

# Gender diversity in hospitality and tourism top management teams: A systematic review of the last 10 years

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## ABSTRACT

Due to women still accounting for less than a quarter of hospitality and tourism executive-level positions, the purpose of this paper was to identify antecedents to and outcomes of gender diverse hospitality and tourism top management teams, describe potential mediators and moderators to these relationships, and provide directions for future research. A systematic review of gender diversity in hospitality and tourism top management teams (TMTs) was conducted between the years 2010 and 2020, resulting in 26 articles used for the thematic analysis. Antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators of gender diverse hospitality and tourism TMTs were identified. The results indicated female role models, organizational structure, and organizational support as antecedents, while financial performance, business growth, and human resource outcomes were consequences. The resource advantage theory is proposed as an explanation for each of these relationships. This study fills a gap in previous literature by conducting a review of gender diversity, identifying critical gaps, and proposing an overarching theory.

## 1. Introduction

The year 2020 is a significant year for gender equality in that it is the one hundredth anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote in the United States (Library of Congress, 2020). In addition, as of this year, it has been seventy-two years since the United Nations General Assembly asserted, “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (United Nations, 2020). Furthermore, out of 195 countries, 143 have a clause pledging equality between men and women in their constitutions (United Nations, 2020). Each of these movements attempted to allow men and women to have equal representation and opportunities. Despite the strides that have been made, women still are largely underrepresented when it comes to executive positions. As a whole, women still only represent one out of every twenty executive positions in the United States, and only one out of every five board positions globally (Catalyst, 2020).

The hospitality and tourism industry is only slightly more gender diverse as opposed to the totality of other industries. As of 2019, the composition of women in executive-level positions was 25% in publicly-

traded restaurants (McKinsey and Company, 2019), 23% in tourism (World Tourism Organization, 2019), 13% in hotels, and 12% of the entire leadership positions, including entry-level managers, directors, and partner/owner (AHLEF, 2020). Additionally, women account for 23% of the board of directors, globally, in hospitality and tourism (Equality in Tourism International, 2018), while women account for 53% of the hospitality workforce and 61% of the tourism industry (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020; World Tourism Organization, 2019). Although the number of women represented in hospitality and tourism management is low, there has been considerable growth since 2015, when women only accounted for 17% of chief positions and 9% of all leadership positions (AHLEF, 2020; McKinsey and Company, 2019). However, there is still plenty of room for improvement in gender diversity in the hospitality workplace.

Previous studies have found that gender diverse management teams provide a wider range of relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies, which leads to higher performance (Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Menicucci et al., 2019). Furthermore, it was also found that female CEOs are better equipped to lead female workers through their ability to better communicate with one another (Flabbi et al., 2018). Considering the hospitality field is over 50% women (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020), it would make logical sense for there to be an equal

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number of men and women in all leadership positions to be representative of the industry.

Unfortunately, that is not the case. Many women face a phenomenon known as a “broken rung” when they are attempting to enter management positions (Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers, 2017). The broken rung is one aspect of the proverbial glass ceiling (i.e., invisible barriers to entry into management), where women are missing the first step to the “ladder of leadership”, or the stages in the promotion process (Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers, 2017). For instance, for every 100 men promoted to an entry-level management position, only 72 women were given the same opportunity (McKinsey and Company, 2019). Therefore, if there are fewer women in junior management positions, it leads to fewer women in executive positions (Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers, 2017), and the broken rung can explain why there are so few women in leadership positions. If hospitality and tourism organizations are able to repair the broken rung, it will likely lead to more women in leadership positions and greater organizational outcomes for all parties involved.

In opposition to the aforementioned studies, Boone et al. (2013) stated that there was no longer a glass ceiling in the hospitality industry, but organizations were failing to assist women with their self-imposed barriers to success. Similarly, Carvalho et al. (2018) discovered female senior managers in the Portuguese hotel and travel business downplayed the organization’s role in aiding or hindering their career advancement in this sector. Instead, their own personal drive, ambition, talent, and availability allowed them to successfully climb the ladder (Carvalho et al., 2018). Additionally, a study of female hotel senior managers found personal (i.e., work-family balance and flexibility), organizational (i.e., lack of mentors and sex discrimination), and societal (i.e., gender stereotyping) barriers for women to hinder their career progress in Zimbabwe (Manwa, 2014). Whether there is a glass ceiling or the barriers to entry are self-imposed, this study identifies the antecedents to gender diversity in managerial teams and how companies can promote and implement gender equality because it cannot be argued women are largely underrepresented in the hospitality field. Additionally, the impact gender diversity has on organizational outcomes, and potential mediators or moderators to each of these relationships were explored.

Given the importance of gender equality within hospitality and tourism organizations, the purpose of this paper is to identify antecedents to and outcomes of gender diverse hospitality and tourism top management teams, describe potential mediators and moderators to these relationships, and provide directions for future research, which includes discussing a potential theory explaining why gender diverse top management teams lead to positive outcomes and how organizations can create these teams. Furthermore, the study identifies critical gaps in hospitality gender research, which is discussed in detail with how hospitality researchers can move the industry forward through extending the proposed theory. The current study thematically analyzes peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2020 to describe how hospitality and tourism organizations may become more gender diverse in their top management teams along with the outcomes of doing so. While diversity as a whole and diversity management have been extensively reviewed (e.g., Kalargyrou and Costen, 2017; Manoharan and Singal, 2017; Sourouklis and Tsagdis, 2013), gender diversity has not been subjected to a review of its own in the hospitality and tourism context, despite the abundance of research on this specific topic (Costa et al., 2017; Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Menicucci et al., 2019).

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Top management teams (TMTs)

Leadership in both general business and hospitality have been defined in a variety of ways. Top management, similarly, has included the board of directors, top chief executives, or a combination thereof in the past literature (e.g., Dezsó et al., 2016; Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Hambrick et al., 2015; Song et al., 2020). Generally, it is understood the

board of directors represents the owners or shareholders while the chief executives represent the business and the strategic decisions within it. To understand all outcomes of those in top management, both the board of directors and chief executives were considered.

