



**PRIFYSGOL CYMRU  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES**

**WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN EGYPTIAN TRAVEL  
AGENCIES AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Dr. Samir El-Sherif and Dr. Ferial Afifi, for all the love, support and encouragement they have given me during my journey through life.

It is also dedicated to my husband, Mohamed, for his endless patience, support and encouragement all along the way and to my beloved kids, Yasmine and Abdallah, for all the hard times they have suffered during my research path.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Literature on employment in tourism addresses a division between tourism workers in gender and race. Nevertheless, there has been little attention to these issues to date. This thesis contributes to the knowledge on gender issues in the Egyptian tourism workplace through a case study of women's employment in travel agencies and the factors influencing their career development depending on a sequential dominant-less dominant mixed method approach. The thesis explores the representation and departmental distribution of women in travel agencies and the organisational policies set in place to support their career development through a survey study. It further explores the different factors influencing women's career development through a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Quantitatively, women formed 26% of the workforce in the Egyptian travel agencies. Women occupied 35% of the managerial positions in the public agencies and 25% of these positions in the private ones. Women dominate both as employees or middle managers in the departments that practice office work and are less present in the operational and ground handling departments. Public travel agencies and 55% of private agencies have written policies for selection and recruitment. Public agencies and 75% of private agencies are committed to "equal pay for equal jobs". None of the public or private agencies have written policies for handling sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Both public and private agencies apply family-friendly arrangements to support women's careers. Such arrangements are more likely effective in the public than in the private agencies, however, both public and private agencies do not provide in-site or off-site childcare facilities.

The major body of the work is a qualitative study of the factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. Semi-structured interviews with women and men employers, managers, employees, consultants and tourism academics are supplemented with single sex and mixed focus group interviews with tourism undergraduates. These provide a rich picture of the factors promoting and constraining women's career development. The thesis concludes that women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies is influenced by three groups of closely interrelated, overlapping and interacting factors: the personal; organisational; societal, which play an important role in shaping the extent and nature of women's involvement in employment. Force field analysis identified nine key forces working for and twelve key forces working against women's career development in the Egyptian travel business. The thesis makes a contribution to understanding women's lives and experiences in an Egyptian context and challenges the migration of Western approaches to women's issues to other contexts based on different value sets.



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH JOURNEY**

#### **1.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter explains the motives that urged me to conduct the current research. It begins by introducing the importance of the tourism industry to the Egyptian economy then narrates my research journey and the motives for my interest in the relationship between gender and employment in the travel business. The chapter further crystallizes my research question, overall aim and specific objectives and ends up with a description of the thesis structure.

#### **1.2 Importance of tourism to the Egyptian economy**

Egypt is rich in tourism resources. It enjoys: a unique geographical location as the meeting ground of east and west; a favourable mild climate all year round; a deep-rooted long history; a huge cultural heritage manifested in the Pharaonic, Roman, Coptic and Islamic monuments; a natural environment enriched by the Nile River, Mediterranean and Red Sea beaches and resorts; vast expanses of desert; fascinating oases; and above all friendly and hospitable people (MOT, 1996; ETAA, 1999/2000; ETAA, 2001/2002).

The country depends heavily upon tourism as the most dynamic industry and the third largest earner of foreign currency after oil and the Suez Canal revenues (ETAA, 1999/2000). Identified as one of the most lucrative economic activities in Egypt, tourism is referred to as the future industry. In his determination to strengthen the Egyptian national economy, President Mubarak

declared tourism development a top priority on the government's strategic agenda. Realising the full impact of the world's largest generator of wealth and jobs, he announced his full support for a plan to boost the tourism industry (None, 2003).

The Egyptian economy depends largely on tourism receipts that account for around 6% of the GDP (None, 2002) and the tourism industry employs about 2% of the total Egyptian workforce (CAPMAS, 2003). Tourism also has a promising capacity to generate continuous direct and indirect job opportunities.

The latest available statistics published by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism show that in the year 2000 the number of visitors was 5,506,179 and the number of tourist nights was 32,787,881. The average length of stay was 5.95 nights/tourist, and the average occupancy rate of hotel rooms was 73%. Tourism receipts for this particular year were approximately US\$ 4.4 billion. The year 2001 was associated with the terrorist attacks on the US on September 11. These events drastically affected the tourism industry all over the world. Consequently, performance statistics for the Egyptian tourism industry for the year 2001 were comparatively less than those for the year 2000. In 2001, the number of visitors dropped to 4,648,485 (about 16% less), and the number of tourist nights dropped to 29,813,290 (about 9% less). The rate of occupancy of hotel rooms also dropped to 61% (12% less) and the tourism receipts fell by 13% to about US\$ 3.8 billion (MOT, 2002).

However, the Egyptian tourism industry began to recover gradually from December 2001 as a result of an immediate collaboration between the government, tourism and aviation enterprises, banks and the Egyptian Tourism Federation (ETF) in implementing a fast recovery plan. This plan was oriented towards deferring the payment of business tax, social security and utility bills; extending credit to tourism enterprises and re-negotiating loans and payments; allowing job cuts, temporary pay cuts and reduced work hours; simplifying entry requirements and procedures for arriving tourists; supporting charter flight operators; reducing promotion expenditure and re-directing marketing efforts and funds towards new and promising markets. Such curative measures, in addition to the super security actions taken by airports and airline authorities world-wide, resulted in regaining tourists' confidence in travel. Slowly but surely the tourists' flow to Egypt was resumed and continued until the Egyptian tourism industry fully recovered within sixteen months of the September 11, 2001 crisis. In the year 2002, the total tourist arrivals were 5,191,678 and the total tourist nights were 32,663, 954 (El-Khadem, 2003). These figures are more or less similar to those formerly mentioned for the year 2000 before the crisis.

Travel agencies represent a corner-stone in the Egyptian tourism industry. The success of agencies in running the travel business depends to a great extent on the capabilities of their management and employees. In other words, human resources are a critical element for the advancement of the travel agency towards making its targeted objectives.

In Egypt, employment in travel agencies is usually equally open to both men and women. However, certain factors may encourage or impose employing a person of a certain sex for a specific job or interfere with equality in career development opportunities for both sexes. Despite the significance of the travel business to the Egyptian tourism industry, little research has been done on the status of women employment in these agencies and the opportunities for their career development within the Egyptian travel business.

It is vital that this research occurs because women's issues are nowadays increasingly focused on in Egypt and women's studies are rapidly emerging in many social, economical, political and cultural directions since the establishment of the National Council for Women (NCW) in the year 2000. However, the status of women and their experiences in many Egyptian workplaces – one of which is travel agencies – remains under-explored.

Available statistics on women's representation in the Egyptian tourism enterprises in general and in Egyptian travel agencies in particular are too old to rely on. The latest I could find during my secondary data collection process was a survey entitled "*A Study of Employment in the Tourism Sector*" conducted in 1991 by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism (MOT) in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS). This study was published in April 1993 and came in six volumes of which volume four dealt with employment in travel agencies (CAPMAS, 1993). Similarly, no qualitative studies on women's experiences within the business could be traced.



The present study aimed to explore women's experiences of careers in the Egyptian travel industry. It concentrated on the current status of women in the Egyptian travel agencies in terms of representation, employment opportunities, career prospects and factors influencing careers within the business. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the growing Egyptian research agenda on women's issues and will cope with the nation-wide ongoing trend of empowering women under the umbrella of the recently established NCW which "*grew out of the reasoning that, in a fast changing world, countries aspiring to achieve progress, can no longer afford to marginalise women*" (NCW, 2000a: 1).

### 1.3 Research journey

This section presents the motives that underpinned the development of the current study. It is founded on the "*intellectual autobiography*" concept that has been mentioned by Stanley and Wise (1993: 8) as a way of sharing experiences and making explicit the strong objectivity of a study. According to Maynard (1998), rendering the researcher visible strengthens the research process through exposure to the cultural and biographical aspects of knowing.

My interest in tourism and travel started very early when I was only five years old. By that time, I made my first flight on board an aircraft joining my father and mother in a long trip from Egypt to the United States. My father had to reside in the US for two years whilst doing his post-doctorate research. As soon as I boarded the plane I felt great fear. I imagined that the plane would fly in the sky and never land again. A female flight attendant was observant

enough to notice my fear. She came and very kindly asked me if I needed anything? I immediately asked her a naïve question: *“Does the plane return to the ground after it goes high in the sky?”* The attendant smiled and said, *“Honey...Don’t worry at all, the plane takes off and lands many times every day... You will be very safe with us”*. Within a few minutes the same female attendant came back and gave me a small drawing book and a box of colour pencils as well as a beautiful small doll. The colouring book and the doll made me forget my fears entirely and kept me busy most of the flight time. Although I was too young to understand or appreciate how the travel attendant smartly handled my fear, I was strongly impressed by her kindness, tenderness and seemliness.

Another thing attracted my attention during the flight. It happened that all of the flight attendants on the plane were females. Again I started asking my mother a group of other naïve questions such as: *“Why are all the travel attendants females?”*... *“Can you work a travel attendant?”* and *“Can I work as a travel attendant when I grow up?”* My mother answered these silly questions patiently. She said that females are often preferred as flight attendants because they look nice, behave kindly and politely and have the advantage of being naturally trained in hospitality. My mother added that she could not work as a flight attendant because she had not studied in a hospitality school, and if I want to become a flight attendant I have to go to a special school to learn hospitality. I accepted my mother’s explanations satisfactorily and simply commented, *“OK, I will go to a hospitality school when I grow*

up". My great admiration of the smart and kind female travel attendant was the seed for my love of tourism and travel.

After we settled in the US I went to school. In the library, I was always fond of the books and stories that showed pictures of recreation and historic sites. My parents bought me plenty of these books to satisfy my hobby. They not only brought me the picture books but also set up a plan to let me see as much as possible of the available recreation and historic sites in practice. Every weekend as well as during the long holidays we drove hundreds of miles away from home to visit new sites. We used to have our meals in the scattered fast food restaurants and spend nights in the roadside small motels or modest hotels. Throughout these trips I noticed that most of the workers in those places were females. I always recalled my mother's explanations about the female travel attendant and began to develop the impression that there are jobs for women and others for men.

I returned back to Egypt when I was seven years old. In fact, the amount of knowledge I gained during my stay in the US made my thinking and understanding far ahead of my actual age. At this relatively young age I was determined to study tourism and hospitality and become a travel attendant or a counter staff in an airline or a travel agency. I began to ask my parents about the requirements for such type of study and the expected future for a person working in those fields. They encouraged me to proceed in this direction and ascertained that I have to be very clever at school to collect the necessary high score that qualifies me to join the College of Tourism and Hotel Management.

They further told me that if I achieved my goals and got involved in the tourism and travel business I would discover that I had chosen a very difficult job with a bright future. I took the challenge, strictly followed the advice of my parents, worked very hard at school and always kept one of the three first positions in my class for all of my school years.

By the age of twelve I was selected, because of my excellence at school, among a group of 14 youth boys and girls representing Egypt to spend two weeks in Italy on a government youth-exchange program. In this mission I visited plenty of historic and tourist sites in several Italian cities. I always observed that most of the tour guides and hospitality staff were women, a phenomenon that brought to my mind a puzzling question: *“Why are most of the people working in tourism, aviation and hospitality females?”*

Five years later, the whole family moved to the Sultanate of Oman where my father worked as a consultant. There, I spent my last high school year. The new society seemed to me very unusual and strange. The school was for girls only and boys learned in separate schools. All of my teachers without exception were females. Men were already regarded as being superior to women in all aspects of this society. In a family visit, for example, men had to sit in a separate room and women had to sit in another room within the same house. Young females of six or seven years old and over were treated as full-grown women. They had to stick to many local cultural and social traditions in relation to clothing, attitude and behaviour. Although it was a tough experience, I succeeded in coping with such culture and traditions. I

concentrated very hard on my last high school year studies. Finally, I occupied the first position among all high schools graduates at the sultanate level with a very high score. This achievement guaranteed that I could fulfil my dream to enrol at the College of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt.

Despite the responsibilities of my father during our stay in Oman he was able to manage several trips for the family to see parts of the country as well as the neighbouring gulf countries. During those trips we ate in several sophisticated restaurants and stayed at luxurious hotels. Surprisingly, I noticed that most of the hospitality staff and tour guides in these places were men. The few women practising these activities were not local citizens and the majority of them were Indians or from the Philippines. When I asked the manager of a famous hotel, who was also an Indian, about my observation he smiled and hesitantly said, *“Miss... For how long have you been in this country? Women citizens refuse to work in hotels and restaurants...They believe it is a shame to work in such places ...Even if the woman citizen wants to work in a hotel or a restaurant her family will not allow her...You have to know more about the culture here”*. His answer made me realise that there is a cultural dimension for women’s work in tourism and hospitality that varies from one society to another. What is widely acceptable and common in America and Europe is totally rejected in certain conservative Arabian communities.

Due to his work obligations in Oman, my father was a frequent traveller. He dealt with several travel agencies to arrange his trips. I used to join him whenever he went to these agencies because of my keen interest to understand

how they operated. For all travel agencies, there were no women employees, few male employees were citizens and the majority of them were foreigners. My Omani experience induced a drastic change in my perceptions about women's work in tourism, hospitality and travel business. I began to realise that it is not sex-related (as my mother tried to convince me when I was five years old) but rather culture-related (as the Indian hotel manager told me at the age of seventeen). Such a change in perception brought to my mind new questions like: "*What is the status of women's work in tourism, hospitality and travel business in my country?*"... "*Is this status sex or culture related?*" and "*What factors influence women's involvement in tourism, hospitality and the travel business?*" Of course, there were no immediate answers for such puzzles but by that time I had a strong inner feeling that I might find answers for one or more of them one day.

After graduation from the high school in Oman I returned to Egypt and enrolled at the College of Tourism and Hotel Management in Cairo. There, I had to specialise in one of three definite fields: tourism studies, hospitality management or guidance. After a period of hesitation, I decided to specialise in tourism studies under the influence of my old keen desire to work as a travel attendant, a tour operator or a counter staff. University study kept me busy and gradually I temporarily forgot my thoughts and questions about women's work in tourism and travel business. Within a year, however, I had a new opportunity to experience another Arabian culture. My father was transferred to Yemen and the family visited with him during the summer vacations.

In Yemen, the culture and traditions were very similar to those of Oman but the Yemeni society seemed to be relatively less conservative. However, men were always superior to women, separation between men and women in all gatherings was practised and strict clothing, attitude and behaviour restrictions were also applied to women even to females less than ten years old. Very few Yemeni women were seen working at different places including hotels and restaurants.

During my first summer vacation in Yemen I tried to train in a travel agency but I faced great difficulty in finding a training opportunity. Yemeni agency owners were deeply surprised to see a young female seeking training in a travel agency. Nevertheless my father convinced one of his friends, who owned a travel agency, to allow me to train. The comment of that agency owner to my father was *"It is a courtesy for you personally...This matter is very unusual here"*. This experience made me eager to know whether the Yemeni travel agencies employed women or not? To satisfy my curiosity, my father arranged for a tour that covered the few travel agencies operating in the small city where we lived. The outcome of this tour was that there were no women employees at all in any of the visited travel agencies. Experience gained from my stay in Yemen emphasised that women's work in tourism and travel business in that country seemed to be strongly influenced by the local culture and made me recall my previous perceptions and unanswered puzzling questions about this particular issue.

During my second and third years of college it was required that I take summer training in travel agencies. I was lucky enough to train at one of the big travel agencies in Egypt for two successive summers. This was a magnificent opportunity to have an insight into the status of women in the Egyptian travel business and review my perceptions of that issue. Certain departments like counter and marketing were women dominated while others like transfer and transport mainly employed men. As a matter of fact, it seemed - in contrast to other Arab societies - that there were no limitations for women's participation in all aspects of the business in Egypt. At this stage, I began to believe that the Egyptian model of women's employment in travel business lay somewhere between the modern developed western culture (in America and Italy) and the highly conservative oriental culture (in Oman and Yemen).

However, a new phenomenon struck me. All senior managers in the agency where I had my summer training were men, and the vast majority of the middle managers were also men. I discussed what I had observed with some of my male and female colleagues who trained in other agencies and almost all of them confirmed that they noticed the same thing although they trained at agencies varying in size from the very small to the very large. This experience prompted me to a new question: *"Why are women less represented than men at the senior and middle managerial levels in Egyptian travel agencies?"*

The years of university study passed quickly and, as usual, I ranked the first position among all tourism studies department graduates. I was nominated as a tutor and post-graduate researcher at the same department. Because of



bureaucracy, at least six months were required to finish the paper work before I took this job. I was very eager to practice work, so I met the General Manager of the travel agency where I spent my summer training and asked him to allow me to continue unpaid training until I had the university job. Due to his previous knowledge of my enthusiasm, he was generous enough to offer me a temporary paid job in the counter department. He further promised to employ me permanently if I liked the job and decided not to occupy the university position. Thus, suddenly, I found a chance to realise another one of my dreams and become a counter staff in a big travel agency.

Work in the travel agency was very tedious and lasted from 9 a.m till 5 p.m six days a week. However, I was happy with it and gained considerable confidence and experience. It gave me an excellent opportunity to have a true view of the agency's structure and its internal operation procedures. This experience strongly activated the questions and perceptions interacting inside me for long about the issue of women's work in tourism and travel business in general and in travel agencies in particular. Gradually, these questions became more crystallised into two comprehensive questions: *"What is the status of women employment in the Egyptian travel agencies? ...and what are the factors influencing their career development within the business?"* I was always highly interested in finding satisfactory answers for these questions and had a strong feeling that this was a suitable topic for an interesting post-graduate study when I start my tutor and research job in the university.

Soon the time came to determine whether I would remain working for the travel agency or move to the university job. Although I loved the work in the travel agency very much I could not resist the desire to proceed towards the post-graduate study. Nevertheless, my final choice was the university job for two reasons. Firstly, the university job would give me ample time to satisfy the desire to do research while the agency job totally exhausted my time and capabilities. Secondly, I believed that I had already developed a suitable research question on women's work in travel agencies through my personal experiences in the American, Italian, Omani, Yemeni and Egyptian societies and it was time to investigate these experiences from a scientific point of view.

My supervisors in the university recommended that I conduct my research for the Master degree on "The role of information technology in tourism marketing" as - by that time - web marketing was an emerging issue in Egypt and seemed to be an attractive research area for tourism post-graduate students. After I obtained the Master degree I was nominated for a government scholarship to study for a Ph.D. in Tourism Management abroad. I was given the freedom to select any topic related to that field of speciality. This nomination refreshed my hopes to realise one more of my dreams and try to investigate my puzzling questions and perceptions related to the issues of women's work in Egyptian travel agencies.

In February 2000 I met with Dr. Eleri Jones, Head of the Welsh School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Management, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), who was visiting Cairo University. The Dean of the College

of Tourism and Hotel Management at Fayoum, Cairo University, introduced me to her. In the meeting I expressed to Dr. Jones my desire to complete post-graduate studies for a Ph.D. at UWIC and informed her about my interest in orienting my study towards human resource management. Dr. Jones welcomed me to UWIC and we decided to discuss, in detail, the scope of my proposed research when I arrive to Cardiff.

### 1.4 Research question

When Dr. Jones and I started discussing my research plans, I was tentatively interested in conducting a comparative study of women's employment in travel agencies and the factors influencing their career development in both Egypt and the United Kingdom. Accordingly, I started with collecting information about the status of women employment in the Egyptian travel agencies but unfortunately I found that there was almost no information to rely on. Thus, it was more practical to limit the scope of my intended research to the Egyptian travel agencies in order to fill such a gap in the body of knowledge on the Egyptian travel business and to cope with the limited time of my scholarship. Thus my research would investigate: **"How women are represented in the Egyptian travel agencies and what factors influence their career development?"**

### 1.5 Study aim and objectives

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the current status of women employment in the Egyptian travel agencies and explore the factors and key forces affecting their career development.

To accomplish this aim, the study focused on the following four specific objectives:

- **Objective one**

To review the literature on gender issues in the tourism workplace in general and in the Egyptian tourism workplace in particular, with special emphasis on the Egyptian travel agencies.

- **Objective two**

To investigate the current status of women's employment in the Egyptian travel agencies and the organisational policies set in place to support their career development.

- **Objective three**

To explore the factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies.

- **Objective four**

To identify the key forces working for and against women's careers in the Egyptian travel agencies.

## **1.6 Thesis structure**

This thesis is structured in eleven chapters. **Chapter one** consists of six sections; the outline, the importance of tourism industry to the Egyptian economy, the research journey, the research question, the research aim and objectives and the thesis structure in sections 1.1 to 1.6, respectively.

**Chapter two** consists of seven sections including an outline in section 2.1 and a discussion of the gender issues in the workplace with particular focus on the

distinction between the terms “gender” and “sex” in sections 2.2 and 2.3, respectively. Section 2.4 tells the story of women’s work. Section 2.5 covers the issues of gender segregation in the workplace and section 2.6 reviews women’s employment in the tourism workplace in the different countries. A summary of the chapter contents is given in section 2.7.

**Chapter three** consists of seven sections including an outline in section 3.1. Section 3.2 presents an overview of Egypt (officially called the Arab Republic of Egypt) in terms of location, population, historical background, religious doctrine, social structure and legislation. Section 3.3 provides information on the historical development of the Egyptian women. Section 3.4 discusses the involvement of Egyptian women in the public sphere and section 3.5 deals with their involvement in the labour market. Section 3.6 concentrates on women in the Egyptian tourism workplace. The chapter ends with a summary in section 3.7.

**Chapter four** consists of eight sections of which section 4.1 is an outline. Section 4.2 discusses the role of science in human inquiry. Section 4.3 presents the concept, criteria and ethics of research. Section 4.4 explores the elements of social research. Section 4.5 clarifies the role and place of theory in social research. Section 4.6 explains the different ways of doing social research. Section 4.7 deals with the inquiry paradigms in the social sciences. Section 4.8 summarises the contents of the chapter.

**Chapter five** consists of seven sections of which 5.1 is an outline. Section 5.2 covers the adopted research approach and section 5.3 deals with the research design in terms of strategy and the methods of data collection and analysis. Sections 5.4 and 5.5 concentrate on the implementation of the research phases one and two, respectively, while section 5.6 lists the limitations to the research process. Section 5.7 summarises the chapter.

**Chapter six** consists of five sections of which 6.1 is an outline. Section 6.2 deals with women's representation in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies at both the lower organizational level and the different managerial levels. Section 6.3 focuses on the departmental distribution of women as employees and middle managers and section 6.4 explores the organizational policies set in place to support their careers. The chapter ends with a summary in section 6.5.

**Chapter seven** consists of five sections including an outline in section 7.1. Section 7.2 is devoted for a theoretical background on the different factors influencing career. Section 7.3 presents a comprehensive view of the different groups of factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies as revealed by the current research findings. Section 7.4 focuses on the family-related and individual-related personal factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. The chapter ends with a summary in section 7.5.

**Chapter eight** consists of three sections. Section 8.1 is the chapter's outline, section 8.2 presents a classification of the identified organisational factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies and section 8.3 is the chapter's summary.

**Chapter nine** also consists of three sections. Section 9.1 is the chapter outline. Section 9.2 is a classification of the different societal factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. The Chapter ends with a summary in section 9.3.

**Chapter ten** consists of four sections including an outline in section 10.1. Section 10.2 presents a force field analysis for the different driving and restraining forces influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel business as revealed from the current research. Section 10.3 evaluates with the validity of these forces and section 10.4 summarises the chapter's findings.

**Chapter eleven** compromises the following nine sections: an outline in section 11.1; the major research findings in section 11.2; the significant contributions of the current study to knowledge (theory), methodology and practice in sections 11.3, 11.4 and 11.5, respectively; the study's limitations in section 11.6; the potential avenues for further research on women's work in the Egyptian travel business in section 11.7; the reflections on the research process in section 11.8 and my final thoughts about the study as a whole in section 11.9.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**WOMEN AND WORK: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

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## CHAPTER TWO

### WOMEN AND WORK: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

#### 2.1 Chapter outline

This chapter gives a brief overview of the different issues related to women and work as derived from selected relevant textbooks and research papers with particular emphasis on women's employment in the tourism workplace. The reader may notice that the chapter provides an introduction to such issues and is designed to contextualise the discussion on women in Egypt which follows in chapter three.

The chapter starts with a discussion of gender issues in the workplace and moves on to the distinction between the terms gender and sex then tells the story of women's work. The chapter further deals with the issues of gender segregation in the workplace and reviews women's employment in the tourism workplace in different countries.

#### 2.2 Gender issues in the workplace

*Gender is a key concept for understanding what is happening with individuals in their working lives and for understanding how people encounter encouragement, scepticism, support and suffering in organizational contexts.*

(Alvesson and Billing, 1997: 1)

Gender issues in the workplace can be regarded from two different perspectives: the *"feminist – sociological"* perspective and the *"business – management"* perspective. Texts supporting the feminist – sociological perspective (e.g. Reskin and Padavic, 1994) often start with showing the sexist nature of contemporary society and the ongoing prejudice against women at

work organizations, despite the presence of the Equal Opportunity policies and the anti-discriminatory regulations, or by referring to common knowledge and/or statistics showing that women in general have lower wages than men even within the same occupation and at the same level, that they experience more unemployment, take more responsibility for unpaid labour, are strongly underrepresented at higher positions in working life and have less autonomy and control over work and lower expectations of promotion (e.g. Chafetz, 1989; Ve, 1989). Other examples of texts supporting the feminist-sociological perspective are EOC (1999), Rees (1999 & 1992), Cropmton (1997), Ledwith and Colgan (1996), Davidson and Cooper (1992), Crompton and Sanderson (1990) and Marshall (1984). In contrast, texts written under the umbrella of the business management perspective often start with emphasising the importance of utilizing women's talents to the most, stressing the benefits organizations may lose due to the marginalization of women and their exclusion from decision making positions (Alvesson and Billing, 1997; Maddock, 1999).

As a matter of fact, these two perspectives are culturally specific and are not particularly helpful to understanding the Egyptian context. Thus, in this thesis, I will discuss gender issues in the Egyptian tourism workplace from quite a different perspective which I shall refer to as the *“reflective perspective”*. I shall try to reflect the gender issues in the Egyptian travel business through the perceptions and experiences of different groups of female and male individuals concerned with and/or involved in this business. I neither tend to adopt the feminist sociological approach, where women are seen as victims of the

patriarchal practices, nor advocate the business – management approach, which accounts on the investment of women's talents.

Frankly speaking, it took me several months to digest the complexity of the different theoretical and philosophical necessary backgrounds related to gender issues in the workplace. Therefore, I kept myself involved in a vast array of texts across a number of social research disciplines of which I, finally, selected literature that seemed to be most relevant to my research topic which explores women in the Egyptian workplace.

### **2.3 The sex/gender distinction**

**Gender** (genus in Latin) is: *“a scheme for categorization of individuals that uses biological differences as the basis for assigning social differences”* (Powell, 1993: 35). Gender is also defined as: *“a system of culturally constructed identities, expressed in ideologies of masculinity and femininity, interacting with socially structured relationships in divisions of labour and leisure, sexuality and power between women and men”* (Swain, 1995: 258),

**Sex** (sexus in Latin) or **biological sex** *“is the term suggested by biological characteristics such as the chromosomal composition and reproductive apparatus of individuals”* (Powell, 1993: 35). Pryzgoda and Chrisler (2000: 2) further defined sex as *“the biological aspects of being male or female”*. Sex is also defined as *“the property or quality by which organisms are classified as female or male on the basis of their reproductive organs and functions”* (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000b).

The term '**gender**' is frequently used interchangeably with the term: '**sex**'.

*Sex and gender are overlapping concepts. Sex is typically seen as referring to biological sex, i.e. the fact that nature produces people as men and women. Gender refers to how men and women are being formed through social and cultural processes.*

(Alvesson and Billing, 1997: 20)

Commenting on the distinction between gender and sex, Pryzgoda and Chrisler (2000: 2) mentioned that "*sex has come to refer to the biological aspects of being male and female. Gender typically refers only to behavioural, social, and psychological characteristics of men and women*".

As seen in the usage notes of the electronic version of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000b):

*Traditionally, gender has been used primarily to refer to the grammatical categories of "masculine", "feminine" and "neuter" but in recent years the word has become well established in its use to refer to sex-based categories, as in phrases such as gender gap and the politics of gender. This usage is supported by the practice of many anthropologists, who reserve sex for reference to biological categories, while using gender to refer to social or cultural categories. According to this rule one would say 'The effectiveness of the medication appears to depend on the sex (not gender) of the patient' but 'In peasant societies, gender (not sex) roles are likely to be more clearly defined'. This distinction is useful in principle, but it is by no means widely observed, and considerable variation in usage occurs at all levels.*

As explained by Pryzgoda and Chrisler (2000), one may notice that the words 'sex' and 'gender' are often used synonymously to differentiate between men and women, boys and girls or even males and females in our individual day-to-day interactions. For example, if one is asked to identify his sex on an official paper or a questionnaire form one is expected to check either the male or

female box. Similarly, if one is asked about one's gender, one is usually offered the same two choices, *i.e.* male and female

According to Claes (1999), the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' are frequently used interchangeably in written material and in conversation. Adjectives like '*male*' and '*masculine*,' or '*female*' and '*feminine*' appear in the discussions of the differences between males and females across a number of academic disciplines, including: biology (the study of living organisms); anthropology (the study of man kind especially its societies and customs); psychology (the study of human mind and behaviour); social science (the study of society and social relationships); management (the study of business administration).

Central to sex/gender distinction is the distinction between the two phrases "*sex differences*" and "*gender differences*". While the former phrase refers to "*how males and females actually differ*", the latter refers to "*how people think that males and females differ*". Examining both types of differences is often required for a better understanding of the male/female interactions in the workplace because "*sex differences influence how people are disposed to behave in work settings*" and "*gender differences influence how people react to others' behaviour in such settings*" (Powell, 1993: 35).

The sex/gender distinction issue further brings to light the need for distinguishing between "*sex roles*" and "*gender roles*". The biological dichotomy lends its structure to one of the current frameworks of gender studies, the '*sex role theory*' which indicates that being a man or a woman

means enacting a general role as a function of one's sex (Claes, 1999). Here, I would argue that, apart from giving birth and breast feeding, any role carried out by women in the past, is carried out by them in the present or will be carried out by them in the future is a 'gender role' not a 'sex role'.

### 2.4 The story of women's work

*Women and men have always worked together to reproduce social life on a long-term as well as a day-to-day basis. The way in which this work is divided between them, however, has changed and developed over time and still varies considerably between different societies. However for a number of reasons, most societies have allocated particular tasks to men and others to women - that is men and women have not usually performed the same work.* (Crompton, 1997: 6)

Women's work has been economically vital since prehistory, although women's contributions have varied according to the structure, needs, customs, and attitudes of society. In prehistoric times, women and men participated almost equally in the hunting and gathering activities to obtain food. However, the contribution of men - who did most of the hunting activities - to the survival of mankind in hunting-and-gathering societies was often more valued than that of women - who did most of the food-gathering tasks (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia, 2002). As stated by (Powell, 1993: 11), "*the activities of hunters of food have frequently been portrayed as more important than the activities of food gatherers*".

Considering the predominant significance of men's roles over women's roles in the prehistoric era, 'man-the-hunter' theorists (who assume that all hunting and gathering societies were similarly organised) have used the "*evolutionary*

*theory*” (which suggests that organisms and societies that are best able to adapt to their environment have the best chance for survival) to claim that the sex differences which exist today were originally established in the ‘hunting-and-gathering’ societies where males did most of the hunting and developed aggressiveness while females depended on males for meat and, hence, developed passivity (Powell, 1993).

Some of the ‘man-the-hunter’ theorists further conclude that in accordance with their hunting activities, men have always been natural killers. Gailey (1987) and Tiger and Fox (1971) mentioned that as men learned how to be successful at dominating other species during the hunt, they also learned how to be successful at dominating (managing) other people in today’s work organisations.

However, Powell (1993: 13) argued that in contradiction with ‘man-the-hunter’ theorists, “*evidence accumulated by anthropologists suggests that no one pattern of sex roles prevail across all societies*”. Furthermore, he added that based on observations of several Pacific cultures, the famed anthropologist Margaret Mead (1949) pointed out the fallacy of assuming that sex differences in a particular society are natural and the result of evolution.

Powell (1993) further referred to the study of Murdock (1937) on cross-cultural occupational differences, which compiled data on the division of labour by sex in 224 cultures, and reached a similar conclusion. Only three activities (preparing and planting the soil, crafting leather goods and making

ornaments) were equally likely to be given to men or women. Other occupations were labelled masculine or feminine according to which sex was more likely to perform them. As some proponents of evolutionary theory would expect, masculine roles included hunting and trapping, while cooking and gathering herbs were feminine roles. Nonetheless, only a few occupations (metal working, weapon making, pursuit of sea mammals and hunting) were nearly always relegated to males while no occupation was nearly always relegated to females. Murdock's study concluded that although a particular society could be quite rigid in sex roles there was considerable variability in sex roles across societies.

Commenting on the findings of both Mead's and Murdock's above-mentioned anthropological studies, Powell (1993: 13) concluded:

*If sex roles are dictated by the lessons of evolution, different lessons have been learned by different societies. Therefore, it is unlikely that our "traditional" conceptions of sex roles are the result of principles of evolution at work. To understand the relationship between the sexes in our own society we need to look elsewhere.*

With the development of agricultural communities, women's work revolved more around the home (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia, 2002). Alvesson and Billing (1997: 54) described men's and women's role in the pre-industrial family as follows:

*Women and men both produced goods for the household and women also took care of the home and the people living there. Work was then not regarded as separated from private life. People produced from day to day what they needed for their existence. Wage labour was a rare phenomenon.*

Crompton (1997: 6) citing Bradley (1989) said:



*Before the social and technical changes associated with the industrial revolution in the mid-eighteenth century, most production, for both day-to-day use and the market, was to be found in the household or domestic sphere.*

The same author added:

*In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the population of England, the 'first industrial nation', was still largely engaged in agricultural work. In such households, men, women and children co-operated in the production of food and basic commodities. Tasks were divided along gender lines: women cared for poultry and pigs, household tasks, dairying and other ancillary such as spinning and sewing, whereas men were responsible for larger animals (horses and cattle), ploughing and mowing, although in periods of work-intensity such as the harvest both sexes might do similar work. Many rural households did not have access to sufficient land of their own or common land, to support a family. Members of the rural poor worked (and very often lived) in other households as servants or labourers.*

(Crompton, 1997: 6 - 7)

As urban centres developed, women sold or traded goods in the marketplace (Encarta Encyclopedia 2002). Nevertheless, although the tasks performed by both men and women in the pre-industrial era were equally essential to the family economy, men more often than women, received and, thereby, controlled the money coming into the family because the products they produced (milk, wheat and wool) were more likely to enter the marketplace than those that women did (butter, bread and cloth) (Powell, 1993).

Prior to the industrial revolution, artisans working in their own homes frequently used the labour of their families. This custom was prevalent during the Middle Ages. By the 14th century, women in England and France were frequently accepted equally with men as tailors, barbers carpenters, saddlers and spurriers. In contrast, dressmaking and lace-making guilds were composed

exclusively of women. Merchants distributed tools and materials to workers who then produced articles on a piecework basis in their homes. Some of these workers were women, who were paid directly for their labour, while men with families were commonly assisted by their wives and children (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia, 2002).

Manufacturing of shoes, metalwork, etc. was similarly carried out by household members of all ages and both sexes. Everyone beyond a very young age had to work. *“People needed to live and work together in order to survive, and the single-person household was a rarity”* (Crompton, 1997: 7).

As the Industrial Revolution developed during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the goods that had been produced by hand in the home were manufactured by machine in factories. Thus, people started moving to the expanding industrial towns seeking wage-work instead of the traditional household production. With such a move, the household work strategies and, consequently, the division of labour, were profoundly reshaped. Men became more likely involved in paid or market work selling their labour power in exchange for money and providing the major economic support for their families while women, especially married ones, became increasingly identified with domestic non-paid work and their contribution to the family economy started to decline. They stayed at home as idle, decorative symbols of their husbands' economic success (Crompton, 1997; Pahl, 1984; Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia, 2002).

The growing exclusion of married women from the workplace by that time was associated with a shift in the ideology of womanhood where good women were increasingly defined as *"refined and delicate beings, who should best be shielded from the crudities and excesses of the public sphere- which included the world of paid employment"* (Davidoff and Hall, 1987 in Crompton, 1997: 7). Women were further described as being the *'angel of the house'* or the *'relative creature who maintains the home as a haven'* (Burman et al., 1979: 15) and the home itself was increasingly defined as *"a purifying haven, maintained as such by the efforts of its resident spirit (the wife)"* (Crompton, 1997: 7).

Reformers, who supported the ideas of womanhood, emphasised the precedence of women's domestic responsibilities, particularly those associated with the care of children and other family members, over market work.

*These ideas, not surprisingly, emerged first of all amongst the bourgeoisie and upper classes who could afford to maintain a non-working wife. However, social reformers who were concerned with matters such as infant mortality and the health of the working classes as well as moral issues such as illegitimacy and prostitution, also considered that these social problems were exacerbated by an absence of domestic comforts, cleanliness and moral order resulting from women's paid employment. Women, they argued, had domestic responsibilities, particularly those associated with the care of children and other family members, which should take precedence over market work.*

(Crompton, 1997: 7-8)

Smith (1973) mentioned that the *de facto* exclusion of married women from paid work areas was accompanied with the development of the *'ideology of separate spheres'* which identified home and domestic sphere as belonging to

women, whilst that of the outside world - including the workplace - as belonging to men.

Poor women worked because of economic necessity whether they were unmarried or married especially if their husbands were unable to sustain the family solely through their own work. They competed with men for some jobs as manufacturers often favoured women employees because of their relevant skills and lower wages. Low pay, poor working conditions, long work-hours and other abuses were characteristic of women's work in the early industrial capitalism. When minimum wage legislation and other protective laws were introduced they concentrated particularly on the alleviation of abuses of working women. Over time, major changes occurred in the industrial nations including the steadily increasing proportion of women in the labour force, decreasing family responsibilities (due to both smaller family size and technological innovation in the home), higher levels of education for women and more middle-income and upper-income women working for pay or for job satisfaction. Nevertheless, statistically speaking, women have not yet achieved parity of pay or senior appointments in the workplace in any nation (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia, 2002).

As mentioned by Novara (1980), the image of women's work throughout the ages is strongly related to six main functions that are necessary for the survival of the human race and are still considered women's work areas today. These functions are: bearing children; feeding all members of the family; clothing people; taking care of the small, the sick, the elderly and the disabled; being

responsible for the education of children and taking care of the home including making products of use to the home. The image of men's work is not, currently or historically, drawn from the above-mentioned tasks though men shared in some activities - like hunting, farming and fishing - that are needed to sustain the human race in varying degrees.

## **2.5 Gender segregation in the workplace**

Today's labour market is characterised as being highly segregated horizontally and vertically on the basis of gender. Horizontal segregation in the workplace is maintained by the recruitment of men and women to different jobs. Vertical segregation is maintained by either the differential recruitment of men and women into vertically ordered categories within the same occupation or the confining of women to lower grades and the restriction of their upward career mobility within internal labour markets (Alvesson and Billing, 1997).

As mentioned by Hakim (1979), horizontal occupational segregation exists when men and women are more commonly working in different types of occupations while vertical occupational segregation exists when men are most commonly working in higher grade occupations and women are most commonly working in lower grade occupations.

Many scholars have explored the reasons behind the worldwide gender segregation in today's labour market, despite the existence of Equal Opportunity legislation and policies and Sex Discrimination acts. Mackie and Hamilton (1993) pointed out that gender stereotypes and traditional gender

roles are among the most prominent reasons why women and men tend to pursue different occupations and horizontal and vertical segregation of labour markets prevail. According to Crompton and Sanderson (1990: 27):

*Theories of occupational segregation are particular instances of more general theories which seek to explain the location of individuals in the positional structure. This admittedly clumsy phrase may be used in a relatively narrow fashion (for example, to describe the structure of paid employment) or more broadly, encompass the location of individuals in respect of wealth, standing, opportunities and so on in the structure of the society as a whole. The explanation and understanding of the genesis and maintenance of structured social inequality may be approached from a variety of standpoints which draw upon different strands within social theory. Thus the significance of (rational) individual preferences might be emphasized (as in rational choice theories (Banton, 1983)), or that of external constraints (as in Marxist and neo-Marxist theories (Braveman, 1974)), or of some kind of over-arching value systems (as in normative functionalism (Davis and Moore, 1964)). (This listing of theoretical inputs is intended to be illustrative rather than comprehensive). Corresponding to this theoretical diversity, neo-classical economic theories of supply and demand, Marxist and Marxist-derived theories of capitalist exploitation and labour market segmentation, as well as the descriptive accounts of cultural anthropology have all been employed in attempts to explain 'the woman question'.*

Two major types of explanations for the division of market work between men and women may be identified. The first emphasises the social and economic structuring “capitalist development and class struggle, the development of ‘separate spheres’ ideology and the activities of bourgeois reformers and patriarchal organisation and exclusion”, and the second emphasises individualist explanations “human capital theory, psychological (biological) differences between men and women and the differences in individual women’s work orientations” (Crompton, 1997: 23).

Alvesson and Billing (1997) discussed the most influential explanations on the pronounced gender division of labour at three different levels of analysis: the macro-level, the meso-level and the micro-level. The macro-level focuses on the general features of the society and the highly aggregated patterns indicated by statistics. The meso-level focuses on organisations and culture and the micro-level focuses on the individual. The macro-level deals with Marxist feminist analysis, patriarchy theories and the dual systems theory. The meso-level deals with the specific institutional sites (corporations, workplaces, and occupational groups) in which gender differentiation and inequalities are socially constituted through structural explanations, organisational policies and organisation culture theory. The micro-level utilises the role theory, socialisation theory and psychoanalytic theory in explaining the ongoing occupational segregation.

## **2.6 Women's employment in the tourism workplace**

### **2.6.1 The significance of tourism**

A number of authors have emphasised the economic significance of the tourism industry in various countries (e.g. Jones and Munday (2004) in the UK; Rogerson (2004) in South Africa; Demir (2004) in Turkey; Saarinen (2003) in Finland; Hanqin *et al.* (2001) in Hong Kong; Guo *et al.* (2001) in China; Milne and Ateljevic (2001) and Ghimire (2001) in several African, Asian and Latin American countries).

As reported by Avelini (2003), tourism is the most important industry in the world both in terms of numbers of employees and impact on the social and

economical development and contributes to resolution of the problems of unemployment and poverty in many developing countries. Hemmati (2000) mentioned that, as an industry, tourism has demonstrated its potential for creating jobs and encouraging income-generating activities. In the last few decades, the tourism industry has undergone a period of explosive growth, and as a labour-intensive industry, there has consequently been a rapid rate of job creation and development.

A report prepared by the World Tourism Organisation states that tourism employs 204 million people worldwide representing 10.6% of the global workforce (WTO, 1992). In other words, one in every nine formal workers in the world is engaged in travel and tourism industry for their livelihood (Government of Rajasthan, 2001). According to the records of the World Travel and Tourism Council, it is estimated that the world-wide employment within the tourism economy will grow to 251.6 million jobs by the year 2010 (WTTC, 2000).

Kinnaird and Hall (1994) accounted for the significance of tourism stating that there is no doubt that it has been and continues to be a focus for development, particularly in the regions of the world that are either suffering the social and economic hardship of de-industrialisation or are seeking development options for foreign exchange earnings. Consequently, the perceived importance of tourism for economic development cannot be disputed. Furthermore, statistical evidence depicts a phenomenal increase in the number of international travellers from 25 million in 1950 to 425 million in 1990 (WTO, 1992). In



addition, tourism is recognised as the world's fastest growing industry representing 7% of all world exports (Harrison, 1992).

### **2.6.2 Women's employment in tourism**

The tourism sector provides various entry points for women's employment (Hemmati, 2000). The estimates of the International Labour Organisation of the United Nations (ILO), dating back to 1983, suggest that one third of the global workforce in tourism was made up of women. More recent estimates (ILO, 2001), indicate that the proportion of women in the tourism industry (excluding the informal sector) has risen to 46%. In catering and accommodation businesses, women represent over 90% of all employees. Although women appear to be engaged in large numbers in the tourism business (e.g. hotels, airlines, restaurants, travel agencies) and other tourist related services, very little information is available on the extent of their involvement in it (ADB, 1999).

One of the major difficulties I faced while conducting this study was the scarcity of either quantitative or qualitative data on women's participation in the different activities of tourism in general and in the travel business in particular. Nevertheless, a study entitled "*Gender and Tourism: Women's Employment and Participation in Tourism*" conducted by the United Nations Environment and Development Forum (UNED-UK Committee) and edited by Hemmati (1999) represented my sole source of information on women's involvement in tourism at the global level. This study illustrated the situation over the ten years prior to its publication drawing on 12 case studies from

around the world on women's employment in restaurant, catering and hotel businesses, which are the largest employers in the tourism industry overall. The major findings of the study were:

- i. Gender desegregated data for the tourism sector was not available for all countries and data on work hours and wages was not available for many of the Middle Eastern countries. Women represented 46% of the workforce in the tourism sector and 34-40% of the all-world workforce. The percentage of women's participation in the tourism workforce varied greatly between countries and ranged from 2% to >80% but in the countries where tourism is a more mature industry women generally account for around 50% of the workforce. There has been a broad increase in the participation of women in the tourism industry at a global level between 1988 and 1997.
- ii. The situation in the tourism job market resembled the situation in the labour markets in general. There was significant horizontal and vertical occupational segregation in the global tourism. Horizontally, women and men were placed in different occupations within the industry and vertically, women dominated the lower levels and the occupations with few career development opportunities while key managerial positions were dominated by men. Gender stereotyping, traditional gender roles and gender identity were among the factors that help maintain gender segregation of the labour markets.

In accordance with the above information, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reported that women occupy the lower levels of the

occupational structure in the tourism labour market with few career development opportunities (ILO, 2001). Sinclair (1997: 6) mentioned that *“work in tourism, as in other sectors of the economy, is structured along gender lines and generally conforms to dominant gender norms”*. The same author contributed to the literature on tourism and gender using a comparative international perspective integrating the relatively unrelated literature on tourism, gender and work considering a range of tourist locations: the UK, northern Cyprus, Bali, Mexico, the Philippines and Japan.

Literature refers to very scarce information on women's involvement in the travel business and few bits on their involvement in Hotel, Catering and Tourism (HCT) industry. Screening the knowledge on women's employment in travel agencies I only came across two estimates (*i.e.* 18.5 % in Egypt (CAPMAS, 1993) and 27% in Jordan (UNIFEM, 2001)).

As for women employment estimates in HCT industry, I located the studies of ADB (1999) in Nepal where 20.6% of the employees in the tourist and related industry were women; Boyne (1999) who reported that in Scotland (UK) the tourism sector employed more women as a result of employment opportunities; Soeder (1998) who found that, in USA, 52% of the restaurant employees were women; Weiermair (1996) who mentioned that in Austria women accounted for 60% – 70% of the total HCT employment and Juyaux, (undated) who estimated the percentages of women representation in the hospitality sector by 58% in Australia, 62% in Denmark, 50% in Italy, 52% in the Netherlands and, 42.5 % in Spain, The above percentages of women employment in tourism in

the different countries suggest that their opportunities in the Western countries seem to be better than in the Eastern countries. Joekes (1995) explained that in Muslim countries few women are employed in the tourism sector due to concepts of seclusion and the physical separation of the sexes, which make provision of services by women in a public space to strangers improper.

### 2.6.3 Major contributions to the knowledge on gender issues in the tourism workplace

Several authors have contributed to the knowledge on gender issues in the tourism workplace. In this respect reference ought to be made to two textbooks, one entitled “ **Tourism: A Gender Analysis**” edited by Vivian Kinnaird and Derek Hall in 1994, and the other “**Gender, Work and Tourism**” edited by M.Thea Sinclair in 1997. Reference also ought to be made to a number of papers that dealt with the gender issues in the hotel and catering industry and prostitution tourism.

On the cover page of their textbook, Kinnaird and Hall (1994) stated:

*This is the first book to examine the impact of tourism from the perspective of gender studies; it deliberately adopts a wide view of the topic, and while concentrating on women, does not neglect the changing status of men and inter-gender relations.*

In the preface of the same book, Kinnaird and Hall (1994) further stated:

*In attempting to fill a gap in the literature, our aim in this volume has been to draw on a range of contributors who could, both individually and collectively, stimulate debate on the gendered nature of tourism-related activities and processes. It appeared to us that the social construction of tourism was lacking a gendered component in the literature and we attempted to construct a framework within which a focus on the gendering of tourism could be articulated and explored. We acknowledge that this volume is only a beginning.*

Kinnaird and Hall's book is divided into three parts. The first part provides a review of the tourism field and outlines the main conceptual issues leading onto a detailed and original analysis of the main factors relating to gender in tourism development in a global context. The second section presents a selection of case studies highlighting other issues including "Female employment in tourism development in south-west England", "Gender in Irish tourism employment", "Gender dimensions of tourism in Greece", "Tourism, gender and development in the Caribbean", "Gender, culture and tourism development in western Samoa" and "Gender and economic interests in tourism prostitution in south-east Asia". The third part introduces a range of conceptual models for the study of the above-mentioned themes together with suggestions for future research agendas.

In chapter one of the textbook "Gender, work and tourism (Sinclair, 1997: 1) stated:

*The divide between incoming tourists and those working in the industry is particularly acute in many tourist destination areas, where contrasting life styles of leisure and work are compounded by considerable differences in income and wealth. The tourism industry is characterised by further divisions between the workers themselves, notably in the form of gender and race. While not as evident as those between tourism consumers and producers, such divisions are significant not only for the operation of tourism but for the relative incomes, status and power of those involved in it. Paradoxically, there has been little attention to these issues to date, the main exceptions being the collections edited by Kinnaird and Hall (1994) and Swain (1995) and a number of individual articles and chapters, particularly in the area of prostitution tourism.*

Sinclair's textbook (1997) examines the gendered structure of the tourism workforce in different international destinations and helps to explain the

processes which reinforce or challenge gendered patterns of work, gender ideologies and distinctions in income, status, power and control. The book further demonstrates how women have been excluded from some occupations and how their work in others is associated with ideologies of gender and social sexuality through a number of case studies covering a range of tourist destinations across the world. These case studies include “Women’s employment in UK tourism”, “Women and tourism in northern-Cyprus”, “Gender and tourism development in Balinese villages (Indonesia)”, “Gender and tourism employment in Mexico and the Philippines” and to “Tourism and prostitution in Japan”.

In spite of the significant contributions made by Kinnaird and Hall (1994) and Sinclair (1997) textbooks as well as numerous relevant research papers on gender issues in the tourism workplace, almost all of the studies concentrated on women’s employment in the hotel and catering industry (e.g. Ng and Pine, 2003) on the perceptions of gender and career development issues of male and female hotel managers in Hong Kong; Bird and Lynch (2002) on gender and employment flexibility within hotel front offices; Doherty and Manfredi (2001) on women’s employment in Italian and UK hotels; Knutson and Schmidgall (2001) on the challenges and opportunities for women achieving success in hospitality financial management; Roehl and Swerdlow (2001) on sex differences in hotel employee training in the western United States; Woods and Viehland (2000) on women in hotel management; Iverson and Sparrowe (1999) on gender differences in income in the hospitality industry in the UK; Akoglan (1996) on the positions women hold in the hotel industry; Crafts and

Thompson (1995) on career advancement obstacles in the food service industry; Biaz and Umbreit (1994) on women in hospitality management; Fulford and Herrick (1994) on women and work in hospitality and Brownell (1993) on addressing career challenges faced by women in hospitality management in the USA as well as women's involvement in prostitution tourism (*e.g.* Kempadoo (2001) on sex work in the Caribbean, Oppermann (1999) on sex tourism and prostitution and Ryan and Kinder (1996) on sex tourism).

It is apparent that much of the work which has occurred to date has been restricted to more Western geographies, environments and cultures. Little attempt has been made to explore the experience of women's employment in the Eastern counterparts. This approach to understanding tourism and gender employment issues could be described as Eurocentric and there are a number of inherent dangers to merely transferring this approach to the Eastern, Islamic context, a transference which is likely in the absence of detailed case study work which could lead to the development of alternative ways of knowing the gendered employment context. In the next chapter I will focus on women in Egypt as an example of an Eastern Muslim society and an attractive tourist destination in a country that highly appreciates the contribution of tourism industry to its national economy.

### **2.7 Summary**

This chapter provided a brief overview of women and work. It covered the gender issues in the workplace, the distinction between the terms 'sex' and

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## **Chapter 2: Women and work: A brief overview**

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'gender', the story of women's work and the issue of gender segregation particularly in the tourism workplace. The chapter further dealt with women's employment in the tourism workplace with emphasis on the significance of tourism to nations' economy, women's employment in tourism and the major contributions to the knowledge on gender issues in the tourism workplace.



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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **WOMEN IN EGYPT**

#### **3.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter overviews Egypt (officially called the Arab Republic of Egypt) in terms of location, population, historical background, religious doctrine, social structure and legislation. It provides information on the historical development of the Egyptian women and their role in the public sphere. The chapter further narrates the story of women's involvement in the Egyptian labour market and the Egyptian tourism workplace to help thoroughly understand how their experiences to day have been shaped.

#### **3.2 About Egypt**

##### **3.2.1 Geographical location**

Egypt is located at the north-eastern corner of the African continent. It extends from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the Sudan in the south, and from Libya in the west to Gaza strip, Israel and the Red Sea in the east. The capital of Egypt is Cairo, which is located at the southernmost end of the Delta of the Nile River (Figure 3.1). The country covers about one million square kilometres area with only 6% of the land inhabited (the Nile-Delta and Nile-valley regions) while the rest is desert (Humphreys *et al.*, 1999). Egypt is divided into 26 governorates comprising 230 districts, each with a district town, sub-districts and surrounding suburbs and/or villages (El-Henawy, 2000; Egyptian Presidency, 2004).

**Figure 3.1: The map of Egypt.**

Source: Yahoo Inc. (2004a).

### **3.2.2 Population**

Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world. It has the second highest population in Africa after Nigeria (BNEA, 2003). According to the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS, 2003) population estimates of Egypt in 2003 are 67.3 million people. Of those, 34.4 million (51.2%) are males and 32.9 million (48.8%) are females. Among the female population, 20.1 million (61.2%) are economically active with ages ranging between 15 and 64 years and 12.8 million (38.8%) are economically inactive with ages less than 15 or over 64 years. Females form 49.1% of the total economically-active workforce (see Table 1App.).

According to the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), the population of Egypt is expected to grow by 50% by the year 2020. Currently, the population density in the inhabited land is about 1000 inhabitants per square

kilometres. The most crowded area in Egypt is the capital Cairo where 27% of the inhabitants live (MOHP, 2000).

### **3.2.3 Historical background**

Egypt has endured as a unified state for more than 5,000 years. Archaeological findings show that primitive tribes lived along the Nile River long before the dynastic history of the Pharaohs began. By 6000 BC, organised agriculture had appeared. In about 3100 BC, Egypt was united under a ruler, known as Mena, who inaugurated the 30 Pharaonic dynasties into which Egypt's ancient history is divided (the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdoms and the New Empire). In 525 BC, Cambyses, the son of Cyrus the Great, led a Persian invasion force that dethroned the last Pharaoh of the 26th Dynasty. The country remained a Persian province until Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in the year 332 BC. In the year 30 BC the Romans conquered Egypt and ruled it for nearly 700 years (BNEA, 2003; Elsaddah and Abu-Ghazi, 2003).

Following a brief Persian reconquest, Egypt was invaded and conquered by the Arab forces in 642 AD and a process of Arabization and Islamization ensued. Although a Coptic Christian minority remained and still remains till today, the Arab language inexorably supplanted the indigenous Coptic tongue. Ancient Egyptian ways - passed from Pharaonic times through the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods and Egypt's Christian era - were gradually melded with or supplanted by Islamic customs. For the next 1,300 years, a succession of Abbasid and Ottoman caliphs and sultans ruled the country. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Egypt. Napoleon's adventure awakened Great Britain to

the importance of Egypt as a vital link with India and the Far East and launched 150 years of Anglo-French rivalry over the region. An Anglo-Ottoman invasion force drove out the French in 1801 and, following a period of chaos, the Albanian Mohammed Ali obtained control of the country. Ali ruled until 1840 and his successors retained at least nominal control of Egypt until 1952 (BNEA, 2003).

During his reign, Mohamed Ali imported European culture and technology, introduced state organisation of Egypt's economic life, improved education, and fostered training in engineering and medicine. He also put particular emphasis on women's education (Al- Salous, 2003; Elsadda and Abu-Ghazi, 2003).

Mohamed Ali's successors granted to the French Promoter, Ferdinand de Lesseps, a concession for construction of the Suez Canal - begun in 1859 and opened 10 years later. Their regimes were characterised by financial mismanagement and personal extravagance that reduced Egypt to bankruptcy and led to rapid expansion of British and French financial oversight. This produced popular resentment, which, in 1879, led to revolt. In 1882, British expeditionary forces crushed this revolt, marking the beginning of British occupation and the virtual inclusion of Egypt within the British Empire. During the Second World War, British troops used Egypt as a base for allied operations throughout the region. British troops were withdrawn to the Suez Canal area in 1947, but nationalist, anti-British feelings continued to grow after the war. Violence broke out in early 1952 between Egyptians and British in the

canal area, and anti-Western rioting in Cairo followed. On July 22-23, 1952, a group of disaffected army officers led by Lt. Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew King Farouk. Following a brief experiment with civilian rule, they abrogated the 1923 constitution and declared Egypt a republic on June 19, 1953. After Nasser's death in 1970, Vice President Anwar El-Sadat was elected President. On October 6, 1981, President Sadat was assassinated and later that month Vice President Hosni Mubarak was elected President. He was re-elected to a second term in October 1987, to a third term in October 1993 and to a fourth term in 1999 (BNEA, 2003).

Convinced of the necessity to reinforce the national mechanisms promoting the advancement of women, President Mubarak established a National Council for Women (NCW) at the highest level acting as an umbrella organisation grouping all women in Egypt by virtue of the Presidential Decree No.90 for the year 2000. The NCW aimed to empower women to play an effective role as major contributors in the social renaissance Egypt is currently undergoing. NCW further aims to maintain and preserve the Egyptian national heritage and identity conducive to raising generations proud of their country and culture as well as holding on to their traditions and values in the face of the repercussions of globalization with the onset of the third millennium (NCW, undated).

#### **3.2.4 Religious doctrine**

Religion is an institution that exists in all-human societies. Throughout the ages, religion has played a significant role in defining and shaping moral codes of conduct governing humans' behaviour in relations with one another, either

through a formal structure, or informally via parental instructions, or both. The power of religion and its hold over societies have fluctuated over time and across lands, but it has left its imprints everywhere. Religion has a tight grip over various spheres of life. It determines the quality and direction of the arts, literature, science, politics, and of course personal beliefs, influences lifestyles, values and attitudes and has a dramatic effect on the way people in a society act towards each other and towards those in other societies. Religion can also affect the work habits of people, and affect politics and business. All religions have their own symbols and taboos to emphasise their distinctiveness. At a deeper level, religions are based on certain core principles, values and precepts that specify right and wrong behaviours. Islam, for instance, is based on a belief that all human beings, regardless of their wealth, colour, family background and the like are equal before God. What makes a person superior to the other is the degree to which he or she obeys God (Tayeb, 1996).

According to the Egyptian constitution, Islam is the official state religion in Egypt and the primary source of legislation. Ninety four per cent of the Egyptian citizens are Muslims (mostly Sunni) while the rest (6%) are made up of Coptic Christians and others (Yahoo Inc., 2004b).

Therefore, it seems logical to deal with women's issues in Egypt from an Islamic perspective. Without such perspective, it would be impossible to achieve any kind of holistic understanding of women's lives, experiences and boundaries. However, Badawy (2002: 1) stated:

*When dealing with the Islamic perspective of any topic, there should be a clear distinction between the normative teachings of*

*Islam and the diverse cultural practices among Muslims, which may or may not be consistent with them. In identifying what is Islamic it is necessary to make a distinction between the primary sources of Islam (the Qur'an and the Sunnah) and legal opinions of scholars on specific issues, which may vary and be influenced by their times, circumstances and cultures.*

As identified by Hassan (undated), the Islamic tradition does not consist of, or derive from, a single source but from a number of sources including: the **Noble Qur'an** (the Book of Revelation which Muslims believe to be God's Word transmitted through the agency of Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Mohamed), **Sunnah** (the practical traditions of the Prophet Mohamed), **Hadith** (the honourable oral sayings attributed to Prophet Mohamed Prayers and Peace be upon him), **Fiqh** (jurisprudence) or Madahib (schools of law) and the **Shari'a** (code of law which regulates the diverse aspects of Muslim life). The same author added that of all the sources dealing with Islamic tradition, undoubtedly, the most important is the Qur'an which is regarded by Muslims in general, as the primary, and most authoritative, source of normative Islam.

The woman is recognised by Islam as a full and equal partner of the man in the procreation of humankind. He is the father, she is the mother, and both of them are essential for life. A woman's role in life is no less vital than her partner's role. As this partnership gives woman certain rights it imposes on her certain duties. Women are required to maintain their homes, support their husbands and bear, raise and teach their children. However, Islam gives them the right to work outside the home for the good of the family or the good of the community as long as their primary domestic duties are met (Ali and Ali, undated).



#### 3.2.4.a Women's rights in Islam

Several authors referred that Islam approves women rights equal to those of men in the spiritual, social, economic, legal and political aspects of life. An overview of the highlights of their contributions to this particular issue is presented in the next few pages.

- **Spiritual aspects**

The Islamic faith provides clear evidence that women are completely equal to men in the sight of God in terms of their rights and responsibilities (Yamany, 2004). Islam makes women equally accountable to God in glorifying and worshipping Him, setting no limits on their moral progress (Ali and Ali, undated). Doi (undated) mentioned that, in Islam, there is absolutely no difference between men and women as far as their relationship to god is concerned, as both are promised the same reward for good conduct and the same punishment for the evil conduct.

The Noble Qur'an provides clear-cut evidence that woman is completely equal with man in the sight of God in terms of her rights and responsibilities as it states, *"Every person is a pledge for what he has earned"* (Chapter "Sourah" 74, verse "Ayah" 38) and *"So their Lord accepted them* (their supplication and answered them), *"Never I will allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he a male or female. You are (members) of one another* (Chapter 3, verse 195). The Noble Qur'an further states, *"Whoever works righteousness – whether male or female – while he (or she) is a true believer* (of Islamic Monotheism) *verily to him We will give a good life* (in this world with respect, contentment

and lawful provision), *and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do* (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter), (Chapter 16, verse 97). Another emphasis of equity between men and women in the Noble Qua'an is the verse no.1 of Chapter 4 that says, "*O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwa' (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand* (your mutual rights), *and* (do not cut the relations of) *the wombs* (kinship). *Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you*".

In terms of religious obligations represented in the five corners of Islam i.e. the testimony (Shahadah) that there is only one God and that Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) is his Prophet and Messenger, the five daily prayers (Salat), fasting the month of Ramadan (Syiam), paying poor-due (Zakat) and pilgrimage (Hajj), women are not different from men (Badawi, 1971). However, as a tender touch of the Islamic teachings, women have, in certain cases, some advantages over men (Al-Salous, 2003; Abd-Al Baky, 1977). According to the latter three authors these advantages include women's exemption from the daily prayers and from fasting during menstrual periods as well as in the forty days after childbirth. Women are also exempted from fasting during pregnancy or when nursing babies if there is any threat to their health or to the health of the babies. If the missed fasting is obligatory (during the month of Ramadan), women compensate for the missed days whenever they can. Also, women do not have to make up for the prayers missed for any of the above reasons. Although women can and did go into the mosque during

the days of Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) and thereafter, the Friday congregational prayers, which is mandatory for men, is optional for women as they may be nursing their babies or caring for them and thus may be unable to go out to the mosque at the time of the Friday prayers.

- **Social aspects**

Afifi (1988) mentioned that Islam gives females many privileges as children, wives and mothers. Gabri (2000) and Doi (undated) referred that infanticide was a common attitude among most of the pagan Arabian tribes before Islam, which forbade it (Al-Salou, 2003; Badawi, 1971). The Noble Qur'an judges infanticide a crime and states, "*And when the female (infant) buried alive (as the pagan Arabs used to do) is questioned: for what sin was she killed?*" (Chapter 81: verses 8&9). Criticising the attitudes of the parents who reject their female children the Noble Qur'an states, "*And when the news (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonour and contempt, or bury her in the earth?*" Certainly, evil is their decision (Chapter 16, verses 58 & 59).

Far from only saving the girl's life, Islam requires kind and just treatment for female daughters (Badawi, 1971). Among the Honourable Sayings (Hadith) of the Prophet Mohammed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) in this regard are: "*Whosoever has a daughter and does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, God will enter him into paradise*" (Ibn

Hanbal, 1955; Hadith no. 1957), and *“Whosoever supports two daughters till they mature will come in the day of judgement as this* (and he pointed with his two fingers held together). A similar Hadith deals in like manner with one who supports two sisters (Ibn Hanbal, 1955; Hadith no. 2104).

According to Hassan (undated) the Noble Qur'an puts the highest emphasis on the importance of acquiring knowledge which has been at the core of the Islamic world-view. The first revelation received by the Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) was in Chapter 96, verses 1-5 of the Noble Qur'an which state, *“Read! In the name of your Lord Who has created* (all that exists). *He has created man from a clot* (a piece of thick coagulated blood). *Read! And your Lord is the most Generous. Who has taught* (the writing) *by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not.* Asking rhetorically if those without knowledge can be equal to those with knowledge the Noble Qur'an states, *“Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not?* (Chapter 39, verse 9). Furthermore, the Qur'an exhorts believers to pray for advancement in knowledge stating, *“Say: My Lord increase me in knowledge”* (Chapter 20, verse 114). Hassan (undated) added that one of the famous prayers of Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) was *“Allah grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things”* and one of the best known of his sayings is *“Seek knowledge even though it be in China”*.

Afifi (1988) pointed out that Islam guaranteed females the right to acquire knowledge. In that respect Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) said, *“Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim”* (Ibn Majah, 1952;

Hadith no 3808). Muslim as used here includes both males and females (Badawi, 1971). This includes knowledge of the Qur'an and the Hadith as well as other knowledge (Doi, undated). In the second chapter of her book "The educational rights for women in Islam as revealed by the Qur'an and the Sunnah" (in Arabic) Al-Salous (2003) discussed how Islam guarantees the educational rights for women and argued those who deny these rights. Yamani (2004) referred in chapter two of his book "Islam and woman" that Islam offered women the right for seeking knowledge since the early days of the Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) and gave several examples of Muslim women who were recognised in different fields of knowledge such as Qur'an, Hadith, literature, history and poetry.

According to the Islamic teachings, every female has the right to choose her husband and no one can force her to marry anyone without her consent (Afifi, 1988; Badawi, 1971). When a woman came to Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) and reported that her father had forced her to marry without her consent the messenger of God gave her the choice between accepting the marriage or invalidating it (Ibn Hanbal, 1955, Hadith no. 2469). In another version by Ibn Maja (1952, Hadith no. 1873) the woman said: "Actually I accept this marriage but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right to force a husband on them".

As a wife, Islam considers marriage a sharing relationship between the two halves of the society, man and woman. In the Islamic doctrine, marriage is not just a physical or emotional necessity but it is a sacred relationship of mutual

rights and obligations based on a divine guidance. God created men and women with complimentary natures and laid out in the Noble Qur'an a system of laws to support harmonious interaction between the sexes (Ali and Ali, undated). The verse number 187 of Chapter 2 states, "***They are Libas*** [(i.e. body cover, or screen), ***or Sakan*** (i.e. you enjoy the pleasure of living with them)] ***for you and you are the same for them***". Clothing provides physical protection and covers the beauty and faults of the body. Likewise, a spouse is viewed this way. