POSITION OF FEMALE MANAGERS IN CROATIAN TOURISM

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ABSTRACT
Theories on leadership heretofore have excluded women and this exacerbated the problem of women not being seen as an appropriate fit in a management or leadership role. Therefore, a more positive outcome for women advancing to senior roles of management or leadership may be observed in the future. The first female executives, because they were breaking new ground, adhered to many of the „rules of conduct" that spelled success for men. Modern tourism organizations understand that faster and enhanced inclusion of women in management structures helps them gain the necessary diversity of leadership styles and approaches to management. This is of high significance to modern tourism organizations if they wish to survive, grow and develop. The aim of this paper was to present some overall structural indicators of the gender inequality evidenced in the field of Croatian tourism. The objective is to determine specific personal and professional characteristics of women in managerial positions in Croatian tourism organisations and the differences relating to the same characteristics in men. The working hypothesis was that a female manager is increasingly aware of her position in society, her chances and qualities, and therefore asks for the relevant acknowledgements as well. The sample of fifty (N=50) leading female managers in Croatian tourism organizations took part in online survey.

The findings indicated that women tend to use the supporting management style. Over one fifth of the leading female managers in Croatian tourism point out that insufficient authority and ambition are the main obstacles to advancement of women to leadership positions. The biggest difference between male and female management styles is reflected in the following spheres: intimate-detached, indulgent-inflexible, solo player-team player, modest-always wants more, avoids the risk-accepts the risk.

Key words: leadership style, management, position, tourism organizations, women

1. INTRODUCTION

Current transitional challenges (economic and social) shed a completely new light on the aspect of leading an enterprise and managing change. In such circumstances, managers need to know how to implement changes quickly, effectively and economically. The key corporate focus is not on *what* to change, but *how* and *how fast* (Horvat, Perkov, 2013, p.20). The men's and women's role and sphere of influence in implementing the change process are the most important to overcome individual barriers (Perkov et al., 2014, p. 466).

For years women did not have the chance to achieve an advancement possibility above the level of their inferiors in organizations. They did not get the opportunity to be educated to become team players, solve complicated cases and to render leader's decisions. The age-long struggle of women for equality (equal employment rights, voting rights, 8-hour working hours as well as equal wages) resulted in amendments to legal acts and positive changes. Despite the achieved progress, women continue to be poorly respected and insufficiently developed human resource; even though the generally accepted view is they are valuable as much as men. They are mostly excluded from jobs relating to top management and leadership. They haven't achieved an equal status yet, partly due to prejudice and partly due to objective barriers. This especially refers to the „glass ceiling" (impossibility of advancement to upper management positions) and „glass wall" (staying in the so-called female areas and activities) phenomena.

The aim of this paper was to present some overall structural indicators of gender inequality evidenced in female employment in general and more specifically in the field of Croatian tourism. The objective was to identify specific personal and professional characteristics of women in managerial positions in Croatian tourism organisations and the differences relating to the same characteristics in men. We concluded that over one fifth of the leading female managers in Croatian tourism point out that insufficient authority and ambition are the main obstacles to advancement of women to leadership positions. This paper was structured in five major chapters. The first chapter briefly introduces the topic of research and presents the paper structure. The second chapter elaborates the literature review of the relevant leadership concepts and is broken into three subheadings. The third chapter analyses the number of persons in Croatian paid employment by tourism activities and gender. The fourth chapter reflects the research methods to test the hypothesis. The fifth chapter presents the research findings. The sixth chapter summarizes key points of the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

All previous theories on leadership excluded women and this exacerbated the problem of women not being seen as an appropriate fit in a management or leadership role. The first female executives, because they were breaking new ground, adhered to many of the „rules of conduct" that spelled success for men. In 1990, research began to report gender differences in leadership styles with female managers being seen in positive terms as participative, democratic leaders. More recent work reports that women are believed to exhibit more transformational leadership style than their male colleagues, and this is equated with effective leadership (Jogulu, Wood, 2006, p. 2). Now a second wave of women is making its way into top management, not by adopting the style that has been proven successful for men but by drawing on the skills and attitudes they have developed from their shared experience as women. These second-generation women managers are seeking and finding opportunities in fast-changing and growing organizations to show that they can achieve results in a different way.