#### 2.1.1. Chief executives

In line with the upper echelons theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984), the strategic decisions that influence organizational outcomes are influenced by not only one person at the top of the organization, but through the decisions of several influential actors (Wu et al., 2019). This group typically consists of the chief executive officer (CEO) and those who report to him/her (Jeong and Harrison, 2017). The hierarchy within the executives varies by not only industry but specific organization, such that some executives are highly reliant on one another and others only meet occasionally to discuss large changes within the organization (Hambrick et al., 2015). However, literature consistently recognizes a TMT of executives to be those highest paid and reported on publicly traded databases, such as ExecuComp (Dezsó et al., 2016; Gröschl and Arcot, 2014). The executive officers listed in ExecuComp are often described as the TMT within both business and hospitality.

#### 2.1.2. Board of directors

However, the last step in the hierarchy is for executive officers to become board members (Adams, 2016). Similar to the executive hierarchy, the board of directors may have a power distribution within the team (Byron and Post, 2016). This power distribution directly affects the strategic decisions of interest to the members and could oppose those of the top executives (Adams et al., 2015). However, it is unlikely that a single board member has the influence that a CEO could in the executive top management team (Lee and Moon, 2018); thus, it is essential for board directors to be especially diligent when making decisions and passing them along to the executives (Byron and Post, 2016). A board with higher diversity may monitor the top executives better because it creates interdependence within the board based on altering prior experiences (Adams et al., 2015). Thus, gender composition within the board and the chief executive team also likely has an influence on organizational outcomes.

### 2.2. Gender diversity in TMTs

Gender diversity refers to the male to female ratio of a certain position in proportion to males to females in the industry as a whole (Campos-Soria et al., 2015, 2011; Song et al., 2020). The current study refers to the gender diversity within the top management teams of hospitality and tourism companies. For the purpose of this research, gender diversity in top management teams are specifically the ratio of men to women in the executive level of hospitality and tourism organizations on serving on their boards (Gröschl and Arcot, 2014). In 2011, a study by Campos-Soria et al. found that only 21.1% of all hospitality jobs have a balanced number of men and women in the position compared to in the industry (i.e., are gender diverse). Several years later, horizontal segregation is still an issue. Many jobs within the hospitality sector still have an unbalanced number of women to men in specific positions, including management (Dashper, 2020; Repetti and Hoffman, 2018).

Gender diversity in managerial teams refers to the number of men and women in the entry-, middle-, and top-management teams (Song et al., 2020). Although in hospitality women make up about 50% of entry-level management teams and 47% of hotel general manager positions (González-Serrano et al., 2018), they only account for approximately 20% of top management teams (hereon TMTs; McKinsey and Company, 2019). In addition, it was found that women are more likely to manage small or independent hospitality firms than large or corporate-owned firms (González-Serrano et al., 2018); thereby demonstrating the horizontal segregation in the hospitality industry, or the division of men and women into separate positions (Campos-Soria

et al., 2015). To create gender diversity in TMTs, horizontal segregation must be eliminated, which creates higher job mobility (Campos-Soria et al., 2015, 2011; González-Serrano et al., 2018; Zhong et al., 2011). Understanding the antecedents and outcomes of gender diversity is the first step in understanding how to reduce the horizontal and vertical segregation in the hospitality and tourism industry.

### 3. Method

To understand how to create higher job mobility and reduce segregation, a systematic review was chosen to analyze and synthesize the themes present as antecedents and outcomes of gender diversity in hospitality and tourism TMTs. A systematic review was chosen to produce answers to the following research question:

RQ: How can hospitality and tourism organizations create more gender diverse TMTs?

A systematic review is extensive in nature and uses strict criteria in order to provide as detailed and extensive review as possible to answer a specific research question, while ensuring reliability and validity of the findings (Cronin et al., 2008). Strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, coding methods, and quality control were used when selecting articles and analyzing their content. A description of the specific steps taken and justification for each when conducting the systematic review follows.

Due to the vast array of information on gender diversity in management, this systematic review only used articles from leading hospitality and tourism journals that mention human resources in their aim or scope, including: *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism*, *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Systems*, *Journal of Hospitality and Financial Management*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, and *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* (Lee and Madera, 2019; Rhou and Singal, 2020). Additional requirements were that the articles use a hospitality and/or tourism sample and were published between 2010 and 2020. Following protocols from other review papers, this range was chosen because diversity is a quickly changing topic, and it is essential to identify current patterns (Lee and Madera, 2019; Rhou and Singal, 2020). Specifically, from 1980 when diversity was being introduced as a research topic to 2009, there were significant increases in female management, but only a one percent increase of women in executive level positions (Carter and Silva, 2010); however, between 2010 and 2014, there was a 22% increase in the number of women in executive level positions and 24% increase between 2015 and 2019 (Fottrell, 2019; McKinsey and Company, 2019). Thus, to fully encompass how gender diversity has increased and the outcomes of such, the timeframe of 2010–2020 was chosen for analysis.

A keyword search on literature databases, including Google Scholar, Elsevier, Science Direct, Sage, Emerald, Taylor and Francis, EBSCO, and Web of Science, was the basis for identifying which articles should be included. The initial keyword search for a combination of “gender diversity,” “women in management,” “top management teams,” “female leaders,” “glass ceiling,” “female executives,” “gender disparity,” and “female managers,” along with “hospitality,” “tourism,” “hotel,” “restaurant,” “casino,” “airline,” and “cruise” identified 71 potential articles. To ensure inclusion of all potential articles, a manual search within each of the journals for titles, abstracts, and keywords that align with the gender diversity in hospitality and tourism was conducted. Only peer-reviewed articles in English that the full article could be accessed were used in the final analysis. Articles were further analyzed by the title and abstract for inclusion purposes. Articles that did not have a sample from the hospitality or tourism industry, strictly identified barriers to entry for women, did not include female managers in the sample, or are secondary sources were not included in the analysis. Barriers were not viewed in this as an antecedent to gender diversity in management as they identify why women struggle to make it into

management, rather than how the managerial team becomes diverse. After applying all inclusion and exclusion criteria, the final sample included 26 articles.

