and it reaches a point that it becomes very tiring. My partner has a very different job from mine, with a schedule from 9 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday, which is even more complicated to combine. And that has strong implications for the decision to start a family. (Elisa, EMP, Front-desk Supervisor)

In fact, witnessing the hassles of fellow women with children has made some interviewees reconsider their future career plans. Vera (*EMP, Reservations Clerk*) refers that she prefers not to progress further in her current organisation if that means facing the same hassles as her supervisor, who is a mother of a young child and spends extensive hours at work. Mooney and Ryan (2009) mention that some women might not even want to progress further in the hotel sector due to perceived difficulties in reconciling their career with family life. Previous research has also found that having children had greater impact on female Tourism graduates' careers than on male graduates, as women with children expressed a lower desire to hold leadership positions than childless women, while for male graduates this tendency was reversed (Costa et al., 2012). Daniel (*EMP, Deputy Manager*), who has worked in several foreign countries, considers that, in Portugal, T&H organisations are still not sensitive to the importance of work-life balance issues, and the existing policies are clearly insufficient, especially when a male work culture is still highly predominant. Closely aligned with Amanda's testimony, cited above, Daniel reinforces the notion that women are afraid of getting pregnant and losing their jobs or facing some type of discrimination at the workplace. This was also the case of Laura (*LEA, ex-Assistant F&B Manager*), whose manager's mobbing behaviour escalated when she got pregnant for the second time. After her son was born and health problems have arisen due to the permanent conflict with her manager, Laura decided to leave the organisation where she has worked for 10 years.

As seen in section 7.2.1, spending long hours at work still persists as a male model of a career based on commitment (Doherty, 2004) and it is a reflection of organisational cultures that reproduce corporate patriarchy (Mooney & Ryan, 2009). Celeste (*EMP, General Manager*) recalls that in all of the seven organisations she worked for, men were always able to show higher dedication and commitment to work. Although everyone postulates that rights and opportunities are the same for everyone, she disagrees, strongly believing that women find more barriers, especially if they have children. Even when women are able to reach higher levels within the organisational hierarchy, they are still trapped in the trade-off between flexibility and availability, as despite having flexibility to manage their own schedules, they are required to be available at multiple levels such as working longer hours, answering to work demands at any moment and under any circumstance (Carvalho et al., 2019). As seen in section 7.2.5, this availability requirement is pointed out by research participant as negatively influencing their well-being and spilling over to other spheres of their lives. This 'availability-related flexibility' pattern is also addressed by Costa et al. (2017) when analysing how social reproductive gender roles influence 'ideal worker' managerial discourses on recruitment decisions, who found that availability and flexibility are characteristics equate to male worker characteristics. Due to their supposed social reproductive responsibilities, irrespective of whether they have them or not, female workers are perceived as less available to work.

Celeste also highlights that few people can find alternative forms of support outside the family, especially after school's closing time, as the majority of T&H salaries are quite low. Alice (*LEA, ex-Receptionist*) partially shares this view, referring how the fact that salaries remain unchanged for long periods of time and people feel stagnant in their careers, without perspectives of financial improvement, does not give people much room for more permanent commitments such as having children or buying a house.

Most research participants refer that work-family balance policies are either inexistent or insufficient in their organisations. This is strongly supported by the *HR Expert (KEY)*, who claims that most T&H organisations stick to the ‘Olympic minimum’, i.e. to the obligatory minimum, which is quite low. Typically, work-life balance issues are absent of CBA discussions. The two *Major Employees (KEY)* participating in this study justify these shortcomings either with the face-time and round-the-clock availability that typifies the hotel sector, or with the fact that most work-life balance policies, do not fit all equally, must be tailored, and are often limited by labour law itself. These two views are pictured in Figure 7.19.

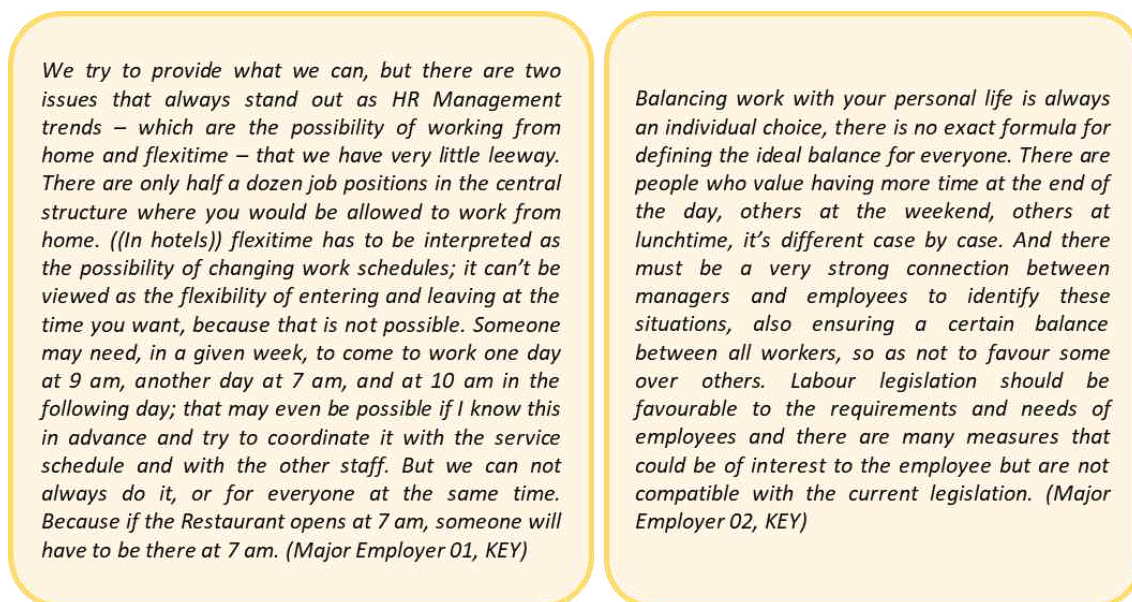


Figure 7.19 | Major Employers' views on work-life conciliation

Source: Own construction

Following the *Major Employer 02's (KEY)* claim for the need to ensure the right balance and the fairest measures for all employees, given that different people have different needs and concerns, Sabrina (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*) presented a dissonant view on this topic. According to this interviewee, her personal life was constantly being disrupted by requests to do overtime in a way she felt disproportionately to her co-workers:

Whether if you have children or not, the truth is one: you are taken advantage of. But there is also a great stigma on those who have no children. If we are three people working and one of them does not have children, it will always be their sacrifice to stay until later. I even understand, and I accept this, but one thing is when it happens from time to time but it's another thing when it becomes the standard practice. I too, could have appointments, but people don't see it the same way, because it's not the same as having children. But I also have a life, I have no children, but it is not my fault that others have them.

Several interviewees ($n=4$) refer not being given days off to attend marriages, birthday parties, dinner with friends, or any other social events, especially when these take place at weekends

and/or peak season. Samuel (*EMP, Receptionist*) refers that over the three years he is working for his current employer, he didn't have the opportunity to spend Christmas with his parents and sister, whereas Jaime (*EMP, Assistant F&B Manager*) recalls to have always worked during Christmas, New Year and other major celebrations. References to non-family links are also verified, in particular with regards to friends, leisure, hobbies and sports. From the perspective of the spillover theory (see section 3.3), high workload and time demands at work are likely to reduce available time and energy, as well as to negatively affect one's emotions, towards family and other non-work activities (Sirgy et al., 2001). Both Hugo (*EMP, Receptionist*) and Benjamin (*EMP, Doorman*), for whom sports is of utmost importance, believe that not having enough time and energy to sports practice is highly detrimental for their well-being, which eventually has a negative impact in their daily job performance. Still according to Sirgy et al. (2001), one of the need-satisfaction dimensions influencing perceptions of QWL is social needs, which not only refer to social interactions at work but also to having enough time off work aimed just at relaxation and leisure. Mitchell et al.'s (2001) job embeddedness construct also encompasses the connection between a person and the surrounding community, which refers not only to other people, but also institutions and leisure activities.

7.3 Conceptions of QWL in the Hospitality industry

QWL is an essential dimension of employee retention and employee satisfaction, having major repercussions on employees' work adjustment and psychological bonds at work, and consequently on organisational effectiveness. Section 3.4 of the literature review was devoted to the analysis of the multidimensionality of QWL, with eight main dimensions having been identified, both from more generic and industry specific literature. This set of dimensions guided data construction concerning the fifth theme of the interview protocol (see section 5.5.1), which subsequently resulted in a revised set of six dimensions and twelve subdimensions, which were just presented and explored from section 7.2.1 to section 7.2.6 (see Figure 7.1 for a pictured outline). In addition, research participants were directly asked regarding their own conception of *quality of working life*, and a specific, closing question was aimed at unveiling the multiple meanings that this concept has to the different interviewees. Only two participants seemed to be caught off guard with this question, taking a few moments to answer, while the majority had a prompt and structured response, which suggests that they had already reflected on this issue. Some participants ($n=7$) were quite concise in their responses, despite listing more than one aspect which they believe to be associated with QWL, but the majority not only had no difficulty in elongating and explaining their response, as they listed a set of 'meanings' of QWL. This reinforces the notion that QWL is a multidimensional concept, made of a combination of aspects that are very exclusive to each individual.

Considering the order of importance of each QWL dimension⁷⁵, it was observed that *Recognition and appreciation* is the most relevant aspect of work (26 mentions), which means that, for a significant number of interviewees, *Recognition and appreciation for work* is synonymous with QWL. This dimension was closely followed by *Social atmosphere/interactions at work* and *Pay* (with 25 mentions each). Two *Leavers (Resolute Leavers*, as categorised in section 8.2.1)

⁷⁵ Consisting of the number of references made to each dimension/aspect of work in T&H, not in the order these were presented in the participants' narratives.

specifically refer that there is no such thing as QWL in the Hotel industry, especially when in comparison to the alternative jobs they found after changing careers, in which they are provided all working conditions they value. All dimensions mentioned by the interviewees are depicted in Figure 7.20 and briefly explored below.



Figure 7.20 | Research participants' conceptions of QWL in the T&H industry

Source: Own construction

i. Recognition and appreciation for work

A significant proportion of the research participants' perceived Recognition and appreciation for work as one of the most important constituents of QWL. As recognition and appreciation interviewees consider having their efforts and contributions acknowledged and reciprocated, especially in light of the high demands that typify most Hospitality jobs, as well as being praised for their good work, which is believe to work as an incentive to improve employee performance. Three interviewees emphasise that although pay is an important aspect in any job, recognition is worth more than monetary rewards. Recognition and appreciation are both mentioned as highly valued and considered to be lacking in most organisations. Several participants refer to recognition

as being respected and having their needs taken into account, such as Marco's (LEA) testimony suggests:

[QWL means] To be respected. Not to see employers as having only one objective, which is the growth of the company, and ignoring us, taking us for granted, because we are a 'machine part'. It is very important for people to feel valued for the work they do. It is essential to know that they give us value and that they know that, without the workers, the hotel would not function. No one is irreplaceable, I believe, but I think people should be valued because every day they give their contribution.

Other interviewees still refer to the importance of being listened to, of feeling that their opinions and suggestions are valued and taken into consideration, of feeling trusted. References are also made to employees' sense of belonging, by feeling that one is an important part for the company and part of the team. This notion is closely aligned with the perception that the organisation cares for employees, rather than just looking at them as figures in an Excel sheet, which configures a form of organisational support (even standing out for Newcomers from their first work experiences).

Feeling that we are not just one more, that the boss knows our name, that we are valued for the person we are and the work we do. (Mario, EMP)

Knowing that the company cares, that they value their employees. In both places where I did my internships, people only spoke ill of their work, they were demotivated. Those managers may be very good in terms of results, but in terms of motivation and valuing people, there is still a long way to go. (Leonardo, NEW)

Happiness and well-being are intangible and not easy to measure, and for some people it can mean one while meaning another for others. But it is important for companies to be concerned about what is important for each person, and that includes valuing HR in their different facets, needs and motivations. (Julia, LEA)

Appreciation also assumes the form of employee-flexibility and reciprocity, with reference to mutual help and interactive exchange. Just as when the organisation needs the employee to make an extra effort or overtime and the employee complies with it, the employee may need a day off, face a family emergency, have to deal with a personal issue, and it is important to know that there is flexibility to do so.

ii. Social atmosphere/interactions at work

As seen in section 7.2.4, interpersonal and supportive interactions at work gathered the greatest consensus as a highly valued aspect of people's working life, which was again supported by the participants' own definition of QWL. Several participants refer that a strong team-spirit, solidarity, fun, honesty and mutual trust between work colleagues, supportive supervisors, voice (not being afraid of expressing doubts and asking questions or receiving detrimental comments), and a general good working environment, act as important buffers or coping mechanisms to deal with high job

demands – namely the extensive working hours, fast work pace, heavy workloads, and high job stress. Interviewees consider that positive social interactions at work positively impact their psychological well-being, job involvement, willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence in the face of difficulties.

We spend so much time at the workplace that the hotel becomes our home and the way we get along with colleagues is very important. If everything is okay, we always carry a smile and everything has higher chances of going well, you have another mood. If not, then it's terrible. (Virginia, LEA)

For me, QWL is to have a good working environment, it's to have a good team. That's essential. Because, whether there's work overload, whether there's a thousand and one problems, if you have a good team, if people know how to work together, if there's a good team spirit, everything goes well, everything can be solved, and we all go home happy at the end of the day. If there is no good atmosphere, we won't be motivated to go to work, we won't give our best, we won't be there 100%. I think that's key to a company's success. (Barbara, EMP)

QWL starts right at the moment when our manager, who is responsible for us and the company, tells us 'you can count on me for everything'. That's the basic. When you have a person or a department that lets you know they are there for you, to back you up, that's QWL; everything else comes after that. (Hugo, EMP)

Having a Director who looks you in the eye and says 'Hello, good morning! Everything okay? So how are we doing today? Is there any problem?'. But beyond just saying, it's really being interested to know. And that's important, knowing that if you have a problem and you need help, you'll get it, because they care for you. (Amelia, EMP)

Octavio (EMP, General Managers) considers that helping employees creating a good social atmosphere at work and improving their working conditions is an important means for winning the admiration and trust of the people he works with. Even half of the *Newcomers* ($n=6$) present a psychosocial working environment as an important dimension configuring QWL. Although QWL dimensions were not evaluated according with their sequence in participants' narratives, it is perceived that when it comes to a good working environment, interviewees almost always referred '*In the first place...*', which suggest that this aspect of work stands out in relation to others and is more importantly evaluated.

iii. Pay

Research participants' conceptions of QWL reflect the exact same issues underlying negative perceptions about remuneration which were presented in Figure 7.9 (section 7.2.2). For QWL to be perceived, pay is supposed to be enough to meet one's needs, fair/adequate to effort and contributions made, and adjusted to employees' qualifications. In Olivia's (LEA) opinion, QWL is synonymous of respect for the investment she did in formal education, which should be reflected in pay

differentials. However, when in the same job position, qualifications are not considered as a criterion for defining wage scales. Although two interviewees wanted to stress that salary was never the most important aspect of the job, a high number of participants consider QWL to be contingent on good and reasonable pay.

Remuneration will always be one of the variables of the equation. (Joel, LEA)

Salary in accordance with my work performance. (Valentina, EMP)

Getting [paid] what's fair for all the work I do. (Thomas, EMP)

Eva (EMP, Receptionist) believes that salaries in the industry could be better evaluated if settled on fair and ethical criteria, based on people's actual duties on the job:

In theory, I'm a 2nd Receptionist but I accumulate roles and responsibilities that don't fit the job description of a 2nd Receptionist⁷⁶, so my work experience is just a pretext to pay me less. Besides, I don't even receive the extras I would be entitled to, because I have an English certificate, but I don't receive the foreign languages allowance.

Some participants acknowledge that is impossible for everyone to enjoy of perfect pay conditions but emphasise the need for financial stability in order to start their own family, make commitments like buying a house, to travel, or to pursue their desired lifestyle. For Manuel (EMP, General Manager), when it comes to senior management positions, salary is just a matter of negotiation, hence advocating that top managers who are not happy with their pay were unable to justify why they need a higher salary and why they deserve it, as all comes down to the value people bring to the organisation.

iv. Work scheduling and workload

Irregular and family-unfriendly/unsocial work schedules are very likely the least manageable characteristics of T&H jobs, which operates on a 24/7, 365 days a year basis. Having a balanced, stable and adequate schedule is, therefore, an important issue for many research participants. Stable in the sense that many work schedules are defined at a weekly basis, which endows people's lives of content unpredictability and lack of routine (not positively perceived in this context). QWL is associated with the number of worked hours, considering that employees are frequently required to stay one, two or more hours beyond their normal schedule, without a proper form of compensation:

People should stick to their eight hours a day. You work your entire shift, you finish it and still you should stay another one or two hours. It's not fair. Because if you really must stay [to handle pending tasks], you got to be paid for it or rewarded in some other way, so it's at least fairer. (Aurora, EMP, Receptionist)

Not having split-shifts, having enough time-off to rest between shifts, working less hours a day, having lighter workloads for an eight-hour work journey, being free to enjoy banked hours on days of one's choosing, or having schedule flexibility, are some of the

⁷⁶ As defined in Collective Bargaining Agreements' job descriptions.

aspects that research participants positively associate with QWL. Difficulties are associated with choosing vacation periods, considering that from May to September is practically impossible to be freed. Several participants even refer to not being authorised to take their days-off on weekends during peak season, despite being legally entitled to. Once more, references are made to under-staffing practices which are common in the industry, which are perceived to be at the origin of such hassles with working schedules and excessive workload and, consequently, are detrimental to QWL.

Sometimes it wouldn't even be necessary to hire a full-timer, just a part-timer, to allow the team to better balance the schedules and reduce the need for overtime. But it's all about that managerial mindset of trying to cut costs by all means. (Veronica, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

We have a five and a half days a week contract, but they still get us to work overtime, that is, working six days a week. All paid, that's not the point, but we have no life. And so, it's very easy to always have someone covering days-off, covering vacations, it all falls on ourselves and that's exhausting. Maybe what we get paid in overtime is equivalent to the cost of hiring someone else and we would all be less overburdened, but it's quite clear at organisational culture: one more person, more costs. (Lucas, EMP, Receptionist)

Smaller companies, with less HR, end up exhausting these people to the limit in times of higher demand and limiting the hiring of additional staff to a minimum. (Clara, LEA)

v. Self-fulfilment and enjoyment of work

As previously described in section 6.2.1, perceiving hospitality work as a calling or as an opportunity to perform a meaningful job was mentioned as an important driver into this educational/occupational field, which configures these individuals as intrinsically motivated. 'Passion for hospitality work' was a recurrent expression employed by many interviewees, and the same pattern is found in reference to their conceptions of QWL. Feeling like they are making a difference, being useful, and feeling that the output of their work provides satisfaction (to customers) is highly valued by some interviewees ($n=4$). Aligned with Person-Environment Fit theories (based on the match or fit between the individuals and the environment, in this case, the occupation), several research participants refer to identification with the job, and finding pleasure in what they do and enjoying work as their strongest motivator.

QWL means being in a job position I like, doing what I really like; it means enjoying working, being motivated, being paid for doing something that makes us happy. (Laura, LEA)

It is critical to do what you like, because if you cannot stand it... Hospitality work is very intense, you work hard, yet you are poorly paid. If you don't like it, then it's just impossible to bear with it. (Virginia, LEA)

We all work for money but I'm not a mercenary and have my values, we all want to identify with the job we do. (Bruno, EMP)

Obviously, [QWL] it's about doing what we like. There is absolutely no doubt that if we are working on what we like it becomes much easier. I know it sounds like a 'la Palissian' truism but doing what you really like is important. (Miguel, EMP)

So as postulated by Career Construction Theory (section 2.2), career construction is a process along which individuals validate their self-concept based on their match with their occupational role. Many interviewees even consider that if this condition is not assured, they will hardly be satisfied with other aspects of the job.

vi. Work-life reconciliation

For a significant number of research participants, QWL has to do with *time*: time for work, time for family and friends, time for hobbies and leisure activities, time for personal life in general. Hospitality work is frequently portrayed as an occupational that absorbs much of employees' time and energy, hence spilling over into other spheres of their lives, as the following quotes reveal:

[QWL] means time. Because I'm starting to get a little tired, because of the lack of time, I wish to do some things and my job doesn't allow me. The fact that I want to have children, the fact that I want to practice sports again, there it is... having a little more time to live my own life. (Benjamin, EMP, Doorman)

Work the eight hours I must work and then having time for leisure, instead of always working more than nine or 10 hours, and always getting home tired, with no time to do anything else. (Thomas, EMP, Waiter)

Having flexibility of time to reconcile with personal life or the possibility of working remotely in some functions, is synonymous with quality of life, which I did not have, but I have now. (Clara, LEA, ex-Assistant Manager)

As previously discussed in section 7.2.6, work-life balance is closely connected with the number of hours people spent at the workplace and workload. Consequently, several interviewees mention their desire to work the eight hours they are ought to, on a regular basis rather than the exception due to constant overtime. Hospitality jobs are described as suffocating people to the point of not being able to have social life or do exercise, which is likely to affect, in the long run, people's mood, energy and resilience, both at work and out of work. Five participants (of which three hold managerial positions) emphasise that when at their workplace they are keen to perform their jobs with the expected quality and requirements; in turn, they expect not to be disturbed on their time-off. They wish to leave work, even if leaving late, and being able to 'disconnect' and do not take work home. Two interviewees refer that role conflict is being exacerbated by technology, which has been blurring the boundaries between work and non-work time, as people are always online. Some participants ($n=3$) also refer to scheduling flexibility as a means to ensure good work-life reconciliation, especially when having children. Cecilia (LEA, ex-Receptionist) stresses how positive the impact of family-support measures (such as having a kindergarten or babysitter for the employees' children) would have had in her QWL and general quality of life. Curiously, the majority

of the research participants mentioning work-life balance in this context are single and have no children (or had no children when working in the industry, when it comes to *Leavers*), which is related to the centrality of work, family, leisure and other domains in people's life and identity.

vii. Physical conditions and facilities

This aspect of work is closely aligned with some of the physical and psychological job demands referred in section 7.2.5 (*Health and job stress*), which strongly increase the risk of job strain and hamper employee well-being. Considering that the industry is often fast paced, especially when in peak demand, participants consider that being given the appropriate tools, equipment and other material resources positively contributes to reducing job stress.

Mentions are made to the physical space where one is working (e.g., natural light, enough room, little noise), comfort of uniforms, furniture layout (e.g., tall counters at the Front-desk for staff who has to stand most of the time or a chair/stool to take some rest), good equipment (e.g., good working and fast computer and internet), good meals (which is not a consensual issue considering that although most hotel employees are offered the possibility of making all meals at the hotel, the quality of the food is often questioned). Some participants evoke health concerns with regards to most of these 'requirements', while others claim that employees represent the firm and if they feel comfortable when working it will show to the customer. With respect to equipment, Xavier (*EMP, General Manager*) reinforces the notion that is necessary to understand the dynamics and work processes of each job position in order to choose the best tools. This idea is supported by the *OB Expert (KEY)* who claims that employees often lack the appropriate tools to efficiently perform their tasks and are trapped in redundant work processes, which highly hampers productivity. Hugo (*EMP, Receptionist*) exemplifies some of these concerns:

I cannot have QWL if I work at the Front-desk and don't have a stool at my disposal to sit down when I have finished my tasks or while I wait for a customer to arrive. Quality means comfort at the workplace. Because standing for 8 hours is not comfortable. We are not demanding luxury; we are talking about basic things. Another example is the employee not having to worry about drinking water. Regardless of whether the company provides meals for the staff or not, it must provide water when the employee is working. This should be mandatory, because these are minimal things that a human being needs to function correctly and those, most of the time, are forgotten.

viii. Challenging work

It is interesting to note that the majority of the participants mentioning enjoyment for hospitality work also refer to value jobs in which they have the opportunity to give more of themselves, to capitalise and maximise the potential they believe to have, to be involved in challenging and interesting tasks and projects – especially when being given achievable and measurable goals. Four out of the seven participants who mention challenging work as inherent to perceptions of QWL hold senior managements

positions. Bruno (*EMP, General Manager*) claims that being a good General Manager is not just occupying that position in any hotel, as identification with the company's project and strategic objectives is highly important. Remuneration is still considered an influential aspect, yet not fully granting satisfaction and QWL if not combined with an interesting and challenging work project. Manuel (*EMP, General Manager*) shares this view by considering that QWL is synonymous with a fully booked hotel, having much work to do, and a reasonable dose of job stress, as this requires him to be more involved, to do his best to keep up with the challenge. A few participants also mention that QWL means autonomy, feeling that the company trusts on the employee's discernment and capabilities, and being given the opportunity to lead and be proactive.

ix. Compliance with legal dispositions

In line with some of the issues that are addressed in section 8.2.1, a few research participants express their concerns with the non-compliance with applicable rules and regulations of the sector. These concerns are mostly related to work schedules/rostering systems, off-time duration and frequency, overtime, and overtime payment, with references being made to the recurrent lack of oversight by supervisory authorities. Again, mentions are also found to the lack of transparency fuelled by poor organisational cultures in the negotiations of employment terms. The participants consider that if legal dispositions were observed, their QWL would be highly improved:

The rules exist, but are not respected, and if they were, it would be halfway to find a hotel worth working in. We never know what to expect and this affects our QWL. If things worked like the law says and we had our rights safeguarded, there wouldn't be anyone dissatisfied while working in the Hotel industry. (Cecilia, LEA, ex-Waiter).

x. Fringe benefits

An attractive benefits package is often presented as a key practice to promote employee commitment, satisfaction, and retention – here also positively associated with perceptions of QWL. Benefits presented by interviewees as a complement to monetary rewards and motivating force, include: health plans, gym cards, discounts on leisure services (e.g., theatres, music concerts, other hotels). Benjamin (*EMP, Doorman*) recalls one of his previous employers by stating that the staff was quite pleased with the countless benefits that the company offered, considering that those could compensate to some extent their daily sacrifices at the workplace, which, in his opinion, is related with the low turnover rates of that hotel (affiliated to an international group). Valentina (*EMP*) also refers to transportation allowances, considering that in the Lisbon region a significant number of people lives quite far from the workplace, which in combination with the low wages of the industry, places an additional burden on many employees.

When searching for patterns of meanings in research participants' accounts, relations were found between coding categories. The relations, schematised in Figure 7.21 reflect the connection that each QWL sub-dimension has to overall QWL, as well as the influence that each aspect of the job exerts on the various sub-dimensions. It is then observed that number of hours that people spend at work is the feature that most negatively influences other dimensions of

work – e.g., perceptions on the adequacy and fairness of remuneration, work-life balance, occupational stress and job strain – as well as it influenced – e.g., by work scheduling practice, excessive workload, under-staffing practices, leadership style. Leadership is also found to influence a significant number of aspects of the job, whereas health and job stress is found to be influenced by a substantial number of others.

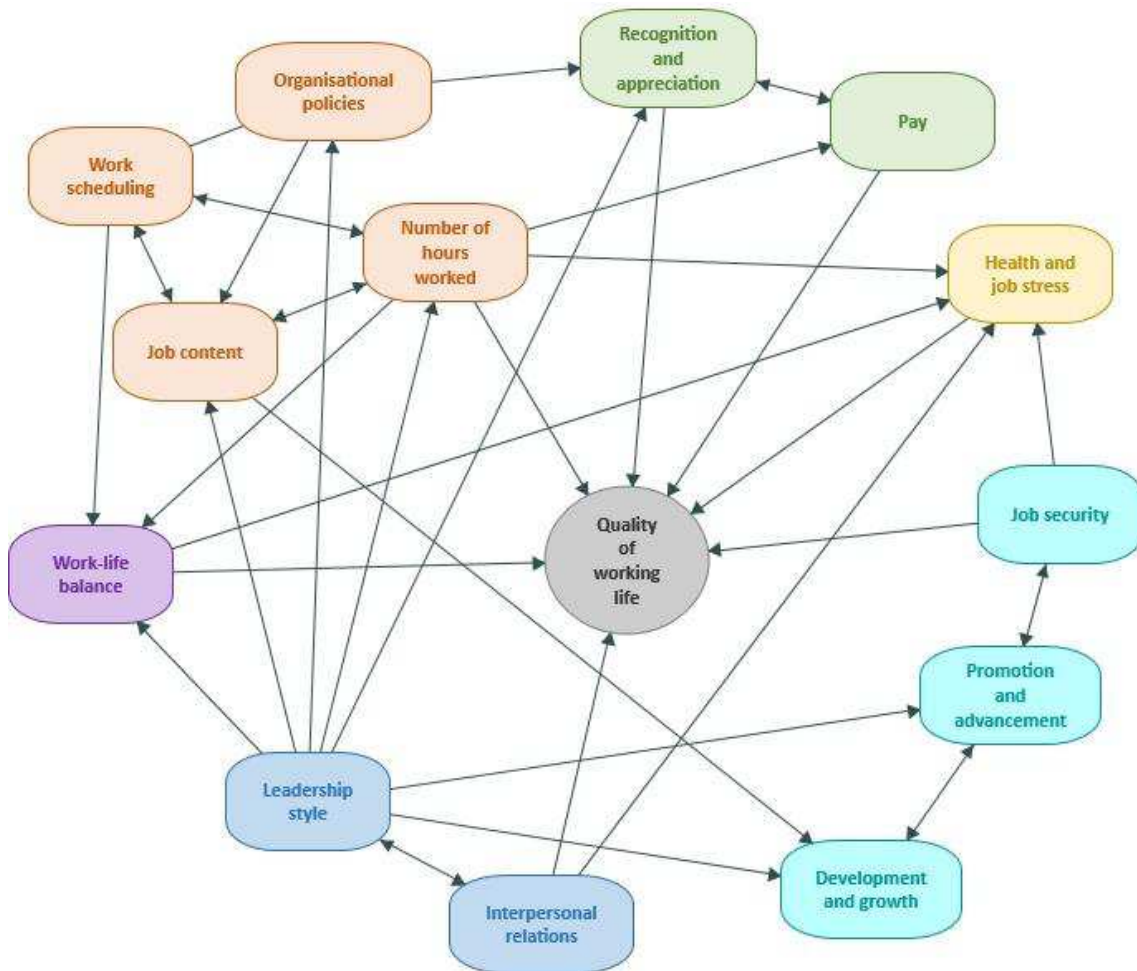


Figure 7.21 | Conceptions of QWL: relations identified in research participants’ narratives

Source: Own construction (NVivo 12 Pro)

7.4 Summary

Whole Chapter 7 was devoted at exploring the concept of QWL in the T&H industry. Underpinned by Chapter 3 of literature review, various dimensions of QWL were identified and described with regards to their importance in contemporary work environments. This chapter discusses how each dimension is perceived as positively and/or negatively influencing well-being at work, retention, and career permanence, addressing some of the implications for career development and Human Resource management. As stated early in this chapter, the analysis of

findings is therefore oriented to answer Research Question no. 2 – *How do highly educated individuals conceive quality of working life in the hospitality industry?*.

Section 7.1 was structured based on the combination of the eight main conceptual dimensions identified from literature review which have informed protocols for data generation in the empirical study, with research participants' subjective assessments, and their reorganisation into six new dimensions. Divided into those pertaining the 'job' level and the 'organisational' level, 12 subdimensions were explored.

In section 7.2.1, three main subdimensions stood out from research participants' accounts with regards to *Job structuring and work organisation*: organisational policies (relating to role clarity, communication processes, feedback, and performance appraisal), job content (pertaining to workload, interesting and challenging work, and autonomy), and working time organisation (focused on how work is planned and organised via production processes and work scheduling, to which workload is also related to). With very few exceptions, all these different aspects are negatively evaluated by the research participants, with the most burning issues being mentioned with reference to workload and work scheduling. Considering the relations between different dimensions found in interviewees' conception of QWL, it was observed that the number of hours that people spend at work is the feature that most negatively influences other aspects of work (e.g., perceptions on the adequacy and fairness of remuneration, work-life balance, occupational stress and job strain). It is, at the same time, influenced by other job/organisational conditions (e.g., work scheduling practices, excessive workload, under-staffing practices, leadership style). Consistent with the fact that a Higher Education degree is perceived as a potentially differentiating factor in the labour market, performing challenging and interesting work represents an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained at university, as well as a chance to prove oneself as a talented individual.

Section 7.2.2 addressed the two main areas of *Reward and recognition systems*, a recurrent and key domain of HR management: pay/compensation and benefits, and recognition and appreciation. Although negative accounts prevail with regards to pay, a few interviewees consider their wages to be appropriate to their tasks and responsibilities; even holding the desire to earn more, they do not negatively rate their remuneration level. Negative assessments are supported by perceptions that: the salary is not sufficient to make ends meet; the salary is neither adequate nor fair when considering efforts and contributions made, as well as the high job demands; or the salary is not satisfactory if considering the employees' level of formal qualifications, especially when considering the influence that holding a university degree has in expectation formation regarding future career outcomes. Fringe benefits are referred to a lesser extent, but not considered as having a significant impact on individuals' career decisions, with the exception of one participant. As far as recognition and appreciation schemes are concerned, non-tangible/non-monetary rewards are described as being of utmost importance yet being largely absent from most employee-employer relationships. This is one of the aspects of hospitality work that strongly underlies notions of lack of reciprocity.

Section 7.2.3 includes a set of dimensions which are strongly associated with good prospects for career advancement: promotion and opportunities for advancement; opportunities for skill development, learning and growth; and job security. As seen in section 6.3, promotion and opportunities for advancement constitute a highly desirable feature for many new entrants to

the T&H industry, despite the unclear career routes that typify most T&H jobs. Considering organisational size and structure, hotel groups are naturally perceived as being more competitive than independent hotels with regards to progression opportunities. These opportunities are also found to be contingent on reciprocity, transparency, and fairness, hence being at the origin of the dissatisfaction, demotivation, and distress, and ultimately in the desire to leave. This happens because a significant number of participants are highly driven by the opportunity to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities. Several participants refer to promises being made with the sole purpose of keep them in the organisation for indefinite time; this is mostly visible in operational function in which organisations typically face more difficulties in recruitment. By being recruited and kept in operational roles, perceptions of stagnation stand out from participants' viewpoints on career development in the hotel sector. Despite some recognition that progression opportunities do arise, when happening, these do not happen as fast as many people expected and/or were ensured when joining the organisation. Although promotions, salary increases and stability are still highly contingent on job tenure in most organisations, job security – which is perceived essentially as associated with contractual stability – was not a relevant concern. This suggests, together with the findings presented in Chapter 8, that the research participants have accepted the transactional nature of contemporary employment relations and do not conceive the idea of a job for life.

Interpersonal and supportive relations at work, which are addressed in section 7.2.4 as a subdimension of the *Psychosocial working environment*, is the one with the greatest consensus on a positive perspective. For the majority of research participants, good interpersonal relations are one of the most positive aspects of working in hospitality, especially with reference to peer relationships and customers/guests (the latter not as consensual as the former), whereas the relationship with managers and supervisors receives mixed reviews. Both at horizontal (e.g., between peers) and vertical (e.g., between employees and supervisors) levels, gender, age and educational level are presented by several interviewees as influencing interpersonal relations at work. Research participants were also asked about what the most significant loss would be (or was, for *Leavers*, when quitting on their career) if they would leave their jobs/organisations. Any other mention was so considerable as those referring to the people they work with. Interpersonal relational are therefore, the highest perceived costs of leaving.

The role of leadership, although solely explored in section 7.2.4, is key in influencing career development and perceptions of QWL in reference to many other work dimensions, such as work organisation, recognition and appreciation for work, interpersonal relations at work, job stress, and work-life balance. Research participants and *Key-informants'* accounts strongly suggest that improving employees' QWL in any organisation depends to a great extent on the leadership (which in smaller organisations overlaps with top management and, very frequently, with property owners), considering that these agents hold the power over any initiative or measure relying on organisational change. This is also supported by the testimonies of the General Managers that integrate the pool of interviewees participating in this study.

Section 7.2.5 is exclusively dedicated to *Health and job stress*, a fruitful topic in employee well-being research. Occupational stress and its impacts on people's ill-health are extensively approached by research participants along their narratives. This is due to the fact that Hospitality work is characterised both by high physical and psychological job demands. Interviewees listed

the main causes of their stress and strain at work as being (from the most impacting to the least): excessive working hours, insufficient (daily and weekly) rest periods, being disturbed in off-work time, problematic customer interactions, pressure to deliver outcomes, and the stress of managing work teams. Curiously, when questioned directly about their own conceptions of QWL, the few references to health and stress-related issues were made with respect to physical conditions. As seen in section 7.2, mentions are made to the physical space (e.g., natural light), comfort of uniforms, furniture layout (e.g., tall counters at the Front-desk), good equipment (e.g., fast computers), or good quality of meals. Although these seem minor issues, they are perceived as contributing to reducing job stress in jobs which are typically fast paced, especially when in peak demand.

Section 7.2.6 was addressed one of the most complex dimensions of QWL in the T&H industry: work-life balance. Recurrent mentions are made to the high demands of hotel jobs in terms of time availability and dedication to work, which make it impossible to maintain a balance between personal and professional lives. Hotel jobs, specifically when it comes to the lower hierarchical levels, lack flexibility in terms of the management and organisation of work tasks and schedules. Many employees who are often 'offered' flexibility are also given more responsibilities and required higher, even total, availability for work, which suggests that this flexibility is solely used as a means to deal with even heavier job demands. Research participants describe how work is systematically spilling over into other spheres of their lives, leaving them with little time for other – family, leisure, social, sports, etc. – activities. Both single as married research participants report the same type of constraints in reference to work-life reconciliation. Having children poses more challenges for all working individuals, but work-family conflict is strongly evidenced as constraining women's career progression in the industry.

Just as every individual exhibits his/her own and distinctive career path, so as distinctive will one's assessment of the positive and negative factors influencing work life be. Each individual is expected to present his/her very own combination of factors/dimensions. In addition, meanings are constructed based on subjective criteria that are expected to change over time and that are influenced by specific work/organisation-related factors, individual factors, and external factors. The findings indicate that such assessment is largely influenced by individuals' life-stage, considering the centrality that work has at different moments of their lives, as well as of kinship responsibilities. Section 7.3 was therefore aimed at unveiling the multiple meanings that the concept of QWL has to the different people. By order of importance, references were made to:

- i. Recognition and appreciation for work;
- ii. Social atmosphere/interactions at work;
- iii. Pay;
- iv. Work scheduling and workload;
- v. Self-fulfilment and enjoyment of work;
- vi. Work-life reconciliation;
- vii. Physical conditions and facilities;
- viii. Challenging work;
- ix. Compliance with legal dispositions;
- x. Fringe benefits.

Only two participants (two *Leavers*) admitted not to make any type of association between QWL and the Hotel industry, hence just describing it as 'non-existent'.

There seems to be a widespread idea, mostly formed by employers, that employees leave jobs and organisations because they are not satisfied with their remuneration and/or with other monetary aspects. However, many research participants strongly emphasise that although salary is a very important factor (not necessarily for its face value, but mostly for its disproportion with regards to job demands), it is not enough to drive loyalty, engagement, and retention. In addition to monetary benefits, employees expect an interesting and challenging job, reasonable workloads, career development, self-fulfilment and opportunities for personal growth, a satisfactory social atmosphere, a supportive leadership, and work-life balance.

Multiple references are made to the fact that the norms of reciprocity are systematically breached, with little return being perceived with regards to efforts and contributions made. Overall, the findings presented in this chapter indicate that a high level of resilience and commitment to the T&H industry is necessary for a long-term career in this field.

8. Career development and adjustment: Building a T&H career

8.1 Introduction

Contemporary work arrangements settled in short-term, uncertain, and contingent contracting, such as previously discussed in section 2.4.2, have contributed to more fragmented career paths, which patterns became more difficult to monitor. Moreover, as postulated by contemporary career theory, employees have been increasingly left to freely manage and shape their own career trajectories, more easily changing workplaces and employers. By following a constructivist-interpretivist stance, which was more fully described in Chapter 5, this study views careers as a series of experiences, events, relationships, and encounters which shape each individual's occupational direction.

In the first part of this chapter (section 8.2), research participants' career trajectories are analysed, focusing on the early stages of career construction, since the formation of the psychological contract, as well on the processes of job/career change. Although career paths became more idiosyncratic and unpredictable than ever, different patterns of directionality within participants' career trajectories are identified.

The second part (section 8.3) is devoted to the different interpretations and meanings that individuals ascribe to staying or quitting their employing organisational and/or their occupation, hence resulting in the proposal of nine profiles for the three groups of research participants. Participants' perceptions on the balance of the exchange relationship with their employers and engagement with their jobs are also explored.

