Perspettivi

A Gozo Review   Issue 4

Front page illustration - 1881 Fountain and adjacent cross, Republic Street - Victoria, Gozo.

Perspettivi - A Gozo review is distributed without charge to interested readers, upon request. Perspettivi is also available online at *grda.mt*.

Table of Contents

The Malta-Gozo Air Service

Part 2 - The Project Takes Off

Joseph Bezzina

Abstract:

The first part of this study outlined the early endeavours for the provision of a permanent airlink between Malta and Gozo. The idea was stimulated by the airfield built in the vicinity of Xewkija in mid-1943 in preparation for the invasion of Sicily. Several far-sighted persons were of the opinion that the landing strip should have been maintained to be converted to civilian use. This was not to be but, nonetheless, in the following years there were several attempts to launch the airlink. In the nineteen seventies and eighties, the idea went into hibernation. In 1987, the island of Gozo got a minister to administer its affairs. Minister Anton Tabone lost no time to revive the project and to carry out concrete steps towards its realization. It was not an easy task for the Ministry to convince the upper echelons of Government that the service would be advantageous to Gozo, but also that the Gozitans had the right to participate in the progress being registered by Malta in air travel. The service, provided by a helicopter, finally took off in 1990.

Keywords:

Authors Bio-Note:

Joseph Bezzina, born in Victoria, Gozo, is a graduate of the University of Malta and the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, from where he earned a first-class Honours doctorate in Church History. He was for seventeen years Head of Department of Church History at the University of Malta. In 1989, he founded the Gozo Section of the National Archives, which he directed until his retirement in 2020. During the same time, he was Assistant National Archivist. He is the author of close to eighty books and many studies published in English, Maltese, French, German, and Italian.

The Malta–Gozo Air Service

Part 2 - The Project Takes Off

The *first* part of this study outlined the early endeavours for the provision of a permanent airlink between Malta and Gozo. The idea was stimulated by the airfield built in the vicinity of Xewkija in mid-1943 in preparation for the invasion of Sicily. Several far-sighted persons were of the opinion that the landing strip should have been maintained to be converted to civilian use. This was not to be. Notwithstanding, in the following years there were several attempts to launch an airlink between the islands. The service would finally take off in 1990.

1 - The idea goes into hibernation (1971–1987)

In the election of June 1971, the Malta Labour Party took over the government of Malta from the Nationalist Party and it was to remain in power for three successive terms, up to May 1987.

Two early significant achievements of the new government were, as a matter of fact, in the aviation sector. On 29 May 1972, sovereign Malta's first-ever Maltese-run and Maltese-commanded military flying unit came into being. The unit in question was of *flight* strength and it was

designated *The Helicopter Flight* – a complete unit of high-quality military standard with four *Bell* 47G-2 helicopters at its disposal.[1]

Another major achievement was the setting up of a national airline. Discussions, deliberations, and consultations regarding a Malta airline had started soon after the attainment of independence from the United Kingdom on 21 September 1964.[2] At long last, on 21 March 1973, through a resolution of the House of Representatives, the Government set up *Air Malta*. It was registered as a limited liability company the following 30 March. Dom Mintoff, the Prime Minister, granted the company an Air Service Licence valid for ten years starting from 1 April 1973.[3] *Air Malta* started flights on 1 April 1974 with scheduled services to London, Birmingham, Manchester, Rome, Paris, Frankfurt, and Tripoli.

An ancillary air service to Gozo was never taken into consideration during the setting up of *Air Malta*, notwithstanding the proposals and plans of the late 1960s. Gozo did however gain from the military helicopter unit. Following on the footsteps of the Royal Air Force, these helicopters were regularly deployed in emergencies as well as to convey VIPS to and from Gozo. The helicopters initially landed at the Silver Jubilee Sports Ground, eventually, renamed the Gozo Stadium. Soon after the formal formation of the FAM · Forzi Armati ta' Malta (Armed Forces of Malta) on 19 April 1973, its *Air Wing*, as it was officially termed, built a helipad at Ta' Lambert, in the same locality of the 1943 American airfield.[4] In medical emergencies, it landed instead at a specifically built helipad adjacent to Gozo General Hospital, inaugurated on 31 May 1975. This latter helipad has since been removed.

––––––––––––––––––

[1] Peter Micallef-Eynaud, *Maltese military aviation: born fifty years ago*, in *Times of Malta* (30 May 2022) 14-15.

[2] Inferred from in a comment in NAM, OPM, 0984/1972.

[3] *See Air Malta:* https://vassallohistory.wordpress.com/air-malta/.

[4] Referred to in Ministeru għal Għawdex, *Rapport ta' ħidma 3* (14 May 1989–13 May 1990) mill-Onor. Anton Tabone, Ministru għal Għawdex, 6.

As from December 1981, with the beginning of the last term of the Labour Government, Malta was mired down in a political crisis that stifled most innovative enterprises. Notwithstanding, the idea of a Gozo–Malta air service did get a very short-lived revival. In September 1983, Joe Grima (1937–2017) was appointed Minister of Tourism, a post he occupied until May 1987. When he took over the reins of the Ministry, he emphasised, like other ministers before him, that he would start focusing on upmarket tourism for the Maltese islands. He stressed that quality standards needed to permeate every sector of tourism. He was absolutely right in his resolve, but it was an undertaking easier said than done, a challenge that appears to elude the reach of any Maltese administration.

However, in the wake of his declared mission, he resuscitated the idea of an airlink between Malta and Gozo. Not long afterwards, he travelled to Stratford, Connecticut, to start talks with *Sikorsky Aircraft*, a pioneer company in the manufacture of helicopters for civilian and military use, on the possibility of the acquisition of a helicopter or two for a Malta-Gozo airlink.[5] No record on any follow-up has been traced.

Three years later, the project was brought up in Parliament by Carmelo Buttigieg, a Malta Labour Party MP from Gozo. On 23 September 1986, he queried the Prime Minister "when is the work on the projected airstrip in Gozo expected to commence; where it is planned to be laid; and what type of aircraft is expected to be employed." A loaded question to which the Prime Minister Karmenu Mifsud-Bonnici replied that "plans for an airstrip in Gozo are in preparation and will be made public as soon as concluded."[6]

Eventually, in April 1987, in the run-up to the general election, the Labour Government announced the approval of the outline plans

---

5 Anton Tabone (first Minister for Gozo), *Notes* to the author (2022).

6 Carmelo Buttigieg, PQ 1662, in *Dibatti tal-Kamra tad-Deputati*, Seduta 378 (23 Sep 1986) 1747.

for an airstrip.[7] It was to be built at the aforementioned locality of Tal-Lambert in the limits of Xewkija, more or less, on the footprint of the former American airfield. It was in fact planned like the former airfield with two runways. The main, on a roughly east-west axis, was to start from the Għar ix-Xiħ area, limits Għajnsielem, towards Tal-Lambert, limits of Xewkija; the shorter runway on a south-west-north-east axis from Santu Liju towards Tas-Santa Ċilja, intersecting the main runway at Ta' Lambert.[8] It was also announced that the expropriation of land in connection with the building of what was dubbed the *Lambert airstrip* was being taken in hand.

On 11 April 1987, an extraordinary joint General Conference of the Malta Labour Party and the General Workers Union, then twinned in a single consortium, approved the Electoral Manifesto. Regarding Gozo, it stated *inter alia* that a Labour Government would undertake "the building of an airstrip, already engaged in at Ta' Lambert, Xewkija, for the use of light aircrafts and helicopters."[9]

2 - The project becomes a priority (1987–1988)

In May 1987, Malta voted the Nationalist Party into power. The Prime Minister Eddie Fenech-Adami, in fulfilment of an electoral promise, set up for the first time a Ministry for Gozo. On 14 May 1987, Anton Tabone was sworn into office as the first Minister for Gozo.

He immediately started to work incessantly on the realization of an

---

[7] Victor Calleja, *When grievous sinners are converted to saints*, in *Times of Malta* (02 Dec 2022) 24.

[8] Carmel Attard, *[Il-Mitjar] approvat sa mill-1987*, in *Il-Ġens* (10 Feb 1995) 1. 24.

[9] "Il-bini ta' airstrip, li diġa ngħata bidu għalih, f'Ta' Lambert, ix-Xewkija, għall-użu ta' ajruplani żgħar u helicopters"; see *Il-Ġens* (17 Feb 1995) 2.

airlink between Malta and Gozo in fulfilment of another electoral promise. An idea that had been bandied for close to two decades immediately became a priority.[10] With a herculean determination, he resolved to overcome all sorts of obstacles for its realization. Anton Tabone found the full support of the Prime Minister and preparations for the venture to became a reality quickly took off.[11]

The Prime Minister was well aware of this Gozitan dream. Years later, he recalled how as a member of the National Executive Committee of the Nationalist Party since 1961, the problem of Gozo's double insularity had been on the Party's mind even then. He acknowledged that it could not be otherwise, as two prominent members who sat on the executive were two Gozitans, Dr Ċensinu Tabone, eventually President of Malta (1989-1994), and his nephew, Anton Tabone, first Minister for Gozo (1987-1996).[12]

In 1980, when Leader of the Opposition, he had consulted with George E. Kissaun, a person with life-long interest in aviation and chairman of the International Air Rally of Malta, on the feasibility of such project. As a result of these discussions, the proposal was included in the Party's electoral manifesto of 1981 with a view of giving it a more solid base in the 1980s. In the 1987 manifesto, it was expressly stated that "there would be a direct airlink between Malta Luqa Airport and Gozo in connection with regular flights to and from foreign countries, that could be used by everybody, particularly by tourists."[13]

—————————————

[10] Anton Tabone, *Notes* to the author (06 Dec 2022) and further personal communications.

[11] The project is well chronicled by George Kissaun (24 Jun 1938 - 29 Jan 2023) who was directly involved in its realization; see George E. Kissaun, *My life in aviation. The Malta-Gozo Airlink*, Malta 2012.

[12] Edward Fenech-Adami, *Foreword*, in Kissaun, 7-8.

[13] "Ikun hemm servizz dirett bl-ajru minn Ħal Luqa għal Għawdex, b'konessjoni mat-titjiriet regulari minn u għal pajjiżi barranin, li jkun jista' jintuża minn kulħadd, partikularment mit-turisti"; cited in *Il-Ġens* (17 Feb 1995) 2.

"The main arguments for the setting up of better links with Gozo - reminisced the Prime Minister - were two. Firstly, Gozitans had a right to every possible facility for movement on a par with those of us living in Malta and, secondly, Gozo needed the infrastructure to help its economy to prosper, particularly through the encouragement of both internal and international tourism.

"The setting up of the Ministry for Gozo in my first Cabinet of 1987 gave added weight to the Gozitan request. My Cabinet encouraged the setting up of a Gozo airlink, but it was made clear that an essential condition would be its economic feasibility. Serious attempts to achieve success were made, but these did not seem to enliven expectations from those who argued against the project."[14]

It did not take long for Minister Tabone to tackle this longed-for project. In early November 1987, he summoned the aforementioned George E. Kissaun to seek his learned advice and expert opinion on a viable airlink between Gozo and Malta. At that early stage, both an airlink with a fixed-wing aircraft as well as one using a helicopter were being considered.[15]

Early in 1988, the Government had for the first time instructed each Ministry to present an annual report. In the first-ever report by the Ministry for Gozo, issued on 10 June, it was reiterated that the Government had long envisaged "a direct air service between Luqa airport and Gozo."[16] Minister Tabone reported that during the previous year, he had held a number of meeting with entities capable of offering a helicopter or fixed- wing link. He had also brought up the subject during a Cabinet meeting and, at the end of a well-prepared elucidation, the Cabinet willingly gave its approval for the launching of the project.[17]

---

[14] Fenech-Adami, in ibid, 7-8.
[15] Kissaun, 12.
[16] Citing Partit Nazzjonalista, *Manifest Elettorali* (1987) 9.4.c.iv.
[17] Ministeru għal Għawdex, *Rapport ta' Ħidma* 1 (14 May 1987–13 May 1988) 4.

On 9 March 1988, Minister Tabone had requested *Air Malta* - the airline of the Maltese Islands – to prepare a study on how the project could become a reality. It was to delve into all possibilities, prepare a comparative analysis upon them, and present a detailed report of the findings.[18]

Minister Tabone was at that time striving to put together a committee for the realization of the project and he invited Kissaun to be its Vice-Chairman.[19] It was first convened in mid-1988.[20] The six members of the Committee who unselfishly gave their contribution to build a solid base and initiate the Malta-Gozo Air Services were:

- Anton Tabone, Minister for Gozo; *Chairman of the Committee*

- Captain George E. Kissaun, Deputy CEO, NTOM-National Tourism Organisation; *Vice-Chairman*

- Frans Camilleri, Group Head Strategic Planning, Air Malta; at times, standing for Albert Mizzi, Chairman Air Malta

- Joseph Galea, representing the Ministry of Finance

- Franco Masini, Chairman Gozo Channel Company, that ran the ferry service between the islands

- Joseph Sultana, Operations Officer, Director DCA-Department of Civil Aviation.