Each article was thoroughly read and coded following Glaser and Strauss (1967) three-step thematic coding. First, open codes were identified for antecedents and outcomes of gender diversity in hospitality and tourism TMTs, then themes were grouped into similar categories known as axial codes, and finally, themes were identified by grouping the axial codes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Please see Table 1 for themes produced from the coding process. To ensure reliability and validity, the code-recode method was used by the first author, where the codes were analyzed in March, then again three months later, which demonstrated accuracy in the coding through similarities (Oriogun, 2009). Further, comparisons of data and codes were continuously carried out to ensure dependability of the results (Lowe et al., 2014).

The review is formatted to fit the following themes identified by the analysis:

- (1) Antecedents to gender diversity in hospitality and tourism TMTs and their theories
- (2) Outcomes of gender diversity in hospitality and tourism TMTs and their theories
- (3) Mediators of the prior relationships
- (4) Moderators of the prior relationships
- (5) Critical analysis of the gaps in the literature
- (6) Proposed theory explaining how and why to create gender diverse TMTs

**Table 1**  
Summary of themes.

	Definition	Variables described
<i>Antecedents</i>		
Female Role Models	Women in positions to inspire other employees	Female mentors Female recruiters Females as managers Diversity training
Organizational Support	Activities provided by the organization to support women	Organizational culture Internal business structure Job descriptions Job mobility
Organizational Structure	Actions made by the organization to create gender diversity in TMTs	
<i>Outcomes</i>		
Financial Performance	Financial indicators of business success	ROA Stock performance Tobin's Q
Business Growth	Increase or decrease in business size measures	Employee growth Sales growth
Human Resource Outcomes	Actions and attitudes employees demonstrate within the organization	OCB Employee satisfaction Job performance Turnover intentions
<i>Moderators</i>		
Personal Characteristics	Attributes of the people in the TMT or applying to be in the TMT	Responsibility level Flexibility Education level Age
Firm Characteristics	Attributes of the organization itself	Firm size Firm age Firm type Departments in firm

Note: Definitions were generated during the coding process by the authors. The variables described can be found in Table 2, listed with the original authors.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Antecedents to gender diversity in TMTs

#### 4.1.1. Female role models

Businesses that have female role models (i.e., female managers, mentors, and recruiters) are perceived to be more fair, accepting, and diverse (Ngan and Litwin, 2019; Pinar et al., 2011; Remington and Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018; Zhong et al., 2011). Table 2 describes female role models as the female managers, mentors, and recruiters within an organization. The lack of female mentors and role models in the hospitality and tourism industry leads to perceived barriers to entry in management for other women (Remington and Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018; Zhong et al., 2011). The resource-based theory states that competitive advantage is supplied with unique resources the firm acquires (Wernerfelt, 1984). Drawing on the resource-based theory and human capital theory (Becker, 1964), people provide the firm with unique resources and a sustained competitive advantage (Barney and Wright, 1998) through their unique experiences and training; therefore, those firms with more female managers provide the company with a sustainable competitive advantage because women have different experiences than their men due to societal and cultural differences (Dashper, 2020; Guillet et al., 2019).

Furthermore, employees of both genders are more accepting of women managers if they have had experience with women managers in the past (Costa et al., 2017; Dashper, 2020; Guillet et al., 2019; Ngan and Litwin, 2019; Zhong et al., 2011). A study by Zhong et al. (2011) found that employees who are not exposed to female role models are more likely to perceive barriers to entry in management teams. More experience with female managers leads to higher ratings of them and more women who believe they can become managers themselves (Ngan and Litwin, 2019; Segovia-Pérez et al., 2018), but for more people to have experience with women as managers, women need to actually make it into the managerial positions.

Those employees who are exposed to female role models are less likely to perceive barriers to entry. A study by Pinar et al. (2011) found if a recruiter for a hospitality managerial position is a woman, women believe there is a higher chance they will be hired by the company for that position, and more women apply for the position. Furthermore, a study by Dashper (2020) found that women in hospitality who have a female role model or mentor are more likely to feel supported and perceive the ability to succeed within the organization. Therefore, female role models are essential to making a hospitality or tourism company more gender diverse.

#### 4.1.2. Organizational support

The management teams that are more gender diverse are in organizations that have a higher perceived level of support (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Organizational support is the perceived importance employees feel the organization cares about their contributions and well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017), which could be perceived as their support in their promotion or transition into managerial positions, and to help them keep moving up, if they so desire. In Table 2, organizational support refers to diversity training and the organizational culture. A study by Santero-Sanchez et al. (2015) found organizations that offer career development possibilities to women have higher job satisfaction. To promote gender diversity, diversity training and the culture of the organization are ways that the organization supports its female employees (Campos-Soria et al., 2011; Dashper, 2020; Guillet et al., 2019; Reynolds et al., 2014; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015; Segovia-Pérez et al., 2018; Singal, 2014). Drawing from the human capital theory (Becker, 1964), people are seen as an essential part of the organization because they are able to learn from training and educational courses, which they use to provide the organization with positive outcomes. A study by Reynolds et al. (2014) found that diversity training in hotels is seen equally to both men and women, in that the training is essential to have a diverse

and fair organization.

However, diversity training does not supersede the organizational culture of the business; it must be used in conjunction with a strong organizational culture. A study by Segovia-Pérez et al. (2018) found that in the companies that have a male-dominated culture, women are less likely to feel the organization is supportive of selection, promotion, or mentoring of women. Similarly, Remington and Kitterlin-Lynch (2018) found one of the key challenges is the masculine culture of hospitality and tourism organizations. However, women who perceive a supportive culture within their hospitality or tourism organization, or one that endorses selection, promotion, or mentoring of women, are more likely to apply (Carvalho et al., 2019, 2018; Guillet et al., 2019); thus, enhancing the probability of more women in management. In addition, Dashper (2020) found women in hospitality who perceive organizational support are more likely to succeed in management, even if it has a male-dominated culture. Therefore, organizational support in hospitality and tourism organizations leads to a gender diverse top management team.