Section 8.4 is devoted to the examination of contemporary views on employee turnover and retention, particularly in the context of T&H businesses, while in section 8.5, the fourth and last part of this chapter, the perceived role of T&H dedicated qualifications in career development is analysed. The ways in which a University degree is valued by recruiters/employers and graduate talent is perceived, recognised as valuable, and associated with more positive organisational outcomes, are addressed.

This chapter is, therefore, specifically oriented to answer Research Questions no. 3 – *In what ways do the experiences of highly educated individuals influence their decisions on job-career permanence or termination?* and no 4. – *How do Hospitality careers unfold for highly educated individuals?*

8.2 Career trajectories

The present section is built upon informants' narratives on their career story and the corresponding career paths since graduation, including the formation of psychological contracts, thus essentially referring to *Employees'* and *Leavers'* experiences only. Individual's career development is studied in the context of the career journey, with an emphasis on how careers evolve from one job to another over time, bearing in mind the many structural and individual factors impacting the career of the interviewed. As previously addressed in Chapter 2, even though traditional career paths are still common, they are no longer limited to one directional track, but take on different forms in accordance to the shifting structures of labour markets, as well as individual prospects and the respective choices.

8.2.1 Psychological contract formation

Understanding how psychological contracts are formed is central to the understanding of exchange relationships. Research has been mostly focused on the individual and organisational outcomes associated with fulfilment or breach/violation of the psychological contract (which are also addressed in this study, throughout sections 7.3 and 8.2.2) than on its formation. As seen in section 6.3.2, professional norms and societal beliefs towards certain occupations influence prospective employees' initial expectations and start shaping psychological contract formation prior to employment. The information organisations share with employees both before and after hire regarding the health and nature of the business act as warranties (Rousseau, 2001), and four interviewees actually refer the ability of honouring financial commitments (e.g., timely payment of salaries) as a relevant aspect when choosing an employer. How different employees interpret employers' promises and actions may be influenced by what is known about a given organisation and how occupations are portrayed by the media (Riley, 2019; Rousseau, 2001); hence, concepts such as employer branding have been gaining greater visibility. Prior and accurate information on the nature of the job, expected roles, type of rewards, likelihood of achieving success, or any positive and negative aspects of the job is a central premise of realistic job previews (section 4.3.3). Internships experiences are also associated with the formation of a psychological contract (section 6.4.2), based on a mental scheme of what trainees expect from organisations and what hosting organisations expect from trainees.

Psychological contracts, which were described earlier in section 4.3.3 mostly with relation to the 'new' career paradigm, although stable and durable, are fine-tuned and revised over time (Rousseau, 2001). Psychological contracts develop over time and their content depends on several factors, such as individuals' career stage, life stage or their past work experiences. Clarice (*LEA*) and Miguel (*EMP*), who have both enrolled in the Hotel industry latter in their lives, hence being mature graduates (Clarice did not pursue HE studies immediate after finishing high school and Miguel dropped out of a career in a different field to study and work in T&H), compare their attitudes and expectations to their degree colleagues, at younger ages. Both share the belief that some degree of excitement and optimism about the future is positive, yet consider that the

majority of new entrants is full of 'hopes and dreams' which will not be easily fulfilled by the industry (at least not in Portugal).

Most participants' accounts converge upon the expression of commitments and promises that can hardly be fulfilled. This is found to be largely associated with perceptions of stagnation that lead to disillusionment with the employment relationship (see also section 7.2.3). This section essentially reports on research participants' promise exchange with their prospective employers prior to employment, at recruitment and at early socialisation phases of psychological contract formation (Rousseau, 2001).

Finding a job: what is on offer?

As presented in section 6.4.2, hospitality management trainees are mostly assigned to operational-oriented internships, as operational departments are typically those which can accommodate more staff, whereas back-office/administrative sections have fewer available opportunities. This need for staff in higher numbers, coupled with the labour shortages that batter the T&H industry, makes more difficult to hire for operational, front-line positions. When considering the dimension, structure, and scope of duties of operational departments, it is perceived that these account for 80%-90% of the HR in a hotel unit. The most significant proportion of staff is taken up by the Housekeeping, Restaurant, Kitchen, Front-office, and Maintenance. This notion is supported by the *Key-Informants* representing the employers' perspective:

Operational roles are where we most feel the lack of staff, they make up around 90% of our resources, and these positions don't require Higher Education. This doesn't mean that we exclude people that do have a degree, or that we don't value it, but as they apply to these roles, we already know that we won't be able to fulfil their expectations. (Major Employer 01)

Maria (*EMP, Deputy Manager*) shares this viewpoint by remarking that in her organisation T&H graduates essentially have access to job offers at the Front-office; the majority stay for about a year and then leave looking for other jobs. Previous research also suggests that having a specialist degree is not perceived as very useful for Front-office work, despite most of the staff at this section having formal education in this field (Kong & Baum, 2006), which may evidence that graduates may be perceiving themselves as overqualified for these jobs.

Mario (*NEW*) confirms that when searching for jobs, almost no offers are available in mainstream job sites and other advertisement platforms, except for the Front-office and Restaurant. Occasionally, a supervisory position pops-up, but also for these departments. In fact, the Hotel industry largely relies in a 'hidden' job market, as many jobs are not advertised to the general public and companies seek to find the most suitable candidates within their contact network. Many *Employees* reinforce this view, stating that there is no lack of jobs in Hospitality, yet not the jobs people want, nor the jobs they idealise. As presented in section 6.2.1, half of the research participants choosing a T&H career are driven by the perceived high employability of the industry. For some *Employees* ($n=10$) and *Leavers* ($n=4$), the problem lies in the gap between what is required and what is offered to new applicants. This is observed right at the recruitment phase, and many interviewees report coming across nonsense and insulting job adverts, as Clara (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*) recalls:

We cannot have a salary basis of 600 Euros for a Receptionist that is required to speak three languages, we cannot. We are making wrong assumptions. If we look at job advertisements, some of them are completely unreal. Companies don't want workers, they want superheroes, but the salaries they offer always fall behind.

Lucas (*EMP, Receptionist, four years in the Hotel industry*) confirms such claims, remarking how he has been to job interviewees in upscale/luxury hotels and still being offered a three month contract, 600 Euros of monthly pay and one day, or a day and a half, off a week. Both Clara (*LEA*) and Samuel (*EMP*) even stress that in other forms of accommodation in which HR structures are more flexibility defined, the boundaries become even more blurred and the notion of multitasking takes a new meaning:

When Local Accommodation started booming, then they started needing handymen. The only thing missing was for companies to actually write that down on their job advertisements, because, in fact, they do want someone to do check-ins, to clean the rooms, if needed, to serve breakfast, to unclog toilets, you name it. (Clara, LEA)

The comparisons with other professional fields are also a constant, which are largely associated with the image of the T&H industry as an employer. Benjamin (*EMP, Doorman*) questions why Hospitality keeps failing to distance itself from other services, considering the increasingly demanding recruitment criteria and pressure to deliver high quality service. Benjamin compares his salary, his qualifications, and the requirements of his job (i.e., the number of foreign languages he speaks, the posture and attitude required in upscale/luxury hotels, the need for standing for almost eight hours of work, or the need for overtime), to those of a supermarket worker, considering that no differentiation exists, adding to the fact that the supermarket worker is likely to have additional benefits that most hotel companies do not offer.

Selection interviews configure two-way communication processes that involve promise exchanges between the two parties, the employer and the prospective employee (M. Riley, 2019). According to some research participants, the promises of prospective employees can be considered, at the very least, to be disproportionate to the warranties provided by the employer, to the extent of being described as 'disappointing' and 'frustrating' (Figure 8.1). Previous research supports that employers tend "to discount student's formal qualifications on the grounds of lack of experience" (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005, p. 211).

In section 6.3.2, Vera's (*EMP, Reservations Clerk*) job search behaviour was addressed after being described by herself as ineffective, considering that she was deliberately applying for lower-ranked, smaller independent hotels, for believing that she would not be hired by higher-ranked hotels due to her lack of work experience. The conditions offered in multiple interviews were described as follows:

At the end of the day, the conditions were always so bad, that I ended up not being able to accept these 500 Euros – not that I make so much more than that – where I had to be alone during the nights, downtown, with absolutely no security. And I heard things like 'as you have this schedule, you need to start working an hour earlier, because if the room is dirty, you have to clean it' or 'you need to bring your own lunch, but you only have a 15 minute lunch break and we don't have a microwave'. I couldn't even believe what I was hearing.

We graduate and they ask us to speak English, Spanish, Italian, French and German, fluently, nonetheless; we must know how to work with God-knows how many software programs, they ask us things that not even the people already working for them know how to do. They are always trying to find someone to do all these things that nobody does, for €500. During this one particular job interview, they kept repeating that I wasn't fluent in French, even though I'm fluent in other languages – which they already knew because they had my CV – as if this was a giant flaw on my part and a justification for the salary they were proposing. Apart from the fact that what seems to be the main goal for these companies is for you to be under 25, and somehow have 10 years of experience, how exactly is this possible? ((said with a sarcastic tone)) It's frustrating. (Vera, EMP, Reservations Clerk)

You have no idea the number of times hotels have called after receiving my CV, telling me I was just the right person for the job, because I had so much expertise, but as soon as they mentioned the salary, it was only the minimum wage. This means we are spectacular, yet what they propose is everything but. They define these impossible-to-achieve requisites for a particular role, things like 'recently graduated with N years of experience'. Who can fulfil this? It's disturbing. (Clarice, LEA, ex- Receptionist)

In London, my job performance was always praised, and when I returned to Portugal, what was consistently offered in all job interviews was what they call a 2nd Receptionist position, earning the minimum wage. During an interview, I played dumb and jokingly asked: 'Sir, what exactly is a 2nd Receptionist?'. He told me that it was a job for people entering the labour market, who were still learning the job. To what I responded: 'Hum... but isn't that a trainee?'. I find it ridiculous that an independent, ambitious person, who chooses to work abroad, upon returning to their country, is offered a job that is, in my opinion, a major setback. My degree and experience, were of no interest, all they do is offer minimum wage and ambitious people end up frustrated. (Hugo, EMP, Receptionist)

Figure 8.1 | Discrepancies between recruitment criteria and employment terms

Source: Own construction

After two failed employment relationships with a month's duration each, Vera came to acknowledge that her skills and competencies could actually be adequate and adopted a more confident and assertive attitude in the subsequent job interviews. She describes what turned out to be a wake-up call, while questioning the meaning of the term 'job opportunity':

*One thing that changed my job searching strategy, after rejecting two or three proposals, was understanding that the market has this 'we, the all merciful gods, are giving you an **'opportunity'** ((uses air quotes)) to work for us for 500 Euros' speech. It's absolute mockery! So, me, the new asset, enthusiastic and full of energy, with know-how, a lot of skills, not a lot of experience, but definitely a lot of other great qualities – I'm responsible, punctual, dedicated – so no, they are not making me a favour. They place a job advertisement, they need someone. They say they have an opportunity ((use of irony)), but none of this sounds like an opportunity. To justify their incredibly low salaries, they focus on the 'you don't know this' narrative, the requirements are so crazy unreal that it becomes incredibly easy for them to say that we don't fulfil all of them and so they can't pay a lot of money. So, does this mean that if I did know how to do everything they asked for, including speaking Mandarin and Swahili, they would be able to pay me 800 Euros – which also sucks – but because I don't, then they*

can only pay me 500 Euros. And I must be very thankful, because in reality I do not fulfil these requirements, and still they are giving me this opportunity; no, to me this means just a job opening.

Both the *Employers' Association Representative (KEY)* and the *Institutional Representative (KEY)* acknowledge that there is a mismatch between supply and demand and a mismatch between expectations of demand and what employers can offer to employees. Career ambitions are viewed as natural and legitimate, and it is up to the organisations to provide adequate training and opportunities for employees to growth – at least to be transparent and truthful about the extent these opportunities can actually be provided, so prospective employees can plan their careers and build their expectations accordingly. Due to persistent labour shortages, companies are eager for people who can join the organisation and start working as soon as possible, without major training needs. In turn, graduates leave universities desiring for the opportunity to promote change, to stand out for their competencies and make a difference. Hence, there is a mismatch between graduates' expectations and those of the labour market.

Martin (*LEA, ex-General Manager*) emphasises that HR need to be seen as an investment, and qualifications should be a differentiation criterion, together with work experience, as individuals with a HE degree are likely to have a different set of skills than those with lower qualifications. According to this interviewee, many players in the industry refer to previous industry experience as the most important criterion in recruitment, but are still offering entry-level salaries to experienced candidates by relying on the fact that they are new to the organisation and such wages are provisory while the company assesses how good is the employee-organisation fit.

Previous industry experience at entry-level jobs

Prior knowledge of the hospitality industry is viewed by most research participants as a highly valued recruitment criterion, as it is with work experience that many of the hard and soft skills required for hospitality jobs – namely those identified in section 6.4.3 – are more extensively developed. Past work experience is interpreted as a warranty of the training, skills, and abilities of new entrants, and as a synonym of work readiness, especially if considering that although dependent on organisational size and structure, the hospitality industry is often fast paced and there may not be a lot of time devoted to training of new entrants. As interviews do not allow for candidates to demonstrate their abilities, neither allow employers to gather enough information regarding an applicant's potential performance, past work experience becomes the requisite (Walsh et al., 2011). Industry experience is typically defined according with the amount of time that a person has spent working in a specific job, department, or occupation. With respect to Collective Bargaining Agreements, the number of years in a specific job is the main criterion for professional category upgrade, mostly aimed at avoiding pay stagnation (for example, moving from 2nd Receptionist to 1st Receptionist). Although an entry-level job equates to a job that requires basic skills and little job experience (such as that obtained during an internship), hence being suited for recent graduates who are initiating their careers in the industry, hotel companies typically seek work readiness among graduates in entry-level position (Jiang & Alexakis, 2017). As is it further discussed in section 8.5, the *apprenticeship* route is still strongly valued in the hospitality industry (Ladkin, 1999; Robinson, Ruhanen, et al., 2016). Perceptual discrepancies exist between the industry and graduates, as new entrants are

frequently portrayed as “over qualified but under experienced” for even entry level management positions. (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005, p. 211)

While most *Key-Informants*, namely *Major Employers*, place high importance on past work experience of prospective employees, research participants’ perceptions were mixed. A few participants ($n=3$) refer that their organisations give preference to young candidates with little or no experience, recently graduated or high school finalists, who are considered more easily ‘mouldable’:

With his years of experience in this hotel, Lucas ((the interviewee is referring to himself)) may no longer be interesting to another hotel. Because other companies see him as someone with vices and they prefer someone they can easily mould to their way of working: young people without experience and preferably without own family, if they know how to speak foreign languages is a bonus, and the necessary training they will provide. (Lucas, EMP, four years in the industry/with current employer)

Although not saying that preference is given to candidates with the abovementioned profile, other participants in managerial positions acknowledge to be open to hire employees with no practical experience as long as the candidates exhibit the *right* profile. Bruno (*EMP, General Manager*) reinforces, however, that providing proper training is key either for employees with little or extensive experience, as all organisations differ from each other and new entrants’ compatibility and adaptation to the job is highly contingent on the organisation’s onboarding practices:

Of course we hire people without experience, as long as they have the right attitude, motivation and the necessary soft skills, we are the ones who must provide the training. The market is the one who must ensure training, the market must be prepared to welcome and train staff according with the company culture.

On the other hand, other participants ($n=6$) stress that past industry experience is a highly valued requisite, although in combination with other factors, such as Table 8.1 illustrates. Several interviewees share the perception of industry experience as the aspect that weighs most heavily in job interviews, much more than academic performance, with companies looking for work readiness and little need of training. Previous research supports that T&H employers seem to consider work experience as more important than a degree when hiring a new employee (Harkison, 2004). References to youth relate not only to desired appearance but also to adaptive capacity to new workplaces, lower conflict levels, probable inexistence of family responsibilities, and lower negotiation predisposition. Findings from previous studies also suggest that young workers also tend to be perceived as more willing to work long hours and perform physically arduous work, yet are also seen as more easily disposable or ‘temporary’ (Mooney et al., 2017). References to previous experiences in upscale hotels are related to the fact that four and five-star hotels tend to preferably hire candidates who have previous work/training experience in the same category level, for being more knowledgeable about service standards. Mobility is, therefore, easier between four and five-star hotel, than the transition from lower categories.

Table 8.1 | Contingent views on the relevance of past work experience

Age: young candidates

- . *Both in the company where I worked and in those where I was interviewed latter, they only want young people, who already have some experience, who have worked elsewhere, but above all who are young. (Laura, LEA)*
- . *People of some age, who may even have a lot of experience in the area, are often pushed aside because they prefer younger people. When we had casuals or temps, some commented that it was not so easy to find jobs anymore and they were aware that it was because of their age, even though they have a lot of experience. (Marco, LEA)*
- . *It has to do with the fact that you are young and good looking. Or that you are not yet married, have no children, and can work in shifts, weekends, holidays and whatever. (Barbara, EMP)*
- . *Beyond a certain age some people are no longer an option for some jobs. Mostly in operational roles, the idea is that they have no vices and are easy to shape, to format to the image the company is looking for. And, of course, to pass on an image of youth to customers. (Rita, EMP)*

Background on upscale hotels

- . *In addition to technical skills, it is also valued that people have one or two years of experience. They always ask if you have worked in another 4* or 5* hotel, where you worked previously, how many years you have worked in this area. It is highly valued that they come from hotels with the same category. (Thomas, EMP, working for a four-star unit)*
- . *I had already applied for this hotel and had not been selected, but when I was called back for an interview, it was the fact that I had a 4* on my CV that gave me the new opportunity. That was even addressed in the interview. I know people who can speak four or five languages, but who are not selected in interviews because they do not have work experience in 4* or 5* hotels. (Samuel, EMP, working for a four-star unit)*

Source: Own construction

A matter of transparency

When examining research participants' accounts of the beginning of their working relations, a meaningful factor stood out: the lack of transparency that, at the moment that is noticed, undermines employees' trust and loyalty to their employing organisations. These perceptions of transparency – or lack of thereof – relate to truthfulness, ethics, openness, and promises kept.

As referred in section 6.4.1, candidates' unawareness of their rights and duties as *workers* puts them in a particularly vulnerable position when negotiating their contractual terms. Both Clara (*LEA*) and Vera (*EMP*) provided examples of the combination of employers' lack of ethics and transparency with candidates' inexperience and credulity; the former unintentionally *rejected* extra payment due to overtime exemption, whereas the latter was not duly aware of the differences between *gross* and *net* values when negotiating her monthly wage for her first work contract. This type of situation is supported by other interviewees who mention to have been handled contracts to sign without time to previously examine the document or without prior clarification of the contractual terms set forth therein. Two interviewees also refer to instances when they were signing their work contract and being verbally informed of terms that were

expressed differently in the written form, as well as being asked to conform with irregular arrangements. This situation includes signing a contract in which 40 weekly working hours are foreseen and no payment for overtime is due, while being asked to sign a second document, intended to protect the company in case of inspection, in which new entrants must agree with a 48-hours a week schedule. Again, this is found to more likely happen with young individuals at early career stages, who do not feel confident enough to question the recruiters, in an obvious dominant position. Others also report non-compliance with applicable legislation, by not being paid allowances to which they were entitled to. This was the case of Eva (*EMP*), who was warned by family members, after some time at her job as Receptionist in a national hotel group, that she was not being paid foreign languages allowance (information that she shared with other unaware peers). These accounts are also indicative that this lack of transparency and fairness largely influence employees' perceptions of job security. Again, Eva's (*EMP*) testimony reinforces this interpretation, as she admits feeling that her employers will not be fully truthful regarding her rights if she ever decides to leave the organisation.

References are also made to pay-related agreements, as some participants highlight to have been verbally promised a salary upgrade or re-negotiation after a probationary period, which never occurred. These participants stress that they started their careers earning the national minimum wage, which was justified by the employer organisation with their lack of or insufficient work experience; no reference being made to their qualifications, yet being ensured that opportunities for salary increase could be easily attained. Laura (*LEA*), who worked for a four-star independent unit, refers to the Front-desk Supervisor position as the job with high turnover rate in that organisation, which she believes to be associated with deceptive recruitment arguments at different spheres of the job role (career advancement, goals and rewards, job discretion and autonomy):

When the General Manager is interviewing candidates he offers a juicy carrot, promising that the person will have opportunities for career advancement and growth, that there will be 'N' goals and targets, that the person will be able to do this and that. But in reality, no one can take a step without him saying so, nothing is done without his permission, and nothing of that happens. Nobody lasts long in that job.

To avoid such type of situations, Victor (*EMP*, General Manager working for a national hotel group) emphasises the importance of asking prospective employees, when interviewed, if they are aware of the working characteristics of the industry, namely the existence of rotating shifts, the need of working weekends and holidays, or the wage scales. According with his experience, none of the working characteristics of the T&H industry is an issue for employees, except for pay.

Several research participants and *Key-Informants* consider transparency in the exchange relationship to be deeply associated with organisational culture. In their view, few companies involve their employees in management decisions, which is often referred as a *cultural* issue. Organisational culture and values and their influence on corporate management styles are perceived as a key antecedent of employee turnover (this issue is explored with more detail in section 8.4). Several interviewees refer to be unaware of their company's objectives, goals and strategies, as this information is withheld solely by the business owners, which undermines the staff commitment and involvement (Table 8.2). Communication is also of paramount

importance in building trust, which is a central premise of psychological contracts (Robinson, 1996) (see also section 7.2.1, *Organisational policies*). In line with the *Employers Association Representative's* (KEY) view on this issue (Table 8.2), transparency concerning financial information is a “means of both motivating workers to behave in ways that promote the firm’s financial health and enhancing employer–employee trust despite an often turbulent economy (Rousseau, 2001, p. 527).

Table 8.2 | Transparency-oriented business mindset

<p>Transparency-oriented business mindset</p>	<p>Positive insights on organisational transparency</p>	<p><i>A good working environment like we have here depends a lot on the culture and transparency, because if things are not well defined, if there are no objectives and goals, if we don't know what the company is looking for, we will hardly be well, we are drifting there. But if there is a well-defined and shared strategic orientation and if the employee is in tune, we get involved and make it work. (Maria, EMP, Deputy Manager)</i></p>
<p><i>It is cultural. The decisions lie entirely with the business owner and only he knows what is going on, and that makes people not to compromise. There is no transparency, which is key to make employees get involved. (Institutional Representative, KEY)</i></p> <p><i>If I know what the constraints of my organisation are, I will be more available to adjust and understand some measures, so that it works better for both parties. And it's not just about sharing information, but involving employees in deciding all types of things, including pay, but this has much to do with the mindset of each business owner. (Employers Association Representative, KEY)</i></p>	<p>Negative insights on organisational transparency</p>	<p><i>Sometimes I feel like I work for a cult. I am at the bottom of the pyramid and I don't know for whom or what I work for, only that I have to work. I don't know what the monthly goals are, nor the annual goals, I only know if the hotels are fully booked because my job requires that I have access to availability to know if I can sell or not. I cannot talk directly with anyone other than my supervisor. There are not channels of communication with the Management. (Vera, EMP, Reservations clerk)</i></p>

Source: Own construction

The *OB Expert* (KEY) reinforces the notion that many employees do not clearly know what the company expects from them and this hampers their performance. And ‘knowing what is expected from them’ is not limited to have clearly defined and quantifiable objectives:

The goals are the ‘what’, but something else is ‘how’; how do you get there? What conditions are needed to get there? The employees have to know, at the time they’re negotiating their employment terms, what resources they are provided and what resources they need to achieve these goals. In this way, people would know what they can achieve if a certain set of resources are provided. The norm is that negotiation doesn’t happen, people just accept the terms, they don’t confront managers with the resources they are due, and managers don’t care, especially when employees are able to achieve the goals even when the resources are missing.

According to the *Institutional Representative (KEY)*, transparency within the recruitment process is conditioned on the supply-demand position: when many potential candidates are available, companies tend to be more transparent in recruitment processes, for not being subject to such high pressure to hire. As at the moment (reporting to the date of the interview), there is almost no recruitment process, in the sense that in face of huge labour shortages companies are eager to hire anyone who is available. Hence, it is likely that promises are made regardless the extent to which they can be kept, and some aspects of the job are not openly presented and discussed with the candidates. Providing a realistic picture (which means both positive and negative information) of their future employment situation, make it easier to access and manage employees' expectations.

8.2.2 Portraying job moves and adaptative career behaviours

When considering the **length of hospitality careers** (further detailed in Figure 8.2), *Employees'* membership in the hotel sector lasts, on average, for nine years. *Leavers'* average tenure in the hotel sector is of seven years. Considering that the expected duration of working life in the EU ranges between 33 and 42 years old (EUROSTAT, 2018), an average tenure of seven years is considerably low, being these individuals highly likely to build longer careers in another industry. Hence, their investment in T&H dedicated higher level qualifications are also likely to be lost or, at least, under-exploited. According to the Theory of Work Adjustment (described in section 2.2), tenure is the most basic indicator of correspondence between individuals and one's work environment, which may suggest that these individual's satisfaction with their jobs was at a low level (considering that most job moves were self-initiated, as presented below, this was more likely the result of individuals' satisfaction with their collection of jobs than of their satisfactoriness).

Concerning organisational tenure (seniority on the job), *Employees* had spent an average of five years with their employer at the time of their interview, whereas *Leavers* spent an average of four years with their last employer while in the hotel sector. As mentioned in section 2.3.1, job tenure in the sector is low, with people being likely to spend less than two years working with the same employer, both in the EU and in Portugal, which can be indicative of the short-term nature of T&H employment. If the average number of years per different employing company along interviewees' hospitality careers is considered, it is also perceived in this study that a more significant number of participants ($n=10$) have spent an average of one to two years with each one of their employers. This might be associated with the limited opportunities for promotion and career progression reported in section 7.2.3, especially if considering that most employee benefits are still related to tenure, which means that starting a new job implies losing the benefits tied to the previous organisation. The exceptions are found at senior management levels, particularly regarding General Managers, who are in a more privileged negotiating position of their employment terms. Job tenure may also influence employees' attitudinal responses, considering that the longer the tenure, the stronger the affective bonds with the job or organisation are likely to be; on the other hand, the higher the risk of burning out may also be.

Also as exhibited in Figure 8.2 (*Number of employing hotel companies*), and although organisational tenure ranges from less than one year (e.g., *Valentina, Sales and Events Executive*) to more than 20 years (e.g., *Maria, Deputy Manager*), for a third of the *Employees* ($n=10$), their current employer was their first and only experience of hotel work. In hotel groups, it was observed that six *Employees* have worked in more than one hotel within the same hotel group, hence configuring examples of intraorganisational mobility, as is further detailed in section 8.2.3 (*Direction of career trajectories*). A lower proportion of *Leavers* ($n=4$) had also only one employing company (all of them family-owned hotels), in which they worked from a minimum of seven to a maximum of 10 years. For *Leavers*, internal mobility is much lower than for *Employees*, with only two interviewees referring four job moves or more. Considering that seven *Leavers* held managerial positions, this suggests that career progression was largely possible just within one or two organisations, hence not being contingent on high physical mobility.

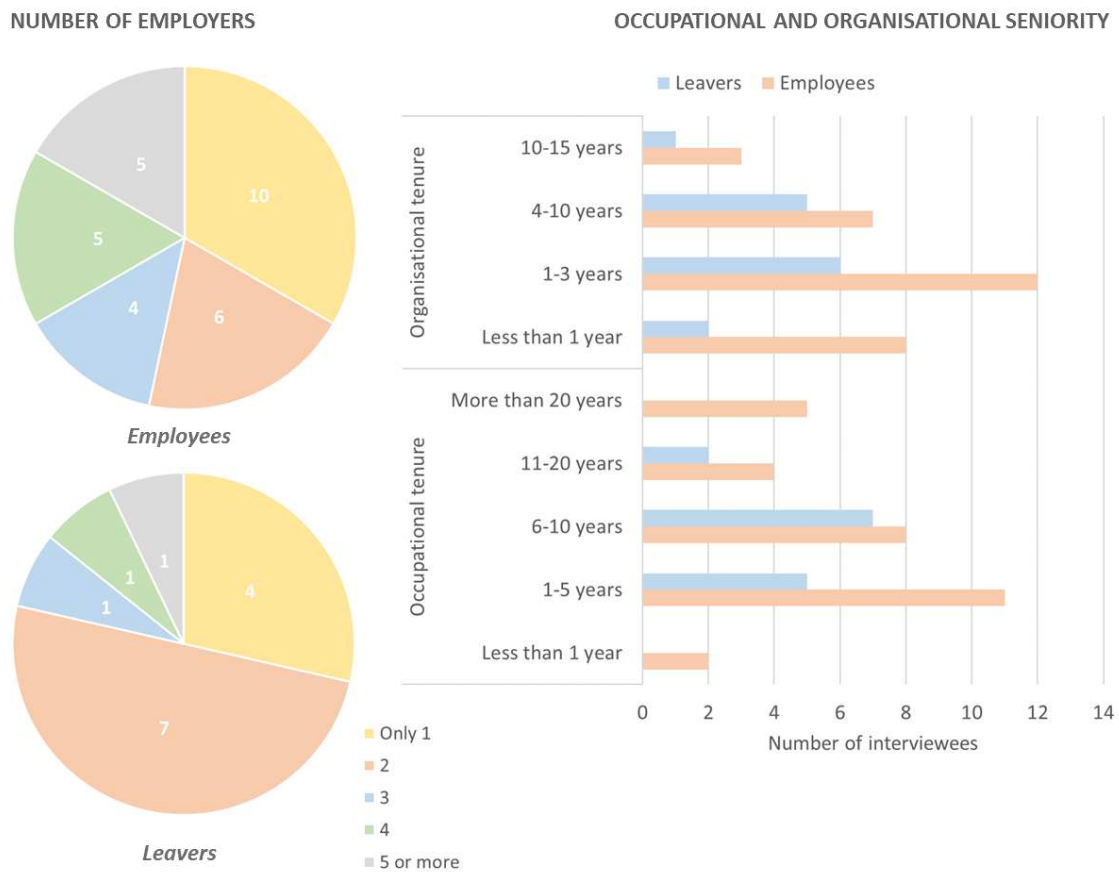


Figure 8.2 | *Employees and Leavers' professional profile: seniority and number of employing hotel companies*

Source: Own construction

Daniel (*EMP, 15 years in the Hotel industry*) and Celeste (*EMP, 17 years in the Hotel industry*) account for the highest number of employing hotel companies (seven each), i.e., external company moves, exhibiting a high mobility orientation. *Employees* account for an average of three different employers, whereas *Leavers* account for an average of two. Considering non-

management, entry-level positions, it is observed that 23 research participants started their careers in the Front-desk, as Receptionists (including the positions of Tournant and Night Auditor); 70% ($n=16$) of each were women. The other most frequent first jobs are found in F&B Operations, Porter, and Sales department.

As seen in section 4.2.2, most of turnover models describe the turnover phenomenon as a multistage process composed of attitudinal, intentional and behavioural components that flow towards the decision to quit or stay, focusing on the moderating or predictive role of a vast number of competing antecedent variables which are mainly defined by interactions between the employees and their work environment. By focusing on the locus of initiative for job/organisational change, as well as on the type of reasons underpinning the different moves composing research participants' career journeys (Figure 8.3) – *Employees* and *Leavers* –, this section aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature of career construction and turnover in the hospitality industry. As for the latter, more in particular, motives underlying job/organisational change, *Leavers'* motives for career change, search behaviours and perceptions of alternative job opportunities, and motives for working in another country are analysed within this section.

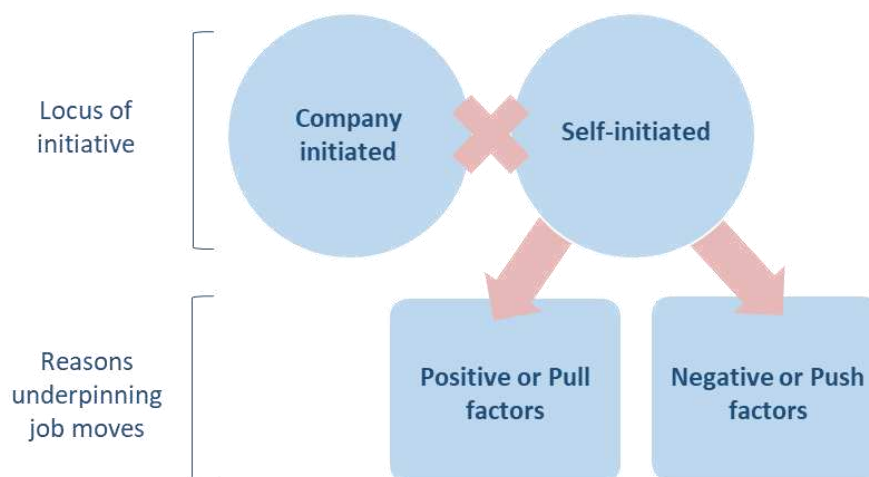


Figure 8.3 | Types of and motives for job/organisational change

Source: Own construction

Initiative for job/organisational change

When asked about the role each member of the employment relationship (organisation vs. employee) played in the various job/organisational changes of their career journeys (excluding job promotions), research participants reported that the number of self-initiated job moves largely surpasses that of company-initiated moves (Figure 8.3).

Only six participants (two *Leavers* and four *Employees*) referred that at least one among their various job moves was company-initiated, hence forcing them to find another employing organisation. Considering the ways in which employee turnover occurs, these accounts make up examples of **involuntary turnover**, which occurs when the decision to cease the employment

relation is made by the employer (see also section 4.2). Two main reasons were reported by these participants as justifying such decision: (i) the organisation not being willing to renew fixed-term contracts (in one case, in light of the Portuguese General Employment Law, this would imply a permanent contractual relationship, which was perceived as not desirable); and (ii) the deterioration of the organisation's financial situation, which involved re-structuring and downsizing (although the two interviewees who mentioned this reason held middle-management positions, their above-average salary was perceived as a decisive factor in their dismissal).

As far as all intra-organisational moves (job changes) are concerned, these should be interpreted as company-initiated, as these largely consisted of internal job promotions (as commonly found in linear upward trajectories), with few exceptions. One is that of Thomas (*EMP, Waiter*), who asked his current employing company to move to a different unit within the hotel group (keeping the same job title), for personal reasons, while in a previous organisation he had also been transferred to a different job position.

Many interviewees emphasise that the decision to change jobs and/or organisations was entirely down to them. A self-directed approach to one's career, in which the individual – and not the organisation – is in charge of career management, is at the core of a protean career attitude (see also section 2.2). According to previous research, protean/boundaryless career orientations/preferences (in particular self-directed, values-driven, and psychological mobility⁷⁷) are significantly intercorrelated and related to proactivity-related traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion) and self-efficacy (Wiernik & Kostal, 2019). Curiously, except for Benjamin (*EMP, Doorman*) (whose aspiration for a Front-desk job position, as previously described, proved a disappointment), no other participants refer to have regretted leaving their previous jobs. Sabrina's (*LEA*) interview, in particular, seems somewhat contradictory: although she repeatedly mentions that leaving the hotel sector was a positive thing in her life, other statements seem to indicate otherwise. This becomes more salient if considering that her posterior job opportunities in other professional areas did not grant her significant better working conditions or job status in comparison to those she had in the hotel sector.

This type of job moves configures, therefore, examples of **voluntary turnover**, which negative consequences – previously listed in section 4.2.1 – are more frequently assigned to organisations (such as supervisory and peer disruption, loss of knowledge and expertise, or reduced morale of remaining employees, for example). Voluntary turnover may also have negative implications for the leaving individuals themselves, which in this study many research participants associate with losing valuable interpersonal relationships at work (see section 7.2.4).

When communicating their decision to leave, several interviewees refer to have been asked about the reasons thereof, although without any formal assessment such as exit interviews, which are a popular tool to account for and understand the impacts of voluntary turnover (Guilding, Lamminmaki, & McManus, 2014; Williams et al., 2008). Except for Amanda (*LEA*),

⁷⁷ These three constructs constitute the Protean/Boundaryless Career Attitudes Scales (Briscoe et al., 2006) (see also section 2.2), together with physical mobility, which this study found to be less related to protean/boundaryless career orientations.

when leaving her job as Assistant Hotel/F&B Manager in a four-star unit of a national hotel group (which workload and work intensity were negatively impacting her health), no interviewees recall their organisations to have made any effort toward their retention. Clara (*LEA*), who was working as Assistant Manager in a large-scale unit of one of the biggest national hotel groups, believes that T&H organisations are not oriented towards retention, stating that:

When I told them I was leaving, they said they were very sad, that they would hold my letter of resignation for a day in case I changed my mind ((use of sarcasm)). When it was so easy for them to ask me 'Clara, what do you need?'. They didn't even try to understand my reasons, for them, it was just another employee that quit.

Among all participants, periods of nonemployment were short or practically non-existent. For the few who experienced a pause between jobs, this was actually reported as a period of recovering from the highly stressful and demanding jobs they hold before embracing new duties. The main motives for leaving their job and moving to a different company are analysed below.

Motives for job/organisational change

For most research participants in this study, the decision to change jobs/organisations has been a trade-off between **positive and negative factors**, which are frequently referred to in literature as 'pull' and 'push' factors (see also section 4.3.2) (Figure 8.3). Positive or pull factors are essentially associated with the actual or perceived existence of alternative job opportunities that are considered more attractive than the current employment situation. Employees may change jobs solely due to pull factors, as they do not need to be dissatisfied to perceive more advantages in other jobs. Negative and push factors are associated with dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of one's job, leaving even if no alternative employment is secured. Push factors are naturally more easily influenced and controlled by the organisation. Also as presented in section 4.3.2, Deery and Shaw (1997; 1999) make this same distinction by referring to the existence of a positive and negative labour turnover culture in the T&H industry.

According to research participants' accounts, they were found to more likely change jobs due to positive/pull factors rather than to negative/push factors. Push factors were naturally related to participants' dissatisfaction, demotivation, and psychological contract breach/violation, which are more closely examined in relation to perceptions of quality of working life in section 7.3. Although less predominant, two interviewees also refer to geographical reasons as drivers of the decision to change jobs. As previously mentioned, Samuel (*EMP*) and Amelia (*EMP*) had to find a job outside their region of residence but kept looking for jobs that allowed them to return – which they found.

A significant number of research participants expressed to have changed jobs following invitations from other hotel companies, which attracted them with interesting job offers and better working conditions. This is a talent attraction method that highly influences individuals' perceptions on the availability of alternative job opportunities within the labour market. The following quotes exemplify not only how interviewees emphasise receiving invitations from other companies, but also individual agency in career decisions, as presented in the previous section:

I've always changed on my own initiative; invitations have come up. (Octavio, EMP)

I always left on my own initiative, but I never had to look for [a new job]. It was always my future employer that contacted me. (Rita, EMP)

Although some contacts were made through professional social media (LinkedIn), most of these invitations came from company representatives with whom the participants contacted while performing their job duties. This is supported by several *Key-informants*, who refer to 'stealing' from competitors as a very common practice in the industry. Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager*) sees this type of 'communication' between employers as beneficial and non-limitative of employees' agentic power over their careers:

I don't think people should look at it as stealing talent from another hotel, as they don't suddenly disappear or because they had their arm twisted (LLL). One has the power to take control and make the decision to stay or go.

For some *Leavers*, when referring to their final move within the hotel sector, which represented an occupational change, three participants also mentioned positive/pull factors as determinant in their decision. All these interviewees were at top-management levels in their organisations. For one participant, Olivia (*LEA, seven years in the Hotel industry*), leaving T&H was an opportunity to start her own business in a completely unrelated field, whereas the other two maintained the connection with the Tourism sector:

It was a matter of personal goals, I thought I needed to refresh my career, in the sense of being in a different field of work. But I wanted to stay connected to the [Tourism] sector, to keep in touch with the same players. (Martin, LEA)

A recurrent reported situation was also the invitation to join hotels still to be opened, which the research participants interpreted as an interesting challenge. Being offered new challenges or having the opportunity to strengthen their experience and skill set have also encouraged several participants to change jobs/organisations. Enrolling in employment relationships that allow individuals to develop their human capital mix by performing intrinsically challenging work is a highly valued indicator of career success (Walsh et al., 2011).

Even although not dissatisfied with their employment situation at the time, several participants mentioned to being passive job searchers, meaning that even if not actively seeking, they were attentive to potentially good opportunities. Some refer to not holding in their minds specific criteria that would justify change, yet being open to the idea of finding a better employment situation. Gabriel's (*EMP, F&B Manager, eight years with his current employer*) testimony illustrates this situation, as it also reveals the importance that invitations from competitor hotel businesses play in individuals' assessments of availability of other jobs within the labour market:

I was recently offered to go to an interview at a competitor's hotel, with a different concept than the one I am in. I wasn't looking to move jobs, but I was open to the idea, so I went there to talk to the General Manager and he asked me a question: what would I like to gain from that company? But it is he who has to make a good offer, that convinces me to leave the conditions I am in, to go for better ones.