- Frank Psaila, the Ministry's permanent secretary, acted as secretary of the Committee whose members have rightly been referred to as "the planners of the service."[21]

---

[18] Ibid, 4.
[19] Kissaun, 13-14. 60.
[20] Ministeru għal Għawdex, *Rapport ta' ħidma* 2 (14 May 1988–13 May 1989) 3.
[21] Kissaun, 12.

3 - Aircraft, airstrip, and finance

This specially-set up committee had quite a load on its hands. First and foremost, it was imperative to decide whether to opt for a fixed-wing aircraft or a helicopter. Upon this factor depended the very important decision of the choice of the site for a landing strip or a helicopter pad and related issues. Last, but certainly not least, it was to weigh the viability of the whole venture and search for financial backers, public or private.

The *first* and pivotal discussion regarded the choice of a fixed-wing aircraft or a helicopter. It had ramifications in all facets of the project and it proved the most debated and disputed point. Each choice had evidently its pros and cons. The running of a fixed-wing aircraft was considered and proven to be less costly to maintain. Captain Kissaun was firmly and resolutely in favour of a fixed-wing solution rather than a helicopter service. He surmised, correctly as it turned out, that it would be costlier than the fixed-wing solution.

In order to prove his point, he succeeded through his many connections in Germany, to simulate trials with a fixed-wing *Dornier 228* from Friedrichschafen to Munich airports. The trip was longer than that between Malta and Gozo, but the turnaround time fitted the 20-25 minute-bracket necessary for the Malta-Gozo link. He continued to harp on this choice till the very end, even when a decision to the contrary was eventually taken.[22]

It was not long before Captain Kissaun started private consultations with colleagues in both the United Kingdom and Germany to identify the kind of helicopter to be used in a nine-to-eleven

---

[22] Kissaun, 23-24.

passenger configuration. He eventually made contact with *Alan Mann Helicopters*, one of the largest and most respected helicopter companies in the United Kingdom, founded 1971. It was agreed that the wet-lease of an *Agusta Bell 412* helicopter was the ideal choice for multiple reasons, foremost amongst them its unique record of reliability and safety. It could carry at least ten passengers.[23]

The *second* nut to crack was the airstrip. Long deliberations about it had, eventually, shifted the Committee towards the costlier solution. A helicopter pad could be built in a few days, contrary to an airstrip that required more planning, a significantly longer strip of land, and a higher investment. A decision in that direction was hastened by Minister Anton Tabone who was adamant that the introduction of an airlink, in the pipeline for close to a half a century, should not be delayed any longer.

Regarding the site, three proposals were taken into consideration. The first was the area known as *Ta' Bordin*, east of the racetrack on the Victoria-Nadur road; the second, *Ta' Lambert*, south-west of the former; and the third, the centre of *Ta' Xħajma* racetrack itself that could at least serve that purpose temporarily. All three were, more or less, within the footprint of the former military airfield.[24]

The question was also brought up on the use of three other sites in Malta. Besides Luqa airport, Buġibba, San Pawl il-Baħar, and Manoel Island were also taken into consideration. They were intended to serve as alternative pick-up points for the convenience of tourists.[25] The first two alternatives were soon aborted, but the third was to be given further consideration. Eventually, the island

---

22 Kissaun, 23-24.
23 Kissaun, 16-17. 25.
24 Kissaun, 16.
25 Kissaun, 21.

of Comino was also evaluated and seriously considered due to its tourist aspect.

The *third* issue was viability: the financial feasibility of the whole project upon which depended its make and break. All Committee members were involved in this arduous task each one with input from his particular area of specialization. Frans Camilleri of Air Malta contributed a lot through his aviation expertise and started delving into feasible flying figures. Joseph Galea assessed the contribution that could be proffered by the Ministry of Finance. Franco Masini paved the way for discussions on the project with Gozitan entrepreneurs and hoteliers so as to garner their interest. Besides, he unstintingly promoted the project to make sure Gozo was well served. Joseph Sultana, Director DCA, dealt with the air requirements side and landing area requisites for flight safety in and out of the heliport.

Captain Kissaun coordinated proceedings and merged the ensuing reports. He also coordinated with the NTOM side, especially with his chief Dr Michael Refalo, then Parliamentary Secretary, who, it must be recorded, showed much faith in the project.

Minister Anton Tabone insistently harped on the main aspect through which the government was looking at the whole project: the social concept. Minister Tabone laid a huge emphasis on this, with the Cabinet agreeing that this was one way of looking at this service.[26] This very commendable stance made possible a Government subsidy. It became clear with one report after another that without the government's financial intervention, the social service aspect would flop.

---

[26] Anton Tabone, *Notes* to the author (2022).

4 - Fine-tuning the project (1989–1990)

A thorough assessment of all the costings was no easy task. Evaluating and checking the accuracy of preliminary figures, in preparation for an eventual presentation to Cabinet, took months. The fine-tuning of the whole project was nonetheless in full swing.

In the aforementioned meeting of 9 March 1988 with the Board of *Air Malta*, Anton Tabone, after requesting a full assessment of the project, urged the Company to get directly involved in fulfilment of its slogan - *Airline of the Maltese Islands*. The initial interest of Albert Mizzi, Chairman Air Malta, proved promising.

Meetings of the Ministerial Committee continued unabated throughout 1988 and 1989. The seven principal hoteliers in Gozo together with other operators in the tourism sector got involved more and more.[27] Problems continued cropping up one after another, but none of them were able to bend the resolve of Minister Tabone and his team. He was confident that a combined effort by all the entities involved would even out all difficulties.

The choice of the site for the helipad, eventually, fell on *Ta' Lambert*, the same area indicated by the *Malta-Gozo Air Services Ltd* in 1968.[28] Though it had been decided that the service would operate with a helicopter, Captain Kissaun had insisted on that spot as, eventually, it could accommodate a runway of five hundred metres maximum.[29] The feasibility of a fixed-wing operation was never off the radar.

The Civil Aviation Department was asked to produce information

---

[27] Ministeru għal Għawdex, *Rapport ta' ħidma* 6 (Feb 1992-Feb 1993) 6.

[28] Ministeru għal Għawdex, *Rapport ta' ħidma* 3 (14 May 1989-13 May 1990) 6.

[29] Kissaun, 22.

on weather patterns, landing directions, legal aspects, and the size of the aeronautical complex. It was emphasised throughout the proceedings to take up as little land as possible, so as not to upset the environmental balance of the area.

Captain Kissaun had in the meantime proceeded with his negotiations with *Alan Mann Helicopters*, that by then had transferred its interests in the Malta-Gozo venture to *Elisud*, their subsidiary in Italy. On 19 April 1990, as the project started heading towards the desired conclusion, Commandante Ciro Manso, *Elisud* commercial director Italy, and Mark Langford, *Alan Mann* sales chief, arrived in Malta for a brief visit to get a closer view of the intended Malta-Gozo operation. They were largely satisfied.

On 27 April, Captain Kissaun briefed Frans Camilleri of *Air Malta* on the minor concerns of *Elisud*, related mainly to the Gozo helipad where work was still being carried out. He also discussed with him the figures put forward for operation and costs and it was agreed that they seemed satisfactory for a month's trial.[30]

By then, Captain Kissaun had readied the brief of the project that was to be presented to the Cabinet for a thorough evaluation. In the third week of May, he states: "I was called by the Cabinet to explain the contents of the brief we had submitted for approval. I consider myself very fortunate to have faced a very understanding Prime Minister who showed tremendous reasoning power and controlled a situation in which at times I could hardly finish a sentence before being bombarded with another question."[31]

He got the impression that the Cabinet largely agreed with the presentation, but reservations were expressed about the estimated

---

[30] Kissaun, 26.

[31] Kissaun, 23.

figures of clients. It was pointed out that high-spending tourists were on the increase and that a ticketing structure should be tailor-made for Gozitan residents especially in emergencies and on those occasions when the ferry service was suspended. The social aspect of the service could not be put aside.[32]

The following week, Captain Kissaun travelled to London to conclude negotiations with *Alan Mann Helicopters*, on the wet-lease of a helicopter for a one-month trial service starting at the end of June, with the distinct probability of a month's extension in August.[33] As agreed, the service was to be offered by their subsidiary *Elisud* and it would be provided by an *Agusta-Bell 412 Grifone*, a multipurpose utility transport version built under licence in Italy by *Agusta*.

On 10 June, *Air Malta* informed Minister Tabone that the Company had agreed to operate the helicopter service. The decision triggered off a meeting of the hard-working committee with *Air Malta* to thrash out the final details of the agreement, a meeting that took place in the office of Albert Mizzi at Luqa airport. The actual signing of the agreement took place at the same office on 21 June 1990. From that moment, responsibilities for the helicopter service were transferred to MAC · *Malta Air Charter* Company Limited - a joint venture by the Government of Malta, *Air Malta*, and *Gozo Channel* Company Limited.

The agreement was announced during a press conference immediately after the signing. It was opened by Dr Joseph Fenech, Parliamentary Secretary for Offshore Activities and Maritime Affairs, who emphasised that the new service paved the way for other initiatives in the field of upmarket tourism. Albert Mizzi

---

[32] Anton Tabone, *Notes* to the author (2022).

[33] Kissaun, 25.

pledged that if the venture proved to be a success, the Company would consider the possibility of using a larger helicopter and the resumption of the service on 1 April the following year. Anton Tabone, the man behind it all, expressed his satisfaction for this breakthrough and thanked all those who behind the scenes had incessantly laboured towards the realization of the service.[34]

Afterwards, all those present assisted at the landing at Luqa Airport of the *Agusta-Bell 412 Grifone* piloted by Commandante Ciro Manzo, accompanied on board by Leone Mondello, President *Elisud*, and Piero di Prima, President *Banca di Credito Siciliana*.[35] Due to the commitment of Minister Tabone, the first full attempt to fly the Malta straits commercially was became a reality.

5 - The first flight takes off (27 June 1990)

The first scheduled helicopter flight took off from the Gozo helipad at *Ta' Lambert* at six in the morning of Wednesday, 27 June 1990, and, after a ten-minute flight, landed at Luqa airport - a real breakthrough in the inter-islands connectivity and a major leap for quality.[36]

The reconstruction of the helipad and an extension for the take-off and landing of the helicopter had been completed in time by labourers engaged with the Ministry for Gozo. Works were also carried out on the widening and resurfacing of the street that from the Xewkija-Għajnsielem roundabout on the Victoria-Mġarr

---

[34] See *Times of Malta* (22 Jun 1990) 40; *Il-Ġens* (22 Jun 1990) 24.

[35] *Il-Ġens* (22 Jun 1990) 24.

[36] Joseph Fenech, Parliamentary Secretary for Offshore Activities and Maritime Affairs, in *Times of Malta*.(22 Jun 1990) 40.

road led to the site.[37] The Gozo Heliport was eventually granted the IATA airport code/location identifier GZM.

The building of a small terminal next to the helicopter was also in the pipeline. Initially, the facilities were extremely limited and passengers had to queue and cram into a tiny hut-like building for boarding. The whole area had indeed an experimental feel about it.[38] However, the service had taken off. A two-hour long plus journey had been reduced to ten minutes, a reduction of a full one hundred and ten minutes.

This *Agusta-Bell 412 Grifone* was equipped with state-of-the-art technology and with automatic flight stabilisation added to its many safety features. It had a maximum of thirteen comfortable seats in a fully-upholstered cabin. It also had a tremendous versatility, in the case of an urgent cargo delivery the seats could be easily removed.[39]

The daily schedule comprised eight return trips from Gozo to Malta, the first departing Gozo at 6.00am and the last at 7.10pm; while from Luqa Airport to Gozo, the first was at 6.15am and the last at 7.50pm. Of these eight, five were return trips to the airport and three return trips to Manoel Island, an islet in the middle of Marsamxett Harbour adjacent to Valletta. Two thirty-minute sightseeing tours were scheduled, the first departing from Manoel Island at 10.15am; the second from Gozo at 6.05pm.[40] The helicopter was based in Gozo, where the last flight arrived at 8.00pm.

There were four different fares. A one-way ticket cost Lm8 (€18.64);

---

[37] Ministeru għal Għawdex, *Rapport ta' ħidma* 3 (14 May 1989-13 May 1990) 6.

[38] James Calvert, *PM inaugurates Gozo Heliport,* in *The Sunday Times of Malta (26 May 1996) 1. 92*

[39] For further technical details, see Kissaun, 27-28.