#### 4.1.3. Organizational structure

Gender diversity in hospitality and tourism management teams has been linked to whether the structure of the organization allows for job mobility (Carvalho et al., 2019, 2018; Pinar et al., 2011; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). Organizational structure describes the way all the parts of the organization fit together to produce the best results. In relation to the top management teams, organizational structure is how the overall internal business structure, job descriptions, and job mobility fit together to create the most productive managerial team (Campos-Soria et al., 2015; Carvalho et al., 2018, 2014), as described in Table 2. The internal business structure refers to the hierarchy of the business and the path to promotion (Clevenger and Singh, 2013; Carvalho et al., 2019, 2014). Job descriptions are the content an organization provides to potential and new employees that maps out what they will be doing at the company (Carvalho et al., 2019; Chaudhary and Gupta, 2010; Segovia-Pérez et al., 2018). Finally, job mobility is the ease in which employees are able to transfer positions horizontally or be promoted to a new position vertically (Campos-Soria et al., 2015; Zhong et al., 2011). Drawing from the career mobility theory (Sicherman and Galor, 1990), employees may take a job that they are overqualified for in order to gain experience and tenure with the company to move into a higher paying position. Therefore, whether the organization has high mobility or low mobility for women and an organizational structure that supports the promotion of women will determine whether the employee who takes a lower paying job will actually be able to make it into the higher paying position (Carvalho et al., 2019; Pinar et al., 2011).

A study by Clevenger and Singh (2013) found that women in hospitality perceived more barriers to management within the internal business structure (i.e., promotional opportunities and opportunities for mentorships) than men. The perceived barriers come from the structure or hierarchy of the business. This is also known as a “broken rung” in the ladder to leadership (Repetti and Hoffman, 2018). In addition, a study by Carvalho et al. (2014) found that the hospitality and tourism companies that offer more permanent contracts to women are less likely to have vertical segregation or a gender pay gap. These studies demonstrate the necessity for an organizational structure that offers equal opportunities for both genders, which would lead to more gender diversity in hospitality and tourism managerial teams.

While these antecedents may not be specific to only the hospitality and tourism industry, they are essential to it. Because hospitality and tourism are incredibly employee-reliant in that the perceptions of employees directly impacts guest satisfaction, guest retention, and brand image through interactions, it is essential women feel the positive effects of gender diverse TMTs. If women do not feel valued in terms of the ability to move up within their company, they will become dissatisfied and potentially negatively impact the business.

**Table 2**  
Summary of hospitality and tourism gender diversity studies.

Author	Segment	Country	Sample	Antecedent (s)	Outcome (s)	Mediator (s)	Moderator (s)	Theory	Journal
Blomme et al. (2010a)	Hospitality	Netherlands	247	Organizational support; job descriptions	Reduced turnover intention; increased employee satisfaction	–	–	Organizational support	<i>Tourism and Hospitality Research</i>
Boone et al. (2013)	Hospitality	USA & Europe	99	Female mentors; organizational support	–	–	–	–	<i>Cornell Hospitality Quarterly</i>
Ngan and Litwin (2019)	Hospitality	China	603	Experience with female managers	–	Attitude toward female managers	–	Sociocultural; social role	<i>Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism</i>
Campos-Soria et al. (2011)	Hotels; restaurants	Spain	3211	Diversity training	–	–	Firm age; department	–	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Campos-Soria et al. (2015)	Hotel	Spain	302	Mobility	–	–	Level of responsibility; education	Career mobility; job matching	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Carvalho et al. (2019)	Tourism	Portugal	24	Mobility; organizational culture; internal business structure; flexibility; job descriptions	–	–	Flexibility	Framework of gendering processes	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>
Carvalho et al. (2018)	Hospitality; tourism	Portugal	6	Flexibility; internal business structure; mobility; organizational culture	–	–	Education; flexibility; hours worked	–	<i>Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism</i>
Carvalho et al. (2014)	Hotel; travel agencies	Portugal	5463	Internal business structure	–	–	Age; education; hours worked	–	<i>Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism</i>
Chaudhary and Gupta (2010)	Hotel	India	110	Organizational support; job descriptions	–	–	–	–	<i>International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Systems</i>
Clevenger and Singh (2013)	Hospitality	USA	60	Internal business structure	–	–	–	Social role; expectation; pipeline	<i>Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism</i>
Costa et al. (2017)	Tourism	Portugal	79 study 1; 401 study 2	Flexibility; experience with female managers	–	–	Flexibility	Rational man	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>
Dashper (2020)	Hospitality	UK	30	Organizational culture; female mentors; experience with female managers	–	–	–	Theory of gendered organizations	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Gröschl and Arcot (2014)	Hotel	USA	54	–	ROA; Tobin's Q	–	–	–	<i>Tourism and Hospitality Research</i>
Guillet et al. (2019)	Hospitality	China	24	Organizational culture; experience with female managers	Reduced turnover intention	–	–	Grounded theory	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>
Hsiao et al. (2015)	Hotel	Taiwan	305	–	Increased job performance; reduced turnover intentions; increased OCB	–	–	Social identity	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Li and Singal (2017)	Hospitality	USA	240	–	ROA; Tobin's Q; stock return	–	–	Upper echelons	<i>Journal of Hospitality</i>