For some research participants (*LEA=8; EMP=6*), the various job moves composing their career paths were driven by perceptions of **psychological contract breach and violation**, which finds an equivalent on the participants' profiles that convey a notion of rupture either with

organisations or with a T&H career – i.e., *Resolute Job Leavers (EMP)* and *Irreversible Leavers (LEA)* – which are described next (section 8.3.1). As seen in section 4.3.3, although psychological contracts are highly subjective and open to misinterpretation, the individual strongly believes in its existence, holding to the belief that reciprocity will occur and the employer will fulfil its promises and obligations. When promises are explicitly made, the stronger this belief will be (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1989), as the testimonies in Table 8.3 reveal.

Table 8.3 | Perceptions of psychological contract breach

Cecilia, LEA, ex-Waiter
<i>When I went to the job interview, they had given me a lot of possibilities for growth and changes in position. For instance, if they ever needed someone for the Front-desk, they would think of me first. But that ended up not happening. I felt like I wasn't evolving, wasn't doing anything new, it wasn't challenging anymore. And for me, when this happened, my willing to get up in the morning and go to work wasn't the same anymore. So, I decided I wasn't going to drag this unsolvable situation any longer.</i>
Amanda, LEA, ex-Assistant Manager
<i>I left Hotel X for financial reasons, they had told me I was going to earn a base salary, in the beginning, because they didn't know me or my work. I said yes, I thought it was fair, and we agreed that in six months, when renewing the contract, we would discuss the salary again. A month before this time came, I asked what their offer would be and they tried to postpone the conversation for a few months; I said no, said that we had agreed to this, and I had reached my end, if they were happy with me, very well, if they were not, I'll just walk away, no hard feelings. To me, a verbal agreement is as valid as a written one, listen, I'm young but I'm not dumb.</i>
Veronica, LEA, ex-Receptionist
<i>I went to Hotel Y, with a verbal agreement that I would be a Receptionist, but for a limited amount of time, because the Assistant Manager was moving to a different hotel, so I could move up the career ladder. This wasn't a complete lie, because after a year she left, but they didn't hire anyone for her position. There was a F&B Assistant Manager that started taking care of Accommodation as well. After a year and a half, I would have a permanent contract as a Receptionist, but I just said I didn't want it, because that wasn't what we had agreed upon. The General Manager said I was a really good worker and all, but I realised that that was only to try to keep me there. Besides not honouring their promise, it really sound like small talk, because he was telling there were some positions for me inside the company, but I happened to know a few people from the Board and they had never heard of me.</i>
Aurora, EMP, Receptionist
<i>When I went to the job interview, they told me I would have the morning shift, precisely because I had my son, and that I would have fixed off days, and maybe, once in a while I would need to work the night shift. However, six months after, a colleague who started working when I did, felt she was being wronged for doing to many afternoon shifts, so everything changed. Since then I have been struggling a lot, with managing my life, because my husband also works in shifts and we need to sort out who is going to be with our son. I'm getting to the breaking point. The off days rotate monthly, but we never have Sundays off, let alone a whole weekend off. I know that by law we are entitled to a weekend off every six weeks, but that has never happened.</i>

Source: Own construction

When there is a breach in a promise, in the form of a psychological contract violation, the intensity of reaction resulting from the feelings of betrayal will be much stronger than if expectations are not just met (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). In Aurora's (EMP) case, who is still employed at the organisation she considered the organisation to be failing to fulfil its obligations, she frankly admitted that this has been resulting in negative emotions, attitudes and behaviours, such as her decision to leave the organisation in the near future and, eventually, the T&H industry.

Motives for career change

As far as *Leavers'* motives for quitting their career in the Hotel industry and forging a new start in a different professional field are concerned, for most of these interviewees the decision to change careers was the result of a combination of factors. The exception was Joel, who assigned the reason to quit the industry solely due to the poor remuneration, envisioning that this aspect of Hospitality jobs was likely to be an issue for him across the industry, hence deciding for the change. As perceived from Figure 8.4, the most significant reasons pointed out by these interviewees are related to scheduling and working time arrangements and work-life balance issues, closely followed by aspects concerning pay, promotion and opportunities for advancement, and health and job stress (see also some specific testimonies regarding the impact of occupational stress on career decisions in Table 7.3), as the following quotes tackle. These factors are further explored with reference to the likelihood of *Leavers* of returning or not to the Hotel industry in section 8.3.1.

'Inhumane' – this is the word that made me leave the Hotel industry, although I did love it so much. I think the way work is organised, it does not respect people's dignity or their family life. The concerns are well known: family time, mental health, divorces – the rates are very high among hotel workers. One works until midnight and at 7am the next day is already there again; this happened when I worked in Hospitality and I know it continues to happen. (Clarice, Ex-Receptionist)

In the beginning we are full of energy, but after a few months, I started noticing I was feeling really tired and I had to ask my Director to reduce the number of hours I was working, I was getting to the point where people were talking to me and I couldn't understand what they were saying. My brain was taking a really long time to process things, I'm not sure if this was the beginning of a nervous breakdown, surely it could have been something a lot worse, had I stayed there longer. After 6 months I already had a permanent contract with them, but then again, I would also love to have an employee that worked the amount of hours I worked. So, to try to keep me there, after 6 months they had already put me under a permanent position (LLL), because it's impossible to find people who can withstand that kind of rhythm. What they ask of us, is not humanly possible. Later I found out they had hired two Direction Assistants to the same work I used to do. (Clara, Ex-Assistant Manager)

Apart from my salary, I wasn't getting anything else. I would do the night shift and not get paid the extra benefit, I would do a ton of overtime, and still wouldn't get paid the extra money. There were no banked hours, nothing. Often, I would leave work at midnight and start again at 7am the next day. I would call it a good day if we could find 15 minutes for lunch and dinner, I mean we need to stop, to rest. This happened

there, but I realised that it happens in so many other places, so I really needed to let go of that, that wasn't a normal life, I needed to try something else, something with different working hours. (Cecilia, Ex-Waiter)



Figure 8.4 | *Leavers'* main motives for career change⁷⁸

Source: Own construction

These findings are consistent with those of previous studies focusing on *Leavers* (which are quite scarce), which have found that low monetary rewards, demanding and unsociable working hours and difficulties planning ahead due to shift work, were the main reasons mentioned by participants as direct reasons for leaving the industry (Gebbers, Pantelidis, & Goss-Turner, 2020).

The vast majority of *Leavers* were under 35 years old when made the decision to quit their career in the Hotel industry (Figure 8.5). More than half have left the industry over the past six years

⁷⁸ See Figure 7.1 (section 7.2) for symbol key.

and four of these respondents only had children after making this career change. At the time of the withdrawal, three *Leavers* were already parents of two very young children, and one was the parent of one (having latter a second child). A constant reference to the incompatibility with family and overall non-work life due to work conditions in the Hotel industry is found within participants' accounts.

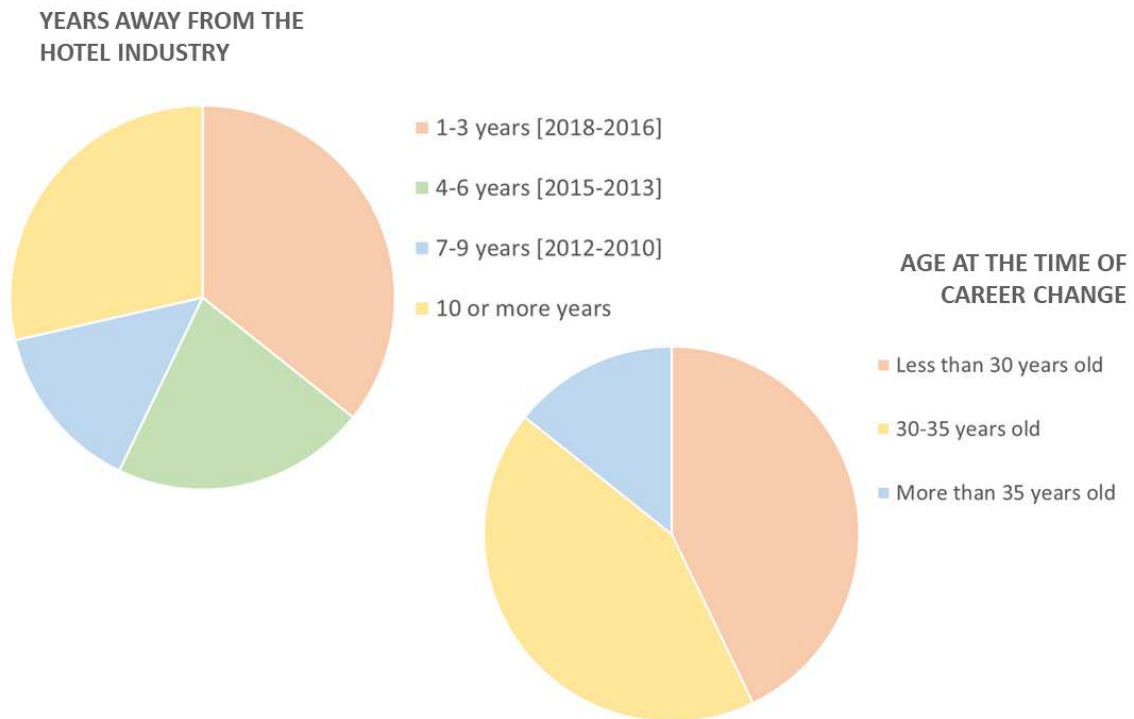


Figure 8.5 | *Leavers'* age at time date of career change and years away from the Hotel industry
Source: Own construction

Half of the *Leavers* interviewed in this study remained connected to the broader Tourism sector to some extent, mostly by working in consulting firms, Destination Management Organisations, travel agencies or education/training. Five of these interviewees were profiled as *Reversible Leavers* (see section 8.2.2), having been found to be keen to give a second chance to the Hotel industry, provided the *right* conditions are on offer.

Search behaviour and perceived alternatives

For most research participants mentioning negative/push factors as determinants for job move, the change was the result of **active job searches**. As a criterion for profiling participants career commitment, increased job search behaviours are a strong predictor of intentions to leave and increase the actual likelihood of turnover (section 3.4; *Job security*). Job search/search intentions are naturally an integral dimension of many turnover models such as Price and Mueller's causal model, Steers and Mowdays' model or Lee and Mitchell's unfolding model (section 4.2.2).

The *Leavers* who stated having searched for preferable alternatives before deciding for job change reveal that when interviewed in other hotels or Tourism-related companies, recruiters

offered them similar conditions or posed certain requirements that they were not willing to accept, which ultimately led to occupational change. Among *Employees*, at least six interviewees referred to be actively looking for a better job opportunity, either by making speculative applications or by applying to job advertisements.

Job search is highly contingent on perceptions of **alternative job opportunities**, which are also a key determinant of intentions to leave, and a constituent of almost all main models of turnover. As discussed in section 4.2.2, which particularly addressed the role of perceived alternatives as a determinant of voluntary turnover, the availability of alternative job opportunities and self-perceptions of employability are found to highly influence the redefinition of a persons' expectations with his/her current job. People are more likely to engage in job search behaviours if they believe to succeed in obtaining a new job, which can be influenced both by internal and external conditions. Moreover, when questioned regarding their major concerns about their future, a significant number of *Employees* and *Newcomers* are fearful of a labour market saturation on a near future. These concerns were expressed long before the COVID-19 outbreak but were still justified by a potential decrease in tourist demand for Portuguese destinations. Although all *Key-Informants* emphasise labour shortages as the most pressing issue in the T&H industry, exacerbated by the increasing number of new hotels, other forms of accommodation and other tourism businesses, most participants believe – mostly due to the knowledge acquired in their degrees about tourist destination's life cycles – that tourist demand would most likely decrease and influence labour needs. Two interviewees are also concerned with the growing use of automated processes in hotels aimed at providing human-free experiences and its impact on hotel jobs (as discussed in section 2.4.2). *Newcomers* also refer to an overabundant educative offer, emphasizing that many graduates are ready, each year, to join the labour market, hence increasing competition for the same jobs and recruiting prospective employees bargaining power (as the market will perceived that many candidates are available); part of this competition is even originated in other countries, as the following quotes detail.

[I am concerned] about the competition, because so many of us study Hotel Management around the world, and we must have a notion that we are competing with people studying in Switzerland, at Les Roches, or at Cornell. We all want to be hotel directors, manage departments, manage [hotel] chains, but there are few positions, and the skills we need to take on those positions are not easy to acquire. (George, NEW)

[I am concerned] about the lack of employment. I think Tourism will continue to grow, but the problem is that people from abroad may start coming to work in this area, who may have much more training, coming from reputable schools, with more work experience. And here in Portugal this still isn't a much-valued area of expertise, and that can be bad for us in the future. (Andrea, NEW)

In fact, the flexibilization of labour legislation in order to be able to hire foreign/migrant labour has been one of the battles recently fought between major employers/employers' associations and trade unions, which the former consider being a suitable answer to cover for labour shortages, whereas the latter perceive it as a means to more precarious jobs.

Alternative job opportunities are also part of QWL/job stress models such as Siegrist's (2017) model of Effort–Reward Imbalance at work (see section 3.3), in which it is also referred as dependency and presented as an enhancer of the severity of the effects of failed reciprocity. Several research participants, mostly before entering the labour market, assumed that holding T&H-dedicated qualifications would positively distinguish them from other candidates when applying either for their first job or when changing jobs. This concurs with previous research that found that employees who perceive themselves as overqualified and underchallenged in their jobs were more likely to be searching for a new job at the short term and to actually leave (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013).

Kinship responsibilities are also found to influence assessments of alternative job opportunities in the industry. Before accepting that she would need to take a different professional direction, Clarice (*LEA, mother of two small children, left the industry at 32 years old*), found motherhood as highly influential of her evaluation of potential alternatives. Bearing in mind Segovia-Pérez et al.'s (2019) approach to describe women's career development (section 2.4.3), Clarice perceived motherhood as incompatible with industry-specific characteristics, such as the long working hours and the constant need for availability, and could not find any alternatives that would allow to overcome these institutional barriers. Issues of gender, age and family strongly influence people's perceptions of and motivations for crossing career boundaries (Rodrigues, Guest, & Budjanovcanin, 2015).

As discussed in section 4.2.2, with regards to self-perceptions of employability, as well as theorised by authors such as Steers and Mowday (1981), alternative job opportunities are primarily determined by individual characteristics (such as qualifications or kinship responsibilities, which have been exemplified above), as well as by contextual factors (such as labour market and economic conditions). The *permeability* of institutional labour markets (function of job availability and ease of entry) strongly underpins the boundaryless career concept (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

As far as this perceived availability of employment opportunities within the T&H industry labour market is considered, research participants' perceptions seem to be mixed. Aligned with the perceived propensity to obtain a job that drives many people to pursue a degree and a career in the T&H, a very common view is that of high availability of jobs. Participants who hold this view ($n=21$) consider to be extremely easy to perform job/organisational changes within the Hotel industry, as well as within the wider Tourism sector, as the quotes in Table 8.4 illustrate. The high tourism growth in Portugal over the last few years largely supports such perceptions, inducing the belief that hotel openings are synonym of more job vacancies. Two *Newcomers* also believe that T&H graduates' skill set is valued in other professional domains, wherefore alternative opportunities are also available outside the T&H industry. This suggests that some individuals may be highly prone for career changes at a very early stage of their professional lives.

On the other hand, many research participants partially agree with the above-mentioned perspective to the extent that job vacancies exist, but contingently on other factors (Table 8.4). Some ($n=5$) consider that job offers are quite limited to some functional areas and levels, with management/supervisory or back-office positions being quite less available (yet, being the most desired, as seen in section 6.3). F&B Operations (mostly the Restaurant) and the Housekeeping

are referred as the most advertised functional areas, constantly hiring. As already seen in section 6.3, this suggests that many individuals associate the T&H industry to a flourishing professional field in terms of job availability, but are little aware of the functional areas and levels in which these jobs are being made available. This is not necessarily equivalent to unrealistic views of T&H characteristics, but rather indicative of an optimistic attitude. Many interviewees ($n=10$) highlight that despite the significant number of job vacancies and labour demand, it is unlikely that one would get the envisioned 'great' job. For many *Newcomers* ($n=6$), even before joining the labour market, it also seems clear that it will not be difficult to get a first job, but not one that will meet their expectations.

Some *Employees* ($n=4$) refer that successful job search differs according to location, with large cities offering more alternative opportunities. Hence, in certain regions of the country it may be more difficult to find alternative opportunities. Preliminary research (section 5.5) also revealed that the cost of living in certain regions or cities may also dissuade job change, especially if pay is not significantly higher⁷⁹. According to these interviewees, mobility is also contingent on the evolution and consolidation of different tourist destinations, as not all regions have the same growth potential. At the same time, some business types are also more appealing than others regarding availability of job opportunities, as happens with big hotel groups. It should be noted that independent hotels represent almost 60% of the Hotel establishments in Portugal. By type of accommodation, Hotels represent 70% of the offer, whereas by category (which indicates the quality of facilities and service standards), 38% are four-star hotels, 8% are five-star hotels, and 2% correspond to *Pousadas* (*Lodging houses* from an upscale segment) (Deloitte, 2019). Therefore, this type of organisations represents a somewhat limited number of potential employers. Combined with the low number of vacancies for management/administrative positions, this may be indicative of a reduced capacity to absorb a significant number of these management-oriented, prospective employees.

Besides perceptions of existing alternatives, the decision to change jobs and/or careers is also found to rely on the extent to which individuals perceive the material or psychological costs of leaving as too high or worth taking. When asked about what they would have to sacrifice if they leave their current organisations, about half of the *Employees* ($n=14$) mention that it would be difficult to cut ties with supportive colleagues and/or would miss interaction with regular customers. Although with a higher focus on the psychology of staying rather than of leaving, both the constructs of job embeddedness (as presented in section 4.2.2, with regard to the dimension of *sacrifice*) and organisational commitment (in section 4.3.3, concerning *continuance commitment* in particular), contemplate costs of leaving. Hence, these and other costs of leaving are approached with more detail in section 7.3, within different dimensions of quality of working life, and in section 8.2.3.

⁷⁹ Although Collective Bargaining Agreements typically account for such regional differences, the salary differential may not be enough to cover the increased cost of living due to relocation.

Table 8.4 | Perceived job alternatives: unconstrained and contingent views of easiness of job change

Easy and available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . <i>From what I see, there are a lot of opportunities and a lot of interest from companies in hiring. And I think someone with a little bit of work experience and a regular resume can easily find a job. (Thomas, EMP)</i> . <i>It is a very dynamic area, which at the moment, in Portugal, and for about 2 years now, is growing bigger. There are many opportunities to do new and different things.</i> . <i>There's one good thing about the hotel business: it's never short of work. Hotels are always looking for people, be they employees, be they casuals, be they temps. It may not be easy to get what you want, but you can always get a job. (Edgar, NEW)</i>
Easy and available but dependent on...	<p style="background-color: #fff9c4; margin: 0; padding: 5px;">Working conditions on offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . <i>I think it's easy. In some places, there are enough hotels for us to hand over our CV and have half a dozen calling back because they have available positions. What's difficult, is finding companies that offer the extra benefits we are looking for. In Portugal, it is very difficult to find a job that offers something more than just the salary. (George, NEW)</i> . <i>There are many job offers but it depends a lot on the conditions they offer. It depends on the extent to which we are willing to sacrifice ourselves. (Samuel, EMP)</i> . <i>It's easy to get a job, but it's not easy to get a job with good conditions. Often you only find low-pay jobs and a lot of hard work. (Marco, LEA)</i> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4; margin: 0; padding: 5px;">Functional area and level of jobs on offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . <i>There is huge staff turnover in Hotels, but perhaps more in F&B and Housekeeping. In top management positions, things are deeply rooted. At least here, in this city, things are structured like that, so it is only with new hotel openings that perhaps more opportunities in the top jobs come up. (Marisa, EMP)</i> . <i>Here in Portugal, there are no management-level vacancies. When job offers exist it is for the Front-office or for the Restaurant. (Mario, NEW)</i> . <i>From what I see, for example in LinkedIn, there are a lot of offers for F&B, Restaurants, Bar and also Front-office. But for the other departments it's harder to find. (Oscar, NEW)</i> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4; margin: 0; padding: 5px;">Geographical location/ mobility orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . <i>To continue in this sector, I would have had to look for a new challenge, outside Central Portugal. I would need to go somewhere that has more jobs on offer and more competition. Especially because I would like to look for a top management position, as I don't see myself taking a step back in my career, and hotels in large urban centres have a different structure. (Julia, LEA)</i> . <i>I don't think that would be too hard [finding a job]. The only thing is, I'd have to move somewhere else where there's more demand. (Elisa, EMP)</i>

Source: Own construction

Working abroad

Nine interviewees experienced **working abroad** in the hotel sector. The United Kingdom ($n=3$), Spain ($n=2$), Brazil ($n=2$), Switzerland, Germany, Estonia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru, were their destination. Although international moves happened when working for the same international hotel group, Daniel (*EMP, 15 years in the Hotel industry*) is the research participant

with more countries in his resume ($n=4$). Daniel has a wide experience in hotel openings, and he was invited to join the on-site training team and/or to implement lodging management procedures in three Latin American countries.

For the participants in this study, the choice for a work experience in a different country was mainly driven by the opportunity for personal development and for gaining additional knowledge and expertise. Most of these interviewees believed these experiences would allow them to have a more highly valued resume upon return to Portugal. None of these participants equated to build their careers out of Portugal, hence viewing these experiences as temporary. Such intrinsic-driven international career experiences may become an entry point to a boundaryless career upon repatriation (Tams & Arthur, 2006). Some participants such as Hugo (*EMP, one year as Receptionist and Sales Executive*) and Manuel (*EMP, one year as Assistant Manager*) stressed that their experiences in foreign countries did not yield additional benefits when seeking for a new job in Portugal. One of the implications of turnover, as described in section 4.2.1, is precisely the loss of previously acquired benefits, which may involve starting from a lower base. This was the case for Manuel, to whom the re-entry in the Portuguese hotel sector was synonym of downward movement, as he came to be first hired as a Receptionist after quitting an Assistant Manager position. Less than one year after, he was being promoted to a middle management position. This may suggest that work experiences in foreign countries can contribute to strengthen the individual's skill set, which although not easily perceived or valued during recruitment processes, can become a key distinctive factor once joining the organisation and positively impact promotion speed.

Only Barbara (*EMP, Web Sales Executive*), who worked for two hotel companies in the UK (and two other Tourism companies), started looking for job opportunities abroad after facing difficulties in finding a suitable job in Portugal. Some research participants have finished their degrees when the effects of the financial crash of 2008-09 on employment hit; this was the case of Barbara, Samuel (*EMP, Receptionist*) and Amelia (*EMP, Receptionist*), who all completed their degrees, start job searching in 2011, and mentioned this type of struggle. For Samuel and Amelia, residing in large cities, the answer lied in seeking for jobs in regions with lower tourist flows (also with lower qualified manpower available). For both, these were transient choices until better and closer located options became available. Considering the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, negative repercussions on prospective employees' job opportunities are still yet to be known, highly contingent on the recovery ability and speed of the hard-hit T&H industry. No age group is expected to escape the hassles of the current economic slowdown, but Younger Millennials (such as Barbara, Samuel and Amelia) had already faced major difficulties when finishing their degrees and first entering the labour market because of the 2008-09 downturn. One of the most frequent concerns of research participants regarding their future is precisely the extent to which the significant growth in tourism demand and the volume of tourism in Portugal will endure. Considering the growing interest of young students in this professional area, most interviewees are somewhat worried about increasing competition from new entrants to the industry.

8.2.3 Direction of career trajectories

Career paths have become much more transitional, multidirectional, dynamic, and fluid (Baruch, 2004). As individuals are expected to take more control of their careers, career development became more idiosyncratic and unpredictable than ever. As discussed in section 2.2, conventional professional paths have not ceased to exist, they simply coexist with a more varied set of career patterns. Although some participants may combine features of more than one type of career trajectory, four **types of career trajectories** – with regards to their **directionality** – were identified from interviewees’ accounts of their work experiences in the hotel sector. By analysing the participants’ career trajectories, it is then possible to shed some light on the types of career orientation that the hospitality industry enables. Two types are associated with career development within a single or predominantly within one organisation (*linear upward* and *crystallised* careers trajectories), whereas the other two types are related to career development across multiple organisations (*ascending* and *lateral* career trajectories). Figure 8.6 portrays the proportion of *Employees* and *Leavers* who followed these various career directions. It should be noted, however, that many *Employees* are still at an early stage of their careers, and these cannot be interpreted as binding categories.

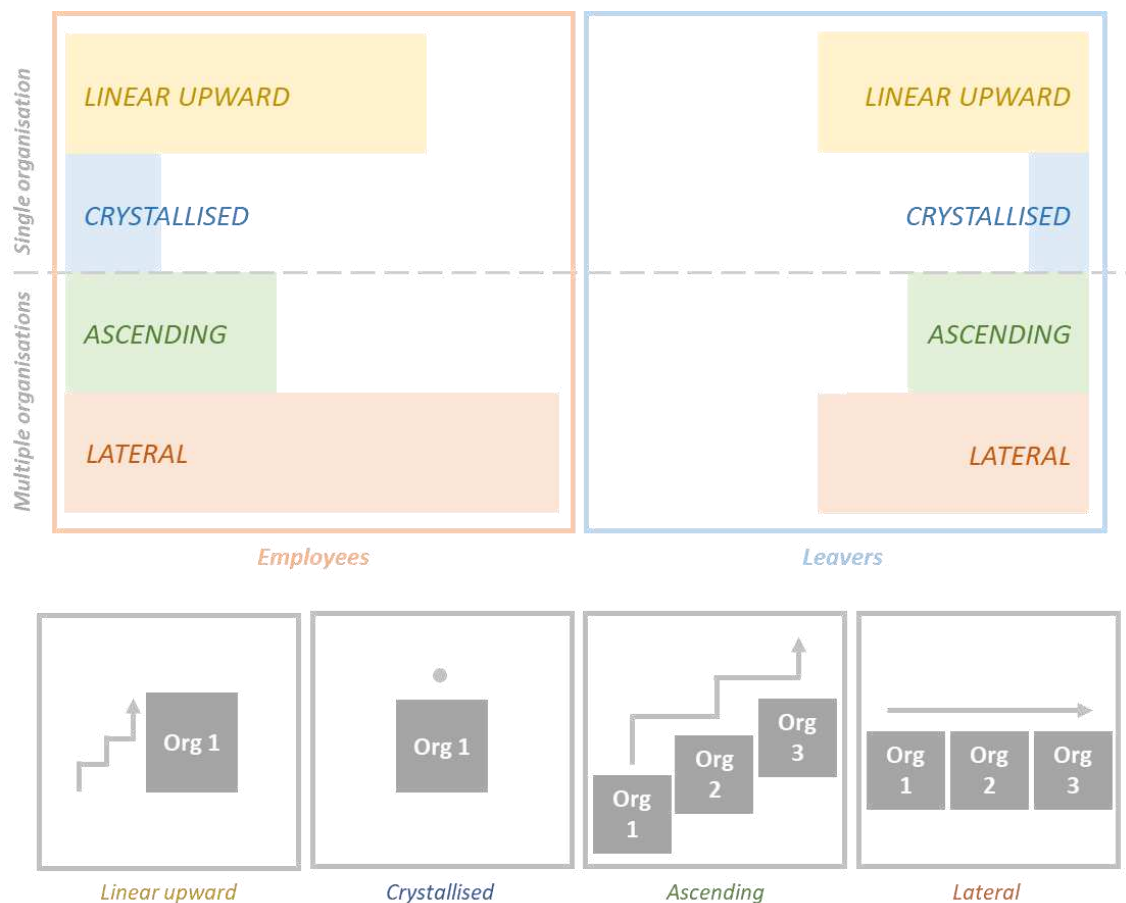


Figure 8.6 | Direction of career trajectories

Source: Own construction

Looking more specifically to the categories in Figure 8.6, **linear upward career trajectories** refer to stepwise, upward career paths, bounded to a single or predominant organisation. This career trajectory is similar to Super's Career Development model (section 2.2), which also hypothesizes upward movement within the organisational ranks. Research participants who exhibit this career pattern naturally refer to one employing organisation in which they made several career moves; overall, most *Employees* and *Leavers* ($n=10$) made one to three job vertical moves⁸⁰ within the same company. Maria (*EMP*) who has worked in three units of the same company (a national hotel group), briefly described how her career developed based on stepwise movement:

After starting work at 'Hotel A', I went from 3rd Receptionist to 2nd then 1st, I passed through all these stages. Then I was Controller and became Front-desk Supervisor. After 'N' years, I went to another hotel in the group as Front-desk Supervisor, but quickly became Assistant Manager, because I already had a great deal of experience in Front-office and as a Controller. 'N' years later, I became Deputy Manager and some time later I was offered a move to another hotel. Despite being the same position, this is a bigger, more reputable hotel, with a different clientele and a lot busier.

As it is further discussed in section 8.5, employers tend to rely on traditional, linear career path models to define career progression than in employees' qualifications. Research continues to reveal that the *apprentice* route is still strongly valued by the industry with managers gradually progressing all the way through different job position as a means to attain technical specialisation and other relevant career competences, hence forming an upward trajectory (Ladkin, 2002; Robinson, Ruhanen, et al., 2016; Wang, 2013).

Although quite less representative, **crystallised career trajectories** are typified by stagnating careers patterns within organisations that do not offer further growth prospects. Research participants who exhibit this career pattern were bounded to a single organisation but did not enrol in any job move⁸¹. Aurora (*EMP*) and Lucas (*EMP*), both Receptionists, working for three and four years, respectively, for the same organisation with permanent job contracts, consider having reached the upper ceiling of growth opportunities within their organisations. The same was accounted for Clarice (*LEA*), who also worked as Receptionist for the same organisation along seven years:

I was hired as a Receptionist and that never changed, though that I ended up doing other jobs and having different responsibilities. My case wasn't unique, nor was it the only hotel to keep people in the same position indefinitely, despite doing a lot of other duties as well.

In turn, **ascending career trajectories** are used to describe boundary-crossing movements that granted research participants access to higher hierarchical levels. These trajectories (ranging from one to eight progressive job moves) were, therefore, synonym of career advancement and

⁸⁰ For clarification purposes, making two job moves, for example, equates to three different jobs (under the same job title or not).

⁸¹ Although not having made any job move, one interviewee, Valentina (*EMP*, 25 years old, less than one year in the *Hotel industry*), was not accounted for in this category. Valentina had quite recently joined the labour market, hence being at a very early stage of her career and likely to change jobs and/or organisations. The assumption that this situation is transitory is supported by Valentina's overall interview.

progression across multiple organisations. Celeste (*EMP*), Octavio (*EMP*) and Xavier (*EMP*) followed the 'typical' hospitality career path, starting their journeys at the Front-desk and climbing the ladder all the way through middle management, up to top management. Although the expression 'climbing the corporate ladder' is typically associated with organisational and bureaucratic careers (Baruch, 2009), these participants do not hold a traditional career orientation. Their route was made across different organisations, and each *organisational change* reflected an additional step in the typical hotel hierarchy.

Finally, **lateral career trajectories** also refer to engaging in frequent inter-organisational movements, although such changes are predominantly non-hierarchical. Hence, these simply imply change/mobility, not progression. The most significant number of research participants, both *Employees* and *Leavers*, fit into this category. Thomas (*EMP, Waiter, 9 years in the Hotel industry*) and Rita (*EMP, Sales and events Executive, 10 years in the industry*) account for the highest number of job moves (some moves implying changes in job titles and duties, but all taking place at similar hierarchical levels): Thomas made eight job moves while working for four organisations, and Rita changed jobs six time while working for five different companies. Alice (*LEA, five years in this industry*) or Samuel (*EMP, four years in the industry*) are also examples of interviewees whose career paths are perceived as lateral: Alice worked for four hotels (four and five-star units) always as Receptionist, until she decided for career change, and Samuel made his journey across two hotels as Night Auditor and Receptionist.

Following Feldman and Ng's (2007) classification of career mobility (presented in section 4.2, *Job mobility*), linear upward career trajectories are simply associated with *job change*, including changes in work responsibilities, hierarchical levels, or titles within an organisation which, in this study, are predominantly the result of internal promotions (Laura, *LEA*, was the only exception, whose job changes were the result of internal transfers). In turn, both ascending and lateral career trajectories are associated with *organisational change*. According to the authors, this organisational change may or not involve job change as well; in this study, ascending career trajectories also imply job change, as long as progressive, whereas lateral trajectories may imply job change, as long as not to a higher hierarchical level. Feldman and Ng's (2007) proposal also includes *career/occupational change*, which can be interpreted as a fifth career trajectory. This scenario is discussed later at section 8.3.1.

Both ascending as lateral career trajectories rely on the notion of inter-organisational mobility, hence being aligned with boundaryless career perspectives that equate a range of possible career forms both within and across organisations, which are largely driven by the individuals and not by the career system of a single organisation. As previously discussed in section 2.2., from a boundaryless-career perspective, career development should have a higher focus on strengthening self-direction and adaptability within a more transactional employment context. Boundaryless careers can unfold in a variety of ways, and both ascending and lateral career trajectories fit the most commonly description of the boundaryless career concept as comprising moves across the physical boundaries of different employers.

Looking more closely at more distinctive career patterns, Gabriel (*EMP, promoted to F&B Manager after seven years with his current organisation*) is one of the few examples of interviewees who fit in more than one type of career trajectory. His first career moves were mainly lateral, but joining his current employer was synonym of progressive movement

(counting two job promotions). Gabriel – together with other interviewees who have enrolled in several progressive job moves along their careers – highlight that this was a slow and laborious process. Although these interviewees are Older Millennials and career trajectories are expected to be different for younger new entrants, as seen in section 2.4.3, T&H organisations are still built upon traditional practices (M. Riley, 2019) and newcomers need to be aware of the time it will take to progress up.

Sometimes, the process is described as simpler if the proper opportunities arise. Four interviewees (three men and one woman) enrolled in management positions practically from the start of their careers (as Hotel Assistant Manager, Deputy Hotel Manager or Events Manager), when their previous work experience was limited to curricular internships. These opportunities are mostly associated with employers' ability to spot talent in trainees or job candidates. For two of these interviewees, holding a Higher Education degree was a key distinguishing factor, although referring to a time when tertiary level qualifications were scarce (which is not the case nowadays).

Although described as lateral, boundaryless trajectories, the careers of five research participants may also be depicted as *butterflying*, if their wider professional journey (to which they refer to in their interviews) is considered. Butterflying career patterns, which were addressed in section 2.2, are presented as an extension of boundaryless careers to describe multiple career routes, with multiple directions (e.g., horizontal, vertical, intra or inter-sectorial). This is the case of Amanda (*LEA, ex-Assistant Manager*), whose resume combines work experiences in the Hotel industry, with business consulting, training in vocational schools and supervisory positions in the restaurants sector. Three interviewees (two men and one woman) migrated from the restaurants sector (in which they held supervisory/managerial positions) to middle and top management positions in the Hotel industry.

Bruno's (*EMP, General Manager for more than seven years*) trajectory is also an example of the high mobility that typifies hotel manager's career advancement (Ladkin & Riley, 1996), which may sort his career trajectories both as lateral and ascending. Bruno went through several organisational changes as General Manager, but although his job title has not changed, these moves can be associated with progression if more advantageous contractual terms or higher status are involved.

Looking at the process of becoming an hotel manager, all General Manager's (in this study) career trajectories follow an ascending and/or linear upward path. Four participants became General Managers following a sequence of job positions within the same company (linear upward path): Manuel (*EMP*), with five moves within several hotels of the same group; Xavier (*EMP*) and Julia (*LEA*), both with four moves within the same hotel; and Martin (*LEA*), with two moves within the same group (simultaneously overseeing two units).

A similar number of interviewees worked in the F&B or in the Sales and Marketing departments *en route* to achieve this job positions. Two interviewees followed a combined path between the F&B and the Front-office. Previous research portrays F&B as the most salient career route towards hotel management (Ladkin & Riley, 1996); several participants reinforce this idea but also refer to a changing pattern, as it is also observed from the growing role of the Sales and Marketing function in the career paths of hotel managers. Two other interviewees, who were

among the few people obtaining a T&H degree at the time, entered directly to an Assistant Manager or Deputy Manager job position. It is interesting to note that both these respondents (both men) felt the need to stress that they had no family ties with their employers. Although none of the interviewees referred to family ties within their organisations or to the influence of social and family networks in their career development in the industry, some refer that this is an aspect that highly influences prospective candidates' opportunities in the labour market and progression speed.

If the job status is taken into consideration (providing that no other criteria for career success were evaluated), Manuel (*EMP*) and Vincent (*EMP*) were the only participants to register a stepwise downward pattern at some point of their careers. Previous research (although with no specific occupation) supports that this situation is rarely verified (Reitzle, Körner, & Vondracek, 2009). Both participants followed this pattern due to geographic changes. Manuel moved from Assistant Manager to Receptionist as the result of repatriation, whereas Vincent's job change from Unit to Deputy Manager happened when he moved from Portugal Mainland to Madeira. Benjamin (*EMP, Doorman, 10 years in the industry*) also exhibit an interesting career pattern, which relates to the role pre-entry expectations play in shaping posterior career decisions. Benjamin's career started at the Porter in upscale/luxury five-star hotels, with the ambition to get a Front-desk job position, which he got after four years at a four-star hotel (from an international hotel group). Issues related to work organisation, working conditions and psychological contract formation (and breach) strongly influence Benjamin's perception of unfit with this job position and his return to the Porter in a different organisation (a five-star, luxury hotel). Benjamin's experience supports the previously discussed notion that many new entrants have an over-embellished image of certain desired positions.

8.2.4 Gendered influences in career development

Although women's participation in both Higher Education and in the T&H workforce has increased, strong gender inequalities still prevail, hindering the development of women's full potential in the labour market (Costa et al., 2011; Costa, Durão, et al., 2015; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). When questioned if they ever been aware of gendered constraints to career construction and development (either their own or for other individuals), and although not the majority, a still quite high number of research participants believe these do not exist. As graphically represented in Figure 8.7, a notable number of women acknowledge these constraints whereas men tend to believe that men and women have access to the same opportunities and one's merit and performance is the strongest determinant of career success.

In Table 8.5, the three perspectives on gender-based constraints to one's career as illustrated with participants' narratives. Some interviewees, listed under the '*No influence*' group, refer that although this may have been an 'issue of the past', it is not as pertinent nowadays, and provide examples of the many women they know who occupy senior management positions and who they describe as 'good professionals'. In fact, when questioned about this topic, most participants refer to a gender-balanced representation or to the prevalence of women in the general hotel workforce – presenting women as the majority of the staff – as well as in managerial-level jobs – highlighting how a growing number of women have become General

Managers in recent years and how *good* they were in their managerial duties. Few participants (and mostly women do) spontaneously mention the barriers to which women are typically confronted within the organisational environment, that prevent them from climbing the organisational ladder.