[40] *Times of Malta* (22 Jun 1990) 40; *Il-Ġens* (22 Jun 1990) 24.

a day return Lm12 (€27.96); an open-dated return Lm16 (€37.28); and a one-way standby fare Lm6 (€13.98). The sightseeing tour cost Lm15 (€34.95) per person. The rate for infants under two years was fifty per cent of applicable fares.[41]

The *Agusta-Bell 412 Grifone* provided a service without a hitch for a full month. Unexpectedly, after just two weeks of operation, *Air Malta* announced that it had made a new deal with a Bulgarian company to continue the service with two Russian-built Mil Mi-8 helicopters. With the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe (1989-1991), many such helicopters became available for lease at competitive prices. Besides, the *Mil Mi-8*, a medium twin-turbine helicopter, was considered as very prolific utility helicopter specifically designated for civilian passenger transport.

This surprising decision was not shared by those involved in the project. The *Elisud* service was run to high safety standards which were of a non-compromising nature in Europe. They were EU standards and that parameter was well known to *Air Malta*.[42] It was acknowledged that while the *Mil Mi-8* were cheaper to lease, they were costlier to maintain.

At the end of July, the wet-lease of the *Agusta-Bell 412 Grifone* was not renewed. The *Mil Mi-8*, flown to Malta by two Bulgarian pilots, took over the service from the beginning of August. The return flights to and from Manoel Island were immediately discontinued.[43]

Captain George Kissaun rightly lamented that these abrupt changes in the first weeks of operations, coupled with an increase in overheads introduced by MAC, and the sudden addition of

---

[41] *Times of Malta* (22 Jun 1990) 40; *Il-Ġens* (22 Jun 1990) 24.

[42] Kissaun, 29-30.

[43] John Visanich, *Malta Airport Movements*: https://www.facebook.com/LuqaAirport/photos/.

a second helicopter, would prove difficult to make a proper assessment on the viability of the service. The extra costs would definitely infringe on the tightrope balance proposed by the Cabinet.[44]

The trial service came to an end on 2 September, a full month more than programmed. During the period 27 June to 2 September 1990, *Malta Air Charter* carried 2649 passengers on scheduled flights and 33 on panoramic flights, a total of 2682 – not a mean achievement for a new service.[45] The majority were Gozitan residents, including this writer, travelling to or returning from abroad, but it was also resorted to by businessmen and professionals as their time of travel had been dramatically cut down.

A cursory glance at the opinion columns of local newspapers at that time attests that the service had been welcomed by the majority. And more than one correspondent urged for the hastening of the next step - a fixed-wing aircraft to cut costs and fares.[46]

The service had indeed been started on a trial basis, but indicators for the future were encouraging.

———————————

[44] Kissaun, 29.
[45] Statistics for the number of passengers were kindly provided by Charles Saliba, PRO, *Malta Air Charter* for my write-up Joseph Bezzina, *Gozo gets a heliport*, in *Malta Year Book* (1998) 451-454. See also, Ministeru għal Għawdex, *Rapport ta' ħidma* 4 (14 May 1990-13 May 1991) 7.
[46] *Il-Ġens* (20 Jul 1990) 8.

Calypso revisited

An essay on the environment

Prof. Joe Friggieri

Abstract:

In dealing with the vexed question of Gozitan identity, one needs to emphasise the role played by the environment in fostering human well-being, and of the harmful consequences that result from its abuse. Gozo's future hangs in the balance. Our lawmakers must ensure that public land is administered in the interests of the common good.

Keywords:

Author's Bio-Note:

Joe Friggieri is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Malta. He has written two books on the Oxford philosopher J.L. Austin and is the author of the first History of Philosophy in Maltese, In-Nisġa tal-Ħsieb, in three volumes. A selected collection of his essays was published by Kite. He is also a poet, playwright, short story writer and theatre director, and a regular contributor to cultural programmes on radio and television.

Calypso revisited

An essay on the environment

I.   Though I do not live in Gozo, I've been there so often that I feel I know the island much better than I know certain parts of Malta. The ferry crossings from Ċirkewwa to Mġarr all seem to merge in my imagination into one uninterrupted sort of dream - the view of Comino and the caves, the sight of Mġarr harbour, with yachts to one side and fishing boats further in, Fort Chambray perched on top of the hill, and the neo-Gothic chapel rising out of the rocks. My memories of Gozo are all closely linked to my experience at the University Gozo Centre - later, the University Gozo Campus - where I served as co-coordinator of the Philosophy courses and Senate representative on the Board of Studies, then as Pro-Rector for Gozo.[1]

The Gozo Centre was officially opened in 1992, with Professor Lino Briguglio as its director, and I used to go there every other weekend to teach Philosophy to three successive groups of adult students, some of whom pursued their studies up to M.A. and even PhD levels. The decision right from the start to include Philosophy,

---

[1] It was then that Gozitan students were given the option to sit for their exams in Gozo, and that the space at the Centre previously used for parking was transformed into an olive grove.

History and Sociology as core subjects in the course leading to the B.A. highlighted the importance attributed by the University to the Humanities in fostering critical thinking, generating new ideas, and stimulating the creative imagination of the students.

Being aware of a country's history, understanding the way society works, and reflecting critically on its expectations, partly define the nature of the subjects I've mentioned. Together and in their own right, these subjects provide the would-be researcher with the conceptual tools required for answering the complex question about the identity of a region such as Gozo, and its people.

II.   On many occasions, President George Vella, adding his voice to that of a number of constituted bodies and voluntary non-governmental organisations, has warned against the profit-driven frenzy for overdevelopment as manifested in the reckless sprawl of buildings taking up an inordinate amount of land, ruining the character of traditional towns and villages, and posing a threat to the identity of small communities. In his appeal for a radical reform of policies where building regulations are concerned, the President singled out Gozo as the most vulnerable target now bearing the brunt of uncontrollable construction leading to the island's uglification.[2] In dealing with the vexed question of Gozitan identities in the ever-changing landscape of personal and social relations, one needs to emphasize the role played by the environment in fostering human well-being, and of the harmful consequences that result from its abuse.

---

[2] See H.E. Dr George Vella's address at the fourth edition of the Malta Architecture and Spatial Planning Awards organised by the Planning Authority on Saturday 1st April, 2023.

III.   There is a myth in Plato's *Phaedrus* about an ancient Egyptian God called Theuth (or Thoth), the inventor of writing, measuring and calculation, who visits Thamus, the Pharaoh, the king of all Egypt, and offers him writing as a gift - a *pharmakon* that would make all Egyptians wiser, because it would make them remember things better. Thamus refuses the gift, telling Theuth that, rather than making them wiser, the 'gift' would make them lazier and more forgetful, since they would be relying on outward signs - written words, rather than on their memory - to remember things. The Greek word *pharmakon*, as Jacques Derrida points out in his essay 'La pharmacie de Platon' (Derrida 1972), has two meanings: it can mean cure, therapy, medicine, a good drug, but it can also mean poison, a bad or harmful drug. We can look at the environment in the same way, or rather in the same *two* ways.

Let's take the cure or therapy aspect first. There's clearly a sense in which a walk along the cliffs at Ta' Ċenċ or Ta' Sanap, an energetic swim at Għajn Barrani or Mġarr ix-Xini, an early morning trek to Gebel San Ġorġ or Wied il-Għasri, away from the noise and pollution of city life, can work wonders for your health. On such occasions, the natural environment can literally help you get rid of a physical ailment, or cure you of a disease, by offering you the kind of sensory or sensual experiences - pleasures of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste - which you won't get in an urban setting. Such pleasures are irreplaceable. That's why those who misappropriate parts of the natural environment are depriving the rest of us of a good we cannot find elsewhere. From being a positive *pharmakon*, a therapy or cure, the environment becomes a bad or harmful drug, a source of strife, discomfort and stress.

Environmental degradation leads to physical and psychological disruption. When the ties between a person's life and their natural and cultural environment are severed, they experience *anomie*,

a deep physical and spiritual malaise, and their relations with the rest of the community will suffer as a result. We can show what happens to people's well-being when they end up living in a poor or hostile environment by recalling Karl Marx's distinction between three kinds of alienation workers suffer from under exploitative relations of production: alienation from themselves, from their product, and from their fellow-workers. People living in a concrete jungle, with no access to nature, suffer from the same kinds of affliction: they become strangers to themselves, they lose control over their actions, and they feel cut off - alienated - from other human beings, from those they would normally be able to relate to and communicate with in a healthy environment. Separating the quality of the environment from the quality of people's lives would be splitting the person into two halves, body and mind, matter and spirit. It would be like inserting a wedge between the physical and the psychological, hiving off thoughts, sensations and emotions from the form of life in which they are embedded or expressed.

IV. According to an old and well-established tradition, Gozo was the enchanted island of the beautiful goddess Calypso. This is how Homer describes the scene that greeted Hermes, Zeus' messenger, as he stepped onto Ogygia's shore from the blue waters of the sea and walked along till he reached the cave where the nymph was living.

'He found the lady of the lovely locks at home. A big fire was blazing on the hearth and the scent from burning logs of split juniper and cedar wafted far across the island. Inside, Calypso was singing in a beautiful voice as she wove at the loom and moved her golden shuttle to and fro. The cave was sheltered by a radiant copse of alders, aspens, and fragrant cypresses, which was the roosting-place of feathered creatures, horned owls and falcons, garrulous choughs,

birds of the coast, whose daily business takes them down to the sea. Trailing round the very mouth of the cavern, a garden vine ran riot, with great chunks of ripe grapes, while from four separate but neighbouring springs four crystal rivulets were trained to run this way and that; and in soft meadows on either side the iris and the parsley flourished. It was indeed a spot where even an immortal visitor must pause to gaze in wonder and delight.'[3]

What made Calypso's habitat so enchanting was the marvellous blend of natural elements and cultural artefacts and the interplay between them - the sea, the cave, the springs, the trees, the birds, the wild flowers and the meadows representing the former, with the hearth, the burning logs, the loom and the shuttle standing for the latter. It would be wrong to think of these elements as separate rather than overlapping, or as contrasting rather than complementary. The vine that trails round the mouth of the cavern is a garden vine, and the four neighbouring springs are *trained to run this way and that* to form four rivulets.

The scent from the burning logs, together with Calypso's singing, define the quality of the sensory experience of the visitor as involving a holistic, unfragmented amalgam of nature and culture. It is this experience that gives Calypso's cave and the rest of Ogygia their meaning. And it is this 'unfragmented amalgam of nature and culture' that we should aim at preserving when planning Gozo's future.

V.   It is possible to distinguish, as Arto Haapala does, beween two senses of place - the geographical sense, and the sense in which we use the expression 'sense of place'. In the first sense, 'place does not involve or require anything more than physical location... To

---

[3] Homer, *The Odyssey*, prose translation by E.V.Rieu, Penguin Classics, pp. 89-90.

have a place,' in this sense, 'is to fill physical space'. In the second sense we are assuming the presence of a subject who is having a particular kind of experience evoked by the location one is in.[4] It was in the second sense, thirty or forty years ago, that one felt that Gozo was different from Malta. It had its own unique spirit, its distinctive environmental character or atmosphere, which it is now in danger of losing.

To see the difference between then and now, one may contrast what one can imagine Gozo to have felt like in legendary time, when it was still Ogygia, with the way another island Gozo's size - call it Ogygia 2 - would feel like today with the noise of heavy machinery drowning Calypso's singing, a bulldozer demolishing her cave and digging a hole to lay the foundation for yet another block of flats, scores of excavators working day and night to build an underwater tunnel joining Ogygia 2 to the nearest island, the land-developer, golden wand in hand, swooping down, Hermes-like, on fertile fields and valleys, and rows of cars emitting poisonous fumes to kill 'the scent from burning logs of split juniper and cedar that wafted far across the island.'

VI.   Those who interpret any reference to the Calypso legend as a misguided attempt on the part of environmentalists to hinder progress in Gozo will obviously not be too keen to look at the episode of the Sirens in the *Odyssey* as a warning against being lured by the glitter of modern lifestyles. Odysseus managed to sail by the Sirens by plugging his crew's ears with beeswax and making them tie him up to the ship's mast. This is how he avoided being thrown into 'the

---

[4] Arto Haapala, 'On the Aesthetics of the Everyday: Familiarity, Strangeness and the Meaning of Place', in Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith, *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, 41-43.

pile of mouldering skeletons of men, whose withered skin still hung upon their bones.' Will Gozo and the Gozitans learn the lesson?

VII.   The point has often been made that poets were the first ecologists and that all great writers, including the authors of the earliest sacred texts in both eastern and western cultural traditions, have found in the natural environment a constant source of inspiration.