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Author	Segment	Country	Sample	Antecedent (s)	Outcome (s)	Mediator (s)	Moderator (s)	Theory	Journal
Marco (2012)	Hotel	Spain	3643 hotel years	–	ROA; Tobin's Q; sales growth; employee growth	–	–	Liberal feminist; social feminist	<i>Financial Management International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Menicucci et al. (2019)	Hotel	Italy	2482	–	Sales growth; employee growth	–	firm size; firm type	Liberal feminist; social feminist	<i>International Journal of Tourism Research</i>
Pinar et al. (2011)	Hotel	Turkey	682	Female recruiter	–	–	Education level	Career mobility; job matching	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Remington and Kitterlin-Lynch (2018)	Hospitality	USA	6	Female mentors; organizational culture; flexibility	–	–	Flexibility	Work/ family border	<i>Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism</i>
Reynolds et al. (2014)	Hotel	USA	242	Diversity training	–	–	–	Human capital; stakeholder	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>
Santero-Sanchez et al. (2015)	Hotel	Spain	11,598	Diversity training; mobility; organizational support	Job satisfaction; employee productivity	–	–	Composite job quality	<i>Tourism Management</i>
Segovia-Pérez et al. (2018)	Hospitality	Spain	30	Female mentors; organizational culture; job descriptions	–	–	–	Gender as a social structure	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Singal (2014)	Hospitality	USA	5057	Diversity training	Tobin's Q; firm credit rating	–	–	–	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Song et al. (2020)	Hotel	USA	320	–	Increased Tobin's Q	–	Age	Resource dependence; human capital	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>
Zhong et al. (2011)	Hospitality	USA	232	Experience with female managers; female mentors; mobility	–	–	–	Human capital; new home economies	<i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education</i>

## 4.2. Outcomes of gender diversity in TMTs

### 4.2.1. Financial performance

In the last ten years, gender diversity in managerial teams has been shown in several studies to increase a firm's financial performance in the hospitality and tourism industry (Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Li and Singal, 2017; Marco, 2012; Song et al., 2020). In Table 2, financial performance outcomes include return on assets (ROA), stock performance, and Tobin's Q (Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Li and Singal, 2017; Marco, 2012; Song et al., 2020). ROA refers to the ratio of net income to total assets (Li and Singal, 2017), and it is an internal accounting measure used by the company to measure efficiency (Gröschl and Arcot, 2014). Conversely, stock performance is an external measure that compares the closing price and dividends returned between this year and last year. Tobin's Q is a forward-looking measure that combines ROA and stock performance with market and book value of both stocks and assets, and outstanding liabilities to arrive at a ratio of assets to their replacement value (Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Song et al., 2020). All three financial measures have been used to show the effect of diversity on financial performance in the hospitality and tourism industry.

For instance, a study by Gröschl and Arcot (2014) demonstrated that gender diversity in managerial teams in hotels showed an increase on ROA and Tobin's Q when variables such as firm size and firm age were controlled for. In addition, a study by Li and Singal (2017) used Tobin's

Q and stock performance as measures which found that hospitality companies with female CEOs outperformed those companies with male CEOs financially, but experience, age, and educational background all moderated the outcomes. Moreover, Singal (2014) discovered hospitality companies that invest in diversity have higher financial performance in terms of Tobin's Q and firm credit rating than organizations that did not invest. These studies confirm that gender diversity in hospitality top management teams leads to higher financial performance; therefore, gender diversity in top management teams leads to increased financial performance.

### 4.2.2. Business growth

Gender diversity in hospitality and tourism managerial teams has been shown to increase business growth. In Table 2, business growth refers to measures of business size in terms of the increase in the number of employees and sales within an organization (Marco, 2012; Menicucci et al., 2019). The increase in number of employees is the ratio of the number of employees at the beginning of the data set as compared to the number of employees at the end of the dataset (Menicucci et al., 2019). Similarly, sales growth is the amount in sales at the beginning of the dataset as compared to the sales at the end of the dataset (Marco, 2012). Studies have used both number of employees and sales to measure company growth over a period of time.

For instance, a study by Marco (2012) used number of employees and

total sales to measure hotel firm growth in a longitudinal study encompassing 3643 hotels over a ten-year period. The results of the study indicated women-managed hotel firms grew on average 2.56% more in rate of employment than those by men and 3.64% in rate of sales when firm size and external financing were controlled for (Marco, 2012). Furthermore, a study by Menicucci et al. (2019) found that hotels managed by women, although significantly smaller, outperformed those managed by men in terms of employee growth and total sales when firm size, age, and ownership structure were controlled. Thus, gender diverse TMTs positively impacted hotel growth, and are an essential case for women leaders in hospitality and tourism.

#### 4.2.3. Human resource outcomes

Human resource outcomes (HROs) encompass many things such as service recovery, organizational citizenship behaviors, and turnover intentions that reflect the inputs of training, hiring, or employee development of human resource management (Guchait et al., 2018). When referring to gender diversity in top management teams, HROs in Table 2 refer to organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), employee satisfaction, employee job performance, and turnover intentions. Gender diversity in TMTs has been shown to increase OCBs in hospitality organizations in terms of doing more than ones work and higher employee productivity than requested or required (Hsiao et al., 2015; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). In addition, gender diverse TMTs have been found to increase employee satisfaction and reduce turnover intention among employees (Blomme et al., 2010a; Guillet et al., 2019; Hsiao et al., 2015).

A study by Hsiao et al. (2015) found gender diversity in hotel TMTs to produce higher employee results (higher job performance and lower turnover intentions) and higher levels of OCBs. The results of the study indicated that employees in gender diverse hotels were more productive, less likely to leave, and there were more behaviors of employees performing extra duties outside their job descriptions within the organization (Hsiao et al., 2015). In addition, a study by Santero-Sanchez et al. (2015) revealed gender diverse hotels to have higher job satisfaction and employee productivity. Thus, gender diverse TMTs produce higher levels of human resource outcomes in hospitality and tourism organizations.