They are succeeding because of and not in spite of specific characteristics generally considered to be "feminine and inappropriate in leaders" (Rosener,1990, p.1). Today's organizations require more talented employees and these are increasingly found to be women (Burke, Cooper, 2004, p. 50). This new perspective has been termed the "feminisation of management" and is built on the recognition that women, while unique, are equally capable of making a valuable contribution to the success of the organisation (Omar, Davidson, 2001, p. 40). This paper links leadership theories to a timeframe to illustrate how women were not visible in a management context until relatively recently. Such an omission may have contributed to the continuing low numbers of women who advance to senior management and leadership roles.

2.1. Leadership process and styles

The leadership process facilitates a transactional event that requires influence. This situates leadership in a social environment which creates interaction among people. Therefore, there must be decision-making, acceptance, and refusal. Effective leaders accept leadership as a process. They know which style to use, what combination of styles to use with whom, where and when. This is important because they work with people they tend to influence. The adoption of the wrong styles may create resentment with followers exponentially in a group context. Business leaders understand there is a bi-directional transaction that takes place between leaders and followers. This solidifies the notion that leadership is a process and leaders are made and not born. Blanchard et al. (1985) argued a model that organizations can leverage to improve their leaders' skills in managing their direct reports. By assessing each follower on an individual basis the leader can adjust and adapt his own style of leadership appropriately (Figure 1).
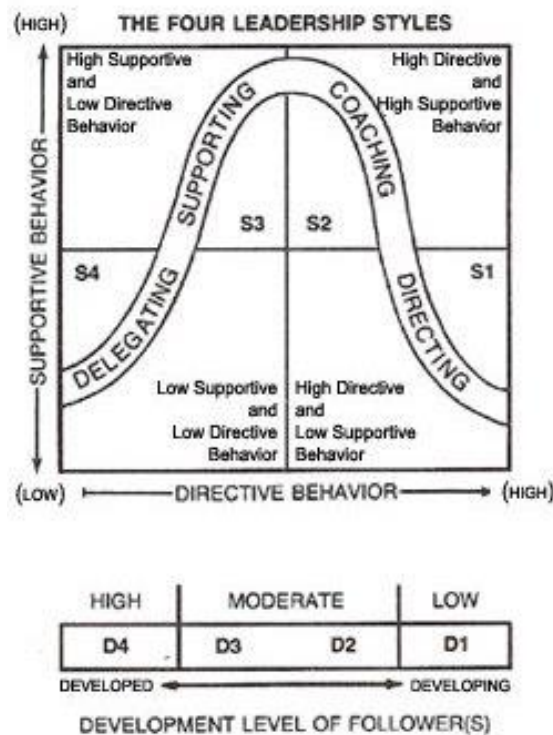

Figure 1: Four leadership styles (Blanchard et al., 1985, p. 50)

This approach encompasses four styles: S1 *Directing*; high directive and low supportive, S2 *Coaching*; high directive and high supportive, S3 *Supporting*; high supportive and low directive, S4 *Delegating*; low supportive and low directive. The four development levels range from D1 (low, developing) to D4 (high, developed) (Northouse, 2013). The adoption of the right styles will lead to what most effective and insightful leaders seek, a compass to achieve sustainable results. The current studies highlight conclusions, experiences, and inferences on leadership traits, and styles, but no quantitative data to demonstrate which style brings about results. Therefore, business leaders must embrace the leadership styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliating, democratic, pace-setting, and coaching to create the right recipe to lead their followers.

2.2. Similarities and differences between men and women business leaders

In an International Women's Forum survey of men and women leaders, Rosener (1990, p.14) found a number of unexpected similarities between men and women leaders along with some important differences. Among these similarities are characteristics related to money and children. She found that women earn the same amount of money as their male counterparts. The average yearly income for men is $136.510; for women it is $140.573. This finding is contrary to most studies, which find a considerable wage gap between men and women, even at the executive level. Rosener also found that just as many men as women experience work-family conflict (although when there are children at home, the women experience slightly more conflict than men). But the similarities end when men and women describe their leadership performance and how they usually influence those with whom they work.

Since women entered the business world, they have tended to find themselves in positions consistent with the roles they played at home: in staff positions rather than in line positions, supporting the work of others, and in functions like communications or human resources where they have had relatively small budgets and few people reporting directly to them. The fact that most women have lacked formal authority over others and control over resources means that by default they have had to find other ways to accomplish their work. As it turns out, the behaviours that were natural and/or socially acceptable for them have been highly successful in at least some managerial settings (Rosener,1990, p. 21).

2.3. Women's lack of vision?

According to Ibarra and Obodaru (2009), women are still a minority in the top ranks of business. The reason? Their perceived lack of vision. In 360-degree feedback, women score relatively low on key elements of visioning—including ability to sense opportunities and threats, to set strategic direction, and to inspire constituents. The authors' research suggests three explanations for women's low visioning scores:

- Some women don't buy into the value of being visionary.
- Some women lack the confidence to go out on a limb with an untested vision.
- Some women who develop a vision in collaboration with their teams don't get credit for having created one.

Regardless of the cause, women seeking more senior roles must be perceived as visionary leaders. They can start by understanding what "being visionary" means in practical terms— and then honing their visioning skills (Ibarra, Obodaru, 2009). Figure 2 presents the analysis of the survey on how men and women were rated on vision. Out of a total possible score of

56, observers ranked the leader on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest) for eight key behaviours. Male peers (who represented the majority of peers in the sample) rated women lower on envisioning. Interestingly, female peers did not downgrade women, contrary to the frequently heard claim that women compete rather than cooperate with one another.
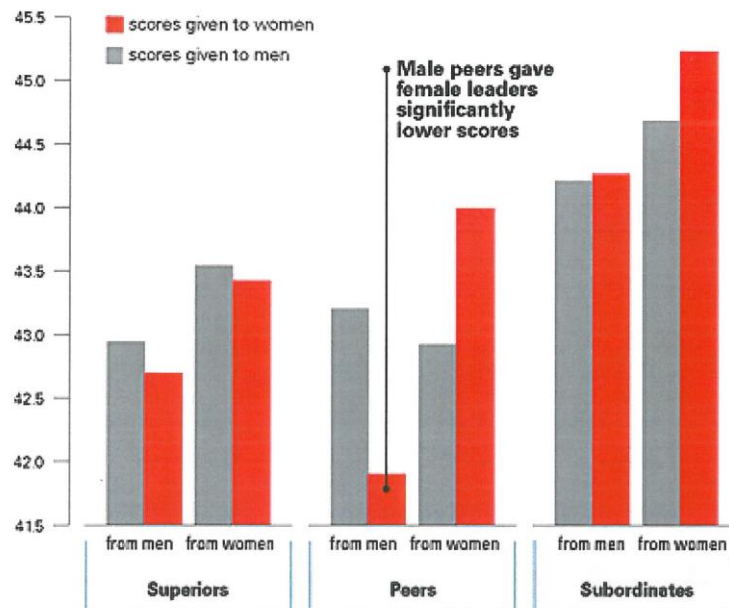

Figure 2: Who Says Women Aren't Visionary? (Ibarra, Obodaru, 2009)

These data suggest it is the men who might feel most competitive toward their female peers. Male superiors and subordinates rated male and female leaders about the same. According to these findings, women are more likely to possess leadership characteristics and attributes that are predominantly effective in contemporary circumstances compared with their male counterparts (Eagly et al., 2003). As such, contemporary leadership theories can be seen as playing a significant role in raising the profile of women in management and leadership roles, within an organisational context.

3.   EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN CROATIAN TOURISM

Despite legal regulations promoting equality of men and women, gender discrimination is still present, especially in employment, however to a lesser extent than before the introduction of the regulations. Statistical reports in the world, as well as those in Croatia, show four points in which the discrepancy is most obvious: (1) on average women earn less than men of the same education level, (2) women perform low-paying jobs more frequently than men, (3) women are seldom employed in upper, managerial and higher-responsibility jobs, (4) women with same qualifications and relevant merit are less frequent to advance than their male counterparts. (Petrović, 2000). The rarity of women in senior leadership roles continues to be documented worldwide. According to a Catalyst report (2003) in the USA, only 13.6 per cent of corporate board seats were held by women in the Fortune 500 companies at a time when 50.3 per cent of management, professional, and related occupations were held by women.

In January 2015, the number of persons in paid employment in legal entities in the Republic of Croatia amounted to 1 086 421, out of which there were 517 124 women (47.6 per cent). The analysis of data by activity (I 55, I 56 and N 79) by Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2015), can be used to assume that the share of women in jobs in the tourism sector in January 2014 was 53.8 per cent (Figure 3). Their presence in travel agencies was even higher (58.0 per cent)

and in accommodation services and food and beverage service it was 53.4 per cent. Nevertheless, the mentioned shares are completely different when it comes to the disconcerting presence of women in upper management positions.

ACTIVITY	EMPLOYEES TOTAL	WOMEN	SHARE OF WOMEN IN %
Accommodation services and food preparation and service	42,352	22,614	53.4
Travel agencies, organised travel and other booking services	4,618	2,678	58.0
TOTAL	**46,970**	**25,292**	**53,8**

Figure 3: Persons in paid employment by activities and sex in January 2015 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics)

Due to a lack of a more precise data on the number of women in leadership positions in tourism, a reference for comparison was the empirical analysis on the position and management style of female managers in Croatian enterprises (Bahtijarević-Šiber, 2003). According to the research, men generally dominate in the management of Croatian enterprises with 74 percent. The majority of men are present at the highest hierarchical level, at which the share of women is only 6 percent. The share of women increases as the management level decreases. As much as 67 percent is present at the lowest, operational level. These indicators imply strong gender discrimination toward career development of women in Croatian enterprises.

4. RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLE ANALYSIS

The main working hypothesis of this paper was that a female manager is increasingly aware of her position in society, her chances and qualities, and therefore asks for the relevant acknowledgements as well. This chapter describes the research method and design, population, sample and instruments. Qualitative research was conducted in December 2013 on the sample of 50 female managers in leadership positions in Croatian tourism: 15 company managers (30 per cent), 10 hotel managers (20 per cent), 14 travel agency managers (28 per cent), 9 division managers (18 percent) and a tourist board manager and director of institution (4 per cent). The online questionnaire consisted of 7 multiple-choice closed questions. The distribution of respondents by age group was: 7 women aged 20 – 30 (14 per cent), 20 women aged 31 – 40 (40 per cent), 14 women aged 41 – 50 (28 percent) and 9 women aged 51 – 60 (18 per cent). The results show that women aged 31 – 40 are most present in managerial positions on tourism (40 per cent).

Young managers aged 20 – 30 are considerably less present in these positions (14 per cent), which can lead to a conclusion that women have to prove themselves more significantly than men in order to advance in their careers. The research results were also analysed on a semantic differential scale, one of the research methods that enables measurement of attitude determinants such as intensity, extreme, direction, stability and the like in an pictorial and simple way, which are hardly achievable by other attitude measurement methods. Osgood's semantic differential model is a type of a rating scale designed to measure the connotative meaning of objects, events and concepts. The method provides a range of

possibilities for determining the source of attitudes as well as for efforts to change these attitudes in direction or intensity (Kraljević, Perkov, 2014, p. 293).
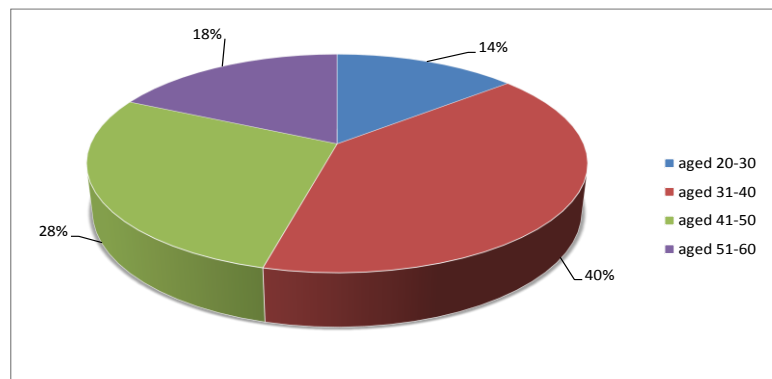

Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by age group

According to level of education, 44 per cent of respondents held a higher education degree. Besides, the sample consisted of 22 per cent of Masters of Science and 10 per cent of Doctors of Science. Only 20 per cent obtained a college degree and a mere 4 per cent had a secondary education level. These indicators confirm that women invest more than they used to in themselves despite family obligations. They are aware of their own values, which they enhance by additional efforts and life-long learning.

5. FINDINGS

This chapter was designed to present the study results and evaluate findings in a way to test the stated hypothesis. Respondents answered three questions about their management styles, main obstacles to their advancement and typical characteristics of male and female managers in the tourism sector. According to Figure 5, all four leadership styles are almost equally present. Women in tourism organisations mostly use the *supporting style* (28 per cent) and the *coaching* style (26 per cent).
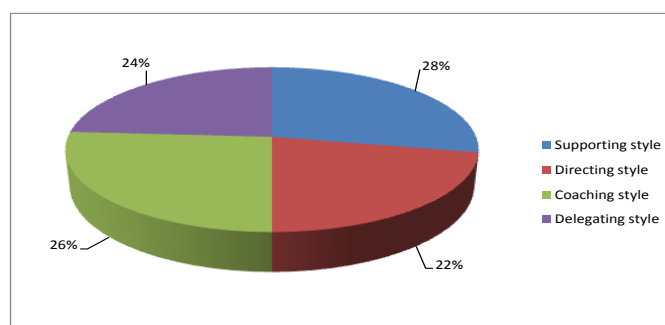
Figure 5: Most used management style by women

The *delegating* style and *directing* style are slightly less present, with 24 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. The most-used supporting style requires the manager to provide strong support to associates, to praise them, to motivate them and to include them in the decision-making process. This style is typical of female management because they are less stern, more approachable and open than their male counterparts. The directing style, which is least present, requires the leader to set goals and deadlines clearly and to strictly control the

achievement of tasks. Several respondents consider that it is best to combine different management styles in order to manage a company successfully.

Modelled in accordance to the work by Juresa-Persoglio (1997), in which she offers reasons for negative selection in employment of women, our research (Figure 6) shows two crucial obstacles to the career development of women: *insufficient authority and ambition* (20.8 per cent) and *frequency time off work due to maternity leave or care of a sick child* (20 per cent).
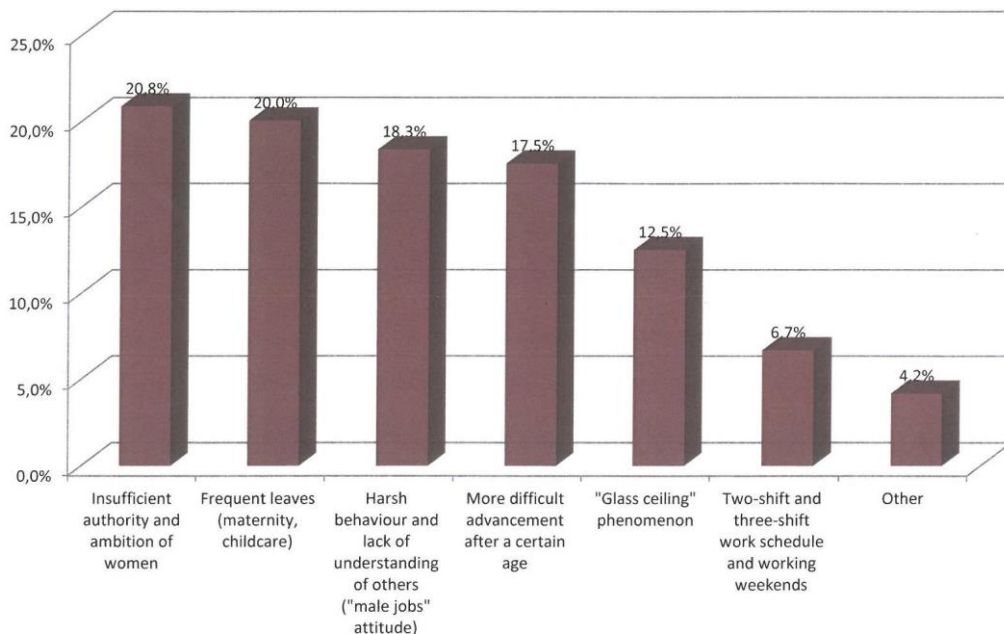

Figure 6: Main obstacles to professional advancement of women in tourism

This is understandable considering that women are lenient, yielding and frequently lack self-confidence. Among the obstacles, the third most important is *harsh behaviour toward women and lack of understanding* due to „male jobs" attitude (18.3 per cent) and the fourth is a *more difficult advancement after a certain age* (17.5 per cent). The remaining three significant obstacles to professional advancement of women in tourism are the „glass ceiling" phenomenon (12.5 per cent), two-shift and three-shift work schedule and working weekends (6.7 per cent) and other (4.2 per cent). The respondents also mentioned as obstacles: patriarchal characteristic of all economic activities, attitudes of Croatian society toward women, preoccupation of women with family life, the necessity of constant balancing of family and professional life and frequent travels women cannot afford due to family obligations. It is noteworthy that individual respondents stated that there were no obstacles to advancement of women as long as they are professional and dedicated!

The semantic differential on Figure 7 represents the typical characteristics of female and male management styles. According to Pološki's research (2003), the blue line (starting on the upper right side and ending on the bottom left side) shows the characteristics of a typical male manager. The characteristics of female managers (red line) were obtained by the research of authors of this paper. Based on a survey of 50 female managers in leading positions in Croatian tourism, the results and possible conclusions from the semantic differential speaks volumes about the similarities and differences between male and female experts in leadership positions. On a descriptive level the research shows some gender differences in managerial positions. The most significant difference is in the spheres *intimate-detached, indulgent-*

inflexible, solo player-team player, modest-always wants more, avoids risk-accepts risk. Mostly young and ambitious managers answered that women always want more and accept risks.
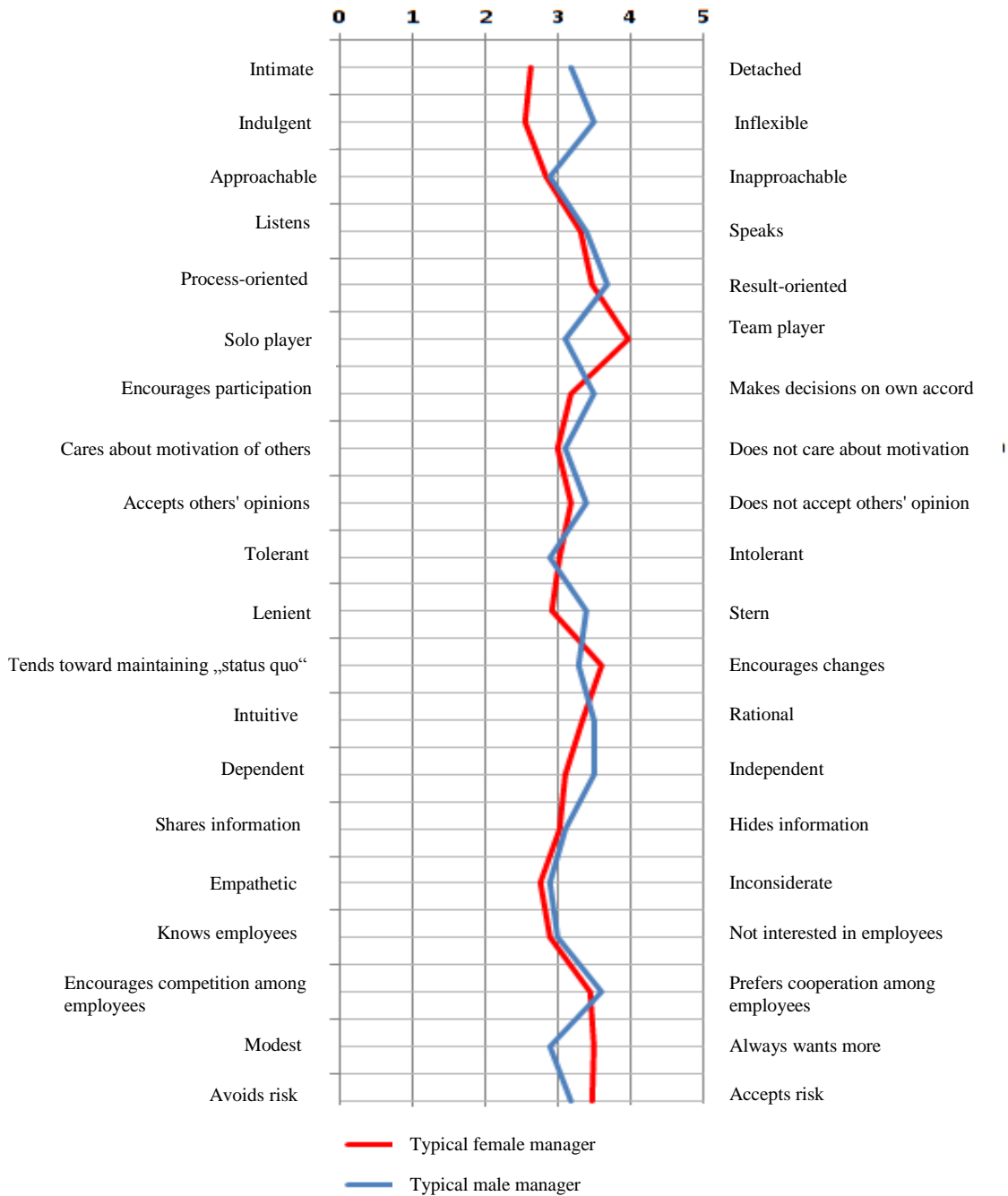

Intimate					Detached
Indulgent					Inflexible
Approachable					Inapproachable
Listens					Speaks
Process-oriented					Result-oriented
Solo player					Team player
Encourages participation					Makes decisions on own accord
Cares about motivation of others					Does not care about motivation
Accepts others' opinions					Does not accept others' opinion
Tolerant					Intolerant
Lenient					Stern
Tends toward maintaining „status quo"					Encourages changes
Intuitive					Rational
Dependent					Independent
Shares information					Hides information
Empathetic					Inconsiderate
Knows employees					Not interested in employees
Encourages competition among employees					Prefers cooperation among employees
Modest					Always wants more
Avoids risk					Accepts risk

— Typical female manager

— Typical male manager

Figure 7: Comparison of typical characteristics between male and female leaders in tourism

The resulting differences are most likely a consequence of different socialising influences relating to gender roles. Based on this, women are encouraged to nurture more intimate relationships and are allowed to a greater extent to express and communicate emotions. This finally integrates into the self-image of some female managers. The opposite is true for men who are expected to be detached and rational. Finally, the research showed that 94 per cent of female managers consider that there should be more women in management positions in

Croatian tourism, while only 6 per cent think otherwise. The majority claims that inequality in employment of women is present and that they deserve more than are offered.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper assesses the socio-economic position of women in terms of the nature of their employment in tourism, which represents the major economic sector of Croatia. The aim was to present some overall structural indicators of the gender inequality evidenced in the field of Croatian tourism. The working hypothesis was that a female manager is increasingly aware of her position in society, her chances and qualities, and therefore asks for the relevant acknowledgements as well. From our recent study conducted among fifty Croatian female business leaders, it follows that:

- over one fifth of the leading female managers in Croatian tourism point out that *insufficient authority and ambition* are the main barrier to advancement of women to leadership positions.
- most women (28 per cent) tend to use *supporting* leadership style
- the biggest difference between male and female leadership styles is reflected in the following spheres: *intimate-detached, indulgent-inflexible, solo player-team player, modest-always wants more, avoids the risk-accepts the risk* (according to sematic differential model).
- 94 per cent of female managers consider that there should be more women in management positions in Croatian tourism.

Faster and more intensive employment of women in leadership positions would certainly result in a greater variety of approaches and styles in management. This would increase the flexibility necessary for competitiveness of modern Croatian tourism organizations.

Considering the limitations which derive from inadequate number of respondents, the results of this research need to be taken with a grain of salt, i.e. they should not serve as the basis for making general conclusions for the entire female population in Croatian tourism organizations. However, the results are quite indicative and statistically reliable for deeper understanding of female managers' position in business and society. In conclusion, this research might deserve an expansion for a higher sample in the future in order to make strong and general statements about perspectives of female career in Croatian tourism sector.

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