Whether it was itself the subject of their literary output, or whether it served as a backdrop to it, Nature always featured prominently in their works, as it did in the case of Maltese and Gozitan poets, who, over the years, helped to create an ecological awareness among children and young adults who later became pro-environment activists in various fields.[5]

Right from the start, Maltese literature celebrated the beauty of all aspects of the natural and cultural heritage of the Maltese islands - hills and valleys, land and sea, birds and trees, the Neolithic temples, the fortifications, the great palazzi, the baroque churches, together with country lanes, village squares, farmhouses, and rural chapels. It was through Literature that the inhabitants of these islands, Maltese and Gozitans alike, learnt to love the place where they lived and appreciate the value of their surroundings. But this was ages ago, when the brutal attacks on the environment had not yet started, causing a new generation of poets, novelists, and short-story writers to make *that* the main argument of their literary output, as I shall now show.

---

[5] See Oliver Friggieri's 'Environmental Elements in Maltese Literature: The Example of Dun Karm, Malta's National Poet', in Patrick D. Murphy ed., *Literature of Nature: An International Sourcebook*, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, Chicago and London, 1998, 212-217.

VIII.   The sense of alienation resulting from living in a hostile environment is reflected in the title of a short story I wrote way back in 1983, 'Madliena, fully detached'.[6] The central character of the story lives with her rich, middle-aged parents in a large house which, like the surrounding palatial buildings, had spoilt the beauty of the natural environment which was there for everyone to enjoy before the 'developers' obtained the necessary permit to destroy it. Like the house she lives in, the central character is 'fully detached' from her surroundings. Her alienation is partly due to what she sees from the verandah, or when she looks out of her bedroom window:

'On each side of the tarmacked road, the soft contours of the earth had been brutally disfigured, permanently defaced by the chaotic sprawl of villas and terraced houses which had mushroomed in the prolonged building boom of the sixties and seventies, huge chunks of stone springing haphazardly from the fertile soil, the monstrous obscenities of the nouveaux riches.'

What the story was meant to show was that there is always an intimate relation or causal link between a person's psychological state and the kind of environment they live in. A scene one would normally think of as one of great beauty, like a glowing sunset, is not likely to evoke positive feelings in the viewer if the cultural contours surrounding the experience tend in some way to obstruct it.[7]

---

[6] The story was published in *Tomorrow*, Pragma Publishing Co. Ltd, Malta, July 1983, 25-27, and republished in an international journal ten years later: *Mediterraneans*, 4, Mediterraneans/Méditerranéens, Paris, 1993, 256-260.

[7] I explore the same theme of environmental degradation and psychological impairment in another story, 'Is-Siġra', first published in *L-Ambjent fil-Pinna*, a collection of short stories on the environment published by the Secretariat for the Environment and the Librarians Association in 1996. It was republished twenty years later in *Nismagħhom jgħidu* (Kite, Malta, 2016), and translated into English by Clare Vassallo ('The Tree', *Straight to the Point and Other Stories*, Kite, Malta 2019).

IX.   Similar feelings of alienation or *anomie* run through Francis Ebejer's novel *In the Eye of the Sun*, where Joseph, the young protagonist, undergoes a mental and psychological strip-tease while the Maltese countryside is being destroyed.[8] Joseph moves from an urban to a rural environment, from the University to a farm in the country, from his room on the farm to a cave in the cliffs, in a desperate effort to see himself as he truly is, to isolate his bare essence. Once he has reached the cave, where else is there to go? Is this the question many young Maltese and Gozitans are asking themselves as they find it increasingly hard to adapt to their environment? When he feels the cave is not far enough, Joseph crawls through a little opening into an inner recess. Above him, a crack in the cliff shows him a patch of sky. The light falls on his face, then, with the movement of the sun, it passes him completely. At a time when so much land is being encroached upon, the story injects an added poignancy. It can be read as a parallel of what may happen - or is already happening - to a small island like Malta and an even smaller island like Gozo when the natural contours of the land are made to disappear in the face of rapid building development and a swift alignment with other tourist hotspots.

X.   The environmental problems the Maltese islands are facing today have a long history, and Gozo would do well to learn from past mistakes rather than slavishly emulating the developmental model that led to the bigger island's rapid decline. For well over forty years now, while lip-service was being paid to sustainable economic growth, and empty promises about the environment filled the glossy pages of electoral manifestos, large areas of countryside were being taken up by new constructions. Village cores were ripped

---

[8] Francis Ebejer, *In the Eye of the Sun*, Macdonald, London, 1969.

open and vernacular architecture was wantonly destroyed. The open spaces separating towns and villages disappeared as a result of ribbon development, while the opening of new roads cutting through fertile land threatened the livelihood of farmers and dealt a severe blow to agriculture and the production of locally grown fruit and vegetables.

XI.   Until fairly recently, representatives of the two main political parties would counter the honest plea for environmental protection by repeating the mantra that Gozo was not a crib ('Għawdex mhux presepju'). If that slogan ever made sense, it sounds utterly hollow now. Luckily, the tide seems to be turning as a wide cross-section of Gozitans have come to realise what lies in store for them if the powers-that-be fail to put an end to the harm that's being inflicted on the island in the name of progress. The sterling work of NGOs, a sustained campaign in the independent press in favour of the environment, together with a number of important legal decisions, have managed to push environmental issues to the centre of public debate. What is being highlighted all along is the duty on the part of government agencies and institutions to ensure that public land is administered in the interests of the common good.

XII.   Malta became an independent state in 1964, so it is now high time for us to assume responsibility for our actions and stop blaming colonialism or the 'colonial mentality' for the way we are wreaking havoc on the environment. Never in the long years of British rule, nor indeed in the preceding centuries of domination by other powers, was so much damage inflicted on our natural and cultural heritage.

What we need is a radical change of perspective. This would mean realising that we human beings have what Holmes Rolston III calls 'entwined destinies' with the natural world. It would mean 'dissolving any firm boundary' between the two so as to let nature take its course, as much as we can' (Rolston 2003: 525-6). It would involve the resolve on our part to deal with the environment with the reverence and respect it deserves. The quality of human life will improve radically once we realise that the environment we live in is not something to be exploited for private profit or financial gain but a good to be appreciated and enjoyed. In David Cooper's words, such a realisation would invoke a change from hubris to humility, where hubris is defined in Heideggerian terms as the urge to transform nature into a tool at our disposal (Cooper 2018:87), an urge based on the belief that human beings could 'shape and exploit the natural world according to their whims' (ibid.91).

XIII.   Gozo's future hangs in the balance. We cannot have a healthy culture in a sick environment, because nature and culture, that is, nature and the way we live, are inextricably linked. We must keep that in mind when we talk of Gozitan identity. Some fifty years ago, Gozitan poet (later President of the Republic) Anton Buttiġieġ wrote this beautiful haiku:

> The farmers migrate.
> Throughout the fields all one sees
> are men of straw.

That was fifty years ago. We all know what the situation is like today. Still, we must not give up hope, for there are clear decisions we can make to save the environment from further degradation, given that, in Gozo especially, there's still a considerable amount of

countryside that can be protected, a fairly long stretch of coast that must be kept accessible to everybody, and a number of old villages whose character ought to be preserved. We know what we should be aiming at and we also have the means to achieve those ends - if only we could convince ourselves and our lawmakers that our cultural environment is a common or public good and should be treated as such; and that it is only when people are at one with their environment rather than pitted against it that they can function as healthy human beings rather than as ''men of straw''.

References

Derrida, J. 1972: 'La pharmacie de Platon', La Dissémination. Paris: Seuil, tr. Johnson, B. 1981: 'Plato's Pharmacy', *Dissemination*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Rolston, III, H. 2003: 'Environmental Ethics', in Bunnin, N. and Tsui-James, E.P. (eds) 2003: *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

Cooper, D.E. 2018: *Senses of Mystery: Engaging with Nature and the Meaning of Life*. London and New York: Routledge.

A Multi-perspective on the role of customer experience across the hospitality industry in Gozo

Mariana Bugeja

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to identify the role customer experience plays within the hospitality industry in Gozo. The study provides an overview of the expectations of hotel guests and how various hospitality providers deal with delivering a positive customer experience. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with holiday accommodation establishment managers and guests.

The findings of this analysis indicate that managers of lodging establishments continuously aim to integrate digital innovations into their strategies. However, not all are eager to invest in technological tools due to multiple reasons including cost. Nevertheless, guests seek out hotels that are digitally driven.

Both managers of accommodation establishments and their guests agree that hotel staff play a key role in customer satisfaction. Even though managers of lodging establishments are certain that they do their best to satisfy their guests, recommendations and complaints are still made by nearly all guests.

Keywords:

Author's Bio-Note:

Mariana Bugeja, a University of Malta graduate, holds a Bachelor of Honours in Banking and Finance, and Marketing. Additionally, she attained a Master of Science in Strategic Management and Marketing. She is a Marketer by profession, and aims to do further studies in Marketing.

A Multi-perspective on the role of customer experience across the hospitality industry in Gozo

Introduction

This research study delves into the role of customer experience in the hospitality industry on the island of Gozo. One of the most important sections of the service industry in Malta and Gozo is the well-established hospitality industry.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the hospitality industry as organisations including bars, restaurants and hotels that provide individuals with a place to sleep, drink, or eat. A significant proportion of the hospitality industry is devoted to lodging. The term lodging describes a variety of accommodation establishments that offer a place for individuals to stay overnight including guesthouses, B&Bs, hotels and resorts. In 2020, Malta and Gozo recorded a total of 260 lodging establishments (Statista, 2022). Gozo is geographically separate from Malta and is definitely different on account of its small villages, green scenery and remarkable tourist spots. Gozo is indeed sought by many in search of these factors and tranquillity (Gozo Tourism Association, no date). The quality of hospitality across Gozo varies from a small guesthouse to a five-star hotel that offer accommodation to both domestic and international tourists.

The hospitality industry is ever growing while it focuses on creating memorable experiences for customers and build strong relationships. Customer experience is a major marketing concept. It involves every element of what an organisation offers including the product or service quality; packaging; advertising; customer care and assistance; and reliability.

Despite a temporary setback during the COVID-19 pandemic lock-down in 2020 and 2021, the hospitality industry in Gozo has enjoyed steady growth. A study conducted in March 2022 projected that the market size of Malta's hotel industry attained nearly €490 million (Statista, 2022). Indeed, the revenue of the travel and tourism sector in Malta amounted to roughly $21.1 million with the hotel sector being the highest contributor as it generated revenue of $4.04 million (Statista, 2022). The number of hotels and other lodging establishments in Gozo is increasing and numerous investments are being made to convert old houses into boutique hotels. For instance, in 2019, Yukselir Group Tourism stated that it had reserved a €120 million for the construction of a 110-room luxury boutique hotel located in a historic building (Agius, 2019).

The main aim of this research study is to assess the role of customer experience within the hospitality sector in Gozo. This evaluation is carried out through three key objectives. Firstly, it involves scrutinizing the methodologies employed by hotels and other establishments to offer personalized and memorable experiences to their guests. Secondly, it entails analyzing the perceived expectations of guests regarding their stay in Gozo's accommodations. Lastly, it aims to determine the extent to which hotels and other establishments successfully provide a positive customer experience according to the perceptions of their guests. These objectives are designed to address two central research questions: the actions taken by the hospitality industry in Gozo to ensure positive experiences for

diverse clientele, and the specific expectations guests hold when utilizing accommodation services in Gozo.

Literature Review

For decades, various researchers have tried to find out what customer experience entails, but it is still unclear as opinions on this topic are very subjective and depend on personal experience. From literature, it is evident that customer experience holds significant importance within organisations across the hospitality sector.

Over the years, numerous studies have been conducted to enhance our understanding of the implications of customer experience. The importance of experience is highly emphasized in the so-called experience economy. Two authors who were among the earliest to address and focus on the concept of customer experience were Pine and Gilmore. They identified experience as being the underlying basis of entertainment (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Gentile, Spiller and Noci (2007) argue that the notion of customer experience is a development of a relationship between an organisation and a customer.

In their critical review, Hwang and Seo (2016) list numerous internal and external factors that have an effect on customer experience. For instance, familiarity, past experience and employee features all play an important role in customer experience. Cetin and Walls (2015) identify the physical environment as one of the major dimensions of customer experience. They consider the other major dimensions as individual interactions. For instance, the physical environment of a hotel lobby and its design are as important as other features of a hotel (Countryman and Jang, 2006).

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) describe customer experience as a journey they undertake during their purchase cycle with an organisation. Several studies have suggested that throughout the customer journey, multiple touchpoints can be recognised (e.g., McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). Hospitality providers can establish many touchpoints, both online and offline. The hospitality provider can organize matters in such a way that the establishment would be the first encounter. However, most customers are now digitally driven, and a shift can be observed whereby tourists' initial encounter is online.