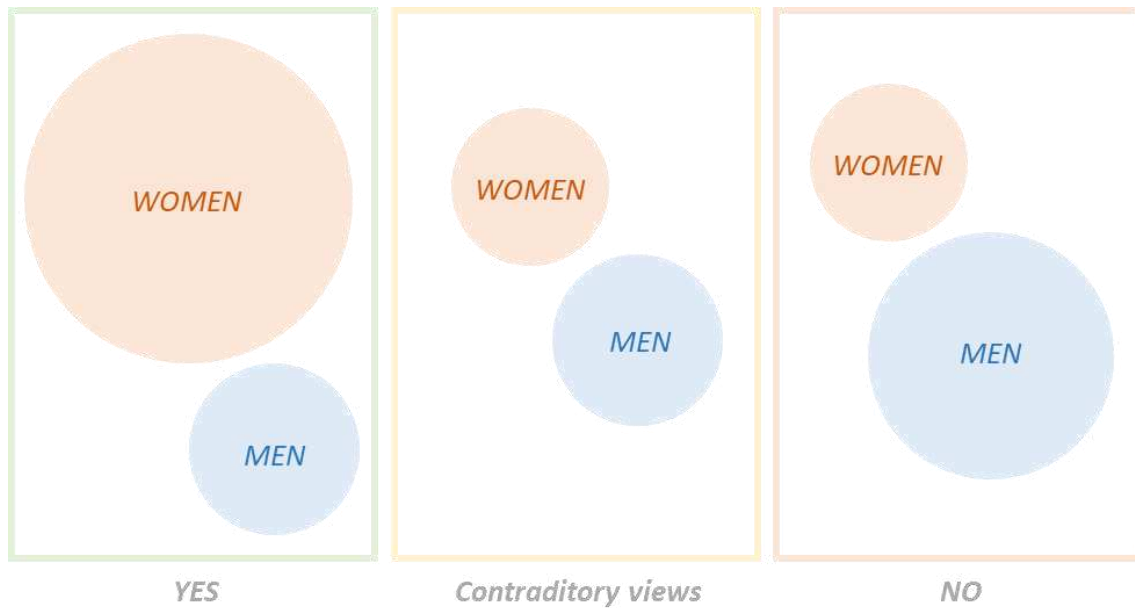


Figure 8.7 | Acknowledging the influence of gender in career construction and longevity (*Employees and Leavers*)

Source: Own construction

Contradictory views thus refer to accounts in which participants state on the one hand that they do not perceive any gender-based difference at the workplace, whereas on the other, they give conflicting examples, acknowledging several types of forces that prevent women to climb the organisational ladder, extensively addressed in previous research (Costa, Durão, et al., 2015; Kirton & Greene, 2015; Mooney & Ryan, 2009; Mónica Segovia-Pérez et al., 2019), such as occupational segregation (job positions and departments in which there is a significant predominance of women), vertical segregation (including the existence of a glass ceiling, referring to hierarchical levels from which no women are found), pay differences (typically providing the example of women managers who are paid less than men in the same position), or increased difficulties in reconciling work and personal/family life.

Three women in managerial positions refer that in their hotel groups there is great receptivity in promoting women to leadership positions providing that the person demonstrates having the desired skills and profile, but acknowledge that wage gaps between female managers and male managers do exist at these higher hierarchical levels – these differences are, however, justified by seniority on the job, giving that all the female managers took on these positions more recently than their male counterparts. Despite overt discrimination being pointed out as the main determinant for gender pay gap (Carvalho, 2017; Santos & Varejão, 2007), when directly questioned about this, a very limited number of female research participants do actually

acknowledge the existence of gendered pay discrimination (this and other forms of gender-based influences on the workplace are discussed in section 8.2.4). In fact, Carvalho (2017) suggests that this type of perceptions are largely due to individuals' own conceptions of what constitutes discriminatory behaviours or not. As seen in Table 8.5, participants acknowledge the existence of a number of gender-based pressures and constraints, yet feeling the need to stress that they have never felt discriminated.

Table 8.5 | Research participants' accounts of the existing influence, or not, of gender influences in career construction and longevity

Influence of gender	Contradictory view	No influence of gender
<p><i>As much as it is said that it isn't the case, and that the rights are equal for all, and the opportunities are equal for all, they are not. (...) If you are a single woman there is absolutely no problem, if you are a woman who has children it is extremely complicated, if you are a married woman it depends on how you can organise things with your partner, but it is not easy. And the moment you have children, it is very difficult. I was never discriminated, attention, but only recently have I become a mother. I managed to adapt, but if I hadn't, it would have been very difficult to get where I am now. Because us, women, are not prepared to be [both] mothers and professionals at this level. (Celeste, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>No, I don't think so. I think the opportunities are open to everyone. Interestingly enough, all the Assistants Managers are women who all went from the Front-desk to those positions, they progressed. The General Management, however, is with a man, but there is also a female Marketing Director. In the Reservations Department there are only women, but now I'm in a doubt. Maybe there are only women because it is more pleasant for people to call and be attended by a female voice. (Samuel, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>I think not. Because that is part of everyone's personality. From my personal experience, I don't think the fact that I am a woman has ever weighed in taking on certain positions. (Cecilia, LEA)</i></p>
<p><i>It is much more difficult to adapt when you are a woman, because the Hotel industry in Portugal is not yet prepared for family-related issues. I've been working in places – and we're talking about 2013, 2014 – where female employees would get pregnant and feel, on their own skin, discrimination because of that. I think things got better, but the situation is still not perfect. (Daniel, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>No, not in our [hotel] group. In terms of opportunities, yes, but in terms of salaries... well. We've never had any Sales Manager, I am the first (female) Sales Manager of the group, so I can't tell you if there are discrepancies in this domain. I think not. We've got many women working. We have two hotels with women Directors and four with men. The Deputy Managers are almost all women. (Adriana, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>One of the good things about T&H is that I think this division is unnoticeable. Apart from jobs that require physical effort and need to be done by men, in terms of opportunities they are all at the same level. (Marco, LEA)</i></p>
<p><i>It is much more difficult for a woman. Unfortunately, I consider that this is a very sexist world. Most people in Hospitality have little training and, moreover, there's a great predominance of baby boomers, with 50 years old or more, who don't find it very funny or have a little more difficulty in seeing a woman at the helm. (Manuel, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>No, I never felt that. And in more than one place, who was in General Management were women. And [they were] good professionals. (Rita, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>No, I never felt that. And in more than one place, who was in General Management were women. And [they were] good professionals. (Rita, EMP)</i></p>
<p><i>My class was mostly comprised of women and only one made it to the [position of] Director. I think this is due to our culture, because there is still a lot of prejudice, unfortunately, that women are not so available as men, which is completely false. At one job interview I was asked if I was married and thinking about having children. I said yes, but – since I was young – only later on, since I wanted to invest in my career first. But the interview ended right there, so I gathered it was due to potentially not having a lot of availability for work. (Amanda, LEA)</i></p>	<p><i>I think not, because we have had several examples of women who have also evolved and who are responsible ((for different areas)). In this project for the Hotel X, my Deputy manager is also a woman and she is no less professional because of that; in fact, 80% of our team are women. Within this company I always thought the opportunities were the same, although in other places I have also witnessed examples such as if you're a woman, you will leave, because one of these days you will get pregnant, you will be a mother... that whole situation. (Gabriel, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>I think it's indifferent and I'll tell you why. I have 60% of women and 40% of men here and rarely does a woman come here and raise questions of that nature. Therefore, based on this principle of flexibility and the capacity of the sectors to articulate with one another, to have complicity in talking about these issues of reconciliation with their family life, we are setting an example of maturity, of an open society. Gender is not an issue in here. I can give an example, I have a female Deputy Manager, a female Groups and Events Coordinator, a female Housekeeper and a female Cafeteria Manager. (Victor, EMP)</i></p>

Source: Own construction

Among those who consider that women face additional barriers in their careers than men do, issues such as discrimination due to pregnancy in a near future and having of children (alluding to an increased perception of reduced availability to work), long hours and overtime culture, sexual harassment and smear campaigns, sexist work practices (mirroring the predominance of a male culture), gender pay gap, or the glass ceiling effect, were mentioned. As previously mentioned in section 7.2.4, three interviewees also refer to feminised characteristics that are frequently assigned to women as workers, that are not perceived as desired or hamper their leadership skills, such as women's 'sensitivity' or 'fragility'. As previous research unveiled, although the 'ideal tourism worker' status is frequently described according with 'gender-neutral' characteristics such as attitude, availability, professionalism, or willingness to accomplish, social reproductive gender roles are found to hinder female workers' ability to fit with the 'ideal worker' model (Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão, et al., 2017).

Us women, we really have to assert ourselves much more. It's very sad, but I have come across situations where being a woman was always much more questioned. I was their boss, but I still had to show that I knew what I was saying, because many topics – sales, recruitment, finances, maintenance – are seen as a male domain. I didn't feel so much questioned by subordinates, but I felt questioned especially by other managers at the same level, by national clients, and even by the community where I live. Why would a woman work at night in a place that has rooms? I was impressed to hear those comments in the neighbourhood. (Maria, EMP, Deputy Manager)

I felt that it was difficult to get where I got because I was a woman. Many times I had to change my profile and my character, I had to be a very cold and arrogant person, in order to create the conditions to be seen as an integral part of that group. It's harder, more so in Central Portugal, where the mentalities are like that. No one seems to care about that, they are all very much in favour of gender equality, but that's not as straightforward, as flowery as it seems. Even my employees, many older than me, middle-aged men, they only started to accept me when they started seeing the good results: overtime hours paid on time, bonuses for attendance, holiday schedules. Had they had a man in management, they would have certainly accepted better. (Julia, LEA, ex-General Manager)

Here in the company there are many female ((middle)) managers, but I notice that it is always more complicated to prove one's worth and be taken seriously. In the highest positions of the company there are only men. Women are valued, but they are not taken as seriously. They may even reach that position, but the way they are looked at is different. I think people tend to take men more seriously, as if women were more sensitive, as if they would break down more easily, as if in a complicated situation, they weren't able to say 'now we're going to fix this and that's it.' (Eva, EMP, Receptionist)

Following the discussion on the influence of gender and age on interpersonal relations at work (see section 7.2.4), Vera (EMP, 26 years old) and Clara (LEA, 28 years old when leaving the industry) assign difficulties in managing work relations to the intersection of these two demographic characteristics, gender and age, considering that young women experience high constraints in making oneself respected as a supervisor, listened and obeyed. Concerning age,

this typically happens when team members are older. Previous research has also found that older members of staff find it particularly difficult to deal with having a female manager (Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durão, 2017). With respect to gender, young female power and competencies as supervisors/managers are more frequently challenged than their male counterparts, as well as whether the other team members are men or women. In organisational settings, not only power is typically associated with masculinity, as men also tend to easily conform with constructions on what is perceived as 'good' management (Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durão, 2017).

Considering the different groups of interviewees, it is observed that in the case of those who do acknowledge gender to be an influential factor on career development, there is a similar proportion of *Employees* and *Leavers*, with the prevalence of women in both these groups. However, when it comes to *Newcomers*, it is actually men who tend to emphasise the barriers and constraints that their female counterparts find. Some female *Newcomers* stress that they have never experienced any form of discrimination, while recognising that they are aware that men are over-represented in managerial positions and usually better paid, and expect to encounter some type of barriers in their careers for being women. Overall, male *Newcomers* seem to be particularly well informed and aware of these issues, as Mario's testimony (presented below) evidences, which may indicate that gendered stereotypes about men's and women's roles are progressively being questioned. However, such accounts also reinforces the need to educate women about the barriers they will face once in the labour market as an important constituent of T&H education programs (Zhong, Couch, & Blum, 2013).

I might be wrong, but I'm pretty sure that many employers don't hire female employees because they know that they might have a child and then six months at home. This is still associated with women, but fathers should be allowed to stay as long at home as mothers, otherwise they are also being disadvantaged. I know very successful women and men, but I don't think both have the same opportunities because once they reach the age of having children, the woman either gives up being a mother, or gives up on her career, she has to make a choice. I have friends in this situation, who are thinking of starting a family, but they know that if they do it now, they will have a break in their careers. And this is because most of our employers are still very old-school. A couple that has a child, if the child needs to go to the doctor, 99% of the times it is the mother who stays with him/her. Everything falls on the mother and the employers knows that if there are two people on the same level, with exactly the same qualifications, if one is a woman and the other is a man, he will probably choose the man. (Mario, NEW)

Mario's view is aligned with entrenched stereotyped gender roles which conceive women as the primary caregivers and men as breadwinners. Many other participants reinforce this idea, making reference to the parental responsibilities which are typically expected to be taken by women, as the following quotes reveal:

It's only women that deal with this type of issue, because the responsibility is usually on women, it's the mothers who have to pick up their children, it's always the mothers who have to deal with children. (Sabrina, LEA)

Perhaps abroad this is a little more blurred, but in a country like Portugal, there's no turning back, we have a tradition of giving women the role of being at home with their

children. Besides the fact that the Portuguese are also ‘helicopter mums’ and well, it’s good for them to want to be with their family, so working more than eight hours is complicated. It’s not easy for those who want to become mothers and want time to be at home, but also want to feel fulfilled at work. Maybe there are two women in every 10 who manage to evolve like this, and maybe they have to renounce motherhood or to become mothers much later, because they prefer to invest in their career first. (Joel, LEA)

Following Mario’s reference to paternity leaves – this was the solely reference to paternity leaves, as when all references made with this regard concerned maternity leaves, which again reinforces women’s social reproductive roles (Costa, Bakas, Breda, Durão, et al., 2017) – previous research on gender equality in tourism companies has found that the welfare state, in particular initiatives in the form of legislation related to parental leave, play an important role in promoting gender equality within tourism labour. In Portugal, incentives are offered to parents who decide to share the parental leave, but the number of new fathers making use of their paternity leave is still very low (Bakas, Costa, Durão, Carvalho, & Breda, 2018). When compared to the OECD average of 1.4 weeks, new fathers in Portugal are able to take a five-weeks paid paternity leave; however, new mothers are only given six weeks of paid leave, compared to the OECD average of 18.1 weeks, making Portugal one of the countries with the shortest maternity leaves in Europe (OECD, 2018).

Although many of women’s choices regarding work and family responsibilities are often described as ‘genuine choice’, literature on women managers reveals that this choice is actually an illusion, ignoring the visible and invisible organisational and societal barriers that constrain their options (Acker, 2006; Mooney & Ryan, 2009). This is supported by other participants’ accounts, who refer to the impact that having children had in their career decisions or those of their spouses. As mentioned in section 7.2.6, Gabriel’s (EMP) wife had to choose to stay with their son, as both were working in the Hotel industry and had little control over their working time arrangements. For both Amanda (LEA) and Clarice (LEA), not benefiting of any organisational measures that could ease work-life balance, having children highly impacted their decision to leave the Hotel industry. As addressed in section 2.4.3, having children has a greater impact on women’s careers than on men’s (Costa et al., 2012; Mooney, 2009). This is also observed in this study, although some male participants have also mentioned their families (e.g., lack of time to be with the children), none has mentioned their family life to interfere with their work roles. Several participants’ accounts jibe with the fact that women are viewed as “more expensive and less reliable workers than men”, largely due to the laws that have been help them combining their productive and reproductive roles (e.g., maternity leave, kindergartens, childcare allowances) (Obadić & Marić, 2009, p. 97).

8.3 Career decisions: Withdrawal vs permanence and its implication for employee engagement

Everyone eventually leaves, as no one stays with an organisation forever, but employees’ intention regarding their future attachment can range from short-term to long-term, considering either their desire to leave and/or their desire to stay. Changes in the employment

relationship in contemporary organisations have led to changes in the nature of psychological contracts which reflect individuals' subjective interpretations and expectations and affect what they take into account when deciding to stay with or to leave an organisation. The fulfilment of psychological contracts is strongly associated with reciprocation in the form of positive attitude and proactive behaviours which support both individual and organisational success.

8.3.1 Profiling the participants: Withdrawal vs. permanence cognitions

Considering research participants' subjective interpretation on the exchange relationship, nine different patterns were identified with respect to the meanings that individuals ascribe to staying or quitting their employing organisational and/or their occupation. These patterns resulted in a set of profiles that characterise the extent to which the different dimensions of QWL impact employee turnover and retention and career longevity:

- i. *Employees* were profiled under the labels: *Resolute job/career stayers*, *Resolute job/career leavers*, *Potential job/career stayers*, and *Resolute job/career leavers*;
- ii. *Leavers* were profiled under the tag *Reversible (career) leaver* and *Irreversible (career) leaver*;
- iii. *Newcomers* were designated as *Willing to pursue a career in the Hotel Industry*, *Not willing to pursue a career in the Hotel Industry*, or *Easily lost to a different occupation*.

Each one of these profiles is described with further details below, in reference to the three groups of participants in this study.

Employees

Considering that *Employees* were the only group of interviewees working in a hotel at the time of the study, they were asked about their careers in the industry, focusing on both past experiences and experiences with the current employer (section 5.5.1). Therefore, these participants' accounts yielded four possible profiles, defined both in reference to their current employing organisation and their career in the hotel sector. Figure 8.8 exhibits the proportion of interviewees fitting in each one of these four profiles, which can be interpreted as being place in a continuum ranging from those career actors who are resolute in their decision to remain with their organisation/in a T&H career, to those who are resolute in their decision to leave, either their organisation or their career in the industry.

As the labels clearly suggest, '**Resolute stayers**' refer to career actors who have a strong sense of identification with this occupation and good perceptions of fit with their jobs. These interviewees are quite determined to continue working for their current organisation in the medium/long-term. Although they may recognise limitations to their organisational careers or highlight several negative aspects of their job and/or organisation, they lean towards a more general positive evaluation, hence being considered satisfied with their jobs. 10 out of 11 *Employees* who are profiled as *Resolute job stayers* hold supervisory/managerial positions, either at middle or top level, which might explain their levels of satisfaction with their current employment situation and prospects within their organisations. Similar principles apply to individuals who are strong willing to continue developing their careers in the industry, hence

subjectively assessing their careers as successful and satisfactory. About half ($n=8$) of the *Employees* with permanent work contracts are not looking for alternative jobs, hence not willing to leave either their current organisations or their careers in the hotel sector, which is congruent with the fact that these participants are also profiled as *Resolute Job/Career Stayers*.

I've been enticed three times by big companies, big national hotel groups. The first time I was completely clear with my Director, I told him, and he admitted that he couldn't pay me more, but even so, I said I would stay. Because I identify with the company, I identify with our goals and our strategy. It was a superior offer only in terms of salary and other benefits. Eventually I could have prospects ((of progression)) because it was a renowned national group. But the fact that, at a first stage, I would do only that ((more limited functions, less autonomy)) and that I was going to lose contact with certain colleagues and clients, made say 'no'. (Adriana, Sales and Events Manager, Resolute job/career stayer)

My goal is to be a Hotel General Manager, and I'm working on it, I believe I'll get there. (...) Yes, yes [I would like to stay with this organisation]. The company is still growing. It's a stable group, that gives you some security, the remuneration is ok, and it is always paid on time, it's a good group to work for. (Jaime, Assistant F&B Manager, Resolute job/career stayer)

'Potential stayers' refer to career actors who are interested in maintaining membership with their organisation, as long as their working conditions and status are, at least, maintained (i.e., do not worsen). These participants enjoy working in Hospitality, despite most of them not being very confident when choosing a T&H degree (section 6.2.2). They believe that their overall working conditions are not bad and find many positive aspects in their jobs/organisations, despite the majority feels under-valued and lack recognition and appreciation for their work. Similar tenets apply to careers, considering that *Potential career stayers* are likely to stay committed to a career in the industry, despite changing employing organisations. These interviewees are still at a young age and at an early stage of their careers and are interested in exploring different jobs within different organisations in order to discover which better suits their needs and career ambitions. However, they are keen to keep this pursuit only until a given point, and if their goals are still not achieved, they are very likely to be open to a different occupation.

There's a Manager here who I've worked with before, we share many ideas, and we are friends above all, but we know how to separate things and that's what allows for a good work environment. But to think I'll spend the rest of my life at this company, I don't know. This is a very stable company. I've been through a month of work and late pay, and that's very unfortunate. In this company, that has never happened. But I'm opened to new challenges. (Gabriel, F&B Manager, Potential job stayer)

'Potential leavers', a second intermediate profile, includes career actors who are more leaned towards withdrawal than *Potential stayers*. Albeit not necessarily overall dissatisfied with their jobs/careers, these participants do not rate several aspects of their jobs very positively, hence frequently questioning how long they will be able to endure. Contrarily to *Potential stayers* who are not likely to leave unless their working conditions deteriorate, these participants are not likely to stay if the negative features of their job/career do not improve to some extent. These

participants admit to frequently think about leaving their organisation (considering changing jobs and taking a second chance of finding more satisfactory terms and conditions) and/or career in the industry (when having worked for several organisations and perceiving no improvements). Therefore, they tend to be actively involved in job search, hence looking for alternative job opportunities with better terms than those they benefit with their current employer and/or in the Hotel industry.

Here I don't have any complaints, they've been very honest about it, they pay well. Of course I'd like to make more, but realistically speaking and seeing how it is in other places, I think I'm good here. At this point, if something better comes up, even if not money wise – though it can't be much less than what I make now – but if it's different, yes, I'm in. (Samuel, Receptionist, Potential job leaver)

'Resolute leavers' refer to career actors who are disillusioned with their employing organisation or with their overall career in Hospitality and already took the decision to withdrawal. Although not very substantial in number, which is quite positive, these participants are already making plans and actively searching for a new job; the moment the opportunity rises, these participants will opt for the change. At the time of the interview one of the participants was already negotiating the change to a new organisation (a lateral job move, considering that it was the same position in a different company).

I have a few personal matters to take care of, but once that's done, I'm leaving the hotel. (Aurora, Receptionist, Resolute job leaver)

I'm not planning on staying much longer, I'll leave by the end of the year. I've interviewed at a few places, but I've been trying to get out of the Hotel industry because these are the conditions we have. My goal is to leave the Hotel industry, but I'd still like to try something else in Tourism before, in a different area. (Leticia, Receptionist, Resolute career leaver)

When the *Employees'* views regarding the likelihood of remaining with their current organisation are combined with their views about the predisposition to continue pursuing a career in the hotel sector, 11 different possible combinations emerge, as displayed in Figure 8.9. The balance is quite positive, considering that almost half of *Employees'* accounts ($n=11$) are indicative of a strong will to remain both with their current employing organisation, as well as to continue pursuing a career in the industry. A significant number of career actors ($n=5$) are also resolute in developing their career in the industry, while leaned toward remaining with their organisation. It is considered very positive that only one participant is doubly profiled as *Resolute leaver*. For *Resolute job leavers*, recognition and appreciation strikingly stands out as the main issue influencing these participants' perceptions of QWL and withdrawal intentions. For the only *Resolute job/career leaver*, pay (unclear and unfair criteria to define pay), lack of recognition and appreciation (either in the form of intrinsic or extrinsic rewards), difficulties in reconciling work with personal life (lack of time for leisure and socialisation), and a poor social atmosphere (due to excessive turnover rates, which weakens affective ties), are the main antecedents of withdrawal intentions.

One participant was profiled as *Potential job stayer*, yet simultaneously described as *Potential career leaver*. Although this may seem contradictory, Benjamin's (*EMP, Doorman*) narrative

suggests that constituent organisational commitment largely contributes to his desire to remain with his current organisation. However, himself admits that if his job conditions ever get worse and he decides to leave the organisation and look for another job, he will start looking for jobs in a different professional field rather than in the Hotel industry.

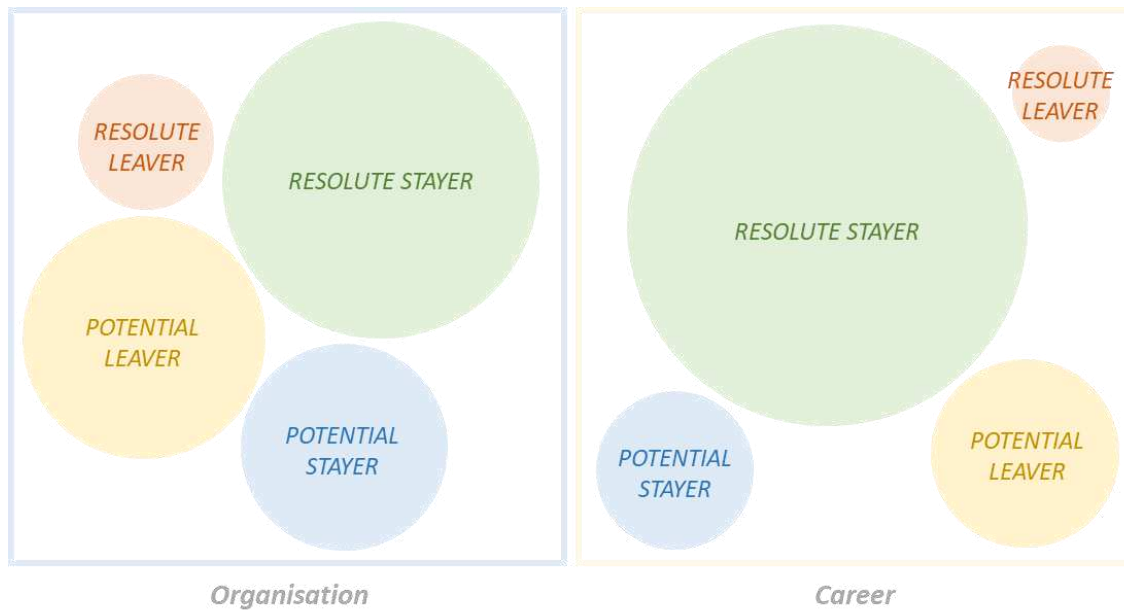


Figure 8.8 | Career profiles: *Employees*

Source: Own construction

Special attention should be given to the participants doubly profiled as *Potential leavers*, considering that despite being disillusioned with the Hotel industry, efforts directed at foster increased satisfaction and perceptions of career success could positively reduce their withdrawal intentions and prevent the loss of these qualified professionals. For these *Potential job/career leavers*, recognition and appreciation, work-life balance, and pay are the most pressing issues. Although not evaluating interpersonal relations at work negatively, they consider that benefiting of higher supervisory support could benefit their well-being at work.

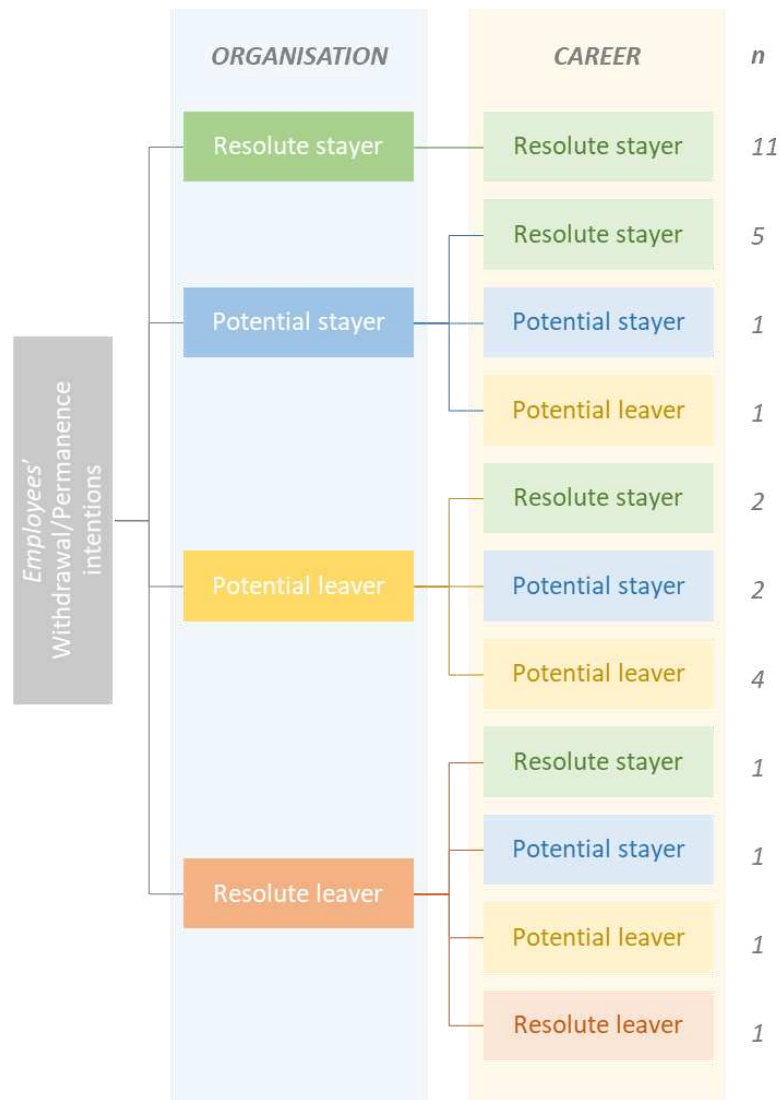


Figure 8.9 | Employees' combined withdrawal vs. permanence intentions towards their current organisation and their careers in the hotel sector

Source: Own construction

Leavers

Following the analysis of *Leavers'* main motives for career change (section 8.2.2), when examining *Leavers'* accounts of their work experiences and careers in the hotel sector, two distinct profiles emerged, yet with approximate proportions: one group of career actors whose career change decision still has the possibility of reversibility ($n=6$), and one group of individuals whose decision is permanent and definite ($n=8$) (Figure 8.10).

'Reversible leavers' configure a group of career actors who have a strong affective connection with Hospitality, and whose decision to change careers was taken after careful deliberation and at high emotional cost, hence being considered regrettable and difficult. The majority of these *Reversible leavers* are participants who were highly confident on their vocational choice when choosing a T&H degree (section 6.2.2). Such participants describe themselves as having been

always fascinated with and attracted to the Hospitality world, feeling that they had a good fit with hotel jobs and were highly service-oriented. While remuneration was not a pressing issue to the majority of these interviewees (yet, it was the decisive aspect for one *Leaver*), insufficient time to rest and recovered from job demands were more strongly emphasised, by being associated with physical and psychic exhaustion and further health problems. Concerns with the work-life balance were also raised, especially by married individuals (both women and men) with children or considering becoming parents.

I may not be good at many things, but I was good at my job. I wish I could go back to the Hotel industry, preferably to start a business on my own, so I could do things my way and work with people who think the same way I do (LLL). Unless a very good proposal came up, making me feel that a proper compensation exists, and all my rights would be granted. Because I don't want to be in those shoes again, going home feeling that, apart from customer satisfaction, I'm not taking anything else worthy. (Clarice, ex-Receptionist)

The enthusiasm I had back then, I still have it; I was quite happy working in Hospitality. Obviously, we never know which context we might find, it would depend on the people involved and on the ambition of the project, but I won't say no, because there may be an irrefutable proposal. But again, the issues regarding salary expectation still exist. Considering my past experience and the skills I still feel I have to grasp a project like this, I wouldn't rule it out just like that. But of course, I'd have to weigh a lot of things, admitting that the most certain thing would be to change my residence, I would have to think about my family. But I would like to leave that open, instead of saying that I would never return to the hotel business again. (Joel, ex-Purchasing Executive)

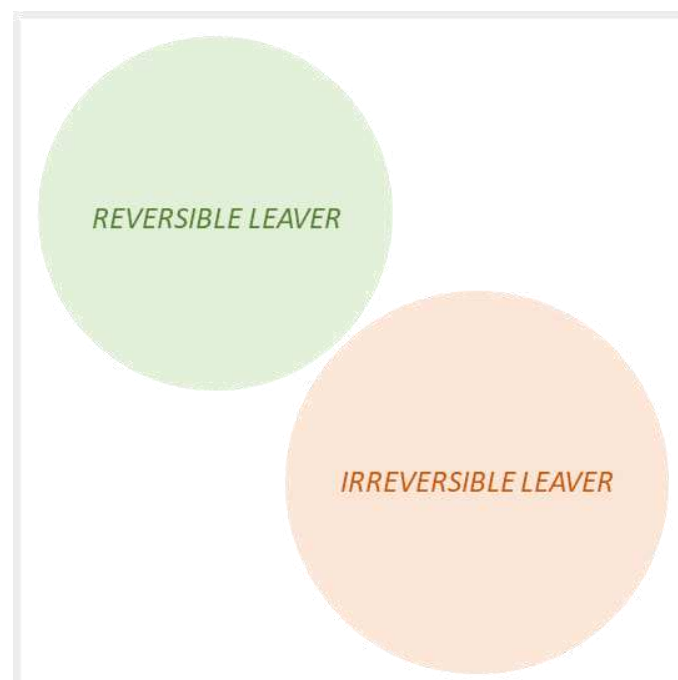


Figure 8.10 | Career profiles: Leavers

Source: Own construction

'Irreversible leavers', in turn, naturally share many of the characteristics of *Resolute leavers*, as seen for Employees. Not only these career actors are not interested in making a return to Hospitality as they found better conditions in a different field of activity, which they are not willing to give up. Their main driver of dissatisfaction are found to be related with: inadequate pay (which was described as low and stagnant over too much time), lack of recognition and appreciation that undermined both individual and group motivation, and high psychological demands and extreme fatigue, mostly due to disturbance during time off work and the constant availability required, which also pose difficulties in work-life reconciliation.

To be able to get to the time of leaving, even if I leave an hour or half an hour later, to be able to hang up and not think about work again until tomorrow. That's my ideal. It has been many years working in Hospitality and I didn't want that anymore, I wanted something completely different, so that I could disconnect, think about my family and my friends, look after myself and enjoy life. (Sabrina, ex-Assistant Manager)

Right now, and since I'm very happy with my new job and I have a lot of prospects to develop my career and grow within the company, that weighs a little. And that, together with the reasons that made me leave the hotel, which were the schedules and the lack of time to live my own life, doesn't make me think about coming back. (Cecilia, ex-Waiter)

There are many companies in other fields with a completely different mindset, like this one where I am now. Everything is thought out for the benefit of HR, there is a huge concern for human capital, there is development, there are benefits, which I have never seen anywhere in the hotel business. So, in this way, Hospitality never again. (Clara, ex-Assistant Manager)

Findings from a study with hospitality professionals holding a relevant degree but no longer employed in the hospitality industry reveal that the decline in career commitment was largely due to the lack of reciprocation for a degree. Considering the high costs of undertaking a degree, higher return on that investment, especially in the form of better career opportunities and higher salary, was expected but not obtained (Gebbels et al., 2020).

Although *Reversible Leavers* do not exclude the possibility of returning to the industry, if the right project comes up or if the right conditions are on offer, the high majority acknowledges a somewhat little likelihood that a return can actually happen. From the six interviewees profiled as *Reversible Leavers* only one equates this return to occur in the short-term, as arrangements are being made to this end. The remaining *Resolute Leavers*, together with *Irreversible Leavers*, represent therefore a loss to the industry. Considering the scenario on the employee turnover in the hospitality industry portrayed in section 4.3.3, the findings of this study seem to reinforce the concerns about the capacity of the T&H industry in remaining competitive as a long-term career choice.

Newcomers

Students are likely to have different views on T&H employment and their career choice at each stage of their study programme (e.g., Penny Wan, Wong, & Kong, 2014; Wen, Leung, Li, & Kwon,

2018). Most of the *Newcomers* participating in this study (75%) were at the final year⁸² of their study programmes, meaning that most of them have already been enrolled in all the internships stipulated by their programmes (only George and Abel still had one internship left to complete). This suggests that by this stage, most of the interviewees had somewhat clear views on their career intentions in the industry.

When analysing *Newcomers'* accounts regarding their ambitions and expectations towards the hospitality industry, informed by their internship and/or previous work experiences in hotel jobs, three different profiles were identified: those who are willing to pursue a career in the industry, those who are not, and those who might be easily lost to other professional field if their expectations are not met (Figure 8.11).



Figure 8.11 | Career profiles: *Newcomers*

Source: Own construction

In a study with undergraduate T&H students, Richardson (2008) found that 50% of the respondents were already considering a career outside the industry, whereas Costa et al. (2012) found that 28.4% of Tourism graduates were working outside the Tourism field. In Richardson's (2008) study, 96.3% of the respondents mentioned that their working experiences were the main reason for not being willing to pursue a career in the industry. Contrary to these previous findings, the majority of the *Newcomers* interviewed in this study are actually contemplating a future career in the industry. As presented in section 6.4.2, in which *Newcomers'* accounts of their internship experiences were analysed, most interviewees referred to both positive and negative aspects, and three had nothing but positive aspects to highlight. Considering that a

⁸² Two *Newcomers* enrolled in post-graduate studies were also at their final year.

significant number of research participants chose a T&H career in light of the perceived job opportunities and the propensity to obtain a job (section 6.2.1), *Newcomers'* career decision making and intentions are also found to be contingent on perceptions of multiple jobs on offer (see section 8.2.1). However, it is likely that this is not enough to ensure that these individuals, once they have a secured job, will be willing to remain in the industry in the long-term.

As the first label suggests, **'Willing to pursue'** refers to career actors who have a strong sense of identification with this occupation and willingness to get a job in the hotel sector upon graduation. These participants are found to strongly display a *hospitality identity* (as discussed in chapter 6), hence being highly driven and motivated, service-oriented, as well as likely to be resilient in the pursue of their career goals and to look for return on their investment in a T&H degree. These interviewees acknowledge that the long working hours and unsocial schedules are a negative aspect of hotel jobs but consider to be prepared to deal with it. They also believe that the T&H labour market is highly *permeable* (Feldman & Ng, 2007), consisting of many organisations and job opportunities and relative ease of entry, as well as many opportunities for career progression. Half of the *Newcomers* interviewed in this study are deemed to fit in this profile.

No doubt my goal is to work in the Hotel industry. I will only be happy once I find a job in a hotel group that pleases me. (Rafael)

I can't see myself studying anything else or doing anything else, and I don't regret, not once, pursuing this career. (Alexandra)

When analysing the perceptions of QWL issues in T&H of these career actors, based on their own on-the-job experiences, it is observed that some highly value the non-routine and challenging trace of most hotel job roles, which is closely aligned with the reasons some participants refer as what attract them in a T&H career in the first place (section 6.2.1). Several interviewees with this career profile anticipate that salaries will be the most poorly evaluated aspect of their jobs, yet some refer that extrinsic rewards such as pay are not their main driver and believe that opportunities for promotion to high pay jobs can be a way of overcoming such limitation. Two dimensions stand out for most of these participants: recognition and appreciation for work ($n=5$) and work-life balance ($n=6$). Recognition is pointed as just as important, if not far more so, than salary, and perceived as underlying potential progression opportunities. Concerning work-life balance, and as discussed in section 7.2.6, Millennials – all *Newcomers* being Younger Millennials – value work-life balance higher than all other job characteristics (excluding salary) (Deloitte, 2016).

The **'Not willing to pursue'** profile reflects an opposite tendency to the one just described. These interviewees are found to be already at this stage, while still students, disenchanted with the picture they have idealised about hospitality work. These *Newcomers* are willing to finish their degrees (not changing areas) but are determined to look for a first job in a different field, aiming for different working conditions than those offered by hotel companies. These interviewees believe that their degrees have endowed them with transversal skills that are valued outside the T&H industry, hence being keen to make this change.

If we're studying for it, we should be ambitious. It isn't as if I wouldn't like to work as a Receptionist, but I know now salaries are terrible and I want to have a good lifestyle,

go on vacation, provide good opportunities for my children. On top of it all, we work on special occasions like Christmas. Obviously, someone has to do it, but we should at least be rewarded for it. I pity the parents who work in the Hotel industry because I don't know where they get the energy and patience to be with their spouses and children after heavy workdays like these. (Carla, Polytechnic HEI attendant)

I chose to do my internship in a hotel because I always wanted to know how it was like, I was always very curious about that kind of business environment. But I realised it isn't exactly what I'd like to do in the future. I'd rather try jobs in different industries and have a clearer idea of what I want. (Andrea, University HEI attendant)

Considering the *Newcomers* assigned with this career profile and their perceptions of QWL issues, it is observed that their main concerns about the future are related with: high emotional demands from frequent customer interactions, highly stressful workplaces (mostly due to time pressures and overload), and low and inadequate salaries (in light of the effort expended) that typify most hotel jobs (especially those job positions which *Newcomers* anticipate to more easily access to).

Under the label '**Easily lost**', are included career actors who desire to pursue a career in hospitality and have their goals and expectations clearly defined. Yet, if not met, they are open to work in a different professional area, if that yields them the opportunity to achieve such goals (e.g., good salary, job status). As the following quotes exemplify, the low salaries of the T&H are of the most significant concerns of this group of *Newcomers*:

With my professional training, with the investment made in such an important industry, making so little ((money-wise)) doesn't bring any value to me, especially if taking into account my value and what I could offer to the company. Probably I'll end up working on something else by taking advantage of my management training, and making money according to what I do. So I'll try to stay involved with Management, even if it means distancing myself from Hospitality. (Emilia, University HEI attendant)

When I started my degree, I was certain I'd work in the Hotel industry, but now, honestly, I'm not so sure. Because I've seen a not so favourable side of it, and a lot of my colleagues have the same notion. I think the Hotel industry in Portugal and its conditions are not that attractive. I enjoyed the internships in the Group X ((international hotel group)), but I cannot understand how top companies pay so little. (Edgar, Polytechnic HEI attendant)

When looking more closely at these career actors' views on the different aspects of work in the industry, concerns with the fairness of salaries are again raised, as well as with the under-staffing practices that overburden core work teams, the physical and emotional demands of front-line jobs (mostly due to long hours, physical effort and customer incivility), the lack of recognition (mostly associated with leadership and communication), and the reconciliation of work and family life (which is anticipated with regards to front-line jobs and shift-work).