#### 4.3. Attitude toward female managers as a mediator

The attitude employees develop toward their managers or managers in general can be an indicator of their acceptance of them as a leader (Ngan and Litwin, 2019). Society has long viewed women as the homemakers and men as the leaders (Ngan and Litwin, 2019); however, times have changed where women make up close to half of the workforce and entry-level managers (McKinsey and Company, 2019). Thus, with time, attitudes toward females as entry-level managers have been slowly developing. A study by Ngan and Litwin (2019) found attitudes toward female managers to be increasing as a result of exposure to more female managers, although their scores are still significantly lower than males. However, the same study revealed women have significantly higher attitudes toward female managers than their male counterparts (Ngan and Litwin, 2019). Drawing on the theory of gendered organizations (Acker, 1990), it is believed women are perceived less favorably due to the nature of the male-dominated organization. Thus, more gender diverse TMTs will allow exposure to female managers, which will cause them to be rated higher, mediating the relationship between gender diverse TMTs and human resource outcomes.

#### 4.4. Moderators to gender diverse TMTs

##### 4.4.1. Personal characteristics

Personal characteristics describe personal attributes of the employee who has the potential to create gender diverse TMTs. These characteristics include the candidate's current level of responsibility, the

candidate's willingness to have a flexible work schedule, the candidate's education level, and the candidate's age (Campos-Soria et al., 2015, 2011; Carvalho et al., 2019, 2018, 2014; Costa et al., 2017; Pinar et al., 2011; Remington and Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018). A study by Campos-Soria et al. (2015) found that employee level of responsibility and the level of education obtained and the candidate's level of responsibility to directly impacted vertical job mobility for women. In other words, women with higher education and responsibility levels were more likely to be promoted than women with lower levels of education or responsibility. In addition, Song et al. (2020) found women who are younger are more likely to be promoted than women who are older. Furthermore, a study by Carvalho et al. (2018) found the willingness to be flexible in their work schedules to be an attribute of all the women interviewed who surpassed the glass ceiling in Portugal, and Remington and Kitterlin-Lynch (2018) produced similar results in the United States. Thus, department, responsibility level, flexibility, education level, and age moderate the relationship between antecedents of gender diversity and gender diverse TMTs.

##### 4.4.2. Firm characteristics

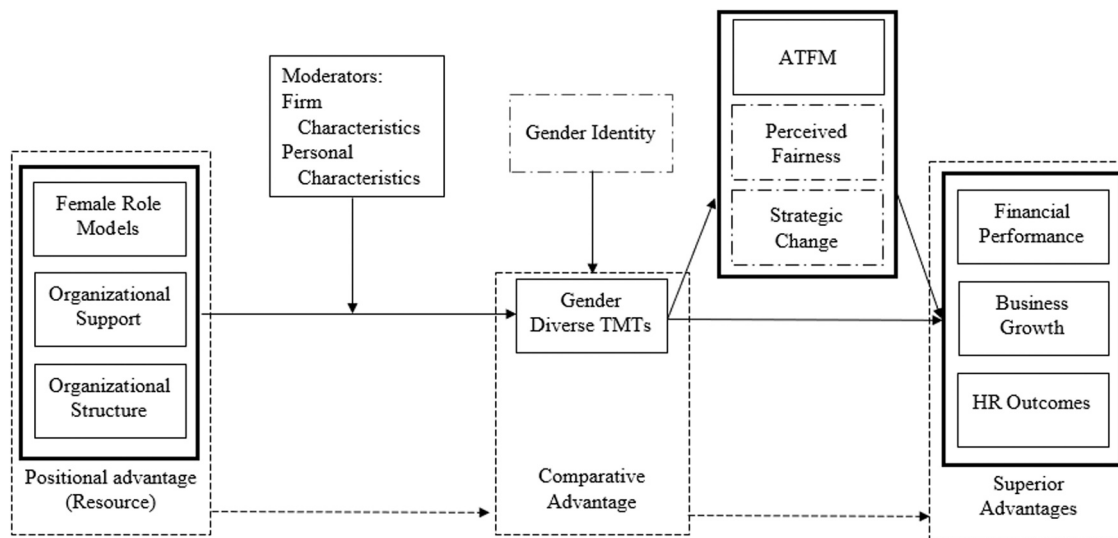
Firm characteristics refer to the attributes of the organization which may affect the relationship between gender diversity and hospitality and tourism firm outcomes. These characteristics refer to the firm's age, the firm's size, the firm type (such as star-rating, independent, or chain), and department in which the person works (Campos-Soria et al., 2015, 2011; Menicucci et al., 2019; Pinar et al., 2011). Financial performance of the hospitality or tourism organization may be influenced by the firm age, the firm size, and the firm type in addition to gender diversity in the TMTs. A study by Menicucci et al. (2019) found significant differences in firm performance when firm size and type were controlled, suggesting the size of the firm and whether it was independently owned or chain owned affected the financial outcomes. Similarly, Campos-Soria et al. (2011) found significant differences in job mobility and firm growth when firm age was controlled, suggesting the number of years a firm was open impacted job mobility and growth. In addition, a study by Campos-Soria et al. (2015) found that departments dominated by women had a positive impact on vertical job mobility. In other words, departments led by women were more likely to have women in management than departments that were male dominated. Thus, the firm age, size, type, and department moderate firm outcomes of gender diverse TMTs. Table 2 contains a full summary of the findings of the systematic literature review.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Critical analysis of gaps in the literature

The current study was able to identify antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators related to gender diversity in hospitality and tourism TMTs. While the aforementioned have been demonstrated to have impacts in the hospitality field, there are several research areas in business and healthcare that have been shown to produce insights into the TMT literature. The following are proposed additional components to the conceptual model based on general management, healthcare, and business literature. Fig. 1 contains a visual representation of the findings and proposed additions.