Recent studies have highlighted the significance of co-created values that customers are increasingly seeking. This is a factor that is co-created by organisations and customers themselves throughout the whole process starting from service design onto the delivery phase and final consumption (Chathoth et al., 2016). In Solakis et al. (2021) the researchers considered the value co-creation and evaluated whether hotels promoted positive experiences for their guests. The value is created when customers perceive interactions with employees as meaningful (Femenia-Serra et al., 2019). These direct encounters can be both physical and digital. The interactions between employees and customers trigger experiences that interconnect with the value co-creation process.

There is extensive research on experience from a customer's perspective, but it is quite limited from an organisational viewpoint (Kranzbuhler et al., 2018). Even though experience is mainly perceived from an individual customer's perspective (Johnston and Kong, 2011), organisations still play an important role. Most organisations are not aware of how they can enhance the experience of their customers at a strategic level. Being knowledgeable on the concept can benefit them enormously. Not only does creating an effective experience affect customer expectations and confidence

levels (Flanagan, Johnston and Talbot, 2005), it also strengthens the brand (Berry and Carbone, 2007).

An analysis by Kandampully, Tingting and Jaakkola (2018) emphasises the significance of managing the customer experience of hospitality providers. They explain that by bringing technology, human resources and operations together with marketing, customer experience could be well-managed. Moreover, organisations should not only manage it but constantly improve their management skills to beat competitors. Organisations should focus on providing a prolonged flow of experiences to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Palmer, 2010).

Methodology

This research study seeks to identify the perceptions of customer experience of guests and organisations in the hospitality industry through exploratory research. This approach provides a foundational understanding of the subject matter which can than guide further analysis.

This research investigation adopted an interpretivist epistemology as the main research philosophy. This philosophy emphasises the understanding of participants and considers them different from physical occurrences since participants are able to create meanings.

As the nature of this research study is to investigate the key elements of customer experience - an inherently subjective concept - from two perspectives it was not considered suitable to adopt a quantitative approach. Instead, the study adoptsa qualitative approach to acquire a deeper understanding of the phenomenon

being researched. Interviews, which are typically the most common data collection method adopted in this type of research (Jamshed, 2014), were used for this study.

Through interviews the context of the subject in the local scenario could be understood. Hospitality providers were selected from a list of licensed hotels in Gozo, whereas guests were selected randomly from hotels.

As this study focused on hospitality providers' practices and their guests' personal experiences, non- disclosure was emphasised. Thus, the identity of the participants was not stated in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

Results

The results of this study were based on a sample of twenty-one interviews. Ten participants were domestic and international guests at a lodging establishment in Gozo. The other eleven participants worked in the hospitality industry as managers.

The first question in the interviews with hotel managers sought information on their views about what for them is a good hotel experience. All the managers replied that the experience is in line with what they themselves expect from a hotel if they were guests. Three of the managers stated that a good hotel experience was when guests "feel at home" and had additional facilities to what their respective homes provides. This was referred to as a rare occurrence nowadays by one manager.

A number of managers pointed out various aspects that they believed contributed to a good experience such as cleanliness,

location and facilities. One of the managers stated that a guest should not be "just a number" but should be acknowledged by staff in a warm manner. Another manager stated that if the hotel matched guest expectations, the experience would be good.

During the interviews with hotel guests, participants were initially prompted to provide a depiction of their most memorable hotel experience. They reported that a top-notch service was part of the best experience they had had in a hotel. Another memorable experience mentioned by the guests in the sample was that of a helpful and friendly staff Indeed, three guests said that they appreciated when staff went to great lengths and that complimentary items were offered. One referred to this as "great customer service". Others mentioned cleanliness, nice décor, quiet atmosphere and good location as notable aspects of a memorable experience in a hotel.

The second question addressed to the managers asked them what they assumed their guests expected from the hotel and its staff. The managers emphasised that guests expect a friendly welcome from the staff. Almost all the managers agreed that staff were expected to staff were required to show empathy and promptly resolve any issues that might arise. Besides, some of the managers mentioned that guests expected a variety of high-quality breakfast options and that facilities were in working order. One manager stated that more importantly, guests expected to see and enjoy what they would have noticed in pictures in hotel brochures or websites before their arrival.

The managers were also asked what touchpoints they considered to be impactful when creating memorable experiences for their guests. A follow-up question then asked them how they integrated online and offline touchpoints. All the managers emphasised that online touchpoints were the most effective. They pointed

out that they had an online presence and that most bookings were through the Booking.com website. One manager opined that such platform "goes beyond any platform", referring to other social media applications. A majority of managers stated that apart from these platforms, they had their own website. Moreover, when answering this question, the topic of pictures and reviews was brought up. Pictures were mostly used for "marketing purposes" as they gave individuals an idea of what the hotel looked like. Reviews helped individuals to choose one hotel over another thanks to the recommendations of past guests.

The guests were asked about their expectations from hotels established in Gozo. Five of the guests put emphasis on a tranquil atmosphere, with one guest specifying a service that matched the peacefulness of Gozo. Indeed, two guests revealed that they expected the location of a hotel to be near a beach or in a village centre. A few guests also assumed the hotel would have the basic necessities such as "high levels of hygiene". Almost all of the guests referred to what they expected from staff, including being well-informed, efficient, and wearing appropriate attire. One guest even stressed that staff were expected to understand English. A small number of guests pointed out that they expected the hotel to be of good value and one that provided a good service.

The guests were asked another question on whether they sought an electronic or physical interaction before staying in a hotel. Nearly all of them preferred an electronic interaction. It was also mentioned that we are currently in the digital era, making it more convenient for guests to search for hotels on the internet. Some guests said that they made use of a hotel website initially and others said that they preferred Booking.com. However, one guest noted that some hotels still lacked digital services.

Hotels that are digitally driven show guests that they are up to

date with modern technologies throughout the premises thus, considering customer's needs, said one of the guests. Pictures and reviews were emphasised by various guests as a reason behind preferring electronical interaction initially. Guests also tend to search online for other guests' reviews before their stay. Both pictures and reviews help guests in making a choice about which hotel to book.

Managers were asked on how they engaged the hotel staff when designing experiences for their guests. The mentioned points included that staff were trained to greet guests appropriately, to be understanding and friendly, and to give guests what they expected. The managers reported that their staff were knowledgeable and were able to advise guests on anything relating to Gozo. However, two managers pointed out that nowadays, it was difficult to hire local staff. One manager stated that Maltese guests sought a host who was also Maltese. Another manager opined that foreigners also preferred hosts to be local.

Another question asked the managers on how they involved the guests when creating customer experiences. A weekly BBQ was mentioned by one manager as an integrating event during which guests could socialise with other guests and staff, facilitating the building of relationships. Some managers highlighted the importance of local produce and comfortable areas where guests could feel at home and "part of Gozo". However, one manager of a traditional B&B believed that the targets set by a guest on their holiday had to be acknowledged. For instance, foreigners seemed more interested in experiencing the local culture than Maltese guests.

The managers were also asked on how they made use of emotions when creating customer experiences for their guests. Nearly all of the managers highlighted the importance of a personal approach

to how they made use of emotions with regards to guests. Managers engaged with guests on a personal level by providing them with personalised notes, customised packages and complimentary items for special occasions such as their birthday.

Different opinions were given by managers when asked on how they used digital innovations to enhance customer experiences. The digital innovations outlined by the managers included room doors that operate with key cards, air conditioning with sensors, and other features such as fire alarms, telephone systems and smart TVs. However, a few managers of small B&Bs stated that since they offered a traditional experience, they tried to keep everything simple. For instance, one of the B&Bs did not provide a TV in each room but had one in the common sitting area. The Wi-Fi service was mentioned by nearly all the managers in the sample that it was considered as a utility. One manager explained that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, technological services were improved, and guests could check-in remotely. Nevertheless, many managers remarked that digital innovations were costly. Indeed, a boutique hotel manager stated that the average price they charged made it impossible to integrate digital innovations.

When questioned about the factors they thought affected guests' experiences in their hotels, managers pointed out various elements. A follow-up question asked managers to point out which factors influenced guests positively or negatively. In response to these two questions, some managers mentioned the atmosphere and cleanliness of the hotel, guest relations, food quality, and the hotel location and view. Three managers of small B&Bs also pointed out that guests expected a local approach with regards to what they offered. It was stated by other managers that reviews, pictures and the overall website impacted guests as well. However, all managers remarked that negative factors were almost always "out of our

control", blaming other circumstances such as construction noise or the smell outside the hotel.

During the interviews conducted with the guests, they were asked on how the ambience, interior design and other servicescape elements of a hotel could impact their experience positively. Several guests responded that factors such as the ambience, hygiene and interior design elements affected their mood. Guests stated that the more modern the hotel was, the more it would positively influence their experience. The role that hotel staff played in providing guests with a good experience was also explored. Through their responses, guests emphasised that staff played a vital role. They mentioned various points regarding staff that had an impact on them including a friendly, helpful and quick service.

The guests in the sample gave various answers when prompted to recount a negative hospitality encounter, they had experienced. They mentioned disorganized and unhelpful staff, taking too long to fix issues, or showing no concern at all. Other examples of a poor experience concerned factors such as facilities that were out of order or lack of amenities. Low levels of hygiene, upsetting ambience, old interior and terrible location were also among the things mentioned by guests when they recalled a poor hospitality experience. One guest pointed out that in their case the room of the hotel was not like the pictures they had seen before the stay and this made the experience less enjoyable.

During the interviews with guests the closing question prompted diverse views on what improvements hotels in Gozo could make to enhance their overall experience. Guests suggested that staff should be more professional, efficient, and have a decent command of English. Besides, it was stated that some hotels lacked an online presence. One guest suggested that they should utilise social media more. Guests also suggested offering complimentary

items alongside clearly labeled fresh food. Additionally, one guest emphasized the importance of posting "good and real pictures" of the hotel.

The last question posed to the managers was on how they processed feedback and complaints from their guests. All the managers attested that they constantly asked guests throughout their stay on their experience and whether there was anything wrong. Some managers said that they also sent post-stay emails to guests to solicit any feedback they might have. Moreover, it was highlighted by nearly all the managers in the sample that complaints were an opportunity to learn and improve. They mentioned that if complaints were handled properly, problems were owned, and guests were not blamed but compensated.

Discussion

The goal of the study was to examine the practices undertaken by hospitality providers in Gozo in their efforts to provide their guests with memorable experiences. The study also analysed the perceived expectations of the guests when lodging in Gozo and whether hospitality providers delivered a positive customer experience as perceived by their guests.

The analysis confirmed that the practices undertaken by hospitality providers in Gozo greatly consider the expectations of their guests. The data suggests that there is a correlation between what between the actions taken by hospitality providers in Gozo and the preferences of guests when seeking accommodations in Gozo. This indicates that hospitality providers are delivering a positive customer experience as perceived by their guests. However, there is still room

for improvement as guests put forward several recommendations on how hoteliers can enhance the guests' overall experience.

Customer experience within a hospitality context is achieved through many factors including food and accommodation (Kandampully, Tingting and Jaakkola, 2018). Guests seek many factors when staying in hotels in Gozo, such as properly working facilities and breakfast. As the managers expressed expectations similar to those of their guests, it signifies that managers had a good idea of what guests expected from a hotel and its staff. Besides, multiple innovative touchpoints are present throughout a guest's stay in a hotel, which may be viewed as a journey (Voss and Zomerdijk, 2007). Kandampully, Tingting and Jaakkola (2018) state that nowadays customers are increasingly affected by technological advances and thus they expect personal experiences at every touchpoint.

Indeed, the data suggests that online touchpoints are considered the most impactful by managers. Guests also seek electronical interaction before staying in a hotel. This might be due to the reviews and pictures that can be found online, as they were mentioned by almost all the guests in the sample as well as by the managers. This supports the view that online transactions relating to the hospitality industry are numerous. Consequently, websites and other platforms serve as crucial touchpoints, benefiting hospitality providers in delivering positive experiences (Dube et al., 2003).

Customers are now digitally driven and seek hotels which are likewise. Thus, websites and other platforms should be an integral part of a hotel system. Nonetheless, the gathered data reveals that certain lodging establishments in Gozo either lack a website or, in other cases, possess outdated websites. This might be due to them having opened their accommodation services recently or because they accommodated few guests. This drawback could potentially have adverse effects on such businesses in the future, especially

with visitors who anticipate being able to review the facilities online before their arrival. However, all managers pointed out that they had an online presence sometimes via intermediaries like AirBnB and especially Booking.com.

Among the internal elements that have an effect on customer experience is the behaviour of employees (Hwang and Seo, 2016). The analysis shows that hotel staff are trained and are capable of working efficiently. Hotel managers uttered their wish to have a competent staff. The data indicates that guests also believe that staff play a big role when they stay at an accommodation service in Gozo. Interestingly, several guests pointed out that staff uniforms played a part in their overall experience, a feature that was not mentioned by managers. It appears that hotel managers should keep in mind the staff characteristics that have a huge influence on the experience of customers.

Additionally, the data shows that the performance of hotel staff is considered as a key factor in the guests' overall experience. The findings also indicate that some managers are aware of the lack of skilled local employees in the hospitality industry. It appears that hotel managers should keep in mind that competencies enable staff members to have a good understanding of the proper behaviour they need to show during work. Since the market lacks skilled local employees, managers could provide training to available individuals seeking to work in hotels.

Emotions are identified by Palmer (2010) as a way of facilitating the building of a connection between an experience and an event. Co-creation of experiences with customers rather than just selling the service to them is significant (Wu and Gao, 2019). This is reflected through the data, as some of the managers interviewed mentioned that they aimed to evoke emotions by reflecting the local culture through interior design and other elements. More importantly,

hospitality providers in Gozo should be aware that even though customer emotions cannot be managed, the entrenched clues in customer experiences that kindle their emotions can be handled (Berry and Carbone, 2007). For instance, the ambience and the approach to the hotel greatly influence the guests' mood and their impressions.

Additionally, lodging establishments that integrate digital innovations in their operations might enhance their guests' overall experience. The analysis indicates that the managers who operate a large lodging establishment were more interested in digital innovations and some even made huge investments for that purpose. On the other hand, the majority of the interviewed managers of small lodging establishments pointed out that the average price they charged made it impossible to integrate such innovations.

Digital technologies are expensive and not all hotels are able to make huge expenditure. Some managers of small lodging establishments also mentioned that they did not integrate digital innovations in order to keep the establishment simple, reflecting the traditional approach they delivered. Yet, the guests interviewed sought digital advancements, as indicated in many responses given to various questions. For instance, one guest mentioned that if a hotel was digitally driven it showed that they give importance to customer needs. Therefore, managers may need to consider investing in improving their technological services in a long-term perspective so as to continue to attract guests and fulfil their expectations.

Managers of hotels and other lodging establishments believed that several factors influenced guest experience. One manager explained that these factors were different for every guest. This is in line with Mehmetoglu's (2004) belief that experiences are perceived by tourists according to their own personal orientation.

Hence, hospitality providers should provide a personal experience to each customer. The positive effect some of the factors have on guest experience were discussed by managers. For instance, several managers considered location, cleanliness, food quality and friendly staff as key elements that influenced guest experience.

Negative factors were considered as being out of their control. These factors included construction noise, lack of parking space and outside smell. However, the data gathered from the guests suggest that hospitality providers should be responsible for issues that may arise during their stay.

Furthermore, the data indicates that the ambience, interior design and other servicescape elements of a hotel has an impact on guest mood during their stay. For instance, some guests mentioned that the more modern the hotel, the better it is. They also stated that hotels with a traditional approach do not give a good impression. Such guests therefore believe that a hotel with a traditional approach is not modern. Such guests' interests therefore clash with the simple approach provided by some lodging establishments. Indeed, the physical environment is also considered as a major dimension of customer experience (Cetin and Walls, 2015). Despite the fact that guests perceive interior design as significant to their experience, managers do not seem to consider it a priority.

The guests who were interviewed in this study could easily recall a poor hospitality experience. The reasons behind the bad experience were many but it essentially accounted to poor service. The arguments put forward by guests highlighted the low-quality and disorganised service. The interior decor was old and there were low levels of hygiene. All this resulted in a poor hotel experience. This verifies that service quality is a baseline for customer experience, as stated by Palmer (2010).

Several recommendations to enhance the customers' overall experience were put forward by guests, including: renovating, having an online presence, and offering complimentary items and refreshments. Other suggestions included the idea of surrounding the hotel with trees to hide views of construction sites. Accommodation establishments must acknowledge that traditional practices concerning customers should be upgraded and approached from an innovative perspective (McColl- Kennedy et al., 2015).

Managers of lodging establishments in Gozo gather feedback and consider each complaint or suggestion. Some managers mentioned that discounts were provided to guests who had any issues as a way of acting upon complaints. Some managers provided a survey sheet for guests to fill in, one of the tools that monitor the experiences of customers apart from observational investigations (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). However, one guest felt that hotels did not acknowledge feedback given on Booking.com after the stay was over. This guest recommended that hotel managers should respond to all messages sent by guests.

Despite the feedback given by hotel guests, some managers may not be aware that renovation is needed from time to time. If a good customer experience is provided, it will eventually generate good word-of-mouth (Cetin and Dincer, 2013) and inspire loyalty (Mahrous and Hassan, 2016).

Conclusion

This study found that the spread of technological tools and devices influenced customer needs and desires especially in

the hospitality industry due to it being of an experiential nature. Hotels and other establishments focused on online touchpoints rather than offline ones and aimed to integrate digital innovations in their operations. However, not all establishments were willing to invest in technological tools due to various reasons including costs. Nevertheless, guests sought hotels that employed digital innovations throughout the establishments.

The findings also indicate that managers of lodging establishments and their guests agreed that hotel staff played a fundamental role in the topic under study. Moreover, managers appeared aware of most of their guests' perceived expectations and that different factors influenced each guest differently. However, some factors which negatively affected guests were deemed by managers to be beyond their control. Even though managers of lodging establishments believed that they did their best to accommodate and satisfy each guest, suggestions and complaints were still made by almost all the guests. Despite the fact that managers continuously gathered feedback they did not appear to be aware that guests expected renovation to take place from time to time.

This research study had a dual focus as it explored the viewpoints of both hospitality providers managing hotels and other accommodation establishments in Gozo, as well as the perspectives of guests staying in these establishments. The derived conclusions and the analysed literature demonstrate that managers are aware of the various expectations perceived by guests regarding their overall experience during their stay. Yet, multiple recommendations were made by guests directed at hospitality providers to enhance their overall experience of such stays.

The findings indicate that managers of lodging establishments followed practices that led to customer satisfaction, but the findings do not specify that the managers managed customer experience

effectively. Guests also expected lodging establishments to be smart and digitally driven. Managers needed to consider that customer needs were constantly changing due to, among others, technological advancements in the field and that they should meet such needs.

Bibliography

Agius, M. (2019) 'Gozo to get a 'luxurious boutique hotel'?', Newsbook, 10 November. Available at: https://newsbook.com.mt/en/gozo-to-get-a-luxurious-boutique-hotel/. [Accessed 16 September 2022].

Berry, L.L. and Carbone, L.P. (2007) 'Build loyalty through experience management, Quality Progress, 40(9), pp. 26-32.

Cambridge Dictionary n.d., 'Hospitality Industry'. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hospitality-industry. [Accessed 13 August 2022].

Cetin, G. and Dincer, F.I. (2013) 'Influence of customer experience on loyalty and word-of- mouth in hospitality operations', Anatolia, 25 (2), pp. 181 - 194, doi: http:// doi. org/: 10.1080/13032917.2013.841094.

Cetin, G. and Walls, A. (2015) 'Understanding the customer experiences from the perspective of guests and hotel managers: Empirical findings from luxury hotels in Istanbul, Turkey', Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 25(4), pp. 395-424, doi: http://doi.org/ 10.1080/19368623.2015.1034395.

Chathoth, P.K., Ungson, G.R., Harrington, R.J. and Chan, E.S. (2016) 'Co-creation and higher order customer engagement in hospitality and tourism services: A critical review', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 28(2), pp. 222-245.

Countryman, C.C. and Jang, S. (2006) 'The effects of atmospheric elements on customer impression: the case of hotel lobbies', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 18(7), pp. 534-545.

Dubé, L., Bel, J.L. and Sears, D. (2003) 'From customer vale to engineering pleasurable experiences in real life and online', Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 44(5-6), pp.124-130.

Femenia-Serra, F., Perles-Ribes, J.F. and Ivars-Baidal, J.A. (2019) 'Smart destinations and tech- savvy millennial tourists: hype versus reality', Tourism Review, 74(1), pp. 63–81. doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-02-2018-0018.

Flanagan, P., Johnston, R. and Talbot, D. (2005) 'Customer confidence: the development of a 'pre- experience' concept', International Journal of Service Industry Management, 16(4), pp. 373-384.

Gentile, C., Spiller, N. and Noci, G. (2007) 'How to sustain the customer experience: An overview of experience components that co-create value with the customer', European Management Journal, 25(5), pp. 395-410.

Hwang, J. and Seo, S. (2016) 'A critical review of research on customer experience management', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 28(10), pp. 2218-2246.

Island of Gozo n.d., 'About Gozo'. Available at: http://islandofgozo.org/about. [Accessed 12 August 2022].

Jamshed, S. (2014) 'Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation', J Basic Clin Pharm, 5(4), pp. 87-8, doi: https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-0105.141942.

Johnston, R. and Kong, X. (2011) 'The customer experience: a road-map for improvement: Managing service quality', An International Journal, 21(1), pp. 5-24.

Kandampully, J., Tingting, C.Z. and Jaakkola, E. (2018) 'Customer experience management in hospitality", International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 30(1), pp. 21- 56.

Kranzbuhler, A.M., Kleijnen, M.H.P., Morgan, R.E. and Teerling, M. (2018) 'The multilevel nature of customer experience research: An integrative review and research agenda', International Journal of

Management Reviews, 20, pp. 433–456, doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12140.

Lemon, K. N., and Verhoef, P. C. (2016) 'Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey', Journal of Marketing, 80(6), pp. 69–96. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/ 44134974.

Mahrous, A.A. and Hassan, S.S. (2016) 'Achieving superior customer experience: An investigation of multichannel choices in the travel and tourism industry of an emerging market', Journal of Travel Research, 56(8), pp. 1049–1064, doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287516677166.

McColl-Kennedy, J., Gustafsson, A., Jaakkola, E., Klaus, P., Radnor, Z.J., Perks, H. and Friman, M. (2015) 'Fresh perspectives on customer experience', The Journal of Services Marketing, 29(6), pp. 430-435, doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-01-2015-0054.

Mehmetoglu, M. (2004) 'A typology of tourists from a different angle', International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration, 5(3), pp. 69-90, doi: https://doi.org/10.1300/ J149v05n03_05.

Meyer, C. and Schwager, A. (2007) 'Understanding customer experience', Harvard Business Review, 85(2), pp. 1-11.

Palmer, A. (2010) 'Customer experience management: a critical review of an emerging idea', The Journal of Services Marketing, 24(3), pp. 196-208.

Pine, B. and Gilmore, J. H. (1999) 'The experience economy', Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Solakis, K., Peña-Vinces, J., Lopez-Bonilla, J. and Aguado, L.F. (2021) 'From Value Co- creation to positive experiences and customer satisfaction. A customer perspective in the hotel industry', Technological and Economic Development of Economy, 27(4), pp. 948-969.

Statista (2022) 'Key figures on hotels in Malta 2022'. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1312360/key-figures-hotel-industry-malta/. [Accessed 17 August 2022].

Statista (2022) 'Travel accommodation numbers in Malta'. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/413445/number-of-short-stay-accommodation-establishments-in-malta/. [Accessed 17 August 2022].

Voss, C. and Zomerdijk, L. (2007) 'Innovation in experiential services–an empirical view', London Business School, pp. 97-134.

Wu, S. and Gao, Y. (2019) 'Understanding emotional customer experience and co-creation behaviours in luxury hotels', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31(11), pp. 4247-4275.

A Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles among Gozo Ministers

Valerie Schembri

Abstract:

The study explores the political leadership styles in Malta, emphasizing their significance in defining Maltese political leadership and addressing practical challenges. Individual Ministers' leadership styles matter and make a difference. In this respect, the aim of this research is to examine the leadership styles that were adopted by two former Gozo Ministers and how their leadership style compared to each other. The research question required a qualitative methodology to grasp the participants' viewpoints regarding political leadership styles. An analysis of historical records and official documentation was carried out followed by in-depth-interviews. A thematic analysis of the narrative data led to the identification of eight leadership themes; namely vision, ideology, power, communication, image, negotiating, decision-making, and gender. This was followed by a comparative analysis between two Gozo Ministers. The findings indicate that the Ministers tended to adopt transactional and transformational leadership styles based on contextual factors. Based on these findings, the study puts forth a number of recommendations for political leaders and senior public officials.

Keywords:

Author's Bio-Note:

Valerie is currently serving as Manager II (Accounts and Finance) within the Ministry for Gozo and Planning. With over 25 years of experience in public service, she has garnered extensive expertise through her involvement in various sections and departments.

In 2016, she obtained a Higher Diploma in Public Accounts and Finance and in 2019 she successfully completed an Executive Master of Business Administration in Public Management (MBA) both with the University of Malta. Looking ahead, her aspiration is to broaden her knowledge in reading other courses.

A Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles among Gozo Ministers

Introduction

The leadership styles of individual Ministers play a crucial role in shaping the political landscape, impacting citizens' lives on a daily basis. The current political leadership crisis in western democratic countries has raised concerns, with a noticeable absence of the gravitas and charisma exhibited by past political heavyweights like Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, and Helmut Schmidt. These leaders left lasting imprints on economic and social policies, making weighty decisions even at the cost of popularity (Zahra, 2014).

Leadership, particularly in the political realm, is essential for addressing issues such as social regeneration, world poverty, and organisational success that enhances the quality of life. (Jackson and Parry, 2011). Political leadership, in particular, is vital due to its direct impact on citizens' quality of life, freedom, and adherence to the rule of law (Bennis, 2007). Whereas there is a plethora of studies on leadership styles in organisational areas, there is a paucity of research on political leadership, resulting in a lack of a broadly accepted definition of political leadership.

In a small island state with limited natural resources, such as Malta,

political leadership is crucial for the socio-economic development of the country. Balancing economic development with environmental protection in the face of unprecedented economic growth presents challenges that demand sensible and courageous leadership.

Malta's unique political landscape, where voters are closer to their representatives, fosters policy congruence and communication between the political class and citizens. However, this small social system also leads to challenges such as personality politics, patron-client relationships, nepotism, corruption, and pork barrel politics (Baldacchino, 2012).

The comparative research focuses on the leadership styles of two Gozitan Ministers, Giovanna Debono (1998 - 2013) and Anton Refalo (2013 - 2017), both from major Maltese political parties. The aim is to examine and compare their leadership styles, considering the dearth of direct assessments in the study of political leadership.

Campus and Holtz-Bacha (2016) stated that as a result of the "personalization of politics and the crisis of partisanship, contemporary democracies are characterized by an increasing emphasis on the relationship between leaders and citizens". In spite of the importance of political leadership styles, the approach leaders adopt when communicating with citizens and followers is under-researched (Campus and Holtz-Bacha, 2016).

Recent political communication studies tend to view political leaders as the key actors in offering solutions and embracing a political vision. The traits and skills needed to practise political leadership can similarly be found in different areas of decision-making analysis, communication studies and gender studies (Campus and Holtz-Bacha, 2016).

This study includes a literature review on leadership styles, providing

insights of important attributes of political leaders. The island's context is also explored to understand the reasons behind specific leadership styles in Malta. The research methods employed in the study are also presented in this Paper.

The research methodology addresses the critical need to understand and analyse political leadership styles, especially in the unique context of small island states like Malta. The comparative analysis of two Gozitan Ministers contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of political leadership at the regional level, shedding light on their styles and impact on citizens. Based on the findings of this comparative analysis, the Paper puts forth a number of recommendations for Gozo's political leaders.

Literature Review

The concept of leadership has been explored by scholars over the years, with Burns' (1978) defining it as a characteristic of power; however, powerholders do not necessarily have leadership traits. Leadership is defined as a process where an individual influences a group to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2016). According to Northouse (2016) leadership should be used to foster relations, encourage followers to achieve goals and serve as a model.

Political leadership, which is dependent on the elected officials, involves willingly influencing citizens, and transcending power and personality (Drzewiecka and Cwalina, 2014). According to Tucker (1977), a political leader's main role is to identify the situation and apply policies that meet the expectations of common people with the best interest of the society. For this to happen, a political leader must exhibit clout and possess enough charisma to be able to inspire the masses. The perception of political leadership is influenced by

democratic maturity, political marketing, and the alignment of leaders with voters' needs and preferences (Cwalina et al., 2009).

Political leaders, according to Morrel and Hartley (2006), perform executive, scrutiny, regulatory, and advocacy roles. They should uphold humanitarian values, including diversity and serving all constituents (Morrell and Hartley, 2006).

Political leaders can adopt different leadership models. These can be categorized into trait, contingency, situational, and constitutive approaches (Grint, 2001). The constitutive approach which is a more contemporary method views leadership as shaped by historical and social contexts, emphasizing the role of arts, philosophy, and drama (Grint, 2001).

Along with the adopted leadership model, the attributes of an individual highly influence the quality of a political leader. In this regard, Grint identifies four principal leadership attributes: identity, strategic vision, persuasive communication, and organizational tactics (Grint, 2001). These leadership attributes are illustrated in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Principal leadership attributes (Source: Grint, 2001, p.29)
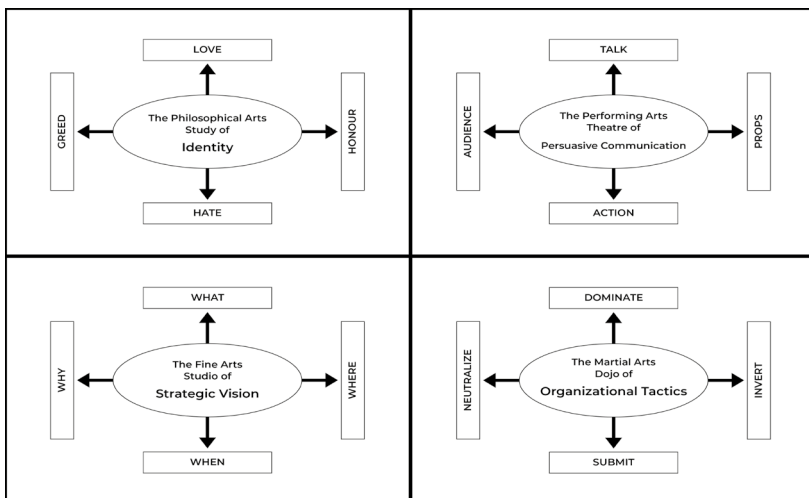
The meaning and significance of each attribute, identified by Grint (2001), is outlined below:

> **i. Identity:** Leaders create shared values, fostering a sense of belonging. The similarities that bind the community together construct the collective identity. These groups can be brought together by universal feelings, such as love and hate of the leader, as well as qualities, such as greed and honour (Grint, 2001).
>
> **ii. Strategic Vision:** Leaders should devise plans and new strategies. In the absence of a convincing past, present and future account, a leader's position is insecure and probably of short duration. Leaders also depend on their followers' imagination to be creative enough to interpret gestures, events, texts, speeches, and the general discourse (Grint, 2001).
>
> **iii. Persuasive Communication:** Leaders must be convincing, utilizing negotiation and rhetorical skills to bring about change.
>
> **iv. Organisational Tactics:** For Grint, no single leadership style can guarantee success. Successful leaders are the ones who empower followers to be able to prevent or compensate for any mistakes made by such leaders. A leader must be a good judge of the most effective organisational manoeuvres and strategies that can give them a competitive edge over rivals (Grint 2001).

Apart from the leadership models, and important attributes of political leaders, this Paper also explored different leadership styles. Several leadership styles were studied over the years. Interactional theories posit a plethora of leadership styles depending on the

perspective adopted. Indeed, if seen from the perspective of power orientation, scholars distinguish between autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Other leadership styles include transactional and transformational leadership.

Transactional leadership emphasizes exchanges between leaders and followers, focusing on contractual arrangements, extrinsic rewards, and clear objectives to meet performance goals. Meanwhile, transformational leadership aims to bring about improvements, with leaders influencing followers through visionary intensity, empowerment, and holistic development (Bass, 1985).

Both of these leadership styles (transactional and transformational) are exhibited by different leaders in the political arena. In this regard, political leadership involves relations with various entities and stakeholders, including the cabinet, electorate, the party organisation, the parliamentary party, the bureaucracy, interest groups, other governmental leaders, and the press (Hede and Wear, 1995).

Within the political context, transformational leadership refers to leadership that promotes long-lasting change. Meanwhile, transactional leadership is founded on an exchange model and is more related to the satisfaction of lower-level needs, such as security or subsidies for campaign contributions or jobs for votes (Hede and Wear, 1995).

Transformational leaders usually possess charisma while they inspire others through their visionary intensity and sense of mission. They deliver intellectual stimulation and encourage followers to think outside the box when they have to solve problems. Furthermore, they cater for individual needs whilst advising, coaching, and providing feedback and delegating (McCleskey, 2014).

However, leaders who adopt transformational leadership styles

are not automatically desirable leaders who bring benefits to their followers (Hede and Wear, 1995). The reason being that it could be that leaders who are perceived as adopting a transformational style by the electorate are viewed differently by public servants or cabinet colleagues. As Etzioni states:

> ".. top executives, heads of state, and kings, who have charisma in the eyes of the public ... may have little or [none] in the eyes of [their] private secretaries, valets, and cabinet ministers" (Bass, 1988, p. 42).

Studies also show differences in leadership styles between genders, with women exhibiting higher levels of transformational leadership and men leaning towards transactional leadership (Eagly et al., 2003). Female leaders score higher on charisma, a component of transformational leadership (Groves, 2005).

Consequently, the current research on political leaders focused on the macro level, and its purpose was to establish whether the leaders selected for this study embraced a transactional or transformational style in their leadership post as Ministers for Gozo.

In the following section the researcher discusses a number of factors that characterise the social, cultural and environmental context in which the Ministers operated, and which helped shape their leadership styles.

Regional Context

This section discusses the unique characteristics of Gozo, the second-largest island in the Maltese archipelago, focusing on its population, landscape, economic environment, and political

dynamics. The population of Gozo is around 40,000, with a distinct cultural identity influenced by its double insularity. The lifestyle in Gozo is less hectic and more rural compared to Malta, with common occupations in retail, tourism, and the public sector.

In terms of employment, approximately 40% of Gozo's working population is engaged in the public sector, a significantly higher figure than the Maltese national average. The economic landscape has undergone changes over the years, with shifts from traditional agriculture to modern manufacturing and services. Tourism, communication, technology-based industries, and financial services have played a crucial role in improving employment prospects and the overall economic well-being of Gozitans.

Gozo exhibits a conservative culture, rooted in Roman Catholic traditions, with each village celebrating an annual festa in honour of its patron saint. However, secularization and the influence of liberal views have brought about significant changes in Gozitan society.

With regards to the fiscal and political environment, the Ministry of Gozo is dependent on the Ministry of Finance and other government entities for budgeting and financial support. Convincing the Cabinet to allocate funds exclusively for Gozo has historically been challenging, requiring Gozo Ministers to have specific leadership skills. In this regard, the research considered these historical aspects, and looked at the different Ministers for Gozo from 1987 to 2017, including their political parties, periods in office, and the challenges they faced.

The analysis mainly focused on two former ministers, Giovanna Debono (1998-2013) and Anton Refalo (2013-2017), shedding light on their family and career paths. The proposals and projects initiated by these ministers during their respective tenures were also explored as part of this comparative analysis. This analysis shed light on similarities and differences between the two Ministers. For instance, Giovanna

Debono focused on projects related to health, education, infrastructure, environment, economic growth, and technology. Anton Refalo continued these efforts, implementing projects such as the new MCAST campus and initiatives for job creation and investment stimulation.

The research also highlights certain challenges faced by the Ministry for Gozo, emphasizing the need for effective leadership and a balance between the Ministry's broad responsibilities and the lack of expertise across various areas. The following section outlines the methodology used for this research, which includes a collection of primary and secondary sources including interviews, archival document analysis, and the use of primary and secondary sources.

Methodology

This section explains the theoretical perspective underlying the research, the methodology used, the research design, the instrumentations used for data collection and data analysis, and the sampling criteria. Furthermore, methodological limitations, credibility, transferability, reflexivity, and ethical considerations of the research are also addressed.

Considering the scope of the study, a qualitative research approach was used to grasp the participants' viewpoints regarding political leadership styles. Rather than seeking quantification, the adopted methodology sought to elicit responses from all the participants t about their perspectives, experiences, and meanings, instead of 'factual data'. A multimethod approach was used, encompassing document analysis, and semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with high-ranking

officials within the Ministry for Gozo, and ex-Ministers for Gozo. This entailed individual face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions, which were elicited from scholarly literature. These included questions on the interviewees' personal skills and traits, their relationship with followers, collaborators, citizens and their media constructed image, the relationship of gender with the political leadership style, and the media. Also, information about the shaping and direction of the two parties' ideologies, the public perception of their private life and inner self, was collected. The interviews also delved into communication and important decisions taken during their political career.

Also, several documents related to the topic were pored over. Such documents included government reports, publications, newspaper articles, and video footage. These were analysed to provide historical context and validate interview findings. Also, these provided an indispensable means of tracking certain political developments and policy changes, and for verifying and validating the researcher's findings. Such a procedure was conducted through both document and thematic analysis.

Data obtained from documents was instrumental in validating the views conveyed by participants. This approach of utilising different methods to collect data enabled data analysis from different viewpoints, therefore enhancing the credibility of the research (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).

Moreover, the employed research methodology adopted a purposeful sampling approach to select information-rich cases, ensuring in-depth study and insights into political leadership styles. The sample size was determined based on qualitative research principles and focused on individuals with relevant experiences.

The research also followed standard procedures for data collection and analysis, incorporating diverse data sources, and maintaining

consistency in the questioning line. Establishing trust with interviewees and returning to the data multiple times enhanced credibility. Credibility, similar to internal validity, is important to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

In order to help participants determine how applicable this study's narrative is to their situations, the researcher went into great detail about the background, and milieu of the participants studied. The issue of transferability is also reinforced when the research is transparent, with regards to the analysis and confidence in the truth of the findings. As far as this research is concerned, transferability can always be possible to other political contexts outside the Gozitan context.

Also, to reduce confirmation bias, the researcher continually re-assessed respondents' impressions and re-questioned pre-existing theories and assumptions regarding leadership styles. Reflexive notes were used during audio-recording, transcribing and analysis of data. Ethical considerations were also observed.

However, despite taking into account the above considerations, and adopting a multi-method research approach, the study acknowledges certain limitations, including the availability and quality of documents, potential biases in documentation, and the complexity of qualitative research methods. Factors such as time consumption and non-generalizability are also considered limitations inherent in qualitative research.

Analysis and Discussion

This section provides a detailed discussion and an explanation of the findings. Findings were corroborated and enriched by an

analysis of official documents. Interviews were conducted with the former Ministers for Gozo Ms Giovanna Debono, Dr Anton Refalo and Permanent Secretaries.

The eight themes shown in the thematic map below, emerged from the data collection and analysis.

Figure 2: Leadership thematic map

Each of the above eight themes is discussed further, focusing particularly on the leadership style of the interview Ministers. This analysis and discussion for each thematic area is presented below.

Vision in political leadership is essential for addressing societal needs and initiating processes for the common good. Minister Refalo envisioned elevating Gozo to the status of a region, recognizing its unique economic characteristics stemming from its double insularity. He emphasized the importance of implementing a strategic plan for Gozo's advancement, even if it diverged from the priorities of trading

partners. Refalo pursued ambitious projects such as the Citadel project despite challenges with EU funding timelines.

Meanwhile, Minister Debono's vision centred on improving the quality of life for Gozitans and enhancing infrastructure. She advocated for a closer connection between policymakers and the community to address local needs effectively. Debono envisioned Gozo as an ecological island and championed projects like the 'Żewwieqa' waterfront and the new Mġarr Terminal to enhance transportation infrastructure.

While both Ministers aimed to secure funding for long-term projects, interviewees noted the absence of a formalized vision and strategy for Gozo's development. Despite efforts to increase funds, limitations persisted, hindering the implementation of comprehensive initiatives. The consensus among interviewees highlighted the necessity of a political vision for Gozo's future, underscoring the challenges in balancing priorities and resource constraints.

Both Minister Debono and Minister Refalo aligned themselves with their party ideologies, which influenced their leadership styles and policy decisions. Debono's commitment stemmed from Christian democratic principles, emphasizing support for the needy and disadvantaged, notably reflected in her anti-divorce stance. Her background in education and Catholic upbringing shaped her values and political positions.

In contrast, Refalo embraced social democracy, advocating for social mobility, and prioritizing the welfare of the vulnerable in society. His close ties with marginalized groups further underscored his commitment to social justice. Both Ministers were promoters of social justice with diverging ideological underpinnings. In a post-truth politics[1], both leaders remained inspired by their respective ideologies as if they were their respective party ideologues.

Minister Debono's mission was to reach out and serve her constituency. Minister Refalo's approach was to focus on most vulnerable, closing the gap between social stratifications. Bass (1990) describes democratic leaders as participative, socially close to their followers and willing to share power. Both Ministers had assessed the hardships of Gozitan students in Malta. Minister Debono met the public individually (where possible) with special attention to those with special needs. She interacted with the community making her presence felt during events. She believed that popularity gains traction gradually after witnessing results. At Cabinet level, Minister Debono would exploit the fact that she gained political leverage to get results. On the other hand, Minister Refalo tended to accede to what the Prime Minister stated during the Cabinet meetings.

Internally both Ministers fostered positive working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders. They were accessible and supportive, using communication channels like telephone calls to persuade and negotiate, especially in securing funding from the Ministry for Finance.

Externally, both Ministers were known for their approachability with constituents, maintaining open-door policies and dedicating significant time to meeting people's needs. They engaged directly with constituents, attending events and networking to build rapport and address grievances. However, this approach also led to criticism regarding perceptions of clientelism.

In dealing with the media, both Ministers expressed mixed views. While they acknowledged the media's usefulness in election campaigns, they also voiced frustration with biased coverage and the lack of attention given to their projects. Minister Debono was noted for her adeptness in handling the media, contrasting with Minister Refalo's perceived insecurity in similar situations.

The public perception of the Ministers, shaped by their private and family lives, influenced their political careers. Minister Debono projected a traditional, respectable, and charismatic image, while Minister Refalo was seen as a family-oriented leader.

Both Ministers displayed strong negotiating skills, advocating for Gozo's interests and securing resources for projects. However, they sometimes faced challenges in decision-making due to conflicting priorities.

Cabinet-level decisions, lobbying, and committee setups played a significant role in shaping Gozo's policies and projects. Both Ministers navigated complex decision-making processes, balancing competing interests and priorities.

The interviewees emphasized the potential for women in politics to bring balance and attention to sensitive issues, but cautioned against equating sensitivity with weakness. According to officers, male politicians often prioritize infrastructure projects, while women tend to advocate for social care initiatives benefiting individuals, families, and vulnerable demographics. Minister Debono's project focus on education and health aligns with this observation, reflecting her belief in the importance of health, education, and social development.

Both Ministers asserted that gender played no role in shaping their leadership styles. Minister Debono emphasized merit over gender, attributing her success to competence rather than gender-based advantages. Similarly, Minister Refalo dismissed the notion that

---

[1] Post-truth politics is a political culture in which "misinformation campaigns are distorting the line between fact and falsity on social media platforms, and there has been a profound shift in the way the social media users consume and interact with information" (Jaques, 2019).

gender influenced leadership, noting that female politicians often face challenges due to media-driven stereotypes. He acknowledged the underrepresentation of women in top political positions in Malta and the relatively low number of female MPs.

The examination of leadership dynamics within the Ministry of Gozo reveals a complex interplay of political, social, and organisational factors, which shape the effectiveness and style of leadership. The Ministers of Gozo faced significant challenges in asserting their authority due to the hierarchical structure of decision-making within the Cabinet and the influential role of constituents' demands on policy direction. This resulted in a distortion of the Ministers' vision for Gozo, particularly evident in instances like the 'Żewwieqa' project, where pressures from businesses and constituents compromised project timelines and objectives.

The Ministry's dependence on other Ministries for enacting laws and obtaining financial resources underscores the need for a more autonomous framework that allows Gozo to regulate its operations effectively. While there have been strides in realizing certain projects, such as Gozo's eco-island initiative, the lack of a structured approach to long-term planning and financing remains a persistent challenge.

Despite ideological differences, Ministers Debono and Refalo demonstrated adaptability to evolving political landscapes, moving beyond traditional left-right paradigms to embrace centrist ideologies. Their leadership styles reflected a blend of transformational and transactional approaches, influenced by factors like negotiation skills, communication abilities, and personal charisma.

The relational aspect of leadership emerged as a key theme, emphasizing the importance of building consensus, fostering teamwork, and maintaining effective communication channels

across departments. However, instances of hasty decision-making and autocratic tendencies, particularly under Minister Refalo's tenure, highlight the need for a balance between decisive leadership and inclusivity.

Gender stereotypes also played a role in shaping perceptions of leadership styles, with Minister Debono perceived as more democratic and Minister Refalo as autocratic. These stereotypes reflect broader societal expectations regarding gender roles and leadership attributes, underscoring the need for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of leadership effectiveness.

The integration of ideas from interviews and existing literature on leadership styles provides valuable insights into the complexities of political leadership in Gozo. It emphasizes the importance of adaptive leadership, effective communication, and a collaborative approach to decision-making in navigating the challenges facing the Ministry.

In the following section, the study offers practical recommendations for strengthening political leadership in Gozo, including the promotion of autonomy for the Ministry, enhancing negotiation skills, fostering inclusive decision-making processes, and challenging gender stereotypes that may limit leadership potential. By embracing these recommendations, political leaders in Gozo can better address the diverse needs of constituents and realize a shared vision for the island's future.

Conclusion

The study revealed that both Ministers adapted their leadership styles based on different situations. Despite differences in personality,

both exhibited transformational leadership by promoting change and finding creative solutions. They also demonstrated democratic leadership by being socially close to followers. Transformational approaches were visible in their communication with colleagues, while transactional styles emerged when interacting with constituents. Both Ministers showed autocratic tendencies at the cabinet level and occasionally adopted a laissez-faire style when decisions directly opposed constituents' preferences.

Despite their distinct personalities, both Ministers endorsed social democratic ideologies, emphasizing policies for vulnerable groups. While both protected their privacy to focus on political leadership, Minister Debono's superior media handling skills were noted. Both Ministers denied that gender affected their leadership, while Minister Refalo acknowledging media stereotypes.

Based on the findings of this research, the study identified key recommendations for political leaders and senior public service management. An important recommendation is that political leaders should articulate a long-term vision beyond growth goals, incorporating sustainability and well-being objectives. Effective communication, trust-building, and broad consultations with citizens can enhance public ownership of such long-term vision.

Another recommendation centres on increased awareness and importance of evidence-based policy (EBP) for informed decision-making. Politicians should value expert knowledge, stakeholders' experiences, and avoid prioritizing political debates over rigorous data.

Besides recommendations that are focused on political leadership, the study proposes recommendations for further research. Considering certain limitations of the study, including lack of quantitative analysis and generalizability of conclusions, further research, exploring leadership styles from different perspectives,

including colleagues, stakeholders, or constituents, and comparisons with ministers in similar or different portfolios, is recommended.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of political leadership, especially in navigating complex issues faced by Malta. It highlights the need for strong, high-profile leadership to address challenges related to economic growth, sustainable development, and environmental protection. The study's findings contribute to understanding leadership dynamics in Gozitan politics and lay the foundation for future research in this area.

Bibliography

Baldacchino, G. (2012), "Islands and despots", Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp.103-120.

Bass, B.M. (1988), "Evolving Perspectives on Charismatic Leadership", in Gonger. J. A. and Kanungo R. N. (1st ed.), Charismatic Leadership: The Elusive Factor in Organisational Effectiveness, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 40-77.

Bennis, W. (2007), "The challenges of leadership in the modem world. Introduction to the special issue", American Psychologist Association, Vol. 62, No. 1, pp. 2-5.

Burns, J. (1978), Leadership, (1st ed.), Harper & Row, New York, p. 425.

Campus, D. and Holtz-Bacha, C. (2016), "Political Leadership Styles and Communication", Workshop Proposal Outline form for prospective Workshop Directors for the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, (Workshop No. 11), University of Pisa, Pisa, 24-28th April 2016.

Cwalina, W., Falkowski, A. and Newman, B. (2009), "Political management and marketing" in Johnson, D.W. (1st ed.), Routledge handbook of political management, Routledge, New York, pp. 67-80.

Drzewiecka, M. and Cwalina, W. (2014), "What political leadership styles do we prefer? Cross-cultural study in Goleman's typology of leadership", in The 2nd international virtual Scientific Conference, 2014, Slovakia, pp.161-166.

Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M.C. and Van Engen, M. L. (2003), "Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men", Psychological Bullettin, Vol. 129, No. 4, pp. 569-591.

Grint, K. (2000), The Arts of Leadership, (1st ed.), Oxford, University Press, Oxford.

Groves. K. S. (2005), "Gender differences in social and emotional skills and charismatic leadership", Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 30-46.

Hede, A. and Wear, R. (1995), "Transformational versus transactional styles of cabinet leadership in Australian politics", Australian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 469-483.

Jackson, B. and Parry, K. (2011), A Very Short Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap about studying Leadership, (2nd ed.), Sage Publications, London.

Jaques, C. Islar, M and Lord, G. (2019), "Post-Truth: Hegemony on Social Media and Implications for Sustainability Communication", Sustainability, Vol. 11, No. 7, pp. 1-16.

Korstjens, I. and Moser, A. (2018), "Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing", European Journal of General Practice, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 120 - 124.

McCleskey, J. (2014), "Situational, Transformational, and Transactional Leadership and Leadership Development", Journal of Business Studies Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 117-130.

Morrell, K. and Hartley, J. (2006), "A model of political leadership", Human Relations, Vol. 59, No. 4, pp. 483-504.

Northouse, P. (2016), Leadership Theory and Practice, (7th ed.), Sage Publications, London.

Tucker, R. (1977), "Personality and Political Leadership". Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 383-393.

Zahra, J. (2014), "The making of the next political leader", Newsbook,

10 October 2014, available at: https://www.newsbook.com.mt/archived-article/?article=the-making-of-the-next-political-leader (accessed 22 July 2019).

GOZO REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Tel: +356 22156342

Email: info@grda.mt

www.grda.mt