No relation was found with the number of internships experiences and *Newcomers*' views on their continuity on the industry, as students either with multiple internships or just with one experience are found across all three profiles. However, as far as the length of internship experiences are concerned, those who are willing to pursue a career in the hotel sector were, in

average, enrolled in longer periods of on-the-job training. As seen in section 6.4.2, internship length is perceived as important not only in influencing adaptability to a future job and the recognition of the trainees' competencies, but also in shaping new entrants' expectations and provide them with a clearer preview of hotel jobs. Internships extensively impact career aspirations, choices, and development. Effectively designed internship programmes are a key determinant of students' commitment to longer term careers in the T&H industry (Robinson, Ruhanen, et al., 2016).

As far as educational background is concerned, previous research found that the field of activity that Tourism students (in both Generalist and Specialist degrees) preferred is Hospitality, and this is in fact the sub-sector in which most graduates are employed, both men and women (Costa et al., 2012). *Key-informants'* perceptions on students' background support that students from Specialist degrees are more likely to pursue a career in the hotel sector, as Generalist degrees traditionally offer a more diverse array of prospects across the different activities that comprise the Tourism sector. However, *Newcomers'* accounts do not provide enough information with these regards and further research would be necessary with the reference to the students' degree background and their willingness to pursue a career in Hospitality. As a high proportion of graduates are working outside the tourism field (28.4%), this may suggests that the labour market is failing to meet new entrants' expectations (Costa et al., 2012).

8.3.2 Finding balance, reciprocity, and the right fit

Organisations currently develop their activities in uncertain and changing environments and one of the key strategies to sustain competitive advantage is to count on employees who are committed to their work and to the organisation, who identify with the organisations' values and perceived the organisation's objectives as reflecting their own interests and goals. Although organisations need a committed workforce more than ever, changes in the nature of work and in employment relationships underpinning new career paradigms challenge some forms of commitment. The commitment to the employer organisation has been gradually losing its centrality and the focus of commitment to other targets arose (Klein, 2013). The T&H needs to develop an appropriate environment in order to control the level of employee turnover. An important component of this environment is to create a sense of belonging, which emphasises the value of long-term employment (Deery & Shaw, 1997).

As seen in sections 4.4 and 7.2, positive attitudes and proactive behaviours which may support both individual and organisational success are largely dependent on perceptions of reciprocation and balance in exchange relationships. Social exchange involves unstipulated obligations, such as, in case of favour of one party to another, a return of favour is expected at a future point. In this type of exchange relationship, both parties are to accept the norm of implicit reciprocity, with an obligation of the beneficiary to reciprocate the benefit later on. The timing and the nature of the latter are unspecified, which requires the benefit provider to trust that the recipient will return the favour in the future. Due to longevity of the relationship, the recipient's willingness to remain obliged to the beneficiary and the latter's trust in the recipient's willingness to 'repay' both serve to strengthen the mutual benefit bestowment and the respective discharge of obligations over the course of the relationship (Coyle-Shapiro, 2006). In

fact, most *Leavers* do acknowledge to having trusted their employers that if they did excel in their performance and demonstrate commitment and involvement with company's goals, they would progress in their careers, reach a desired position and/or see earlier made promises fulfilled. As Cecilia's (*LEA, ex-Waiter*) testimony evidences, this was frequently mentioned as not being the case:

I tried to give everything of myself, to also to rest on my 'laurels', but it came a moment that I felt it was no longer worth (LLL); so, I gave up.

Most *Leavers* ($n=8$) gave special emphasis to this situation, pointing it as one of the most significant reasons that lead to their disillusionment with the T&H industry. Multiple references were made to the belief that they were outstanding employees, dedicated, willing to make sacrifices, who perceived the business as their own. Yet, the norm of reciprocity was understood as not being fulfilled by their employers, who they consider to, at a given moment, not having 'paid their dues'.

Following research participants' notion of the employability skills which are expected to ensure that T&H graduates can effectively and innovatively apply their expertise in the workplace, a positive work attitude is also perceived by several interviewees as an ability that influences career success. Such positive attitudes translate into resilience, enthusiasm for work, vigour and energy, hard work, willingness to accept challenges and to take the initiative. Engagement is an intrinsic attitude that denotes an employee's enthusiasm for his/her job. Following Robinson's et al. (2004) reference to the characteristics of *engaged* employees (see Figure 4.10), it was possible to note that all are present in several interviewees' accounts:

- i) belief in their organisation:

When I am working, I am working for the interests and objectives of the organisation, (Angelo, EMP, Receptionist)

I have already been invited to another company and I said no. When I spoke to my Director, he admitted that he couldn't pay more, but I still said that he would stay. Because I identify with the product, I identify with the group, I identify with our goals and our strategy. (Adriana, EMP, Sales end events Manager)

- ii) desire to work to make things better:

In all the jobs I've been in I've always felt that it's important to be committed. Because if I'm being given a chance, I have to commit and earn it. And that means, above all, giving new ideas, sharing suggestions with my supervisors, with colleagues, to think of how the company can improve, what can we do more. I think this is very important because it shows that you are really interested, that you are concerned with the well-being of the company. (Barbara, EMP, Web sales Executive)

- iii) understanding of business context and the 'bigger picture':

I believe I am a concerned, committed, and responsible employee. I am always concerned and it's good when there is openness to communicate. I am aware that this last month has been very demanding and many investments were made. So even yesterday I asked how much money do we have to make up for this month to cover

the previous month's expenditure? My manager told me that it was still a lot of money, so we have to sell more, to make an extra effort. (Thomas, EMP, Waiter)

iv) respectful of, and helpful to, colleagues:

I am extremely responsible; I keep to my schedule and even go in early and leave after hours. I carry out all my tasks and even some tasks for my colleagues without them having to ask me. I don't mind giving some support to other departments even not being my obligation. (Vera, EMP, Reservations Clerk)

There were not enough staff (...) [and] there was no compensation for working more hours. We were the ones who respected each other and helped each other. If a group arrived at the end of a shift, we would no longer leave, we would be there for an hour or two helping, so as not to leave other colleagues dealing with things alone. (Clarice, EMP, Receptionist)

v) willingness to 'go the extra mile':

I always try to do my best. In spite of everything, I always do my best. I've had situations where I was on holidays, there was a problem and I went to work to help solving it. I've always dedicated myself to work. (Leticia, EMP, Receptionist)

You are the face representing that hotel and that group. It's your word that you give to customers even when you know that the service has its flaws or the AC is broken. If you struggle to preserve the good image of the company, that means you're going that extra mile. (Amelia, EMP, Receptionist)

The most recent example is that I have been going to work sick (LLL). Now, seriously, I don't leave my job unless I know everything is OK, that it's all like a 5 hotel guest would like it to be. I'm not leaving until I make sure everything is perfect. I can run, I'm not afraid to run or to roll up my sleeves. (Valentina, EMP, Sales and Events Executive)*

There was not one customer who would leave dissatisfied, because I found a solution to any problem. Even if it meant working for one or two hours more, or going home and coming back. Because I couldn't leave the image of the hotel being harmed, it is against my principles, especially in that hotel, with which I had a strong affective connection. This has to do with my way of being, I can't leave my work undone. (Clarice, LEA, ex-Receptionist)

vi) keeping up to date with developments in the field:

Good professionals are those persons who are continuously investing in themselves, investing in their job and who are aligned with the company objectives. (Gabriel, EMP, F&B Manager)

I also do a lot of training courses on my own. I'm always looking for free or paid training courses, such as wine-tasting, bar techniques, or even in the HR management or general management field; I'm always looking for opportunities to learn and grow. (Thomas, EMP, Waiter)

It is quite positive to observe that many research participants believe to be engaged both with their jobs and/or organisation, applying their full selves to their work roles. Multiple references

are made to the ability of 'going the extra mile' or 'wearing the company's colours'. In proportional terms, when considering the interviewees who most claim to have (or have had) a great deal of dedication, commitment, proactivity and motivation to their jobs in the Hotel sector, it is verified that almost all *Leavers* fit into this group, so as those classified as *Resolute – job or career – Leavers*. This suggests that these participants are negatively evaluating their exchange relationships and considering their employers to be failing in reciprocating. This naturally leads to increased loss of trust and loyalty and increased intentions to leave.

As postulated by Saks (2006), Social Exchange Theory, which proposes that relationships are built around mutual obligations, provides a theoretical foundation that allows a better of understand why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organisation. As also suggest by the JD-R model (section 4.4), employees decide to engage to a greater or lesser extent based on the resources that their organisation provides them with. If the employees find a balance that suits their needs from the support, rewards and resources that their organisation provides, they are likely to commit in return. This is precisely what interviewees such as Lucas (*EMP*) and Veronica (*EMP*) highlight, referring that many people – and frequently themselves – go to work only because they have to work and do the 'minimum' they are obliged to, as they do not believe to receive further benefits if showing more dedication:

There is no loyalty, people do the bare minimum, because there is no connection to the company, because they see that the company does not recognise their value or respect their personal life. We have to work because we are lucky to have a job ((use of irony)) that takes up 14 hours of the day. We shouldn't leave because there are others who don't have a job and are unfortunate; this does not motivate anyone, we do the minimum because that's what the company also gives us. (Veronica, EMP)

Some participants make reference to the image that many employers have of their own staff – describing them as lazy, complainant, or always dissatisfied –, in order to express their disagreement with such viewpoint. There seems to be a consensual opinion that employees do go the extra mile when they feel valued, and hence the importance of recognition and appreciation. Veronica (*EMP*) even stresses to be aware that many hotels have only make it through the latest economic crisis, due to the resilience of their workers, who were willing to make sacrifices to keep their jobs.

This viewpoint is partially supported by the *OB Expert (KEY)*, who evokes the concept of internal customer, which she considers to be largely overlooked in most T&H organisations. In order for such culture and mindset to be promoted, a lot of time, awareness, training and information would be required, she claims, and while employees do not perceive any benefit in going this extra mile, there is no point in telling them that they have to do it. Still according to this informant, this is done by 'living by example' (as discussed in section 7.2.4), as positive attitudes lead to positive behaviour.

Several participants, mostly General Managers, also emphasize the importance that attaining a good fit between an employee and the 'right' job position, has. Both Octavio (*EMP*) and Celeste (*EMP*) refer to performance evaluations that take place twice a year, in which the employees' career development plan is discussed. In their opinion, this allows them knowing whether people are satisfied, obtaining constructive feedback from both parties, and understanding

where each employee fits in best. Octavio (*EMP*) stresses that this evaluation is more than just telling people in which areas they are underperforming and that they should improve, but rather showing them how to improve, and provide them the necessary resources to achieve the proposed objectives. Adopting a bottom-up approach and taking the employees' profile into account are, therefore, key. Victor (*EMP*) is also supportive of this strategy, reinforcing the notion that all employees are important and even if some people are not tailored for customer service, it is just a matter of identifying their strengths and find them a back-office job in which they can be good at. In this General Manager view, this constitutes an important retention strategy.

From research participants' accounts on the emotional and affective connection to their jobs, two perspectives stand out. One is related to the fact that resilience, perseverance, and self-sacrifice are perceived by several interviewees as very important characteristics to build a successful career in T&H, as Gabriel's (*EMP, F&B Manager*) testimony suggests:

[This job] requires sacrifices, forces us to make choices at an affective level. I have worked with people who were very committed at the beginning, but who have given up with the first wave. Sometimes we enter into the sea and do not have the perfect waves, we have to wait for them. When the waves are dangerous, we have two options: either we stay on the sand, safe, or we take a chance and get rolled up in the wave. Throughout my life I haven't always been a supervisor and I didn't start right on top or earning a lot. I had to work many hours. So, I think people have to show their worth and they have to strive to succeed.

A second perspective is related with the previously explored theme of vocation and passion for hospitality work. Several participants use a common expression to refer to this enthusiasm and identification with T&H as having 'the little bug'⁸³, as Marisa (*EMP, Assistant Manager*) believes to be her case:

You must have a taste for the hotel business. Because not everyone has it, the mental availability to be 'on' 24/7/365 and don't end up giving up. Even when I'm on holidays I'm always worried about how the hotel is going. Apparently, I have 'the bug', or at least I was infected with it (LLL). I'm starting to think that this is not that common, to wake up with the desire to go to work, or to be on holidays and feeling happy to return to work the next day. And that feels good.

As seen in the previous sections, by providing people with job features which are important to their careers, which is related to fulfilment of the psychological contract, organisations are reinforcing commitment and promoting positive behaviour at work, loyalty, and long-term retention.

⁸³ Translated from the original 'ter o bichinho'.

8.4 Generic perceptions on employee turnover and retention

Due to the significant change in the nature of careers over the last few decades and the consequent changing work environment, organisations have become more hesitant to invest in long-term relationships with their employees (Greenhaus et al., 2010; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). At the same time, so employees no longer anticipate life-time or long-term employment with a single employer (Cappelli, 1999). In light of these changes, this section is therefore devoted to the analysis of the different views that research participants hold on employee turnover, on the retention of valuable employees, and on the image that the T&H holds vis-à-vis the interviewees' social ties (family members, friends, etc.) and the society at large.

Views on voluntary turnover

Employee turnover goes hand in hand with the labour shortages afflicting the T&H industry. Tourism's exponential growth in recent years has led to an increase in demand for labour and the educational offer is not sufficient to meet the requirements. Particularly in the scenario preceding the Covid-19 pandemic, almost all *Key-Informants* (*Major Employers, Employers' Association Representative, Institutional Representative, HR Expert*) and *General Managers (EMP)* refer that the necessity for HR is more pressing than ever, and increased competition largely drives employee turnover, especially when job resources such as pay and job demands are weighted up:

Nowadays, the Hotel industry does not pay very well, compared to other areas, so I understand that people change for this reason. But I also believe that some of the turnover has to do with the lure of other companies, which come here to get people. The money can even be the main reason for people to leave, but we also have this problem of competition. If another five-star hotel opens, of course people see there an opportunity to get a more interesting situation, to climb one more step, and take the know-how from here. And we have to be prepared, because we have also picked people from other places. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)

The problem lies in the imbalance between personal and work life, which, in this area, is usually in conflict with people's needs for rest and free time. When people want to be on vacation, when they want to be with their families, it is precisely in the most demanding moments for the sector. If we can't compensate for this afterwards, we have two major impediments to the sector's attractiveness: working hours and remuneration. And this has a direct impact on retention. (Employers Association Representative, KEY)

Many research participants, in particular those who do not hold senior management positions, do not share this view and several references are made to a market 'full of graduates' and 'full of people who are looking for a job', or to the fact that 'after you, there is someone in the line willing to take it'. Amanda (*LEA*) and the *HR Expert (KEY)* reinforce this idea, stating not to consider that training deficits exist; instead, she associates labour shortages with lack of investment in retaining talent. For most of these interviewees, most companies are not perceived as experiencing difficulties in recruiting, nor feeling pressured to make better offers, although it is acknowledged that the seasonality and unpredictability of the tourist demand highly influences staffing issues. Practically all participants concur that the low salaries, in

combination with the long and irregular hours, are the major reasons underpinning employee turnover (Figure 8.12).

I notice a higher turnover of staff who is always looking for better conditions; today people change jobs for 50 Euros. But I also notice a great shortage of labour force, especially in operational areas – housekeeping, restaurant – and not so much in administrative and back-office areas. Just now, it took me one month to hire someone for the restaurant. Hotels are growing, more and more, schools do not correspond to the demands, and there is also a huge distrust on the part of the people who come to this area in relation to what the daily work life in hotels is. The question of working on weekends, nights, holidays, Christmas and New Year's Eve weigh more and more on people's decisions. Then, there is the issue of wages, which are not that great, as we know. And people prefer to earn a little less, but to have regular schedules, from 9am to 5pm, in another company. (Xavier, EMP, General Manager)

The salaries in the hotel industry, as is well known, and unfortunately, are not yet what we would like them to be. They have improved a lot, due to the increase in the average price, but they are not yet what we would like them to be. And unless we keep people motivated, we will lose everything. There has to be a change of mindset, a cultural change, in the way you look at your employees. There are still many Portuguese companies that treat people badly, as if they were doing them a favor by giving them a job. I think that the difficulty in hiring people is a result of that. (Octavio, EMP, General Manager)

It is because the conditions are very bad, very low, and many people are not keen to be subject to this kind of schedules, with this kind of wages. (Leticia, EMP, Receptionist, Resolute job/career leaver)

The sector is still highly affected by seasonality, because sometimes you need a lot of people, but then you don't need as many people anymore, and then the companies only hire a small number of core employees, and the remaining others keep changing. Besides that, you talk to your workmate, he talks to someone else, and the next day we all leave and go to another hotel. But I understand it has to be like this, people are always looking for something better. (Amelia, EMP, Receptionist)

Figure 8.12 | View on employee turnover in the Hotel industry

Source: Own construction

In line with the issues of transparency in the employer-employee relationship previously discussed in section 8.2.1, several participants are also of the opinion that employees have been increasingly dissatisfied and discouraged by seeing the Tourism activity growing by the year, boosting higher investments, higher occupancy rates, higher average prices, and higher profitability, at the same time that wages are stagnant for years.

Also, as mentioned in section 8.2.1 (*Finding a job: what is on offer?*), the functional levels in the Hotel industry in which Higher Education is especially valued and required are not the most critical with respect to labour shortages. On the one hand, the so-called back-office functions, whether more administrative or more strategic, can also hire staff with other background that not T&H, such as Marketing, Human Resources, Economy, IT or even Engineering. Employee retention at this level is equally important, mostly for the skills and competencies that are of

great value to the organisations and risk of brain drain. The opposite is also observed, given that many T&H graduates prefer other areas within the Tourism sector that not Hospitality, choose to migrate to other professional fields (either having worked in the Hotel industry before or not, for the sake of comparison), or choose to build their careers outside Portugal.

The great need for constant recruitment and training is thus much more significant at operational levels. Mostly at this level, the main reason assigned to the high turnover is related to the low wages, with people easily changing jobs for more 20 or 50 Euros a month. According to *Key Informants'* and interviewees in managerial positions, the lowest the hierarchical level and the staff's formal qualifications, the more likely the change is to be motivated by monetary reasons, even if is a small difference at stake. Octavio (*EMP, General Manager*) believes that this happens because low qualified staff tends to have a lower focus on their curricula and not as driven by opportunities to learn and to growth as more highly educated people are. Celeste (*EMP, General Manager*) considers that people look for and accept jobs in these operational areas because they need a job regardless of what the job description is, or because they want to get more experience before applying for other higher ranked positions; hence, in the first place, she believes that these people are not driven to remain in these jobs for long time and change as soon as the first alternative opportunity arises. Vera (*EMP, Reservations Clerk*) recalls how close she was to make a job change, and simultaneously a career change, to a company where she would perform administrative work, with a higher pay and several additional benefits. Concerns that she would not like the job as much as she loves hospitality and the investment made in her degree, prevented the change. However, she admits to constantly compare the Hotel industry to other areas, especially with regards to the poor conditions offered in light of such high job demands.

Research participants refer to the F&B department as the most affected by voluntary employee turnover, due to the high job demands such as extremely long and unpredictable schedules. It is then followed by the Housekeeping, on account of high physical demands and low pay. The Front-office is also mentioned due to highly stressful duties and interactions, work intensity and heavy workload. Looking at the overall hotel structure, Housekeepers and Waiters/Waitresses are pointed out by the participants as the job positions with lower pay, usually placed at the minimum wage level.

Major Employer 02 (KEY) stresses that due to lack of staff, and although this is not the desired situation, companies have been forced to hire people without T&H dedicated training (whether higher education or even technical-professional levels) or previous experience and take charge of their training in-house. Both the *Major Employer 01 (KEY)* and the *Employers' Association Representative (KEY)* concur that the sector's employability rates are very high, and industry players have been discussing the possibility of following one or all at once of the following options: hiring migrant workers, reconvert/capacity people from other sectors (unemployed or not), or to attract part-timers such as student-workers. For the *Labour Union Representatives (KEY)*, hiring outside the country is not perceived as acceptable when the unemployment rates in Portugal are far from desirable levels. Several participants in managerial positions who are also involved in education and training for the industry, stress that retraining and skills upgrading can be challenging due to the low attraction power of the industry to less qualified people, whereas employability is very high for qualified individuals. Gabriel (*EMP, F&B Manager*) and

Alice (LEA, ex-Receptionist) who are also certified trainers at local schools, emphasise that a significant number of students who complete Professional Studies do it because these courses are financially supported and as a means to complete Secondary Education, but very few are willing to actually start working in the sector, especially after contacting with it through internships. The *Employers Association (KEY)* sees the increasing qualifications of HR as the way to add value to the hotel offer, ensuring a positioning in accordance with the high level of customer demand, and thereby also ensuring that these jobs are better valued and remunerated.

As far as the perceptions of turnover as positive or negative are concerned, participants' views focus on many of the implications presented in section 4.2.1, both for individuals and organisations. There are typically two distinctive views on employee turnover; one that sees it as problematic for both individuals and organisation, and another that faces it as unavoidable and even necessary or desirable. As salient in Figure 8.13, turnover is mostly perceived as positive for employees as a means to obtaining more and more varied work experiences, acquiring more knowledge and gain new competencies, or seeking a job that best suits one's expectations. Turnover is negatively perceived when hampering people's stability, especially when considering that organisational tenure largely underpins promotion opportunities. With respect to organisations, turnover is mostly perceived as having indirect negative impacts, especially on the quality of customer service and on the remaining staff's morale. Increased costs with recruitment and training are also mentioned as direct costs of turnover. The only positive repercussions are associated with potential for innovation and adaptation, considering the know-how that new staff can bring to the organisation.

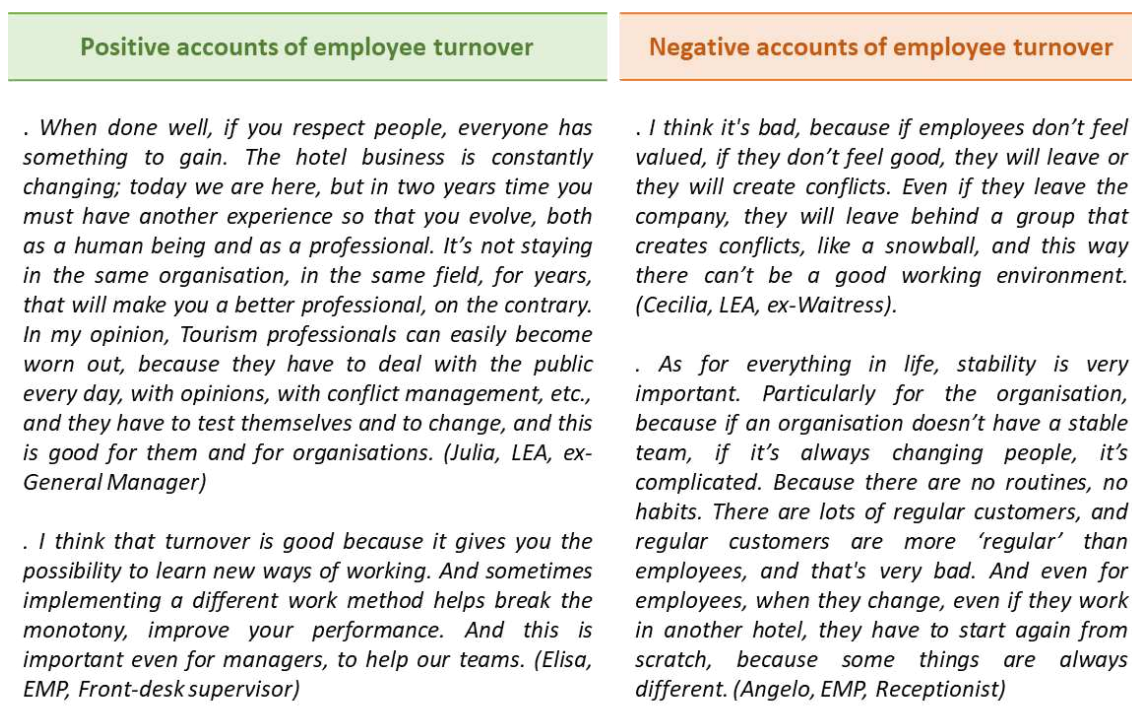


Figure 8.13 | Positive and negative accounts of employee turnover

Source: Own construction

The discussion surrounding turnover issues naturally led research participants to dwell on the antipode phenomenon: retention. Interestingly, *Newcomers* are the group of participants who most focused on this topic, perceiving employee turnover as having both positive and negative implications, depending on the angle from which it is analysed, as Figure 8.14 displays. *Newcomers'* accounts suggest that lifetime employment is not a priority among younger individuals. This can be interpreted either as supporting the notion that age-related differences exist in how individuals perceive their psychological contract's terms and career development over their lifespan (Narelle & Jepsen, 2009), or that recent graduates are becoming increasingly aware of the nature of contemporary employment relationship, when in comparison to the previous times.

I think there can be two different points of view. This idea that a person can spend their entire life in one company is something we don't see anymore these days. And ultimately, I don't even think it's all that productive, because I suppose that maybe if you spend your entire life in one place than you don't know how the rest of the companies work. Maybe it's a positive thing that people do rotate between jobs, so we can all learn something new now and again. At the same time, I'm not saying we should change every single year, I think we need to find a middle ground. (Leonardo, NEW)

That's not fixed, some people do search for stability, while others like to move from one place to another. Maybe, at first I will also subject myself to that, and maybe I will be searching for something better – I believe we should always try to find something better – but I think there comes a point in life where we want to settle down and advance in our careers. Because if today I'm in a company and tomorrow I'm in a different one, than maybe I won't be able to move up the hierarchy ladder. It's also important to have multiple experiences, be at different places, different hotels, they all function differently. Sometimes when you look at a CV and the person has been in so many different places, you can make one of two reading: either they were not ok anywhere or they were searching to learn and explore new things. (Claudia, NEW)

I think these days, people want to try different jobs, they don't want to stay in the same place for long, they want to have multiple choices. I think the main reason for people to be continuously changing jobs, and for people to be moving in and out of companies is because they want to try different things and have different options in their lives. (Andrea, NEW)

I think that is generational; our generation no longer wants to find a job and hold on to it for 40 years until they retire, as it used to be. Before, people would go to a company and spend their entire lives there, today it's exactly the opposite, when you start a new job you're already wondering where to go next. This has a lot to do with your working conditions, they are usually so unstable, with very low income. (Mario, NEW)

Figure 8.14 | Newcomers' perceptions on the meaning of retention

Source: Own construction

More flexibly changing workplaces and employers has been normalised and many interviewees see it as associated with difference in generational behaviour. Many participants compare themselves to their parents' generation, acknowledging not to expect a job for life at a single

organisation. These accounts mirror a more proactive career orientation, focusing on self-driven, goal-directed work behaviour, and preference for mobility, which are the core of a protean and a boundaryless career orientation (Wiernik & Kostal, 2019) (section 2.2). *Newcomers'* viewpoints on retention also evidence a higher labour-market orientation, a growing concern with employability (McGuire, 2014; Tomlinson, 2012), perceiving career success as contingent on career capital/competencies gained from a succession of jobs. *Major Employers (01/02)* share this view that younger employees, more recently graduated, exhibit a higher preference and predisposition for mobility, being more concerned about the portfolio of experiences and expertise that a job can offer them, rather than a long-term bond. However, as observed in Figure 8.14, having an orientation for mobility should not be perceived as detrimental of other forms of stability. Again, considering what people value most in a job nowadays, *Major Employers (01/02)* reinforce the importance of stability:

People like stability. They like to be in a company they believe in, that they feel confident in, to know that the company fulfils all its obligations towards them and does not fail them. People seek more this kind of trust and security rather than long-term stability. It means identifying with our service, it's knowing that when they tell someone that they work here, it is valued. There is a lot of talk about precarious practices and contractual ties, but for me precariousness is not about not having a job for life. Because employment is no longer viewed as a marriage for the rest of your life. People stay while they feel good and when they stop feeling good, they want to change. A job is precarious when there are no discounts for Social Security or if it is in breach of any obligation that will harm the employee in the future. (Major Employer 01, KEY)

The level of importance assigned to this notion of *stability* is perceived as being dependent on employees' career stage and varying over one's lifespan, as more experienced individuals are professionally more mature and give further thoughts to job change:

There is a younger generation of workers who have recently completed their training, they are much more predisposed to mobility. They are more concerned with the experience they may have; they do not want a job for life, but rather an experience for 2-3 years and then change to a different place. Then there are those who have already started a family and want some stability from a geographical point of view, but also from a remuneration point of view. They value the safety rather than the experiences, because they feel they have other duties to fulfil. And then we have a 3rd group that are the people who have already made their career – I would not say that they are at the end of their career – but they do not have a great disposition for mobility, they are no longer attracted by the experiences, sometimes not even remuneration, because they no longer feel so pressured at this stage of their lives. (Major Employer 02, KEY)

Subjects' criteria and evaluation may change over time, due to changes in reference points, to changes in the person's perspective and priorities, to ever growing needs of each person, and in response to changing conditions. The challenge then becomes to simultaneously accommodate the needs and expectations of a working group comprised by different generations, coexisting in the same workplace. The trend will be therefore not to implement measures that are transversal to the whole organisation, but that are variable or customisable to each employee

and/or team. According with *Major Employer 02 (KEY)*, such approach is highly dependent on both employer and employee-flexibility.

Octavio (*EMP, General Manager*) is of opinion that a proper management of employee turnover and retention comes down to the **organisational mindset**, which is shared by several interviewees who highlight that there is no good HR policy across the T&H industry aimed at promoting employee retention. Many participants stress that organisations do invest great effort in talent attraction, but not necessarily in retention.

Companies in the field of T&H are not oriented towards this, unfortunately they are not. And I don't understand why. Because there are good, worthwhile people who should be retained. (Clara, LEA)

I think that the big flaw in Hospitality is often due to not having the right HR service, in terms of how to be able to understand people, talk to them, motivate them, know what they lack – which often is not money – it is often other factors that are lacking. (Marco, LEA)

It is necessary to change the mindset of companies. If the employees have high morale, if they have a good professional environment, the company will earn even more, without a doubt. But the vision that companies have of employees is: your life has to be this, your life is to work every day for this. Hence a person can endure 1, 2 years, but then look for a job elsewhere. And so the workers' view is: you don't work in Hospitality for life. (Lucas, EMP)

The common feeling, everywhere I've been, is that everyone is replaceable. (Vera, EMP)

For the *HE Expert (KEY)* retention is indeed a matter of mindset, with some organisations already doing quite well when it comes to define strategies to recognise and acknowledge employees' value and contribution. Several *Key-Informants* do not believe, however, that this is the rule but rather the exception. As discussed in section 7.2.2, people perceive recognition and appreciation for their work to be largely absent. Most people do not perceive their organisations to be genuinely concerned about their staff needs and well-being. Bruno (*EMP, General Manager*) posits that contemporary employment relations are based on concepts of happiness, emotional bonds, achievement, and self-fulfilment, more than on money, hence considering that employees look at the employer brand and at what the company can do for their well-being. Some interviewees make the association with retention with performance evaluation and feedback, and consequently with leadership type. As discussed in section 8.3.2, several General Managers refer to the importance of making regular assessments, providing feedback, showing the employee news ways of improving his/her performance, and – more importantly – finding good fit between the employee and the 'right' job position for him/her, as a means to talent retention.

In the *HE Expert's* view, retention does not mean to keep a person forever in the organisation, but for a reasonable period of time so that person's potential can be unlocked and capitalised. In *Major Employer 01* and *HR Expert's (KEY)* opinion, the main issue of retention has to do with the simple fact that some employee wishes to being retained, while others do not. The *HR Expert (KEY)* emphasis that retention has to be '*as needed*'; this because retaining an employee for too

long may just lead to perceptions of stagnation, dissatisfaction or to unmet expectations. Retention strategies should be designed in close contact with the employee, including a deep assessment of his/her expectations, so efforts are not dispersed with someone who does not wish to be retained and more transactional contracts can be produced instead. Commitment can still be promoted for individuals who do not wish to be retained, but who are still valuable for the organisation – considering the current difficulties in recruitment or the potential that healthy rates of turnover have for innovation – but resorting to different strategies. All these *Key-Informants* stress the importance of identifying high-potential people, who can add value to the organisation and should be the focus of specific retention strategies. Once again, following the discussion in section 8.2.1, transparency and the leaders' role in identifying such assets and mobilising the necessary resources towards their retention are key, especially at recruitment and at early socialisation phases of psychological contract formation.

The image of T&H as a valuable career

Despite the visibility that the Tourism sector has for a significant number of national economies such as in Portugal, its workers do not benefit from the same status, and the vast majority of T&H jobs are poorly valued and respected in social terms. Individual's expectations towards a job are formed through professional norms and societal beliefs regarding work, occupations, and organisations. The image of occupations is, therefore, an important stimulus in career choice decisions and in employee retention (Deery & Jago, 2015; Riley, 2019; Riley et al., 2002).

A few participants ($n=5$), mostly those who have occupied Front-office positions, either formally as employees or during their internships, believe that misconceptions about T&H jobs and career exist because there is a great ignorance about what most hospitality jobs consist of and their relevance. The *Newcomers* ($n=3$) referring to this aspect stress that began to give more value themselves to certain functions when they started contacting with this reality. As discussed in section 6.4.2, this reinforces the role that internships play in giving students a more realistic view of the industry.

People have no idea what our work is like, not just mine in particular, but all hotel jobs. Maybe a lot of people think we just sit there with nothing to do, just waiting on a guest to arrive for check-in, hand him/her the key and that's it. If, in fact, this was all I did, then sure, I would be overpaid. But the truth is I work really hard. (Amelia, EMP)

Even I started valuing a Receptionist's work a lot more after I had that experience. I no longer think they just hang there the whole day, carefree, with nothing to do. Now I know all the work that goes in to it. (Andrea, NEW)

Rooted in this lack of knowledge regarding T&H occupations is also the fact that many people believe that anyone can easily perform T&H jobs without dedicated training and regardless of their educational background. References are made to the fact that most hotel-related tasks being easy to learn and to be performed. Waiting tables is presented as the function that is more frequently subject to this type of preconception, when it is a highly technical, physical demanding and stressful job that also requires a wide set of competencies, such as good communication and interpersonal skills, language proficiency or working under pressure.

However, and as George (*NEW*) emphasises, everyone can indeed wait tables, the impact of doing it in a local restaurant is very different than doing it in a five-star hotel.

Some interviewees believe that many people look at T&H jobs as a fallback solution if unemployed or looking for a temporary job. Others consider that many people develop an idealized image of the sector, dreaming of having their own hotel or restaurant even if without previous experience or knowledge about the business.

Specially now with all the BnB's and Local Accommodation, everyone thinks it's awesome and so easy, because anyone can make a bed, anyone can host. We have a culture where everyone thinks anyone can do this type of work, with or without a degree. (Amanda, LEA)

A lot of people always have a 'if you can speak English and are comfortable around a computer it shouldn't be hard to check someone in. Just say Hello and hand them a key' ((interviewee mimics a condescending face as she says this)). There is a large depreciation, but maybe this wouldn't happen if our own industry didn't downplay us so much. A lot of the times the very people for whom we work seem to view our jobs that way. (VERA, EMP)

The value of some job positions is described by the *Employers Association Representative* (KEY) as underestimated:

Take the example of Chambermaids, who should be framed as relevant workers within their organisation. Their work is critical in a hotel; they have direct contact with the guests, they touch their things, they have the ability to make or break their well-being with small details, it's a role as important as the one of a Receptionist. The same applies to a Waiter, who ultimately is a Sales Person, who needs to know about wines, pairing dishes, matters of nutrition and food health, speak multiple languages, that must know how to host, have general knowledge to maintain a conversation; yet it's a really undervalued job.

Most of the examples provided by the research participants refer, precisely, to the lower levels of the organisational hierarchy, in which most of the lower qualified jobs and lower paid are concentrated. Although these jobs are frequently referred by the players in the industry as very important to service quality, their wages reflect their weak capacity to add value to the organisation. Both Manuel (*EMP, General Manager*) and a Financial Manager⁸⁴ are of the opinion that wages are naturally defined in accordance with the value associated with each job position.

Everyone wants to get a raise or a promotion, but rare are those employees who ask what value they can add to the organisation. If someone wants to make more money, then they will have to take on more responsibilities and produce more. It doesn't shock me that someone earns 8,000 Euros a month, what is important to understand is what value that person brings to the company. It's not the same with a Kitchen Helper – I'm saying this with all due respect, because it's an important role, and without it a hotel wouldn't work – but what this person does, doesn't generate money; it helps others

⁸⁴ Interviewed at the preliminary research stage.

generate money. Obviously, their salary needs to be lower, this is the logic behind these calculations. (Manuel, EMP, General Manager)

This claim finds support in the HR literature, with Boella and Gross-Turner (2005, p. 152) emphasizing that “each employee does not generate large sums of revenue for the employer (...), particularly when compared to other industries where each employee may generate hundreds of thousands of pounds each year.” This is suggested to be the most significant criteria defining pay levels, leaving the industry with little room for significant wage increases. As these low paid positions constitute the majority of hotel jobs, low pay is then a predominant characteristic of the industry (see also section 2.3.1). As previously discussed, it is precisely at these levels where recruitment and retention difficulties are most felt. For eight interviewees, low wages levels are the main aspect determining the poor social image of T&H jobs. Vera (EMP), working as Reservations Clerk, confirms that when mentioning her job many people assume that she is being paid solely the minimum wage. Benjamin (EMP, Doorman) compares the salaries in the industry to those in other activities, by referring to supermarket cashiers as a job category that earns similar wages to that of Receptionist despite needing a not so complex set of skills and significantly less job demands. The *Major Employer 01 (KEY)* agrees that salaries do highly affect the image of the industry as a good employer, yet referring that this is not a fully true conception:

There is a misconception that the Hotel business is a poorly paid sector. In Portugal, salaries are generally low and if we compare Hospitality with other sectors, there are many others paying only the national minimum wage, and in hotels salaries are higher than that. I may pay the minimum wage to about five people in my whole company; I don't have any chambermaids earning anywhere near the national minimum wage. So, they ((the Government)) might as well raise the national minimum wage, which makes no difference to us. We pay higher salaries than those defined by Collective Bargaining Agreements. And there is also a big discrepancy depending on the location; if we go to Lisbon or Porto, we won't be able to hire anyone if we pay what comes in Collective Agreements; everyone is paying more. I still think wages are low, but they are not as low as people usually think.

Several participants also believe that the poor image of T&H as a valuable career is:

- i. A cultural issue, considering that job titles are very important to the society and in hotels, only middle and top management position benefit of such status. In some regions, such as the Azores, hospitality jobs are also portrayed as not *adequate* for women. References are also made to other countries in which T&H jobs are not seen as diminishing.
- ii. Rooted in the value that is typically assigned to all service-related jobs, confusing ‘service’ with ‘servility’. Two interviewees highlight how

People who get embarrassed by serving others can't have a career in Tourism, and when we realise that, we quickly need to remove them, or they'll have a negative effect on the magic of service. To serve others is a mission, but it feels as though today there is a great stigma around it. A politician is also in service of others, he/she serves society and the community. So many people want to be doctors, but if you take a really close look at it, it's one of the

hardest, dirtiest jobs there are, to deal with illness, pain and death. It's all a matter of perspective, direction in life, and it draws from your education. (Victor, EMP, General Manager)

- iii. Related to fluctuation in tourism demand and casualisation of employment relations (e.g., short-term, non-renewable contracts);
- iv. Associated with the traditional career routes that typify Hotel Management careers, that posits that progression should happen step-by-step all the way from operational levels to top management, either when employees hold high level qualifications that were not as democratised a few decades ago, as the following quote reveals:

I think it is due to the way people who have been working in the Hospitality Industry for a very long time perceive the ones recently employed, with a narrative that goes 'I started as a Porter, then a became a Receptionist, then a Manager, than whatever, and I didn't need a degree for that'; this is not helpful at all. Maybe the narrative should be 'If I had a degree, maybe I didn't need to have been a Porter, a Receptionist, whatever to be where I am today'. Who knows, maybe the road didn't need to be so rough. (Vera, EMP)

As reflected in Vera's view, and related to the notion that anyone can perform T&H jobs is, of course, the need to enrol in Higher Education studies in order to build a career in the industry. Several participants make reference to being subject to a constant reminder from older co-workers to the fact that not having a degree never constrained their careers. When questioned about the social value of T&H jobs, some participants refer to how friends and relatives do not perceive studying/working in T&H as a respected and prestigious vocation, often making derogatory remarks such as those presented in Table 8.6. As referred in section 6.2.2, some participants faced some challenges when making their career choices, precisely due to the fact that their parents did not perceive T&H as an adequate choice in comparison to other occupations, as Virginia's (LEA) testimony evidences:

I had good grades, so I was expected to choose a career in Physics, Chemistry, Engineering, Law, Medicine or Education. When I told my parents what I really wanted was a career in Tourism, for them it was as if I had told them I wanted to be an artist. My parents were very conservative, and they wanted me to have a job with a certain amount of prestige. For them, Tourism as a career was unthinkable, which they saw as a lesser career, they saw no future for me. In Brazil if you have a degree in Tourism you are a 'Turismólogo'⁸⁵; in Portugal we don't even have a name for our profession.

Previous research has also found that a significant number of Tourism students do not perceive working in the industry as a prestigious vocation or that their jobs would be perceived as beneficial service to the society (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000).

⁸⁵ Expression that could be roughly translated as 'Tourismologist'.

Table 8.6 | Social prestige of T&H dedicated Higher Education

<p><i>Even in my family, they asked me 'Are you insane? Tourism? What is that good for? To be a flight attendant? To work in hotels?' People think you don't need a degree to have a career in Tourism. (Alice, LEA)</i></p>	<p><i>My older sister was studying Business Management and I was a very good student, so my parents always dreamed that I would choose a career like hers, or as I would always say, Math Teacher. When, out of the blue, I change my mind, they ask me: 'Will you graduate to be a waitress? To make the beds at hotels?'. (Clara, LEA)</i></p>
<p><i>People ask me if I'm spending money and studying to wait tables. (Alexandra, NEW)</i></p>	<p><i>I've had family members joking about how studying Tourism is the equivalent of a walk in the park. (Oscar, NEW)</i></p>
<p><i>When you say you've graduated in Tourism and people stare: 'But what is that?'. I don't know, it has no merit, it's not like saying you got a degree in Journalism or Medicine. It has very little social value as a profession. (Elisa, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>Every time I would tell anyone I had graduated in Tourism they would say 'yeah, you be a tourist, while you're at it'. It's a degree that is not taken very seriously. (Michael, EMP)</i></p>

Source: Own construction

Three participants believe that this lack of recognition is visible even within HE Institutions, having noticed that among the different areas of education in their departments or universities, T&H degrees are frequently associated with easy access and low status. Even among T&H graduates, some beliefs and preconceptions start to be formed regarding some job positions. Vera (*EMP, University HEI attendant*) was offered an internship as Deputy Housekeeper in a four-star hotel and recalls her classmates commenting on how little prestigious and relevant this job positions was for her training. In line with the reasons underlying the choice for a T&H degrees and career (see section 6.2.1), many interviewees consider to be proud of their occupation; however, they also feel undervalued, especially when considering their qualifications and the high requirements of their jobs. Several interviewees, mostly among the youngest participants (both *Employees* and *Newcomers*), highlight how they perceive T&H occupations as dignified and worthy of praise jobs, expressing their surprise at not understanding how such an important economic sector is so undervalued by the society and by the organisations themselves, in light of the precarious working conditions on offer.

The major exception among T&H jobs refers to *chefs*. Several participants ($n=5$) consider that this is a very *sui generis* job, which has always been very well paid – with many *chefs* earning higher wages than Hotel General Managers. This has always been a reputable job, considering the limited number of professionals and the fact that dedicated qualifications could only be obtained in very exclusive, foreign institutions, but got under the spotlight due to popular television shows such as *Masterchef* and the dynamics of some celebrity *chefs*. This is the way the *Employers Association Representative (KEY)* and the *Institutional Representative (KEY)* mention that promotion campaigns have been thought of, to improve the image of certain jobs in people's minds, promoting not only a higher respect from the wider society, but also trying

to attract people to choose these occupations. This is also one of the reasons why Employers' Associations are negotiating with Labour Unions a reorganisation of the professional categories which define job descriptions and wage levels.

8.5 The role and value of a T&H degree

The number of T&H programmes in Portugal has increased significantly since the first programmes were established in 1986/87 at three private HEI. In 1988/89, the first Tourism programme was then established in the public system, at the University of Aveiro. Over the almost 40 years, enrolment in T&H programmes has steadily increased, supplying the market with highly educated individuals oriented for managerial roles, but questions remain to whether recruiter are valuing the competencies and knowledge that such qualified applicants hold. In the Portuguese context, previous studies have been produced about the level of articulation between the labour market and Hospitality Management Programmes (e.g., Correia, 2017). As approached in section 6.4.1 (*Bridging the gap*), several *Key-informants* are of the opinion that the Higher Education system has been making reasonable efforts to help graduates make the transition to the labour market. Employing organisations are also summoned to share this responsibility with HEI, as no programme can duly prepare people to such a very challenging and diverse labour market in a 3/4-year period and on-the-job training is also of great importance in promoting work readiness in T&H graduates.

When questioned about the role that Higher Education played in career construction and development, different perspectives stand out among *Employees* and *Leavers*. Most participants believe that having a degree is important, but also acknowledge that employing organisations do not really value this type of qualifications, not perceiving it as distinctive, especially at entry-level.

For a considerable number of interviewees (*LEA*=3; *EMP*=6) and *Key-Informants* (*n*=4) **a degree is imperative**. In light of what was discussed in the previous section (8.4, *The Image of T&H as a valuable career*), Julia (*LEA*) and Cecilia (*LEA*) stress that it cannot be assumed that anyone can work in a hotel, especially if considering that nowadays there is plenty of dedicated education and training offer. Julia (*LEA*) considers that all staff in a hotel must be qualified, whether technical (mostly for the operational levels, including all jobs, from chambermaids to kitchen helpers) or of higher level. The youth is increasingly becoming professionalised and higher qualifications are a means to demonstrate people's merit. Many *Key-Informants* posit that qualification is key for hotels to better and more competitively position themselves according to the growing customer demands, as the following quotes reveal. *Major Employer 02 (KEY)* remarks that although Hospitality jobs are typically described as low qualified, this is not likely to be desired by any organisation, who are merely forced to hire people with little or no specific competencies and training (providing them with that training on-site) due to recurrent labour shortages.

We have to adapt the offer to these consumers, especially the niches who are willing to pay more for hotel services. This can only be achieved by developing organisations and the tourism product and it is this new wave of people who are pursuing a

university degree in Tourism that will achieve this. (Employers Association Representative, KEY)

With all the competition between companies, the quality of HR becomes a determining distinguishing factor. Because it is people who make decisions – even if assisted by technology –, who have the ability to motivate others. A good university degree, which understands the needs of the market and the employment system, and which prepares students well, will not only be supplying the market, but it will also give inputs to the organisations in terms of innovation and good practices. They are not just providing for businesses, but promoting change. (HE Expert)

Several research participants (n=7) describe Higher Education as an added value in one's professional life, that consolidates knowledge, gives a more comprehensive and critical view of the industry, and provides graduates with the tools and capabilities to better manage their job duties. Some interviewees (n=7) highlight the value of a degree when it comes to personal growth and development of specific skills and competencies which they would likely not obtain otherwise. References are made to planning, leadership, coordination, and management skills; Barbara (EMP) offers, with her testimony, a deeper perspective on this issue. Vincent (EMP, Deputy Manager) claims having no doubt that without such qualifications he would not have reached the position he holds today. Some interviewees also mention the fact that graduates are naturally more demanding and have a more defined set of expectations regarding future careers.

I think that, when having Higher Education, you mature and grow as a person, you give value to other things. I think my degree helped me to realise that, in addition to technical stuff, customer service is essential for any type of business. The fact that a person is professional, friendly, affable, creates a connection. Sometimes people even have this understanding, but they don't have the ability to apply it, and I think Higher Education helps. The two degrees ((Bachelor and Master's degree)) I took helped me to realize this and helped me a lot as a person, to mature, to grow, to gain responsibility, to have set hours to do things, to deal with the pressure and with the amount of work that on the day-to-day we will have to know how to manage. On a personal level, we start to have the background to know how to deal with this, with this stress, without letting it affect our way of being. I think Higher Education is essential. Anyone who wants to go into the Tourism sector, should have a degree. (Barbara, EMP, Web Sales Executive)

My degree gave me the skills and tools to understand what to do, when I'm sitting here, where to look and how to look. I apply almost nothing of what I learned at school, also because the procedures evolve very fast. I did learn, though, to have a good work methodology, to have a good attitude, to know how to present myself at work, to be organised, or to know how to prepare documents, such as a report. (Daniel, EMP, Deputy Manager)

This notion is supported by *Key-Informants* such as the *OB Expert* and the *HR Expert*, who oppose that Higher Education contributes to a greater recognition of graduates' worth by enhancing their skills, enabling them to understand what companies need, what their job descriptions consist of and to perform them in accordance with the organisation's expectations. It will also place these future workers in a more competitive position, especially when

negotiating their own wage packages. However, the *Labour Union (KEY)* does not fully agree with this vision, considering that increased qualifications have led to more modern versions of the hotel business, to an increasing digitalisation of work and to the transformation of the hotel business into white-collar professions; yet, it did not increase workers' capacity to assert and exercise their rights, as because labour relations are becoming increasingly individualised and people lose power to claim. In fact, when questioned about their knowledge about labour legislation, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and the role of Labour Unions, a considerable number of participants reveal great unfamiliarity with this dimension of their work lives.

Although with limited experience in the labour market in comparison to *Employees* and *Leavers*, for all *Newcomers* ($n=12$), a degree is not only highly important, it is a basic requirement. As presented in section 2.4.1, there has been an increasing participation in Higher Education in all fields, and T&H was no exception despite most jobs in this field were previously typically not held by graduates (Tomlinson, 2012). Higher education was mentioned, several times, as something that could make a difference in one's future.

Nowadays nobody has a decent job without a degree and even with a degree it is difficult to find one. Without a degree, what do you do today? (Carla, NEW)

Three participants claim to be aware that companies are looking for graduates, that most job announcements defined a bachelor's degree as minimum qualifications. However, as seen in sections 8.2.1 and 8.4, this idea does not find correspondence in other participants' accounts, especially of those in managerial positions, postulating a different message: a degree is valued, yet not a prerequisite. Very often, a degree was not a mandatory requirement, yet it was perceived as being valued by recruiters as a warranty of applicants' knowledge, especially if including internship experiences. Victor (*EMP, General Manager*) concurs with this perspective, considering that young people are expected to have higher qualifications than older individuals.

Similarly to other participants' accounts about this same 'pre-career' stage (when undergraduates or recent graduates), as seen in section 6.3.2, a university degree is expected to be a competitive advantage, positioning its holders as good candidates for progression opportunities or speeding the process. For these interviewees, taking up a managerial position is believed to be contingent on holding a degree; even recognising that people may progress without such type of qualifications, a level will be reached that it will require the formal recognition of these competences. Although all *Newcomers* recognize the importance of working knowledge and work experience, they reinforce the value of theoretical knowledge and the broader vision that Higher Education is able to provide:

Of course, experience is very important, but before mastering practice, we must master theory. Without some theory, we will never get where we could. It is important to be aware of the theory, so that later we can implement it. Practice alone is not enough. (Rafael, NEW)

Of course that working knowledge and know-how are important, but it is also important to have the theoretical bases. I think this will give me a wider skill set and differentiation. (Claudia, NEW)

A second perspective, that gathered most of participants' references on the relevance of a university degree in career construction and development, portrays Higher Education

qualification as important for the competencies it provides to graduates, but **not as an absolute prerequisite or a *sine qua non* condition**, combining three viewpoints (see Table 8.7):

- i. Those who place the onus of career success on graduates’ attitudes and personal characteristics more than on a degree; these characteristics are largely associated with the perception of soft skills as the most relevant in the recruitment and selection of new entrants (see also section 6.4.3);
- ii. Those who place higher importance in working knowledge, experience, and practical/technical skills than in a degree; which, as discussed in section 8.2.1, is linked with perceptions of prior knowledge of the hospitality industry as a highly valued recruitment criterion; and
- iii. Those who acknowledge several benefits in a degree, but still do not perceive it as critical to build a successful career in the industry; which is also closely aligned with the image of T&H as a valuable, socially recognised, career option (section 8.4).

Table 8.7 | Perceptions of a university degree as a non-prerequisite

i. Graduates’ attitudes and personal characteristics	ii. Working knowledge, experience, and practical/technical skills	iii. Has benefits but still not a critical condition
<p><i>Having Higher Education is important, it is not a guarantee of having a job, but it is halfway, you can get there. The rationale is to hire people who effectively demonstrate the skills and profile for a given role. Higher Education is not a guarantee that the person will be an excellent professional in that area, they may not be good at that or see themselves doing that and realise that this was not the area they should have chosen. (Vincent, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>People come with a will and with some very valid skills, but they are not all necessary for the activity. Knowing how to manage a hotel is not done solely by having a degree. We need work, evolution, until we are at a minimum and reasonable level to manage a hotel. (Victor, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>There is always an advantage, because you know a lot of things that those who do not have a degree don’t. This puts you in a safer position. You bring a different skillset to the table with academic training, no doubt. (Elisa, EMP)</i></p> <p><i>Of course, having a degree is an asset, because it gives us different tools, other experiences, another culture, and a more complete training, which helps us to move into other areas. It gives us more capability, that’s for sure. (Gabriel, EMP)</i></p>
<p><i>The person has to be a good professional, regardless of having a degree or not. It is an asset to have academic qualifications, but employers want to see us working. The employees may not even have training, but be good at what they do, be excellent professionals. It happens because they got to know more, showing the capacity and willingness to learn more. (Thomas, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>We had to have some training, of course, but in the companies where I worked, they gave us training, as much training as we already brought in from outside. Because everything was very specific and very adapted to each situation. If you had a Bachelor’s or anything, they didn’t care. They wanted to know about my experience and my on-the-job training in other companies. (Virginia, EMP)</i></p>	<p><i>The course is important, but it essentially teaches us to learn faster, not necessarily to be better professionals. (Octavio, EMP)</i></p> <p><i>Obviously, a degree gives us management skills, which is important. But Hospitality is done by working and we must have a basic knowledge of all sections of the hotels, so we can really command. But this is the same in almost all fields. (Manuel, EMP)</i></p>

Source: Own construction

With regards to this viewpoint, the *HE Expert (KEY)* stress that although many employers often refer that formal education and training are not critical, because technical skills can easily be taught on-the-job as long as the person has the right attitude and knows how to create empathy with the customers. For his expert, this is catch-all that should not be interpreted as working for all organisation, as it is not sustainable. Combining formal qualifications with attitude is instead desirable. It will be the quality of education, combined with graduates' interest and motivation to work in the T&H industry that will allow people to acquire a set of skills which will distinguish them from others throughout their academic career and later in the labour market.

Veronica (*LEA*), who has been working as an educator in the T&H field, shares this view, emphasizing that ends up being a combination of the three conditions: experience (not only work but life experiences too), personality, and training. She recalls how some graduates do have management skills but are very little service and detail oriented, whereas many individuals with Professional Studies have good technical and practical skills and easily develop a managerial orientation once at the labour market. However, she recognises that many young people are pressured to pursue a degree as the result of a widening participation in tertiary education, as seen in section 2.4.1.

In my experience as a teacher, there are a lot of people who get degrees and should never have done it, because that's not what gives them their professional value. They should have chosen Technical or Professional Studies and following a different profession, instead of trying to be managers or hotel directors, when it is perfectly clear that this is not their profile. And maybe they would be much happier in another area, but their parents want them to have important job positions. (Veronica, LEA)

A third group of participants ($n=10$) acknowledges the relevance of a university degree as a **career progression facilitator**, although not necessary improving other aspects of the job, such as remuneration, and still contingent on other factors, such as an intimate will to progress and take on roles with higher responsibilities.

Those who did higher education tend to have more potential for development and growth. (Major Employer 01, KEY)

Training is always an important factor; looking at the resumes, what I think is that someone with a degree will skip the steps faster. They come prepared with another vision of the sector, which does not mean that, with a degree, as we also know, we are prepared for everything. I notice that they are more capable of overcoming the stages, they spend less time at each level necessary to reach a position of management. Above all, what I see in recent graduates is that they want to progress very quickly; some will have the ability to do so, others will have to work longer, stay at lower levels for longer, because it also depends a lot on the course they come from. (Xavier, EMP, General Manager)

Four participants refer that holding a degree provides them access to training and progression opportunities that are closed off to other employees who do not have a degree, no matter how much experience they have in terms of organisational tenure. Eva (*EMP*), for example, remarks how only Higher Education graduates can apply for some job positions (e.g., Assistant Hotel Managers) or internal training programmes such as those in which Octavio (*EMP*) and Manuel (*EMP*) enrolled in as a means to take the lead of hotels of the group as General Managers (see

section 7.2.3). This is congruent with previous research, considering that despite T&H employers seem to be placing more importance on work experience than a degree when hiring, a dedicated degree qualification is a criteria for entering management levels (Harkison, 2004). The *Major Employer 01* (KEY) also stresses that for leadership positions, a degree is naturally valued. In operational roles it is also valued, but from a perspective of identifying people with potential to grow inside the organisation and take on more responsibilities, exemplifying:

If I start working as a Waiter at the Restaurant and eventually get a degree, my chances of progressing within the hotel structure may be enhanced in comparison to someone with no higher education.

However, and as supported by careers literature (Ladkin, 2002; Robinson, Ruhanen, et al., 2016; Wang, 2013), references are always made to the fact that the career structure in this field presumes that a graduate in Hotel Management will always have to commence his/her route from operational roles and moving up the ladder, attaining the necessary career competences in the process. Martin (LEA, ex-General Manager) is very critical of what he designates as a 'fallacious argument' that several Directors use, by saying that they also started their career as Bellhops and climbed the career ladder, especially when they are talking of a time when no offers for formal training, nor tertiary education existed in this field.

This is not to say that there are no exceptions to the rule, but nowadays I think it will be very difficult for someone to start as a Bellboy and become a Hotel Manager. It is much more difficult because there are people who study for it, people who are working and perfecting themselves to fill these positions. If not, that would be a contradiction to the whole educational system, it makes no sense. I understand that older businessmen think like this, because that's how they started out themselves. Even if you start at the Porter trying to prove your value and be promoted step-by-step, other qualified people show up in the meanwhile and will very likely occupy those middle positions, and you may never get there.

According to several participants and the *HE Expert* (KEY), and as discussed in section 8.4 (*The image of T&H as a valuable career*) this is deeply rooted in organisational culture and in the entrenched belief that anyone can work in T&H, while in more traditional areas Higher Education is highly valued.

A fourth perspective depicts Higher Education **without added value** to career development. Some participants ($n=4$) do not regret the investment made in Higher Education but consider not having benefited of it in a professional sphere, while two *Leavers* and one *Employee* claim that if they knew what they know today they would not have chosen this field of study. Such type of perceptions often leads to comparisons with work colleagues with lower qualifications, typically Professional Studies, as it is further explored next.

No, it is not necessary to have Higher Education to work in a hotel. At Hotel X ((last employer)), the director hasn't taken any course and he is a director. All the colleagues I worked with, none of them had a degree. I was the one who had Higher Education and they all had only Professional Courses. Often, in interviews, they told me I was overqualified. Especially because I did Professional Studies in Tourism and could have stopped there. (Alice, LEA)

In no way [it represented an advantage]. At least at hotel where I worked, it wasn't. If I had a 12th grade or a university degree, it was the same thing. (Laura, LEA)

In tourism, as in any area, what matters is the practice, not Higher Education. I don't mean to say that I regret having it, I don't know, but if it were today I don't know if I would have done things this way. (Sabrina, LEA)

Holding a degree or not: does it matter?

Considering the extent to which a University degree it is valued by recruiters/employers, many research participants in non-managerial positions share the belief that despite believing that a degree is important, for employing organisations the fact that they hold a degree is indifferent and no distinction is made. A few interviewees consider, however, that it highly depends on the **organisational context and culture**.

I created some expectations because I learned that the Tourism sector needed qualified people and had to rejuvenate, because there are professionals with 30 years of experience, but many did not even finish secondary school. So, there was this idea that Tourism needed new people, trained people, and I believed that companies would value it, these young people who invest on their training. But no (LLL), it is not really like that. (Hugo, EMP)

I feel that employers either don't value it, because they also don't have these qualifications themselves, or because they consider this work so basic that it would be obvious for us to know how to do it, nor would we need to have studied for it. I think the minimum requirement is almost at the same time the maximum requirement. If you have Professional Studies, one of those at Secondary level, that's good, that's the minimum; if you have a degree, that's nice; if you have a Master's degree it's completely irrelevant. (Vera, EMP)

Neither most of my colleagues in the Front-Office nor the owners ((also Managers of the hotel)) had a degree and hence perhaps there this gap in the way we see things. There were people who could be giving much more of them in another section. Education meant nothing. It's OK that we should distinguish ourselves by merit, but I don't think it was appreciated either that I had these qualifications and was willing to embrace other challenges. That's why I think they lacked vision. (Cecilia, LEA)

Both Vera and Cecilia's testimonies make reference to the fact that many employers/business owners in the Hotel industry, and in the Tourism sector in general, have themselves little formal qualifications in this field. Hospitality Management literature suggests that a few managers in the Hospitality industry have tertiary education and may consequently have a poor understanding of graduates' strengths (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005).

The *HE Expert (KEY)* is of the opinion that organisations also have some difficulties in understanding the added value of a Higher Education graduate and of Professional Studies/Vocational Education. The former should provide future graduates with a set of tools to help them think, look at a problem and see how they can solve it, research how to solve this problem in context. Higher Education also provides students with some technical competencies, it should help people learning how to learn, by relying on critical thinking and reflexivity; it is not a matter of knowing how to do it, of learning by repetition, it requires a higher mental effort.

The latter is more technically oriented, hence excelling faster in terms of performance. As seen in the previous section, 8.4, most of organisations' recruitment needs are precisely in the operational area, to which this type of education is more oriented to.

There is therefore some disarticulation and we have overqualified people working in jobs that have lower requirements. Even if we take into account that people have to start somewhere, that they have to gain experience and maturity, that they have to experience operational work to be aware of the work context, this is mostly the result of HR with technical and specialised training for certain functions with less need for management skills, which is precisely what Higher Education gives. (HE Expert)

Several participants share this view that a degree does not prepare people for operational positions, it prepares them *to think*. But when they get to the labour market, they are not expected to think, they just have *to do*. As discussed in section 7.2.1, feeling unable to utilise the skills developed on their programme not only can contribute to feelings of frustration and an increased questioning of one's options, but also have an impact on graduates leaving the industry (Barron & Ali-Knight, 2017).

Following the observation in section 6.4.1 that a considerable number of interviews consider having received an adequate preparation for their working lives in the industry, and although quite young and with little work experience, Emilia (*NEW*) already has a well-formed idea on these issues, hence reinforcing this viewpoint:

Having a degree is a minimum requirement. It's not a matter of being better or not, because there are people who have been working there for 15 years and know the hotel better than anyone. But Higher Education, taking into account the diversity of curricular units we have, gives us some tools to know how to deal with situations that go beyond the practical dimension. These colleagues may be very used to the operation of the hotel, but if they had to deal with things related to management, they might not be able to. They may know how things work, but they don't have the big picture of hotel management, they haven't developed the skills to deal with it.

Constant comparison with colleagues performing the same or similar job positions under the same employment terms, but without a university degree, is also observable from research participants' accounts. According to the *OB Expert (KEY)*, having people with the same job description but with different qualifications is a major problem of the sector and a common source of conflict, disrupting the organisational climate. This disruption is aggravated when the seniority factor joins the equation, as many people who are not so qualified are also those with higher organisational tenure. As seen in section 6.4.2, this very often negatively influences new entrants on-boarding processes.

Several participants refer to when it comes to remuneration and other benefits, a degree makes no difference whatsoever, as the testimonies in Figure 8.15 suggest. Pay, becomes, once more, a significant aspect determining perceptions of career success, grounded on notions of lack of proper reciprocity. "Human capital theory suggests that the pay of an individual is primarily attributable to individual attributes such as education, experience in the job and accumulated experience in the labour market. In other words, levels and differentials are explainable by differences in amounts of skill and knowledge." Following such logic means that individuals who invest in education would earn more than those who do not; the same being observed regarding

those who are more experienced. (Riley et al., 2002, p. 43). However, this is not what is verified for the T&H industry. As Valentina's account on this topic evidences, comparisons are made not only within the sector, but with other professional areas, which was seen in section 8.3.1, influence participants' willingness to remain in the industry. Raybould and Wilkins (2005) remark that the frustration of feeling underutilised and overqualified is very likely to make many of them seek more challenging opportunities in other sectors.

Companies hire highly qualified professionals – graduates, speaking three languages, with work experience, because these are the pre-requisites of companies – but are, without detracting from anybody's value, paying them the same as the Chambermaid or the Maintenance technician, who have not studied. Of course, these people have other skills, but there is no distinction. Recruiters say they are looking for talent, but it must be hidden talent, because I don't see what criteria they are looking for ((use of irony)) (Miguel, EMP).

A degree facilitates entry and progression, yet the salary is the same whether the person has the 9th grade or Higher Education. (Hugo, EMP)

In most departments, we have highly educated people who have studied, who have Masters and Postgraduate degrees, and who feel that, in this country, they cannot earn in a way that rewards what they have invested in their education. It makes no sense that graduates working in other areas earn almost twice as much as we earn and with far fewer demands in terms of workload and hours of work. Especially if we consider the importance of the T&H industry to the economy. (Valentina, EMP)

Figure 8.15 | Perceptions on the relative value of a T&H degree

Source: Own construction

Graduate talent

As discussed in section 6.3, new entrants are often criticised for having unrealistic expectations of the type of work they will perform once in the labour market, of the career routes that are made available, or of the skills and competencies that are expected to hold in order to successfully perform their roles. As also previously analysed, graduates often see little value being given to their formal qualifications on the grounds of lack of experience. The industry frequently relies on this justification to instil new entrants to initiate their careers in operational roles, despite they may qualify for entry-level management positions (Ladkin, 1999; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Robinson, Ruhanen, et al., 2016); especially if considering that most new entrants actually hold some type of previous practical experience though part-time jobs or internships. Some of the testimonies presented above also evidence that many graduates believe having well-developed skills, which are under-utilised by the industry. New graduates tend to find their jobs unchallenging when they are assigned only operational roles that require fewer complex skills or consider not to be taking advantage of their talents. Employees who feel underutilised and underchallenged are more likely to be searching for a new job within a six month time frame, supporting the view that perceptions of overqualification may result in the loss of talented employees (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005).

Although this issue has been mentioned by many participants (mostly *Leavers* and *Employees*, due to their longer experience), Vera (*EMP, Reservations Clerk, 26 years-old, three years in the Hotel industry*) is the interviewee that most emphasise it (see Figure 8.16). She describes how she is expected to have a number of digital competencies based on her youth (e.g., different software, programming, internet and social media proficiency), while at the same time many other of her skills are undervalued on the basis of her supposed insufficient experience in the industry.



Figure 8.16 | Perceptions on the lack of recognition for graduate talent

Source: Own construction

Key-Informants have also extensively debated the valuation of graduate talent. The *HE Expert*, the *HR Expert*, the *OB Expert* and the *Employers Association Representative* concur that graduates are generally well prepared, but companies are neither prepared to accept their contributions, nor available to enhance their practical knowledge with proper training, as there is still the taboo that because a young person has no experience, he/she do not understand nothing in the business:

Many recent graduates have noticed that there could be benefits in changing some practices, but as they carry a halo of a recent graduate, and as such are not perceived

as people who have sufficient experience or knowledge to have a voice. (OB Expert, KEY)

The *Major Employer 01* is of the opinion that organisations must understand their own role in the formative process of new entrants to the industry. The industry should expect work readiness when all companies are so different, in form and in processes. Some of the training, namely critical thinking, learning how to develop work skills, can be done by HEI, but organisations need to complement it in everyday work life, on the job.

Both the *Major Employer 02* and the *OB Expert* place the onus of this mindset on conservatism and resistance to change, positing that difficulties are experienced not only by new entrants, but by anyone trying to introduce change in any organisation.

I have doubts about the ability of companies to make the best use of their employees' skills when they join the organisation. Hotels are very prescriptive structures, large groups have research and innovation units for products and services, but for work processes, they are still highly standardized. When it comes to small, independently-owned hotels then it is even more difficulty. (OB Expert, KEY)

Independently-owned hotel units are described as most marked by such mindset, but several reports are also directed at chained-hotels. Nevertheless, and as one informant in the preliminary research states, whoever works in a hotel group may not agree with the rules, but at least everyone knows what the rules are, and hotel groups are therefore portrayed as organisations in which people most aspire to work.

This *Key-Informant* considers that innovation is often seen as a means to make acquired status vulnerable. If there is a culture of flexibility, acceptance and humility, organisations can understand that everyone can benefit from the contributions that a new entrant can make. But in most cases, organisational cultures are very closed and have no shared and collective values. Leadership is again highlighted as very important with this regard, as leaders are largely responsible for this culture and for potential changes in culture. If a new General Manager is hired, it is very likely that change happens, and the process is easier, because his/her power is acknowledged, whereas a new graduate, newly hired, has very little power of negotiation and influence. Therefore, a receptive leadership plays a key role in the recognition and capitalisation of graduate talent.

8.6 Summary

Chapter 8 adopted a more comprehensive approach on career development, built upon research participants' narratives on their career story, following their trajectories and decisions. The findings presented in this chapter aim to address Research Questions no. 3 and no. 4, but the answer to these are also the outcome of the previous chapters.

The first section is focused on the formation of the psychological contract, reporting to recruitment and early socialisation phases, with regards to which most participants' accounts converge upon the expression of commitments and promises that can hardly be fulfilled and latter lead to disillusionment with the employment relationship.

The length of participants' hospitality careers was also analysed, and job/organisational moves were explored with respect to *Employees* and *Leavers'*:

- i. Locus of initiative for job/organisational change (if self-initiated or company initiated, with the former largely surpassing the latter situation);
- ii. Type of reasons underpinning the different moves composing their career journeys (if driven by positive/pull factor or negative/push factors, with several job moves being motivated by perceptions of psychological contract breach and violation);
- iii. Search behaviour and perceived alternatives (considering participants' enrolment in active and passive searches and self-perceptions of employability, with the latter being mixed: some interviewees perceive job alternatives as existing and accessible, whereas others evaluated them based on working conditions on offer, functional area/level of jobs on offer, and geographical location/mobility requirements);
- iv. Attitudes towards working abroad (typically at the origins of comparisons and criticism with the Portuguese reality, although not deeply explored in this study).

Leavers' motives for career change were also analysed with respect to their perceptions of QWL, being the most significant reasons related to: scheduling and working time arrangements and work-life balance issues, closely followed by aspects concerning pay, promotion and opportunities for advancement, and health and job stress. As seen in Chapter 7, constant references to the incompatibility of hospitality work with family and personal life are made.

Section 8.2.3 was specifically dedicated to research participants' career trajectories followed, with four different categories being proposed in reference to the direction of such routes:

- i. Linear upward career trajectories, which refer to stepwise, upward career paths, bounded to a single or predominant organisation;
- ii. Crystallised career trajectories, which are typified by stagnating careers patterns within organisations that do not offer further growth prospects (with less representativity);
- iii. Ascending career trajectories, which are characterised by boundary-crossing movements that granted research participants access to higher hierarchical levels, i.e., career advancement and progression across multiple organisations; and
- iv. Lateral career trajectories, which describe frequent inter-organisational movements, yet predominantly non-hierarchical, i.e., moves that simply imply change/mobility, not progression (with greater representativity).

Considering socially constructed constraints to employees' career development, interviewees were questioned if they ever been aware of gendered constraints to career construction and development (either their own or for other individuals). As a result, a still quite high number of research participants believe these do not exist, claiming to perceive little (if any) influence of gender on career development nowadays. Some participants report to have never thought about this issue or to do not perceive it as a 'problem anymore'. Although younger generations grew up in a context of greater overall equality, thus making them allegedly more gender-aware, some contradictions and references to gender-related barriers and discrimination based on gender roles found in their discourse, which might point to the persistence of gender's invisibility within tourism labour. For this reason, participants' account on this issue were categories as recognising gendered influences, not recognition, and holding contradictory views. The latter

refers to accounts in which participants state on the one hand that they do not perceive any gender-based difference at the workplace, whereas on the other, they give conflicting examples, acknowledging several types of forces that prevent women to climb the organisational ladder.

Section 8.3 is dedicated to the different meanings that research participants ascribe to staying or quitting their employing organisational and/or their occupation, from which a total of nine profiles were proposed to characterise the extent to which the different dimensions of QWL impact employee turnover and retention and career longevity:

- i. The labels *Resolute job/career stayers*, *Resolute job/career leavers*, *Potential job/career stayers*, and *Resolute job/career leavers* are applicable to *Employees* and refer to the extent these interviewees are determined to continue working for their current organisation and/or continue pursuing a career in the Hotel industry in the medium/long-term;
- ii. The labels *Reversible leaver* and *Irreversible leaver* naturally apply to the *Leavers* group, and reflect very different view on their experiences with hospitality work; ultimately these also reflect the extent to which these interviewees are willing to give the Hotel industry a second opportunity.
- iii. The labels *Willing to pursue a career in the Hotel Industry*, *Not willing to pursue a career in the Hotel Industry*, or *Easily lost to a different occupation*, which are used to design the *Newcomers* group, reflect their willingness to get a job in the sector upon graduation.

Following the notion of social exchange, employees enter a relationship with an employer expectation to obtain some type of benefits or rewards, and one way for individuals to repay their organisations for receiving these given resources is through engagement. When the employee considers to be in a balanced relationship – which is not observed from most research participants' accounts – these generates feeling of commitment, attachment, and obligation, which stimulate positive attitudes and behavioural that benefit both individual and organisational outcomes. Many research participants do consider to be engaged both with their jobs and/or organisation, applying their full selves to their work roles. These interviewees refer to themselves as proactive, passionate about their jobs, aligned with company mission and operational goals, and motivated to contribute to organisational success. Considering *Leavers'* actual turnover and *Resolute – job or career – Leavers'* turnover intentions is not surprising that these participants negatively evaluate their exchange relationships and considering their employers to be failing in reciprocating.

Section 8.4 was devoted to the analysis of research participants discourses on the phenomenon of employee turnover, the meanings of retention in contemporary employment relationships, and the image of the T&H industry as a valuable career. Concerning voluntary turnover, perceptions are mixed, with almost all Key-Informants and General Managers referring that pressing needs for HR increase competition between organisation and employees leave, constantly looking for better offers. On the other hand, especially conveyed by non-managerial staff, several references are made to a market 'full of graduates' and 'full of people who are looking for a job', or to the fact that 'after you, there is someone in the line willing to take it'. Great consensus is found around the fact that poor remuneration conditions (not only salaries are low as remain unalterable for long periods of time), in combination with the long and

irregular hours, are the major reasons underpinning employee turnover. Participants' narratives have also allowed the identification of both negative and positive perceptions regarding this phenomenon.

Perspective on retention mirror a more proactive career orientation, guided by the tenets of 'new' career paradigms, with many participants comparing themselves to their parents' generation and acknowledging not to expect a job for life at a single organisation. Although varying over people's lifespan and depending on career stage, the notion of stability stood out from participants' narratives. This stability is perceived as being related with the ability of organisations to fulfil their promises and obligations, rather than on temporal or contractual stability. Younger employees, more recently graduated, are viewed by the industry as having a higher preference and predisposition for mobility and being more concerned about the portfolio of experiences and expertise that a job can offer them, rather than a long-term bond.

The image of an occupation strongly impacts career choice and retention, and despite the growing interest for T&H programmes, the majority of T&H jobs are still poorly valued and respected in social terms. Many participants refer to high scepticism from parents, other family members and friends regarding the status and success of T&H careers. Research participants believe that this detrimental image is rooted on an interconnected set of reasons such as:

- i. A considerable lack of knowledge regarding T&H occupations;
- ii. Entrenched belief that anyone can easily perform T&H job without dedicated training and regardless of their educational background;
- iii. Low wage levels;
- iv. Cultural-related stereotypes;
- v. Association of service-related jobs with 'servility'
- vi. The fluctuation in tourism demand and casualisation of employment relations;
- vii. Norms of the industry that still postulate traditional career routes that have typified Hotel Management careers over the last decades (when little dedicated Higher Education offer existed to this end).

The last section of findings focuses on the value that is assigned to a T&H Higher Education degree and on the role a degree plays in career construction and development of a graduate. Most participants believe that having a degree is important, but also acknowledge that employing organisations do not really value this type of qualifications, not perceiving it as distinctive, especially at entry-level. Views are divided among those who perceive a T&H degree as:

- i. Imperative, in order to be successful in the labour market and remain 'marketable';
- ii. An added value in one's professional life, that consolidates knowledge, gives a more comprehensive and critical view of the industry, and provides graduates with the tools and capabilities to better manage their job duties;
- iii. Important for the competencies it provides to graduates, but not as an absolute prerequisite or a *sine qua non* condition – this view gathers the higher number of opinions, being then divided into those who place the onus of career success in attitudes and personal characteristics, in accumulated working knowledge and experience, or in some specific benefits that this level of qualification can offer;

- iv. A career progression facilitator (although not necessarily contributing to improve other aspects of the job, such as remuneration);
- v. No adding value to career development (no benefits acknowledged).

Considering the extent to which a University degree is valued by recruiters/employers, many research participants (mostly in non-managerial positions) share the belief that despite having some benefits, holding a degree is indifferent and no distinction is made – especially with regards to remuneration and other benefits. A few interviewees consider, however, that such views are related to the organisational context and culture. Constant comparison with colleagues performing the same or similar job positions under the same employment terms, but without a university degree, are frequently found and posited as harmful to organisational climate.

Finally, the mismatch between perceptions of graduate talent were addressed. Once more, references to the organisational context and culture, in particular, resistance to change, are made by several interviewees. Graduates often see little value being given to their formal qualifications on the grounds of lack of experience. Although qualifying for entry-level management positions, recent graduates are recurrently placed in operational roles. When in combination with not as many progression opportunities as they envision, may irreversibly hampering their continuation, not only in the organisation, but in the industry itself. The industry frequently relies on the lack of experience to justify this positioning, even when new entrants indeed have practical experience, gained from preceding part-time jobs or internships. Many graduates believe having well-developed skills, which they feel being under-utilised when solely applied to operational roles that require fewer complex skills. Such accounts suggest that, although highly pressured by labour shortages (which are more strongly felt in operational functions), the industry is not being able to take on full advantage of T&H graduates' talent, by simply not recognising due value to it.

Part V

CONCLUSIONS



9. Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This research sought to contribute to the debate surrounding the ability, or willingness, of the T&H industry to retain HR with dedicated T&H high-level qualifications. A qualitative multi-method-style methodological approach informed by a constructivist-interpretivist stance was employed to explore the experiences of highly educated individuals at different stages of their careers within the hotel sector, and to investigate how these experiences came to shape their understanding of quality of work life and permanence in this industry. The research approach is therefore based on in-depth, first-hand accounts of career experiences and decisions, feelings and perceptions, of three groups of purposefully selected participants offering different viewpoints of career development and longevity in T&H.

The purpose of this last chapter is, therefore, to present the main findings and conclusions of the thesis by revisiting the Research Questions and themes discussed across *Part IV – Data Analysis and Findings* (section 9.2).

The second part of the chapter (section 9.3) is focused on the theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions of this research. Some limitations of the study, as well as some suggestions for future research in this field of study are put forward in the last section (section 9.4).

9.2 Main findings and conclusions

In order to achieve the aim of the research, four research questions were outlined. The organisation of data analysis and findings chapters (Part IV) in this thesis reflects the research objectives. The fulfilment of all four objectives were essentially obtained during Phase I of data collection, which constitutes the core component of the study. Following a logic of complementarity, inputs from Phase II were taken into consideration in the interpretation.

Tourism has the potential to contribute to job growth, but besides the number of jobs created, nature and quality also matter, especially when this is a sector marked by high levels of mobility of all types. The industry is struggling to staff both existing and new T&H business, especially hotels, which have a multitude of very specific job positions and typically have higher labour needs. Coupled with these growing shortages of labour force, voluntary turnover is, therefore, one of the most problematic managerial issues, which demonstrates the need for additional research focusing on the diverse sub-sectors (N. Kim, 2014). Considering the centrality that Human Resources within the context of tourism experiences, the T&H industry provides a favourable environment to explore some of the current issues in organisational behaviour studies and HR management.

Due to the ever-increasing complexity of labour markets and employment relationships, a high quality of life at work, considered as an essential dimension of quality of life, is essential for organisations to successfully attract and retain valuable employees. QWL may be deemed as a general state of well-being at the workplace, which is closely related to – yet, different from – job satisfaction, and can influence other spheres of one’s life (Kahn, 1992; Nadler & Lawler, 1983; Sirgy et al., 2001). Consequently, it has a significant impact on shaping people’s career decisions. QWL is not directly observable and it is unlikely that overall measurements would be able to summarise all its components. However, by deconstructing the concept it may be possible to identify all the components and the relationship between these components. The findings of the study, together with an examination of the extant literature, both generic and industry specific, allowed the identification of a set of six major dimensions (made up of 12 subdimensions): *job structuring and work organisation* (organisational policies, job content, scheduling and working time arrangements); *reward and recognitions systems* (pay and fringe benefits, recognition and appreciation for work); *achievement and development* (promotion and advancement, skill development, learning and growth, and job security); *psychosocial working environment* (interpersonal and supportive relations at work, leadership style); *health, job stress and emotional demands*; and *work-life balance*.

Despite the identification and analysis of this set of dimensions, when considering individuals’ conceptions of QWL it is observed that this concept is actually made of a combination of aspects that are very exclusive to each individual. These meanings are constructed based on subjective criteria that are expected to change over time due to changes in reference points, to changes in the person’s perspective and priorities, to ever growing needs of each person, and in response to changing conditions. Just as every person will exhibit his/her own and distinctive career path, so as conceptions of QWL are highly subjective and variable. The findings evidence that the norms of reciprocity underlying exchange relations are systematically breached by employing

organisations, with little return being perceived with regards to efforts and contributions made by the employee, typically in favour of the former.

There is a widespread idea, mostly formed by employers, that employees leave jobs and organisations because they are not satisfied with their remuneration and/or with other monetary aspects. Findings do partially support this notion that salary is a very important factor, not necessarily for its face value, but mostly for its disproportion with regards to job demands. Holding a university degree is precisely one of the most important factors why remuneration is so poorly rated, when considering the expectation formation regarding future career outcomes. However, satisfaction with remuneration is found as not enough to drive loyalty, engagement, and retention. In addition to monetary benefits, employees expect an interesting and challenging job, reasonable workloads, career development, self-fulfilment and opportunities for personal growth, a satisfactory social atmosphere, a supportive leadership, and work-life balance. The degree of perceived QWL will then be contingent on the degree to which individuals believe his/her criteria (especially those in which he/she places greater importance) have been met.

One of the findings of this study relate to the role of leadership, which is postulated as being key in influencing career development and perceptions of QWL in reference to many other work dimensions, such as work organisation, recognition and appreciation for work, interpersonal relations at work, job stress, and work-life balance. Results suggested that, in light of the style of leadership adopted and associated managerial practices, improving employees' QWL in any organisation depends to a great extent on the leadership. Moreover, a receptive leadership plays a key role in the recognition and capitalisation of graduate talent, as leaders are largely responsible for shaping organisational cultures and for potential changes in this culture. Although experiencing countless changes over the years, being quite innovative and cutting-edge with regards to service development, T&H organisations are innately conservative, highly prescriptive, standardised and resistance to change with respect to work processes. This often results in continuously poor productivity, working conditions and remuneration – with these problems being particularly acute for SMEs, which support the majority of tourism jobs (Baum, 2007; Cooper & Hall, 2008). Organisational culture and values and their influence on corporate management styles are perceived as a key antecedent of employee turnover, with the findings suggesting that perceptions of transparency – which relate to truthfulness, ethics, openness, and promises kept – are a meaningful factor in the evaluation of the quality of the employer-employee relationship.

Making a good, or bad, career decision, will have a significant impact in one's life and if hospitality graduates are entering the T&H sector without an accurate understanding of it, this can be one of the main causes why so many entrants leave the sector, despite their investment in specialised education and training. This is particularly relevant when considering that a high proportion of T&H management graduates drop out (e.g., King, McKercher, & Waryszak, 2003; Sinéad, Deegan, O'Leary, & Deegan, 2005; Sturges & Guest, 2001) or that an also high number of students choose not even to work in hospitality, and chose working in other areas instead (e.g., Richardson, 2008, 2009). Concurring with previous research (Ladkin, 1999; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Robinson, Ruhanen, et al., 2016), if considering that T&H Management Degrees are oriented to Hospitality management, it is not surprising that recent graduates feel

undervalued when recurrently and indefinitely placed in operational roles, despite qualifying for entry-level management positions. Highly educated individuals, especially Millennials (e.g., Ng et al., 2010; Richardson, 2010), are perceived as having prospects of rapid career advancement. A degree is not perceived as fully endowing new entrants with all the required knowledge and skills to upfront be held a management position; however, graduates do want to progress quite quickly up the hotel ranks. Results suggest the image that employing organisations have about graduates, particularly Younger Millennials, may be hindering their integration, continuity, and attachment both towards their job and the T&H occupation/career. This perceived lack of recognition of the potential and value of talent by Hospitality organisations involves, more specifically, feelings of stagnation, limited opportunities to use and develop graduates' specific skills and capabilities and lack of fair and differentiated treatment between higher and lower levels of staff qualification. Employers are often considered to be sceptical about graduates' qualifications, therefore limiting opportunities (e.g. to be more autonomous, to implement some changes, to progress faster), mostly on the grounds of their insufficient work experience. When in combination with not as many progression opportunities as they envision – which the findings of this study indicate to be a very important career factor –, may irreversibly hampering their continuation, not only in the organisation, but in the T&H industry itself.

Common notions that new entrants tend to hold unrealistic expectations regarding the labour market (Lefever & Withiam, 1998; Nachmias et al., 2017) are not fully supported by the findings. Although research participants did not expect a management role upon graduation, they expected that holding a University degree would provide them with a competitive advantage, positioning them as good candidates once progression opportunities came up and/or ensuring faster progression. Even if indecisive regarding their career choice or if not holding very clear career goals, findings suggest that new entrants are quite aware and knowledgeable of the T&H industry norms, work characteristics and operating modes. Many participants clearly expressed being aware that they would not be offered a managerial position upon graduation and knowing that they are expected to conform with Hospitality career norms. These norms imply starting one's career at lower hierarchical levels, performing exclusively operational roles, and making a step-by-step route up the career ladder, despite eventual organisational moves. As supported by careers literature (Ladkin, 2002; Robinson, Ruhanen, et al., 2016; Wang, 2013), recurrent references are made to the fact that the career structure in T&H presumes that a graduate in Hotel Management will always have to commence his/her route from operational roles and moving up the ladder, attaining the necessary career competences in the process. However, several critical voices start to raise against this 'fallacious argument', considering that careers typically unfolded like this in times when no offers for T&H dedicated formal training, nor tertiary education existed – which is not the case at present.

It should be remarked that it is in the transition stage to early adulthood that educational choices, which strongly shape individuals' future career directions, are made. These potentially unclear views are then highly contingent on youth, on a certain degree of naivety, and inexperience concerning the labour market. This process is not facilitated due to the fact that the T&H industry lack clear career pathways (Andersen & Hjalager, 2001; Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017), hence not being surprising that career ambitions often lies with the management of a hotel unit, with a certain image of success and status being associated with the Hotel General Manager position. The industry often assign the hassles of education-to-work transition to new entrants'

unrealistic expectations, and previous research refers that inflated expectations are found to often result in negative organisational outcomes, including increased turnover, low satisfaction, and a lack of organisational commitment (Lefever & Withiam, 1998; Richardson, 2008, 2009; Wanous et al., 1992).

Graduates often seen little value being given to their formal qualifications on the grounds of lack of experience, when in fact most new entrants actually hold some type of previous practical experience through part-time jobs or internships. Some of the testimonies presented above also evidence that many graduates believe having well-developed skills, which are under-utilised by the industry. New graduates tend to find their jobs unchallenging when they are assigned only operational roles that require fewer complex skills or consider not to be taking advantage of their talents. Employees who feel underutilised and underchallenged are more likely to be searching for a new job within a six month time frame, supporting the view that perceptions of overqualification may result in the loss of talented employees (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Both employees and employers tend to think about talent – and consequently talent management – as a function of a list of different, transferable, and predominately ‘*soft*’, skills and competencies, or as an individual trait. However, talent management should rather be interpreted as the efforts that organisations employ to make people better at their jobs. It has more to do with aligning the right people with the ‘right jobs’ (Baum, 2008; Jones et al., 2017), as findings also suggest.

Besides the emphasis on educational and career decisions driven by *rational*, extrinsic motivations, largely underpinned by perceived job opportunities and propensity to obtain a job, the pursuit for intrinsic rewards is also a very significant driver of career choices. A ‘romanticised’ vision of the industry is frequently highlighted, typically associated with strong perceptions of good fit with the job-occupation, and with the successful development of a Hospitality identity. Recurrent references to Hospitality work being perceived as a calling, as a passion, as an innate talent, or as honourable occupation were found. The perceived vocation for hospitality work has been identified as a factor influencing not only conceptions of QWL, as also to resilience. Vocation, determination, and resilience are pointed out as key elements for those who want to be successful in a Hospitality career.

The study findings suggest that resilience is a key trait of personality which may have a decisive role in shaping career decisions, especially at early stages of career development. Previous research also suggests that young graduates seem particularly tenacious about working under extreme, less desirable conditions if they believe in the long-term prospects that such job can offer (Nair et al., 2017). This can also potentially explain why the T&H field remains so attractive to many young people, despite the general awareness of low salaries, no regular working hours and need to start with lowest positions. As postulated by Vroom’s VIE model, *expectancy* refers to the perceived degree of probability that a given level of effort or an action, will lead to the desired outcome. Similarly to the findings of Nair et al. (2017), many research participants were keen to work hard and make sacrifices holding on to better career prospects. Several interviewees believe that many promotion opportunities do exist, and recognition is possible, as long as one keeps perseverance and focus. It is not that individuals underestimate the high demands of T&H jobs, but rather exhibit high levels of confidence on future outcomes as a consequence of effort and investment expended. Considering the formation of psychological

contacts, which occurs prior to employment, at recruitment and at early socialisation phases, promise exchanges are made between the two parties, the employer and the prospective employee (M. Riley, 2019; Rousseau, 2001). The promises of prospective employees can be considered, at the very least, to be disproportionate to the commitments and warranties provided by the employer, to the extent of being described as 'disappointing' and 'frustrating'.

In light of contemporary career perspectives responsibility for career development has shifted from the organisation to the individual (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). However, careers are also the outcome of structural opportunities and limitations, and, for this reason, responsibility for career development should instead be perceived as a shared responsibility, not limited to the individual nor the organisation. Despite the focus on careers literature that careers management is an individual (rather than organisational) responsibility most research participants joined organisations with very high expectations regarding their future careers, anticipating that their employer would help them managing their careers. This 'assistance' would come mostly in the form of training and development opportunities. The higher the level of specialisation and the higher the level of transferability of skills between companies and sectors of activity, the greater the ability of professionals to adapt to the new careers paradigm, instead of being limited to the traditional model. Promotion and opportunities for advancement constitute a highly desirable feature for many new entrants to the T&H industry, despite the unclear career routes that typify most T&H jobs; so as a significant number of employees are highly driven by the opportunity to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities. By being recruited and kept in operational roles, perceptions of stagnation stand out from participants' viewpoints on career development in the hotel sector. Reports on promises being made with the solely purpose of keeping people in the organisation for indefinite time, especially in operational jobs which are more difficult to staff, are recurrently found. Despite some recognition that progression opportunities do arise, when happening, these do not happen as fast as many people expected and/or were ensured when joining the organisation. These opportunities are thus found to be contingent on reciprocity, transparency, and fairness, hence being at the origin of the dissatisfaction, demotivation, and distress, and ultimately in the desire to leave.

Although the 'new' psychological contracts are more transactional in nature and there is a lower focus on security within the exchange relationship, the findings suggest that stability becomes a more relevant factor. Participants were not worried about having a secure path, but rather in having their psychological contracts fulfilled. In the literature job instability is referred as being associated with temporary, seasonal and part-time employment, mainly as a consequence of fluctuations on tourist demand, and presented as a justification for employees being more willing to switch jobs (ILO, 2010; Stacey, 2015). The findings of this study suggest that although promotions, salary increases and contractual stability are still highly contingent on job tenure in most organisations, job security is not a relevant concern. In line with the tenets of contemporary career paradigms, promotion and career advancement opportunities are, therefore, not perceived as being so contingent on organisational tenure as in the past.

Stability then assumes a wide set of interpretations that go beyond contractual stability, such as confidence and trust that employing organisations inspire, especially for capable of meeting their obligations towards their employees, fulfilling promises, and safeguarding their employees' rights and interests. Although varying over people's lifespan and depending on career stage, the

notion of stability stood out from participants' narratives. Job stability is also associated with each person's life stage and family formation, something that is not exclusive to the T&H industry, considering that having kinship responsibilities becomes an important criterion of evaluation of one's professional situation. More experienced individuals are professionally more mature and give further thoughts to job change. In accordance with previous research (Furåker & Berglund, 2014), employment security seems, in this context, more relevant than job security, as participants are more focused on the possibility of being employed, rather than staying with the same employer.

Perspectives on employee turnover and retention are closely aligned with this assumption, mirroring a proactive career orientation, guided by the tenets of 'new' career paradigms, with many participants comparing themselves to their parents' generation and acknowledging not to expect a job for life at a single organisation. Findings suggest that lifetime employment is not a priority among younger individuals, which may evidence that recent graduates are becoming increasingly aware of the nature of contemporary employment relationship, as well as that age-related difference do actually influence how individuals perceive their psychological contract's terms and career development over their lifespan (Narelle & Jepsen, 2009). Such as postulated by protean and a boundaryless career theories, self-driven, goal-directed work behaviour, and preference and predisposition for mobility (Wiernik & Kostal, 2019) stand out. Highly educated individuals are described as being more concerned with employability, which is gauged by means of the portfolio of experiences and expertise that a job can offer them, rather than a long-term bond. Again, having an orientation for mobility should not be perceived as detrimental of other forms of stability.

Findings of this study also support that despite the growing interest for T&H programmes, the industry of T&H is still struggling to position itself as valuable career. The majority of T&H jobs are still poorly valued and respected in social terms, which underlies high scepticism from parents, other family members and friends regarding the status and success of T&H careers. This detrimental image is rooted on an interconnect set of reasons ranging from the frequent association of service-related jobs with 'servility', to the low wage levels that characterise most T&H job ranks, or to the entrenched belief that anyone can easily perform T&H job without dedicated qualifications. This naturally poses higher challenges to educational/career choice and retention, especially when supported by poor evaluations of QWL in the industry.

To conclude, the findings indicate that employee turnover and retention, and the consequences for both individual career development and organisational outcomes, are due to a complex series of causal factors. Several influential factors have been identified: career expectations; perceived quality of working life; perceived psychological fulfilment or breach; demographic and human capital characteristics; and job/organisational characteristics.

9.3 Thesis originality and contributions

This research is rooted on a multidisciplinary perspective, as the main concepts hereby involved have been subject of analysis in multiple fields of knowledge, thus combining relevant insights from Tourism, HR management, Industrial Psychology and Organisational Behaviour. This

interdisciplinary study had an ambitious agenda, covering a wide group of concepts and topics related to individual career management in T&H, while employing and combining theoretical perspectives and methods from different disciplines. Its contribution is theoretical, methodological, and empirical.

Career development is still an underexplored theme in T&H literature, particularly in light of significant changes in the nature of work and employment relations which occurred over the past decades. Mainstream employment relations and career paths with long-standing continuity and security have been increasingly replaced by more flexible job arrangements (Siegrist, 2016). New career paradigms and alterations in psychological contracts which place higher emphasis in mobility and marketability, can increase the likelihood of voluntary turnover and call into question career longevity in the T&H industry. Hospitality careers have unique attributes that are shaped by a highly variable context and combination of skills that hospitality work requires, and research on how careers develop in the industry is quite scarce. Hotel managers – mostly male managers – are the exception, whose careers exhibit more structured, easily traced career patterns (Baum, 2002; Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2018; Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017). This study aims, therefore, at contributing to the careers literature by exploring career trajectories and career factors that can either lead to voluntary turnover or permanence of T&H graduates.

Although there is a considerable body of knowledge on T&H graduates' career paths and turnover intentions (e.g., Blomme, Tromp, & Rheede, 2008; Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010; Scott & Revis, 2008; Sturges & Guest, 2001), as well as on undergraduates' expectations and future intentions towards working in the industry (e.g., Barron, 2008; Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp, 2009; Lu & Adler, 2009; Mooney & Jameson, 2018; Richardson, 2008, 2009), one group remains under-explored: that of T&H graduates who made the decision to be no longer employed in the industry. The only exception found refers to the recently published study of Gebbels, Pantelidis and Goss-Turner (2020) (therefore not available when this study was being undertaken), which focused on the leaving process of hospitality professionals holding a relevant degree but no longer employed in the industry. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there are also no studies combining different groups of T&H professionals at different career stages (in reference to the permanence in the industry), with the exception of Brown, Arendt and Bosselman (2014), who examined differences in perceptions of hospitality graduates who left the hospitality industry and of those who stayed.

As far as the Portuguese context is concerned, even less research is devoted to T&H careers from an individual – not organisational – perspective (Costa, Breda, Malek and Durão (2013) report on one of the few research projects focusing on career paths of T&H graduates). Curiously, in Portugal, the few exceptions are found with regards to women's career management (Carvalho, 2017; Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2018; Costa, Breda, et al., 2013; Costa, Caçador, Carvalho, Breda, & Costa, 2013). Overall, and despite this is a very labour-intensive and high-contact industry, Tourism labour and employment is still far from being considered a major subject area in T&H academic research, and there has been a call for research into the challenges of retaining and engaging the Hospitality workforce (Baum et al., 2016; Ladkin, 2011), which validates the need for studies like this.

With respect to quality of working life, this is a largely untapped topic in the existing T&H literature, particularly with regards to research applying qualitative approaches. The few existing

studies involve a specific typology of workers, such as room attendants (Knox et al., 2015) or casino employees (Wan & Chan, 2013). Only Weaver's (2009) has a broader focus on Tourism graduates. Qualitative studies are still limited, while being largely surpassed by quantitative studies, which although offering interesting insights, fail to fully capture the researched phenomenon. Many studies, whether on employee turnover, career development, or quality of working life are actually in favour of surveys, which leave little space to make sense of research participants' perceptions on the factors influencing their careers. By examining, with greater depth, the experiences of a small number of participants, this study aimed at gaining new, rich and context specific data which might address some of the gaps in the existing knowledge on how T&H careers unfolded for individuals with high-level qualifications who ambioned for a long-term career in the industry when choosing this occupation. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study contributes to the literature on career management and employee retention. More specifically, it extends existing research on Hospitality careers, turnover intention, and quality of working life.

One of the significant contributions of this study is to demonstrate the potential of using a less traditional approach to qualitative research, hence attempting to contribute to contemporary multi/mixed method research development. A somewhat distinctive, two-phase, QUAL → *qual* design was deemed appropriate to answer the proposed research questions. Multi-method qualitative studies are frequently adopted in other fields, but quite scarce in the T&H domain (see section 5.4.2). Adopting a constructivist-interpretivist stance with a critical orientation, the process of data/meaning construction is based on participants' own voices and words; in-depth interviewing is, therefore, the strategy which was adopted in this study. Aiming for clarification and a more comprehensive understanding of how participants make sense of their career experiences, a supplementary method was also used, based on key informant interviewing. This study thus adds to empirical knowledge by broadening the understanding of graduates' career management and by revealing the influence of multiple QWL dimensions as retention factors. Career longevity in the T&H industry is explored in the context of the critical changes in contemporary working life and culture.

Given the impossibility of conducting a longitudinal study, three groups of *highly educated* individuals at different phases of their careers were targeted as research participants: newcomers to the labour market, graduates currently employed in the industry, and graduates no longer working in the industry. These participants were not only differently positioned in relation to their Hospitality careers (i.e., still enrolled, not enrolled, still to be potentially enrolled), as purposive sampling aimed at maximizing variation in their profile. Participants are therefore of different age groups, gender, family responsibilities, locations within the country, and educational background (University and Polytechnic HEI graduates). Concerning their professional profile, both back and front-of-the-house staff were included in the sample, as well as a variety of functional levels (staff/operational, supervisory, and managerial) and job positions (up to 15 different positions). Although such variation may difficult the identification of relevant patterns in participants' narratives, the researcher believes that this may constitute relevant information for future studies, following more refined criteria in participant selection.

Following Baum et al.'s (2016) considerations on the position of workforce and employment issues within sustainable tourism narrative, it is posited that this topic is largely absent from the

debate, and decent work objectives – which configure one of the Sustainable Development Goals – continue to be unmet in The tourism sector. Aligned with these authors' stance, more than aspiring to offer solutions for workforce and employment problems in the T&H industry, this study attempts to offer explanations for the factors and drivers underpinning these challenges. As the T&H industry continues to be confronted with the problem of attracting and retaining qualified employees, which contributes to a never-ending cycle of skilled personnel shortages, the results of this study may provide some valuable insights for T&H employers, educators, and even T&H students or recent graduates.

The findings from this study apply to individuals, organisations, and the T&H industry in general, as retaining skilled and satisfied employees is essential to the growth and sustainability of all businesses, to which T&H is no exception.

Given the interactive and co-operative researcher–participant relationship that characterises qualitative approaches, the researcher has tried to draw participants' attention to the importance of discussing these issues. This is particularly relevant for future hospitality graduates and new entrants, who may use this information to determine to what extent their perceived importance of different career factors is promoted by the industry, to make better informed career decisions, and to be aware of the multiple trajectories Hospitality careers may follow. Implications can also be found for educators, considering their role in shaping students' pre-entry expectations, and relevance that vocational guidance/educational counselling may have in defining T&H students future career paths.

For employing organisations, particularly those in the Portuguese T&H sector who were, until very recently, facing challenges in staffing the ever-growing number of T&H business – this growth has been curbed by the Covid-19 pandemic and it is still unclear when recovery will be happening – this study can provide useful information that may help them devise effective strategies to attract and retain qualified HR. It is also expected that employers become gradually more aware of the value and importance of tertiary-level qualifications, contributing to a greater recognition of the need for a more balanced and equitable exchange relationships. Knowing what factors drive or influence students' decisions and attitudes, what career factors and dimensions of one's job employees value the most, and what are the most important predictors of people's intentions to stay or to leave, can have important benefits in managing the current complex and uncertain employment relations. It is also desirable that insights from this research could lead T&H employers to craft appropriate employability and career management strategies which are more beneficial to the employees, showing greater concern with employees' quality of working life, facilitating the transition into satisfying employment, and delineating possible interventions to promote employee retention.

Finally, one of the contributions this study has made refers to the T&H industry as a whole, as an *employer*, by discussing the role of Higher Education in the growing professionalisation of the sector. The researcher hopes that both organisations and policy-makers may, in a near future, direct their efforts to debate potential pathways for a higher valuation of T&H jobs and careers, thus fighting the *brain drain* of a growing number of highly educated individuals to other professional fields, and capitalising the investment made in high-level, dedicated qualifications.

9.4 Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

Some limitations associated with this research can be identified and should be taken into account in future studies. In this section, more generic limitations are pointed out, as the concerns more specifically addressing methodological limitations have already been expressed in section 5.7.

From a broader perspective, all research paradigms are associated to some extent with methodological limitations, but almost all philosophical frameworks arise from exposing the limitations of previous paradigms and exploring the opportunities to develop further understandings of reality. A critical lens will, therefore, include some questions and exclude others, but critique should be a constant point of reflection. Typically, “reflexivity is contextualized within a concern to develop a more critically informed practice” (Valentin, 2006, p. 27). Developing this study implied privileging some methodological choices over others, and each choice has inevitably some shortcomings.

Many of the limitations of this research concern the process of data collection, in particular the strategy of inquiry, the selection of participants, and the instruments and techniques for data collection (section 5.7). This is largely related to the fact that when implementing less conventional research methods, the researcher is facing higher risks and questioning than if adopting more traditional, far more theorised and tested, methods.

The decision to finally draw the line where data reaches saturation is not consensually straightforward. By highly diversifying the participants’ profile, the researcher has tried to maximise the representativeness of the research sample; although generalisation should be treated with some caution, as some cases can be too specific to be representative. This study includes a large and diverse pool of research participants (e.g., participants occupying different job positions, including managerial and non-managerial, participants at different career and life stages, employees in both independent and chained hotels), which in qualitative investigation may be perceived as either as a strength or as a weakness.

Although some references are made in research participants’ accounts and in interviews from the preliminary research stage to the existence of differences in the nature of employment relationships and on employees’ experiences based on the geographic region they work in, such differences are not explored in this study. Not only the researcher considered not having enough data to do so, by solely relying on the content of the interviews, but also because participants from the North region of Portugal are over-represented. This is due to the fact that, despite the researcher tried to ensure some geographical variety (the way participants were located and recruited is described in section 5.5.1), the researcher’s personal and/or professional networks more significantly cover the North of Portugal.

Finally, and similarly to what happens with other studies, Hospitality (with reference to the Hotel industry) is a very significant and ubiquitous component of Tourism and it is frequently used as a proxy for the whole Tourism sector. Consequently, interchangeable references are made to T&H, Hospitality, and the Hotel industry. The researcher is well aware that these three dimensions do not necessarily overlap each other, as well as that the employment terms and relationships, organisational structures and job attributions, among other aspects, in the other

industries of the Tourism sector, may significantly differ from those that are observable in the Hotel industry. Likewise, the context of tourism employment varies greatly, and it is influenced by a wide range of economic, socio-cultural, and political factors. Not only it was not possible to adequately address many of these contextual influences, as this also imposes some limitations on the generalisation of many of the assumptions made in this study.

Most of the limitations of this study leave room for the identification of research topics and problems worthy of future investigation. Considering the multidisciplinary nature of this study, and the wide group of concepts and topics related to individual career management in T&H that are explored, future studies can be devoted to obtain a more in-depth, complementary, perspective of both employees and employers. Studies conducted within the same organisations or within a group of organisations with similar characteristics, both in the hotel industry more specifically (e.g., several hotels units of a given hotel group; several hotels with the same category and dimension; only independent, family-owned hotels), and in other forms of accommodation (which organisational structures and culture significantly differ from those of hotels), or even more broadly in the wider Tourism sector (either offering comparisons between different subsectors or offering deeper insights on other industries rather than hotels). This study purposefully selected a wider group of research participants (e.g., back and front-of-the-house staff, diverse functional levels, different job positions), but working conditions are also significantly influenced by job content. Some studies can already be found with a focus on different Hospitality jobs such as Housekeepers (e.g., Harris, 2009), Chefs (e.g., Cain, Busser, & Kang, 2018), or casinos employees (e.g., Wan & Chan, 2013), but still in a very small number. Studies with front-line employees in general, either front office employees and food and beverage front-of-house staff, are more frequently found (Ahmad & Scott, 2013; Chiang et al., 2014; Zeytinoglu et al., 2012). However, the wide majority of these studies focus on job attitudes (such as job satisfaction or organisational commitment) or turnover intentions, but research on how the careers of these professionals unfold are scarcer. More specific research could thus be directed to overlooked groups within the Tourism sector.

As careers are perceived as socially constructed, and following the discussion on how career decisions are made, namely regarding the control over one's vocational choice, it would also be interesting to understand how relations shape individuals' careers. This could be done by focusing on their accounts of how other people were significant in the course and direction of their careers (e.g., parents, other family members, friends, counsellors). Besides the moment of educational/career choice, a focus on the course of individual's careers can also be equated (e.g., parents, spouses, co-workers, supervisors, mentors).

Considering the pertinence that the findings of this study assign to resilience, suggestions for further research can also include a focus on coping strategies (i.e., psychological patterns that individuals use to manage thoughts, feelings, and action) that T&H professional may be employing to deal with the high demands of their jobs, hence supporting career longevity. Despite the fact that T&H jobs fall into the categories of 'high emotional labour' and 'high burnout' jobs, resulting in significantly high levels of employee stress (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002), when analysing T&H research recently published, it is found that very little of it was devoted to the health and well-being of the people engaged in the industry (Miller, 2016).

Although brief mentions are made during the course of this thesis to the macro (economic, social, political structures/regulators) and meso level (workplace structures) factors influencing career development and withdrawal in the T&H industry, this topic has not been fully examined and can potentially justify the distinctiveness and many of the specificities of T&H as employing industry. In order to more fully understand the turnover phenomenon in the T&H industry, particularly with regards to individuals who have opted for a degree and a career in this field, extensive research with highly educated individuals who have decided to leave their careers – similarly to the *Leavers* groups which was analysed in this study – are deemed necessary. As internships constitute critical experiences in influencing students decision as to join the T&H workforce (Correia et al., 2017; Robinson, Ruhanen, & Breakey, 2016), it is believed that analysing the perceptions of T&H students who decided not to pursue a career in the industry as the result of their active learning experiences, could provide valuable information for both the industry and educators.

Expanding the current research can be either based on additional qualitative explorations of career choice, career development and work adjustment of highly educated individuals, as well as on quantitative research, oriented to the identification of causal relationships that could provide a complementary perspective to that offered in this study.

The payment of salary supplements according with performance objectives is not a common practice in the participants' organisations (with the exception of some middle and top level managers), but several research participants disclose to be quite interested in such type of practice, which they believe to be a more fairly retribution of their efforts and contributions. However, these practices require transparency since companies would have to give employees access to information on billing and profitability. As little is known regarding to the extent that this type of practices are being implemented in the industry, how successful they may be, future studies could provide some useful, practical insights on how such regards systems could be developed and what type of impacts these could have in employees perceptions of fairness and adequacy of monetary rewards.

This study started with a quite different methodological approach and design, which was oriented for multiple case studies. Almost a year of research was devoted to a strategy which was not well received: three different hotels – as case studies – would host the researcher. These hotels would have similar characteristics (in terms of location, category, and size), yet representing different categories within their segment. Data would be collected from the Management/Board and from highly educated employees working at those organisations (through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews). While ensuring the adoption of a set of procedures that would minimise the researcher's intervention (e.g., the questionnaires would be filled in non-working hours), none of the several Hotel units which were contacted agreed to host a study with this format. Permission would be given to approach the companies' representatives (e.g., the General Manager), but not the employees. The main justifications provided were that the researcher was external to the organisation and could not remain in the premises; employees would not be available to discuss these issues with the researcher; and that no different information would be revealed from interviews with the exception of the – well-known – dissatisfaction with remuneration. After several rejections, the researcher opted for a different approach, which she considered to offer a wide and in-depth understanding of

how Hospitality careers develop for highly educated T&H professionals. This approach was designed to assess and compare both perspectives, those of the employers and those of the employees, controlling contextual influences, as the insights would refer to the same organisational context. Such strategy would also allow to focus on both components of HR management: the employer-employee relationship (the *Human* component) and organisational practices for managing human capital (the *Resource* component) (Wilkinson et al., 2009). The researcher considers that this is an approach that would be worth trying to apply again, especially if researchers have privileged access conditions to organisations that may be receptive to host this type of studies.

APPENDICES



Appendix I. Leading theoretical and philosophical frameworks in social research

Ontological beliefs	Epistemological beliefs	Axiological beliefs	Methodological beliefs
Positivism			
<p>Synonyms and/or related terms: Objectivism, Scientific method, Empiricism, Functionalism</p> <p>Key theorists: Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer</p> <p>Key assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality. . Seeks to understand the facts and causes of social phenomena, regardless of subjective states. . Based on a hypothetical-deductive model, which uses a deductive process to test a pre-established hypothesis. . Hypotheses are tested using objectively collected factual data which, if successful, produces scientific laws. . Large samples suppress idiosyncrasies in data and reveal general causes or the ultimate laws of nature. 			
Naïve realism: One true reality, but apprehensible.	Dualistic and objective; detached researcher role; unbiased observer; causal explanation and prediction as contribution; observable and measurable facts	Value-free: The researcher's values have no place in the research and must be carefully controlled; objective stance	Experimental conditions; hypothesis testing; careful manipulation of variables and control of confounds; typically deductive; only quantitative methods
Postpositivism			
<p>Synonyms and/or related terms: Realism, Critical Realism</p> <p>Key theorists: Karl Popper, Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, Roy Bhaskar</p> <p>Key assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Developed as a response to critique of positivism. . Researchers do not claim to have discovered the 'truth' but to have established probable facts or laws which are useful until such time as they are supplanted by new theories/laws which provide a fuller or more comprehensive explanation of the available data. . Hypotheses found to be consistent (or not) with the data deemed to be 'not falsified', establishing probable facts. . Researcher's view is objective and exists independently of human thoughts and beliefs or knowledge of their existence (realist) but is interpreted through social conditioning (critical realist). 			
Realism/Critical realism: One true reality but approximal, reality is knowable but only incompletely understood in an imperfect and probabilistic manner	Objectivism: Reality can only be approximated, but it is constructed through research and statistics; objectivity remains a regulatory ideal but dualism is abandoned and deemed unrealistic; interaction with research subjects is kept to a minimum; validity comes from peers, not participants.	Value-laden: The researcher's values need to be controlled and not expressed, so as not to bias the study.	Experimental and quasi-experimental; manipulative methods emphasizing 'critical multiplism'; mainly quantitative methods, but some qualitative methods are used; deductive methods are important, such as testing of theories, specifying important variables, and making comparisons among groups; scientific method and writing

(Continues 1/3)

Ontological beliefs	Epistemological beliefs	Axiological beliefs	Methodological beliefs
Constructivism–Interpretivism			
Synonyms and/or related terms: <i>Subjectivism, Social Constructivism, Symbolic Interaction, Phenomenology</i>			
Key theorists: <i>Wilhelm Dilthey, Heinrich Rickert, Max Weber, Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, Lincoln and Guba, Thomas Schwandt</i>			
Key assumptions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Truth/reality as multiple, holistic, socially constructed, and ever-changing. . Seeks to understand phenomena and how social constructions happen. . Recognises background/context as shaping interpretation. . Interprets participants constructions of meaning in their own accounts. . The interpretive researcher tries to ‘get inside’ the minds of subjects and see the world from their varied points of view. . Usually involving qualitative methods and an inductive approach. 			
Relativism: multiple, equally valid, local and specific constructed and socially co-constructed realities (through lived experiences and interactions with others)	Interactive researcher: participant role (reality is co-constructed and shaped by individual experiences); potency of interaction uncovers deeper meaning and insight; transactional/instrumental/subjectivist	Value-bound: Researcher value biases are inevitable and should be discussed at length and bracketed (‘epoch’) and negotiated among individuals	Naturalistic, highly interactive; only qualitative methods; inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) is obtained through methods such as interviewing, observing, and analysing texts, by uncovering embedded meaning through words and text (hermeneutical); literary style of writing
Critical–Ideological			
Synonyms and/or related terms: <i>Critical theory, Socio-critical, Transformative, Postmodernism</i>			
Key theorists: <i>Jürgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Kincheloe and McLaren</i>			
Key assumptions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Research influenced by beliefs/values critical of the status quo in society and mediated by power relations in society. . Certain groups in society are privileged over others and exert an oppressive force on subordinate groups. . What are presented as ‘facts’ cannot be disentangled from ideology and the self-interest of dominant groups. . Mainstream research practices are implicated, even if unconsciously, in the reproduction of the systems of class, race and gender oppression. 			
Critical realism/Historical realism/Value-laden realism: Apprehendable reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time	Transactional/ subjectivist; value mediated findings; inquiry is participative and/or reflects the values of human players.	Researcher’s values are central to the inquiry; proactive researcher, seeking participant transformation, emancipation and empowerment	Naturalistic, highly interactive, that seeks to challenge commonly-held notions; creating transformation (dialectic) through transactional discourse (dialogical); mainly qualitative methods

(Continues 2/3)

Ontological beliefs	Epistemological beliefs	Axiological beliefs	Methodological beliefs
Transformative			
<i>Synonyms and/or related terms: Participatory, Advocacy, Emancipatory, Action Research</i>			
<i>Key theorists: Donna Mertens, Brian Fay, John Heron and Peter Reason</i>			
Key assumptions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Knowledge is not neutral, and it reflects the power and social relationships within society. . Adopts an action agenda for addressing the injustices of marginalized groups. . Places central importance on the study of lives and experiences of diverse groups that have traditionally been marginalized. . Focuses on inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class that result in asymmetric power relationships, linking political and social action to these inequities. . Researcher and subjects jointly influence the pattern of research. 			
Participative reality: Participation between researcher and communities or individuals is being studied; often a subjective–objective reality emerges.	Extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing; critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos; co-created findings with multiple ways of knowing.	Values need to be problematized and interrogated; respect for indigenous values; researcher and research embedded in power relations; researcher radically reflexive.	Methods consist of using collaborative processes of research, encouraging political participation, questioning of methods, and highlighting issues and concerns; mainly qualitative methods, but some quantitative methods are used.
Pragmatism			
<i>Synonyms and/or related terms: Bricolage, Eclecticism, Mixed methods</i>			
<i>Key theorists: Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey</i>			
Key assumptions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Knowledge should be based not on theoretical or logical rigour alone but also on experience in the real world and practical usefulness in addressing real-world problems. . Located between positivist and interpretive/relativist position; often policy/management-focused. . Problem solving and informed future practice as contribution, emphasising practical solutions and outcomes to real-world problems. . Uses the most appropriate methods for addressing the research question. 			
Pluralism: reality is complex and multiple; reality is what is useful, is the practical consequence of ideas, and ‘works’.	Pragmatism: Reality is known through using many tools of research that reflect both deductive (objective) evidence and inductive (subjective) evidence; practical meaning of knowledge in specific contexts; ‘true’ theories and knowledge are those that enable successful action.	Value-driven: Values are incorporated into inquiry and discussed because of the way that knowledge reflects both the researchers’ and the participants’ views.	Following research problem and research question; the research process involves a range of approaches to data collection and analysis: mixed, multiple, qualitative, quantitative or action research.

Source: Own construction based on Bryman (2012), Creswell and Poth (2018), Crotty (1998), Howell (2016), Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), Lincoln et al. (2018), Mertens (2010), Ponterotto and Grieger (2007), Saunders et al. (2016), Veal (2018) and Willis (2007)

Appendix II. Information letter, consent form and post-interview protocol for Phase I (*employees' version*)

NOTA INFORMATIVA

Retenção de talento e qualidade de vida no trabalho: que futuro para as carreiras em Turismo e Hotelaria?

No seguimento do convite que lhe foi feito para colaborar, através de uma entrevista, num estudo que está a ser desenvolvido na Universidade de Aveiro, no âmbito de uma tese de Doutoramento em Turismo financiada pela Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, disponibilizamos a seguinte informação para seu conhecimento:

1. Objetivo da entrevista

O principal objetivo deste estudo é investigar o fenómeno da **retenção de talento no setor do Turismo e da Hotelaria**, à luz da natureza incerta e variável das relações laborais atuais e do crescente debate acerca da importância de **atitudes positivas** e de **qualidade de vida no trabalho**, com especial enfoque nos profissionais qualificados que ambicionaram seguir uma carreira neste setor.

Serão entrevistados trabalhadores e ex-trabalhadores qualificados da indústria hoteleira e estudantes que já tenham tido uma primeira experiência de trabalho na área. No contexto desta entrevista, entende-se por trabalhadores qualificados, os indivíduos que escolheram o setor do Turismo e/ou da Hotelaria como primeira opção de carreira, apostando em educação e formação especializada com obtenção de um diploma ao nível do Ensino Superior.

Foi identificado(a) como um(a) potencial participante, com base nos seguintes critérios: i) ter completado formação académica de nível superior em Turismo, Hotelaria ou áreas relacionadas; e ii) trabalhar há pelo menos 5 anos (sem obrigatoriedade de consecutividade) em hotelaria convencional (i.e., estabelecimentos hoteleiros).

2. Anonimato e confidencialidade na recolha e tratamento dos dados

Em linha com o novo Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados (RGPD) (Regulamento (EU) 2016/679), a investigadora assegura a todos os entrevistados que garante a segurança e confidencialidade sobre todos os dados que lhe sejam fornecidos, recolhidos exclusivamente para a prossecução deste projeto, não recolhendo qualquer informação pessoal e adicional sem o prévio consentimento do entrevistado, nos termos exigidos pelo RGPD.

Como tal, a sua participação neste estudo é totalmente **confidencial e anónima**, sendo que o seu nome será substituído por um pseudónimo. Em nenhum momento da análise dos dados recorrentes desta entrevista será feita referência ao seu nome real e será tido o maior cuidado para não sejam utilizadas informações que possam permitir a sua identificação por terceiros. Se o desejar, ser-lhe-á enviada uma cópia da transcrição da sua entrevista para verificação, devendo quaisquer dúvidas ser transmitidas à investigadora responsável.

Os seus dados pessoais e de contacto serão registados apenas para este efeito, para o caso de ser necessária clarificação posterior sobre algum aspeto da sua entrevista ou para envio das conclusões do estudo, quando autorizado. No entanto, estes dados serão **apenas** do conhecimento da investigadora responsável e serão **eliminados** assim que o estudo esteja concluído.

Os procedimentos éticos para a investigação académica em curso exigem que todos os inquiridos concordem, explicitamente, em ser entrevistados, bem como com o modo em que as informações contidas na entrevista serão utilizadas. Ser-lhe-á solicitado que assine um formulário de consentimento, de forma a garantir o seu entendimento e envolvimento, assim como a sua concordância quanto às condições de participação.

3. Condições de participação neste estudo

Está previsto que a entrevista tenha uma **duração** de cerca de 45 minutos e pode ser interrompida a qualquer momento.

Ser-lhe-ão colocadas questões sobre as suas perceções e atitudes relativamente ao seu trabalho e à sua carreira profissional. É somente importante que seja sincero(a) e que responda de acordo com as suas convicções, pois não existem respostas certas nem erradas. Do mesmo modo, não se preocupe com possíveis julgamentos por parte da entrevistadora ou de outras pessoas. Sinta-se livre para fazer perguntas ou elaborar sobre aspetos que considere mais pertinentes, uma vez que as questões colocadas servem apenas para orientar a entrevista.

Não haverá lugar a qualquer tipo de compensação financeira para nenhum participante em qualquer fase do estudo, tal como o participante não terá de incorrer em qualquer tipo de custo ou despesa, para além do tempo despendido durante a entrevista.

A entrevista será gravada, dado que a **gravação áudio** é a forma mais eficaz de assegurar um registo preciso e fiável de todas as questões colocadas e respetivas respostas, o que contribui para uma maior fiabilidade na análise dos resultados. Esta gravação é feita apenas com a autorização dos entrevistados. Após conclusão do estudo, as gravações serão **destruídas**.

6. Disseminação dos resultados

Os resultados obtidos no âmbito deste projeto serão utilizados apenas para fins académicos, nomeadamente para a produção de uma tese de doutoramento, de publicações científicas e de comunicações para conferências. Se tiver interesse em ter acesso aos resultados deste estudo, a investigadora responsável informá-lo(a)-á aquando da sua conclusão.

7. Responsabilidade pela realização do estudo

A entrevista será conduzida por **Marília Durão**, a responsável por este projeto de investigação, enquanto aluna do Programa Doutoral em Turismo. Este trabalho é orientado pelo Professor Doutor Carlos Costa (Professor Catedrático da Universidade de Aveiro) e coorientado pelas Dotoras Maria João Carneiro (Professora Auxiliar da Universidade de Aveiro) e Mónica Segovia-Pérez (Professora Contratada da Universidad Rey Juan Carlos).

Caso necessite de algum esclarecimento adicional sobre este estudo, poderá solicitá-lo através dos seguintes contactos: marilia.durao@ua.pt, tel. 912 834 962 ou ccosta@ua.pt.

Muito obrigada pela sua colaboração!

A investigadora

CERTIFICADO DE CONSENTIMENTO

Retenção de talento e qualidade de vida no trabalho: que futuro para as carreiras em Turismo e Hotelaria?

Ao assinar este formulário de consentimento, confirmo que:

- Li a nota informativa que me foi entregue;
- Consinto em participar voluntariamente neste estudo e entendo que posso me retirar a qualquer momento ou recusar-me a responder a qualquer pergunta, sem quaisquer consequências;
- Dou o consentimento para o tratamento dos meus dados pessoais para os fins acima descritos, sabendo que tenho direito a:
 - Aceder aos meus dados e receber informação sobre o processamento dos meus dados pessoais;
 - Retificar quaisquer imprecisões sobre os seus dados pessoais durante o período de recolha dos mesmos;
 - Eliminar os seus dados pessoais;
 - Apresentar reclamação a uma Autoridade de Controlo.
- Tive a oportunidade de fazer perguntas e entendo que posso contactar a investigadora a respeito de quaisquer dúvidas que possa vir a ter no futuro;
- Dou o consentimento para que a sessão seja gravada, nos termos descritos na nota informativa;
- Entendo que o conteúdo da gravação será transcrito pela investigadora responsável, sendo o acesso à transcrição limitado à equipa de orientação científica deste estudo e a gravação áudio original destruída após a transcrição;
- Entendo que posso solicitar uma cópia da transcrição da minha entrevista para verificar o conteúdo da mesma e que a minha identidade se encontra devidamente protegida;
- O conteúdo da minha entrevista ou excertos dela, incluindo citações diretas, possa ser usado em publicações académicas ou outras produções de foro académico (ex., comunicações orais), com o compromisso de a investigadora ter o maior cuidado na utilização das informações prestadas, de forma a garantir o meu anonimato;
- Não espero receber qualquer benefício ou pagamento pela minha participação.

Nome _____ Data _____

Assinatura



PROTOCOLO DE ENTREVISTA

Retenção de talento e qualidade de vida no trabalho: que futuro para as carreiras em Turismo e Hotelaria?

Código da entrevista: _____

Data: _____ Hora: _____ Duração da entrevista: _____

Local: _____

- Agradecer ao entrevistado pela sua participação no estudo e pelo tempo despendido com a entrevista
- Entregar ficha informativa ao entrevistado e solicitar que a leia cuidadosamente
- Solicitar ao participante que assine o certificado de consentimento
- Entregar a ficha de caracterização do perfil profissional e sociodemográfico, para preenchimento
- Iniciar gravação áudio

Impressões sobre o entrevistado e disposição para falar sobre as temáticas abordadas:

Principais pontos abordados na entrevista:



Appendix III. Major characteristics of the study's informants (extended version)

<i>Leavers</i>											
Name (alias)	Gender	Age	Age when leaving the industry	Job title/position	Years in the industry	Years with last employer ¹	Number of hotel companies ²	Years out of the industry	Kept connection with Tourism sector	Higher Education background ³	Region of residence/work
Alice	Female	35	34	Receptionist	5	1	4	1	No	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Açores
Marco	Male	24	23	Receptionist	6	3 (1)	2	1	Yes	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Norte
Julia	Female	39	34	Hotel/Unit General Manager	7	7 (4)	1	5	Yes	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Centro
Laura	Female	35	34	F&B Manager	10	10 (2)	1	1	No	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Centro
Cecilia	Female	26	25	Waitress and barmaid	2	1	2	1	No	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Centro
Amanda	Female	44	34	Assistant Hotel Manager	16	< 1	5	10	Yes	Polytechnic, Specific degree + University, Generic Master	Norte
Martin	Male	43	37	Hotel/Unit General Manager	11	11 (2)	1 (2H)	6	Yes	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Açores
Sabrina	Female	42	39	Assistant Hotel Manager	9	6	2	3	No	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Norte
Clara	Female	33	28	Assistant Hotel Manager	7	2	2	5	No	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Norte
Joel	Male	43	31	Purchasing Clerk/Executive	3	2 (<2)	2	11	Yes	University, Generic degree	Algarve
Olivia	Female	35	28	Assistant Hotel Manager	7	4 (2)	2	7	No	Polytechnic, Generic degree + International School, Specific Post-Grad	Lisboa
Clarice	Female	40	32	Receptionist	7	7	1	8	Yes	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Centro
Virginia	Female	46	23	Guest Relations	5	< 1	2	23	Yes	Polytechnic, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Lisboa
Veronica	Female	46	28	Receptionist	2	1	2	18	Yes	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Centro

¹ Number of years working for the last/current employer; (*n*) number of years in the referred job title/position (e.g., Julia, 7 years with last employer, 4 as Hotel/Unit General Manager)

² Number of hotel companies (employing organisations) in which the participants have worked throughout their careers; *nH* – number of employing hotels within the same hotel group.

³ Higher education background briefly describes participants' academic path: (i) *Polytechnic* versus *University* higher institution type; (ii) *Generic* (when referring to Tourism, Tourism Management, Management of Tourism Activities, etc.) versus *Specific* (when referring to Hotel Management, Hospitality Management, etc.) degree; (iii) when '+' sign is used, it means that the participant has pursued studies at Master/Postgraduation level, if not used, only Bachelor/*Licenciatura* degree was obtain.

Employees

Name (<i>alias</i>)	Gender	Age	Job title/position	Years in the industry	Years with current employer	Number of hotel companies	Higher Education background	Region of residence/work
Elisa	Female	33	Front Desk Supervisor	11	11 (7)	1	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Norte
Lucas	Male	28	Receptionist	4	4	1	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Norte
Angelo	Male	23	Receptionist	1	< 1	2	Polytechnic, Generic degree + Polytechnic, Generic Master	Norte
Barbara	Female	31	Web sales Executive	6	< 1	3	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Norte
Rita	Female	32	Sales and events Executive	10	2	5	University, Generic degree + University, Specific Post-Grad	Norte
Miguel	Male	38	Receptionist	2	< 1	2	Polytechnic, Generic degree + Polytechnic, Generic Master	Norte
Eva	Female	21	Receptionist	< 1	< 1	2	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Lisboa
Hugo	Male	24	Receptionist	2	1	3	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Algarve
Samuel	Male	31	Receptionist	4	3	2	Polytechnic, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Norte
Aurora	Female	31	Receptionist	3	3	1	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Centro
Adriana	Female	36	Sales and events Manager	10	10 (8)	1 (4H)	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Norte
Maria	Female	51	Hotel Deputy Manager	27	27 (15)	1 (3H)	University, Generic degree	Açores
Marisa	Female	35	Assistant Hotel Manager	13	13 (2)	1	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Centro
Celeste	Female	39	Hotel/Unit General Manager	17	3	7	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Açores
Victor	Male	53	Hotel/Unit General Manager	28	14	4 (6H)	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Açores
Benjamin	Male	33	Doorman	10	5	4	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Norte
Gabriel	Male	35	F&B Manager	21	8 (1)	4	University, Generic degree	Açores
Amelia	Female	28	Receptionist	3	2	3	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Norte
Thomas	Male	32	Waiter	9	< 1	4	University, Generic degree + Polytechnic, Specific Post-Grad	Norte
Vincent	Male	37	Hotel Deputy Manager	7	2	2	Polytechnic, Generic degree + Polytechnic, Specific Post-Grad	Madeira
Bruno	Male	43	Hotel/Unit General Manager	9	1	4	Polytechnic, Specific degree + Polytechnic, Specific Post-Grad	Lisboa

(Continues 1/2)

Octavio	Male	43	Hotel/Unit General Manager	21	7	5 (10H)	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Lisboa
Michael	Male	26	Purchasing Clerk/Executive	3	3 (2)	1 (2H)	University, Generic degree + University, Specific Master	Açores
Valentina	Female	25	Sales and events Executive	< 1	< 1	1	University, Generic degree + University, Specific Master	Lisboa
Jaime	Male	24	Assistant F&B Manager	5	5 (<1)	1 (3H)	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Madeira
Daniel	Male	40	Hotel Deputy Manager	15	3	7	Polytechnic, Generic degree + University, Generic Post-Grad	Madeira
Manuel	Male	32	Hotel/Unit General Manager	7	6 (1)	2 (5H)	Polytechnic, Specific degree + University, Specific Master	Algarve
Vera	Female	26	Reservations Clerk/Executive	3	1	3	University, Generic degree + University, Specific Master	Lisboa
Leticia	Female	24	Receptionist	2	2 (1)	1	University, Generic degree + University, Specific Master	Algarve
Xavier	Male	42	Hotel/Unit General Manager	25	< 1	5	University, Generic degree	Alentejo

Newcomers/Students

Name (<i>alias</i>)	Gender	Age	Number of internships	Internships duration (months)	Number of departments	Year of study	Education level	Higher Education background	Region where studying
Rafael	Male	19	1	3	1	Year 2	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Norte
Alexandra	Female	21	2	8	3	Year 3	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Norte
Leonardo	Male	23	2	8	4	Year 3	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Norte
Claudia	Female	20	1	5	2	Year 3	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Norte
Mario	Male	26	1	3	1	Year 3	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Norte
Carla	Female	21	1	3	1	Year 2	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Generic degree	Norte
Emilia	Female	23	1	4	6	Year 2 (Master)	Postgraduate	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Centro
Oscar	Male	22	2	3	1	Year 3	Undergraduate	University, Specific degree	Norte
Edgar	Male	21	3	9	3	Year 3	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Centro
George	Male	22	4	15	2	Year 3	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Lisboa
Andrea	Female	25	1	3	2	Year 2 (Master)	Postgraduate	University, Generic degree + University, Generic Master	Centro
Abel	Male	20	1	2	4	Year 2	Undergraduate	Polytechnic, Specific degree	Lisboa

Appendix IV. Information letter, consent form and post-interview protocol for Phase II (key informants)




Instituições de acolhimento:



 universidade de avaro
 centro de investigação em
 governança, participação e
 políticas públicas



 Universidad
 Rey Juan Carlos

Projeto de investigação financiado por:



O desafio da retenção de talento em Turismo e Hotelaria

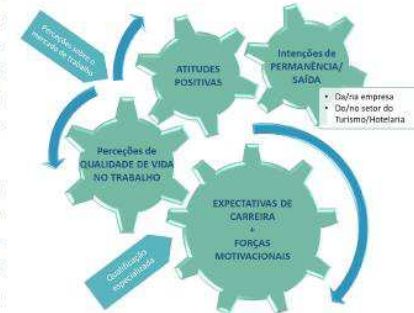
Como capitalizar o potencial dos profissionais qualificados? Um estudo sobre perspetivas de carreira, redução da rotatividade de pessoal, atitudes positivas e qualidade de vida no trabalho

Qual o objetivo e finalidade deste projeto?

Este projeto de investigação tem como principal objetivo investigar o fenómeno da retenção e rotatividade de pessoal no setor do Turismo e da Hotelaria, à luz do crescente debate em torno de temas como qualidade de vida e atitudes positivas no trabalho, em especial dos trabalhadores qualificados que ambicionaram uma carreira profissional neste setor.

Ancorados nos domínios teóricos da Psicologia Positiva, da Gestão Estratégica de Recursos Humanos e do Comportamento Organizacional, temas como motivação, expectativas, satisfação, *engagement*/envolvimento e performance individual têm sido cada vez mais explorados por investigadores de diversas áreas e pelos próprios gestores, com o objetivo de identificar o que influencia as atitudes dos trabalhadores – ao nível cognitivo, afetivo e comportamental – e como isso afeta as organizações.

Apesar de largamente reconhecido o seu significativo efeito multiplicador sobre o emprego e da promissora performance atual, um dos maiores desafios que as organizações do setor do Turismo e da Hotelaria têm enfrentado é a retenção de talento.



A rotatividade de pessoal neste setor é reconhecidamente alta e pode ter inúmeras consequências, repercutindo-se no desempenho organizacional e na satisfação dos clientes. A qualidade do serviço prestado, de caráter intangível, e o sucesso do setor hoteleiro baseiam-se na interação pessoal e a capacidade de manter uma força de trabalho qualificada, motivada e empenhada é considerada uma das principais vantagens competitivas de qualquer empresa.

Estas questões parecem particularmente pertinentes quando aplicadas aos trabalhadores que fizeram do Turismo e da Hotelaria a sua principal opção de carreira, investindo em formação superior especializada nesta área. São conhecidas as razões que levam as pessoas a sair, mas – e mais importante – o que motiva e impulsiona os trabalhadores a permanecer na empresa e a apostar numa carreira neste setor? A oferecer o melhor das suas competências e habilidades? A adotar atitudes mais positivas, que contribuam para o sucesso organizacional?

Pretende-se, assim, identificar mecanismos e estratégias que permitam melhorar a qualidade percebida dos empregos em Turismo e Hotelaria, através da capitalização da qualificação nesta área, tendo em consideração as circunstâncias específicas em que operam as empresas portuguesas.

O que pretende a investigadora responsável?

Numa 1ª fase, foram entrevistados trabalhadores e antigos trabalhadores qualificados da indústria hoteleira e estudantes que já tiveram uma primeira experiência de trabalho na área. No contexto deste estudo, entende-se por trabalhadores qualificados, os indivíduos que escolheram o setor do Turismo e/ou da Hotelaria como primeira opção de carreira, apostando em educação e formação especializada com obtenção de um diploma ao nível do Ensino Superior.



No sentido de consolidar a análise e a formulação de conclusões acerca do fenómeno que está a ser estudado, a 2ª fase deste estudo – designada de *scenario discussion with expert panel* –, pressupõe a consulta a um conjunto de agentes-chave do setor, convidados à reflexão e comentário dos vários cenários emergentes da análise preliminar dos dados recolhidos na 1ª fase. Pretende-se, através de um processo dinâmico de interação com vários intervenientes, alcançar uma visão mais completa e holística do fenómeno em estudo, reforçando simultaneamente a validade, fiabilidade e rigor metodológicos.

Foi identificado(a) como um(a) destes agentes-chave e potencial participante com base: no seu extenso conhecimento sobre a dinâmica e problemáticas da gestão dos Recursos Humanos do setor, no posicionamento e papel desempenhado na organização que representa atualmente, assim como no posicionamento desta mesma organização; e no tipo e grau de interação com outros agentes-chave do setor.

Estas discussões não seguirão um guião pré-definido de perguntas e respostas, existindo apenas alguns tópicos para orientação dos temas a discutir, enviados oportunamente aos participantes. Todas as informações obtidas serão tratadas com recurso a análise de conteúdo.

O que me é útil saber sobre os participantes da 1ª fase do estudo?

As entrevistas da 1ª fase foram orientadas com base em 5 temas, direcionadas para os 3 grupos de entrevistados:

- Percursos de carreira [Narrativa sobre background profissional e trajetória profissional]
- Planeamento e iniciação de carreira [interesses e motivações, papel da educação e formação, aspirações e objetivos para o futuro]
- Construção da carreira e momentos críticos [determinantes para seguir/deixar/regressar a uma carreira no setor, alternativas e empregabilidade, igualdade de género no trabalho, atitudes perante o emprego-profissão]

- Retenção e perspetivas futuras [desafios futuros, rotatividade de pessoal, boas práticas com vista à promoção da retenção, imagem e valorização do setor]
- Qualidade de vida no trabalho [conceção individual do conceito, qualidade percebida da relação trabalhador-empregador]; incluiu exploração de 8 dimensões identificadas como potenciais fatores de retenção:
 - a. Conteúdo e organização do trabalho
 - b. Remuneração e outros benefícios
 - c. Reconhecimento e valorização
 - d. Oportunidades de progressão
 - e. Segurança no emprego
 - f. Relacionamento interpessoal
 - g. Stress e desgaste emocional
 - h. Equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e a vida pessoal/familiar.

Perfil dos entrevistados

- Total de 56 participantes: 12 estudantes, 30 trabalhadores e 14 antigos trabalhadores
- 27 do sexo masculino, 29 do sexo feminino
- Média de idades de 32 anos – 29 (53%) Younger Millennials (20-31 anos), 13 Older Millennials (33-39 anos) e 14 Gen Xers (40-54 anos)
- Antiguidade no setor da Hotelaria (média): 9 anos | Antiguidade na atual/última empresa (média): 4 anos
- 22 (39%) frequenta(ram) o Ensino Superior Público Politécnico
- **Trabalhadores:** 10 chefias de topo, 4 chefias intermédias e 16 operacionais; Front-of-the-House e Direção de hotel são as áreas mais representadas; experiência no setor da Hotelaria variável de 1 a 28 anos; 22 (73%) estão há menos de 3 anos com o atual empregador; 25 (83%) sempre trabalharam exclusivamente em hotéis; apenas 7 (23%) têm experiência de trabalho em hotéis no estrangeiro; 20 (67%) trabalham, em média, mais de 9 horas diárias; 14 (47%) trabalham por turnos; 21 (70%) frequentaram o Ensino Superior Público e 16 (53%) prosseguiram estudos ao nível do Mestrado ou Pós-Graduação.
- **Ex-Trabalhadores:** 7 chefias de topo, 2 chefias intermédias e 5 operacionais; Direção é a área mais representada (sobretudo a função de Assistente de Direção); experiência mínima de 2 anos no setor e máxima de 16 anos; 11 (79%) sempre trabalharam exclusivamente em hotéis; 8 (57%) deixaram o setor nos últimos 6 anos (5, nos últimos 3 anos); apenas 2 (14%) têm experiência de trabalho em hotéis no estrangeiro; apenas 2 (14%) trabalhavam, em média, até 8 horas diárias; apenas 5 (36%) trabalhava por turnos; 7 (50%) mantêm profissões ligadas ao setor do Turismo; 11 (79%) frequentaram o Ensino Superior Público e 8 (57%) não prosseguiram estudos para além da Licenciatura.
- **Estudantes:** 8 (67%) frequentam Licenciatura específica no domínio da Hotelaria, 2 frequentam Licenciatura generalista em Turismo, e 2 frequentam Mestrado generalista em Turismo; 9 (75%) frequentam o Ensino Superior Público Politécnico; 7 (58%) fizeram apenas 1 estágio; 6 (59%) têm experiência de estágio em hotéis no estrangeiro; 7 (58%) optaram por estágio(s) extracurricular(es); apenas 2 (17%) fizeram estágio(s) com duração total superior a 9 meses; estagiários passaram por 1 a 6 departamentos e por 1 a 7 posições diferentes; departamento de F&B é aquele onde decorreu o maior número de estágios (em particular o Bar e o Restaurante).

Quais são as condições e implicações da participação neste estudo?

Está previsto que a sessão de discussão tenha uma duração de cerca de 60 minutos, embora a duração máxima esteja sempre sujeita à disponibilidade e envolvimento do(a) participante, uma vez que este(a) é livre para elaborar sobre os aspetos que considere mais pertinentes.

Nenhum dos participantes terá de incorrer em qualquer tipo de custo ou despesa, para além do tempo despendido durante a sessão. Note-se ainda que não haverá lugar a qualquer tipo de compensação financeira para nenhum participante em qualquer fase do estudo.

A sessão será gravada, dado que a gravação áudio é a forma mais eficaz de assegurar um registo preciso e fiável de todas as questões colocadas e respetivas respostas, o que contribui para uma maior fiabilidade na análise dos resultados. Esta gravação é feita apenas com a autorização dos participantes. Após conclusão do estudo, as gravações serão destruídas.

Em linha com o novo Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados (RGPD) (Regulamento (EU) 2016/679), a investigadora assegura a todos os participantes que garante a segurança e confidencialidade sobre todos os dados que lhe sejam fornecidos, recolhidos exclusivamente para este projeto, não recolhendo qualquer informação pessoal e adicional sem o prévio consentimento, nos termos exigidos pelo RGPD.

Como tal, a participação neste estudo é confidencial, sendo que o nome dos(as) participantes será substituído por pseudónimos. Em nenhum momento da análise dos dados recorrentes desta discussão será feita referência a nomes reais e não serão utilizadas informações que permitam uma identificação direta por terceiros. No entanto, a investigadora alerta que ao contextualizar a escolha dos agentes-chave que participem no estudo, e dada a dimensão do setor no contexto português, exista a possibilidade de reconhecimento e identificação, por terceiros, da organização representada pelo(a) participante ou à qual este(a) está associado(a). Se o(a) participante desejar, ser-lhe-á enviada uma cópia da transcrição da sessão para verificação, devendo quaisquer dúvidas ser transmitidas à investigadora responsável.

Quaisquer dados pessoais e de contacto serão registados apenas para este efeito, para o caso de ser necessária clarificação posterior sobre algum aspeto da sessão ou para envio das conclusões do estudo, quando autorizado. No entanto, estes dados serão apenas do conhecimento da investigadora responsável, serão guardados somente até à conclusão deste estudo e não serão utilizados para outra finalidade que não a já mencionada, tendo sido tomadas precauções para salvaguarda contra acessos indevidos por terceiros.

Os procedimentos éticos para a investigação académica em curso exigem que todos os participantes concordem, explicitamente, em colaborar neste estudo, bem como com o modo em que as informações prestadas serão utilizadas. Será solicitado ao(à) participante que assine um formulário de consentimento, de forma a garantir o seu entendimento e envolvimento, assim como a sua concordância quanto às condições de participação.

Como será feita a disseminação dos resultados e a que *outputs* deste projeto posso ter acesso?

Este estudo insere-se no âmbito de uma tese de Doutoramento financiada pela Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, que será apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Turismo. Os resultados obtidos no âmbito deste projeto serão utilizados apenas para fins académicos, nomeadamente para a produção de uma tese de doutoramento, de publicações científicas e de comunicações para conferências. Se o(a) participante tiver interesse em ter acesso aos resultados deste estudo, a investigadora responsável informá-lo(a)-á aquando da sua conclusão e poderá enviar-lhe publicações relevantes.

De quem é a responsabilidade pela realização do estudo?

Todos os procedimentos realizados no âmbito deste estudo serão conduzidos pela Mestre Marília Durão, a responsável por este projeto de investigação, enquanto aluna do Programa Doutoral em Turismo da Universidade de Aveiro e membro da Unidade de Investigação em Governança, Competitividade e Políticas Públicas (GOVCOPP). Este trabalho é orientado pelo Professor Doutor Carlos Costa (Professor Catedrático da Universidade de Aveiro) e coorientado pelas Doutoradas Maria João Carneiro (Professora Auxiliar da Universidade de Aveiro) e Mónica Segovia Pérez (Professora Contratada da Universidad Rey Juan Carlos).



Para qualquer esclarecimento adicional, poderá contactar a investigadora responsável, através de: marilia.durao@ua.pt; tel.: 912 834 962, ou o principal supervisor deste estudo: ccosta@ua.pt

CONSENTIMENTO INFORMADO

Retenção de talento e qualidade de vida no trabalho: que futuro para as carreiras em Turismo e Hotelaria?

No seguimento do convite que lhe foi feito para colaborar, através de uma sessão de discussão, num estudo que está a ser desenvolvido na Universidade de Aveiro, no âmbito de uma tese de Doutoramento em Turismo financiada pela Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, disponibilizamos a seguinte informação para seu conhecimento:

1. Objetivo da sessão de discussão

O principal objetivo deste estudo é investigar o fenómeno da retenção de talento no setor do Turismo e da Hotelaria, à luz da natureza incerta e variável das relações laborais atuais e do crescente debate acerca da importância de atitudes positivas e de qualidade de vida no trabalho, com especial enfoque nos profissionais qualificados que ambicionaram seguir uma carreira neste setor.

Numa primeira fase, foram entrevistados trabalhadores e ex-trabalhadores qualificados da indústria hoteleira e estudantes que já tiveram uma primeira experiência de trabalho na área. No contexto deste estudo, entende-se por trabalhadores qualificados, os indivíduos que escolheram o setor do Turismo e/ou da Hotelaria como primeira opção de carreira, apostando em educação e formação especializada com obtenção de um diploma ao nível do Ensino Superior.

No sentido de consolidar a análise e a formulação de conclusões acerca do fenómeno que está a ser estudado, a segunda fase deste estudo (designada de *scenario discussion with expert panel*), pressupõe a consulta a um conjunto de agentes-chave do setor, convidados à reflexão e comentário dos vários cenários emergentes da análise preliminar dos dados recolhidos na primeira fase, com o objetivo de se reunirem diferentes leituras e perspetivas.

Foi identificado(a) como um(a) destes agentes-chave e potencial participante com base: no seu extenso conhecimento sobre a dinâmica e problemáticas da gestão dos Recursos Humanos do setor; no posicionamento e papel desempenhado na organização que representa atualmente, assim como no posicionamento desta mesma organização; e no tipo e grau de interação com outros agentes-chave do setor.

2. Condições de participação neste estudo

Está previsto que a sessão de discussão tenha uma duração de cerca de 60 minutos, embora a duração máxima esteja sujeita à disponibilidade e envolvimento do(a) participante, uma vez que este(a) é livre para elaborar sobre os aspetos que considere mais pertinentes.

Nenhum dos participantes terá de incorrer em qualquer tipo de custo ou despesa, para além do tempo despendido durante a sessão. Note-se ainda que não haverá lugar a qualquer tipo de compensação financeira para nenhum participante em qualquer fase do estudo.

A sessão será gravada, dado que a gravação áudio é a forma mais eficaz de assegurar um registo preciso e fiável de todas as questões colocadas e respetivas respostas, o que contribui para uma maior fiabilidade na análise dos resultados. Esta gravação é feita apenas com a autorização dos participantes. Após conclusão do estudo, as gravações serão destruídas.



3. Disseminação dos resultados

Os resultados obtidos no âmbito deste projeto serão utilizados apenas para fins académicos, nomeadamente para a produção de uma tese de doutoramento, de publicações científicas e de comunicações para conferências. Se o(a) participante tiver interesse em ter acesso aos resultados deste estudo, a investigadora responsável informá-lo(a)-á aquando da sua conclusão.

4. Confidencialidade na recolha e tratamento dos dados

Em linha com o novo Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados (RGPD) (Regulamento (EU) 2016/679), a investigadora assegura a todos os participantes que garante a segurança e confidencialidade sobre todos os dados que lhe sejam fornecidos, recolhidos exclusivamente para este projeto, não recolhendo qualquer informação pessoal e adicional sem o prévio consentimento, nos termos exigidos pelo RGPD.

Como tal, a participação neste estudo é confidencial, sendo que o nome dos(as) participantes será substituído por pseudónimos. Em nenhum momento da análise dos dados recorrentes desta discussão será feita referência a nomes reais e não serão utilizadas informações que permitam uma identificação direta por terceiros. No entanto, a investigadora alerta que ao contextualizar a escolha dos agentes-chave que participem no estudo, e dada a dimensão do setor no contexto português, exista a possibilidade de reconhecimento e identificação, por terceiros, da organização representada pelo(a) participante ou à qual este(a) está associado(a). Se o(a) participante desejar, ser-lhe-á enviada uma cópia da transcrição da sessão para verificação, devendo quaisquer dúvidas ser transmitidas à investigadora responsável.

Quaisquer dados pessoais e de contacto serão registados apenas para este efeito, para o caso de ser necessária clarificação posterior sobre algum aspeto da sessão ou para envio das conclusões do estudo, quando autorizado. No entanto, estes dados serão apenas do conhecimento da investigadora responsável, serão guardados somente até à conclusão deste estudo e não serão utilizados para outra finalidade que não a já mencionada, tendo sido tomadas precauções para salvaguarda contra acessos indevidos.

De forma a garantir o seu entendimento e envolvimento, assim como a sua concordância quanto às condições de participação, ao assinar este formulário de consentimento, confirma que leu e concorda com as condições de participação acima descritas.

Nome _____ Data _____

- Consinto em participar voluntariamente neste estudo e entendo que posso me retirar a qualquer momento ou recusar-me a responder a qualquer pergunta, sem quaisquer consequências;
- Dou o consentimento para o tratamento dos meus dados pessoais para os fins acima descritos, sabendo que tenho direito a:
- Aceder aos meus dados e receber informação sobre o processamento dos meus dados pessoais;
 - Retificar quaisquer imprecisões sobre os seus dados pessoais durante o período de recolha dos mesmos;
 - Eliminar os seus dados pessoais;
 - Apresentar reclamação a uma Autoridade de Controlo.



- Dou o consentimento para que a sessão seja gravada, nos termos acima descritos;
- Entendo que o conteúdo da gravação será transcrito pela investigadora responsável, sendo o acesso à transcrição limitado à equipa de orientação científica deste estudo e a gravação áudio original destruída após a transcrição;
- Entendo que posso solicitar uma cópia da transcrição da sessão para verificar o conteúdo da mesma;
- O conteúdo da sessão em que participo ou excertos dela, incluindo citações diretas, possa ser usado em publicações académicas ou outras produções de foro académico (ex., comunicações orais), com o compromisso de a investigadora ter o maior cuidado na utilização das informações prestadas, de forma a garantir o meu anonimato e o anonimato da organização que represento;
- Não espero receber qualquer benefício ou pagamento pela minha participação.

Assinatura

5. Responsabilidade pela realização do estudo

A sessão será conduzida por Marília Durão, a responsável por este projeto de investigação, enquanto aluna do Programa Doutoral em Turismo. Este trabalho é orientado pelo Professor Doutor Carlos Costa (Professor Catedrático da Universidade de Aveiro) e coorientado pelas Doutoradas Maria João Carneiro (Professora Auxiliar da Universidade de Aveiro) e Mónica Segovia-Pérez (Professora Contratada da Universidad Rey Juan Carlos).

Para qualquer esclarecimento adicional sobre este estudo, ou para gozar, em conformidade com o RGPD, dos direitos sobre os seus dados pessoais, o(s) participante(s) poderá(ão) fazê-lo através dos seguintes contactos: marilia.durao@ua.pt, tel. 912 834 962 ou ccosta@ua.pt.

Muito obrigada pela colaboração!

A investigadora

PROTOCOLO DE SCENARIO DISCUSSION WITH EXPERT PANEL

Retenção de talento e qualidade de vida no trabalho: que futuro para as carreiras em Turismo e Hotelaria?

Código da sessão:

Data: _____ Hora: _____ Duração: _____

Local: _____

- Agradecer ao entrevistado pela sua participação no estudo e pelo tempo despendido com a sessão
- Solicitar ao participante que assine o consentimento informado, entregando-lhe uma cópia do mesmo
- Verificar, com o participante, a melhor forma de pseudonimização
- Iniciar gravação áudio

Informações de contexto sobre o interlocutor:

1. Sexo: Masculino Feminino
2. Idade: _____ anos
3. Número de anos ligado ao setor da Hotelaria: _____ anos
4. Formação de base (nível e área): _____

Principais pontos abordados na sessão:

Appendix V. Codebook

Code	Code
A. Career initiation	
Career interests and motivations	B6_Work-life balance
Practical_employability	Conceptions QWL
Romanticised	QWL does not exist
Industry-Person congeniality	Conceptions QWL_Recognition and appreciation
Conviction of choice	Conceptions QWL_Social atmosphere
<i>Ease of entry</i>	Conceptions QWL_Pay
<i>Family connection</i>	Conceptions QWL_Scheduling and workload
<i>Previous experience</i>	Conceptions QWL_Enjoyment of work
<i>Vocational guidance</i>	Conceptions QWL_Work-life reconciliation
Meeting personal interests	Conceptions QWL_Physical conditions and facilities
<i>Vocation and passion for hospitality work</i>	Conceptions QWL_Job challenge
<i>Sense of community</i>	Conceptions QWL_Legal dispositions
Pre-entry expectations-Career aspirations	Conceptions QWL_Fringe benefits
Awareness of T&H working characteristics	C. Career trajectories
Inflated /irrealistic expectations	Career paths EMP-LEA
Realistic expectations	PsyContract formation
Attitude - persistence, ambition, humility	<i>Offer vs. requirements</i>
Education-to-work transition	<i>Transparency</i>
Education background_preparedness	Type of job move_initiative
<i>University-Industry connection</i>	<i>Company-initiated job moves</i>
Internship experiences	<i>Self-initiated job moves</i>
<i>Internship - negative experiences</i>	Reasons for job move
<i>Internship - positive experiences</i>	<i>Pull factors</i>
Valuable skills and competencies	<i>Push factors</i>
Soft skills	<i>Job search intentions</i>
Hard skills	<i>Perceived job alternatives</i>
Transferability of skills	<i>Perceived costs of leaving</i>
B. Quality of working life-dimensions and perceptions	<i>LEA Reasons for career change</i>
B1_Job structuring and work organisation	Working abroad
Organisational policies	Trajectories_direction
<i>Definition of objectives</i>	Linear upward
<i>Performance evaluation and feedback</i>	Crystallised
<i>Flexibility_functional</i>	Ascending
Job content	Lateral
<i>Workload and work intensity</i>	Gender-related influences
<i>Job challenge</i>	Engagement, emotional bonds
<i>Autonomy</i>	D. Career longevity
Facilities_Adequate resources	Turnover perceptions
Scheduling and working time arrangements	Positive perceptions
<i>Workplace culture</i>	Negative perceptions
Pros and cons of managerial positions	Critical jobs/depart
B2_Reward and recognition systems	Retention_meaning
Pay and fringe benefits	Image of T&H as valuable career
<i>Positive</i>	Poor image_reasons
<i>Negative</i>	Social prestige
<i>Fringe benefits</i>	E. Education value and role
Recognition and appreciation for work	With vs without a degree
<i>Tangible rewards</i>	Imperative
<i>Non-tangible rewards</i>	Not a prerequisite
B3_Achievement and development	Progression facilitator
Promotion and progression opportunities	No added value
Stagnation	Value by employers
Learning and skill development	Employer culture and practice
Job security	Graduate talent
<i>Stability</i>	F. Participants profile withdrawal vs permanence
B4_Psychosocial working environment	EMP Permanence_job-occupation
Relationship with peers	Potential leaver
Relationship with customers	Potential stayer
Relationship with managers and supervisors	Resolute leaver
Conflict	Resolute stayer
<i>Interpersonal relations_Gender influence</i>	LEA Return_occupation
<i>Interpersonal relations_Age</i>	Irreversible leaver
<i>Interpersonal relations_Education</i>	Reversible leaver
Leadership	NEW Joining_occupation
B5_Health and job stress	Easily lost
Health and job stress_causes	Not willing to pursue
	Perceptions of continuity and job offers
	Willing to pursue

Appendix VI. Generational traits and views of work

BABY BOOMERS		GENERATION X	
Context/ Formative years	Difficult moments in the world economy (post-war; in Portugal, political dictatorship) Raised by traditional structured family	Context/ Formative years	Hegemony of capitalism and meritocracy <i>Latchkey</i> kids of dual-income parents
Behaviour and style	Idealists, Revolutionary, Optimistic, Collective	Behaviour and style	Commitment reluctance, Realists, Cynical, Self-reliant, Highly independent, Entrepreneurial
Relationship with technology	Expedient commodity <i>Reference:</i> Personal computer	Relationship with technology	Tech-savvy <i>Reference:</i> Mobile phone
Views of work	'Work-to-live' philosophy Work as means to self-fulfilment Strong work ethic Long-hours culture Team oriented Conservative Loyal and dedicated Rewards and recognition are viewed as deserving Values accumulated experience Values security and stability Linear/single careers	Views of work	Work is an obligation, a means to a stable life and leisure Willing to change the status quo Hard-working and competent Informal Self-reliant Self-focused Goal-oriented Strong candidates for leadership positions Desire flexibility Transferable careers
GENERATION Y		GENERATION Z	
Context/ Formative years	Globalisation, economic stability and the emergence of the Internet Raised by active and protective parents	Context/ Formative years	Mobility and multiple realities, high parental protection
Behaviour and style	High expectations of self, Idealists, Highly optimistic, Confident, Family-centric, 'Global' thinking	Behaviour and style	Fluid identity, Realistic, Thoughtful activists
Relationship with technology	Intense users of technology <i>Reference:</i> Internet	Relationship with technology	Digital natives <i>Reference:</i> Social networks
Views of work	Thrive on challenging work Achievement-oriented Feedback-seeking Expect rapid promotion and development Need constant feedback Team oriented (participative) Challenging of authority Confident and highly competitive Retained by personal relationships Value work-life balance Multiple careers/job hopping	Views of work	Now entering the workforce Work should provide satisfaction and happiness Accepting differences Open-minded Collaborative Value participation in social actions Wired and fast processing Require legitimization of the hierarchy Always looking for better options Eager to move up the career ladder quickly

Source: Own construction based on Brown et al. (2015); Chen and Choi (2008); Davidson et al. (2010); Goh and Okumus (2020); Gursoy et al. (2013); Krahn and Galambos (2014); Ozkan and Solmaz (2015); Park and Gursoy (2012); and Randstad (2017)

Appendix VII. Minimum wages for the hotel sector

Minimum monthly gross wages for the hotel sector for the period of April 1st to December 31st, 2018, as defined by the Collective Bargaining Agreement between APHORT (Portuguese Association of Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism) and FESAHT (Federation of the Agriculture, Food, Beverages, Hotel and Tourism Unions of Portugal), published in the Labour and Employment Bulletin (*Boletim do Trabalho e Emprego*), no. 23, 22/6/2018, of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security.

This CBA is referred to cover 4,917 companies and 36,241 workers. The wage scale is defined by crossing two criteria: (i) the classification of hotel establishments, and (ii) workers' professional categories and degrees. Values are presented in Euro.

Level	Group A	Group B	Group C
	5-star Hotels 5-star Rural Hotels 5-star Apartment Hotels	4-star Hotels 4-star Rural Hotels 4-star Apartment Hotels	3,2,1-star Hotels 3-star Rural Hotels 3-star Apartment Hotels
X General Hotel Manager	2,220.00	1,895.00	1,275.00
IX Assistant Hotel Manager	1,145.00	1,015.00	950.00
VIII Front-desk Supervisor	1,020.00	875.00	830.00
VII Front-desk Deputy Supervisor	830.00	765.00	740.00
VI Head Receptionist	745.00	705.00	670.00
V 1 st Receptionist	705.00	670.00	632.00
IV 2 nd Receptionist	655.00	630.00	610.00
III 3 rd Receptionist	625.00	615.00	600.00
II Trainee Receptionist	558.00	530.00	530.00
I Apprentice Receptionist	512.00	512.00	512.00

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