There is still a need for research in several areas in order to assist the hospitality and tourism industry in becoming more gender diverse at the executive level. An overarching theory to describe how organizations become more gender diverse in their TMTs and the outcomes explaining the reasons why gender diverse TMTs are important is lacking in prior literature. Each of the theories used in the studies analyzed in this review only support a portion of the variables analyzed. The human capital theory (Becker, 1964) states that people are important resources for an organization and investing in them creates positive outcomes for businesses. However, gender is not specifically identified in this theory, nor



**Fig. 1. Proposed Conceptual Model.** Note: Dashed lines represent the R-A Theory. Dashed and dotted lines represent proposed variables to move hospitality research forward.

is the explanation of how to create diverse managerial teams. Although one antecedent is training, there are several others that cannot be explained by this theory. The other theories listed in Table 2 are only specific to one or two of the other antecedents or outcomes, which leads to a gap in current research knowledge: how are gender diverse TMTs created and why are they necessary? To answer this question, an additional theory is proposed: the resource advantage theory (Hunt and Morgan, 1996).

The resource advantage (R-A) theory states that resources create a positional advantage which leads to a comparative advantage, then ultimately, a superior advantage, such as financial performance, business growth, or human resource outcomes (Hunt and Morgan, 1996; Wittmann et al., 2009). The R-A theory posits there are seven types of resources a firm can develop into a comparative advantage: financial, physical, legal, organizational, human, informational, and relational (Hunt and Morgan, 1996; Wittmann et al., 2009). Wittmann et al. (2009) found the R-A theory to be a good fit for explaining alliance relations in business. However, the R-A theory has not been used to explain the human aspect of the seven resources in any of the previous literature. In applying this theory to gender diverse TMTs, the resources are the antecedents (i.e., female role models [human], organizational support [informational], or organizational structure [organizational]), the comparative advantage is the gender diverse TMT itself, and the superior advantage is the outcome of gender diverse TMTs (i.e., financial performance, business growth, and human resource outcomes). Fig. 1 demonstrates the proposed conceptual model with identifiers of the R-A theory.

One aspect of the R-A theory is establishing a comparative advantage that will led to a sustained competitive advantage in the long run. However, providing a simple mix of men and women is not something which other businesses cannot replicate due to the binary interpretation of gender as it currently stands in business and hospitality research. To gain a further understanding of gender's impact on organizational outcomes (e.g., financial performance, business growth, and HR outcomes), hospitality researchers are advised to view gender as a non-binary variable. Gender identity, or the degree to which individuals align with masculine, feminine, both, or neither traits (Wood and Eagly, 2015). Using the R-A theory, businesses may establish a comparative advantage through a gender identity diverse TMT, whereby executives align with masculine, feminine, both, and neither traits, somewhere on a sliding spectrum (Wood and Eagly, 2015). This will allow organizations to create a sustainable competitive advantage through true gender

diversity based on the presupposition that gender is established through societal influences and no two persons experience the formation of gender in the same way (Keener, 2015; Swain, 1995). Thus, to understand why businesses gain a competitive advantage from gender diversity and the influence of gender on organizational outcomes, it is imperative researchers are considering gender as a non-binary variable in terms of identity.

Other gaps in the research that were identified by the review are potential mediators not tested in the hospitality or tourism setting. The gender diversity literature in hospitality and tourism could benefit from added variables introduced in business settings and journals. While hospitality and tourism has recognized various positive outcomes to gender diverse TMTs (Guillet et al., 2019; Menicucci et al., 2019), additional variables that may help explain the variance or provide theoretical support for gender's effect are missing. Two potential mediators are proposed below: perceived fairness and strategic change.

## 5.2. Moving hospitality and TMT research forward

### 5.2.1. Perceived fairness

First, perceived fairness is a proposed mediator between the diverse TMTs and the outcomes. While perceived fairness has been used in prior hospitality literature (e.g., Madera et al., 2017; Russen et al., 2021), it has yet to be used in explaining the relationship between gender diverse hospitality TMTs and organizational outcomes (superior advantages). Organizations are perceived as fair when its decisions, procedures, and interpersonal treatment is equal across all groups (Ambrose and Schminke, 2009; Madera et al., 2017). This fairness directly influences the genders because women will be less likely to perceive an organization is fair if it has low representation of women in its TMT; thus, women are less likely to apply to that organization (Madera et al., 2019). In other words, if women perceive the organization as fair, they will be more likely to apply for open positions, thus creating a heterogeneous workforce.

A study by Choi and Rainey (2014) found organizations with employees who perceived diversity to be effectively managed and higher levels of fairness within the organization were more satisfied with their jobs. Furthermore, Madera et al. (2019) discovered the organizations with higher levels of women in managerial teams attracted more female applicants in a variety of businesses than those organizations with very few women in their TMT. In addition, the same study discovered potential applicants of both genders perceived the organization as fairer



when there was a gender-balanced managerial team than when men represented the majority (Madera et al., 2019). This indicates the importance of organizational fairness in the role of creating more diverse TMTs, especially in the hospitality and tourism industry where the majority of employees are female (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). Thus, it is proposed that organizational fairness mediates the relationship between gender diverse TMTs and the outcomes.

### 5.2.2. Strategic change

Second, strategic change is proposed as a mediator between the TMT gender diversity and organizational outcomes identified by the systematic review. Strategic change is an alteration in the business strategy typically initiated from a modification in the business vision, mission, or objectives (Okello and Ngala, 2019). When a business responds to change in the environment, it is imperative the TMT members are on board with any necessary changes and make the choices that will benefit the organization's strategy in the long run. Demographics of the top executives (e.g., gender) are one influence on the strategic choices made by the TMT, which have been found to influence organizational outcomes (García-Granero et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2019).

Furthermore, it has been found that strategic changes that align with the environmental influences (i.e., social movements) lead to greater long-term performance within the organization (Wu et al., 2019), which can be interpreted as a sustainable superior advantage. This is due to individuals with varying backgrounds and experiences supplying a more diverse set of knowledge that influences strategic choices, which lead to strategic change (Wu et al., 2019). It has been found that strategic change is crucial for long-term survival through superior advantages (Kunisch et al., 2017). Thus, providing a comparative advantage of gender diverse TMTs, in terms of the R-A theory, will inevitably lead to better or more frequent strategic change due to altering experiences, ultimately providing long-term superior advantages for the organization. In hospitality, this could lead to higher employee satisfaction which enhances customer delight and repeat guests, which gives the business more financial resources.

These mediators also will help hospitality extend the R-A theory to better fit the industry. Gender diversity is a complex characteristic; thus, it has been found to influence many different organizational outcomes, namely financial performance in multiple measurements, business growth in terms of employees and sales, and human resource outcomes including OCBs, employee satisfaction, employee job performance, and turnover intentions. Perceived fairness and strategic change could help to explain why gender diversity in the TMT has a significant influence on organizational outcomes in the hospitality context because this industry is especially employee-centric due to inseparability. To move the literature on gender diversity in hospitality TMTs forward, research into gender identity, strategic change, and perceived fairness are three places it is recommended to start. Fig. 1 contains the proposed conceptual model with these variables.

### 5.3. Practical implications

The current study attempts to summarize the current literature on gender diversity within the hospitality and tourism industry through a systematic review. The results of this review reveal the reasons why more companies should create diversity initiatives for their TMTs and how they can accomplish these initiatives by reviewing the antecedents. First, hospitality and tourism companies can use female role models to encourage other women to apply for managerial positions. This can be accomplished through mentoring programs the company can design about women mentoring women and women mentoring men. It would be ideal to allow women to be role models for both genders because they have different experiences, and previous research has shown that more exposure to female role models leads to a higher attitude toward them (Ngan and Litwin, 2019).

In addition, hospitality and tourism organizations can analyze and

redesign their organizational culture and diversity statements to be more inclusive. This culture can be taught through diversity training courses or session for managers and employees or through the managers leading by example. If the top managers are more accepting of diversity, it will have a trickle-down effect to the rest of the staff members. With a stronger culture of diversity and inclusion, the employees will perceive better odds of women being promoted to higher levels of management.

Furthermore, companies can enhance their diversity goals through enhancing their own organizational structure to encourage women, or even minorities, who desire to become managers within their company. First, organizations can develop a clear path to promotion with specific steps that will allow the fairest promotional opportunities to all qualified candidates (i.e., gender-balanced offers in addition to other demographic characteristics). Moreover, companies can enhance job mobility through cross-training or manager-in-training programs that can be introduced and designed around women's preferred characteristics, such as a gender-neutral job descriptions.

### 5.4. Limitations and future research

The current systematic review has its limitations. First, the articles reviewed were restricted to top-tier hospitality and tourism journals, of which the articles could be fully accessed and were in English. These restrictions limit the number of journals included for analysis. It would be recommended to introduce dissertations and theses, articles in other journals outside hospitality and tourism or top-tier resources, and articles published in other languages to extend the possible antecedents and outcomes.

Second, this systematic literature review addresses gender as a binary variable. Future research is recommended on gender as a non-binary variable (i.e., with more than two categories) due to the cultural transition in viewing gender as having more than two categories (Diamond, 2020). This research was restricted to the aspect in which previous research as viewed gender; however, future research into gender diversity should address gender with the fluidity it has become in recent years.

Third, this research introduced a new theory into gender diversity research, known as the resource advantage theory. This theory is able to capture antecedents to gender diversity, the outcomes of it, and potentially explain why the antecedents lead to a comparative advantage, and finally superior outcomes. While the R-A theory has proven useful in explaining comparative advantages in the business context (Wittmann et al., 2009), it has not been tested in the hospitality or tourism context, and it would be recommended to apply this theory to gender diversity studies in the future.

Fourth, the systematic review did not include barriers to entry in the analysis, and instead only included variables that were identified as antecedents to creating a gender diverse TMT. It would be beneficial to determine whether companies that help to alleviate such challenges to women, such as offering childcare or eldercare support (Carvalho et al., 2018), have more gender diverse TMTs. Future qualitative and quantitative research into organizations that offer additional support to women overcoming barriers to entry is recommended.

Finally, this review demonstrates a lack of knowledge in the hospitality and tourism context of women who make it to the TMTs. There are very few articles that analyze women who surpass the glass ceiling in terms of any challenges they continue to face – most research are reflections of how they made it into management (e.g., Carvalho et al., 2019, 2018; Guillet et al., 2019; Remington and Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018). Business research has identified other struggles women face while managing from the upper management and executive positions, known as the glass cliff (Ryan et al., 2016). The glass cliff refers to the challenges women face once they surpass the proverbial glass ceiling, causing them to be in riskier positions than their male counterparts (Ryan et al., 2016). For instance, it was found that the majority of the small amount of women appointed to CEO in Fortune 500 companies are

far more likely to be appointed in a firm that is struggling than with a corresponding sample of male Fortune 500 CEOs (Glass and Cook, 2016). In other words, many women are appointed to managerial positions during times of crisis for the business, and it would be beneficial to address the glass cliff phenomenon in the hospitality and tourism context.

## 6. Conclusion

The current study filled a gap in the research literature by identifying and addressing antecedents and outcomes to gender diversity in hospitality and tourism TMTs. More specifically, this study described how organizations can become more gender diverse at the executive level and why it is important they do so. In addition, this study identified potential moderators and mediators to these relationships. It is essential for the hospitality and tourism industry to understand each of these concepts because the benefits of having gender diverse TMTs could be highly impactful to the industry in terms of their employees, their customers, and the organization itself in terms of financial performance. To employees, there could be higher satisfaction and less turnover due to the positive image of the company and better work experience provided. In addition, companies with a diversity statement have been shown to produce a better image to their customers and their community (Gajjar and Okumus, 2018), thus, the initiatives will produce a more loyal customer and employee base. Moreover, the heterogeneous experiences, ideas, and background women bring to managerial teams has been shown to increase financial performance in hospitality and tourism organizations (Gröschl and Arcot, 2014; Menicucci et al., 2019). Finally, the resource advantage theory was proposed to explain the relationship between the antecedents and outcomes of gender diverse TMTs, which will directly impact future research on this topic and could provide a clear framework for hospitality and tourism industry professionals to enhance the gender diversity in their TMTs.

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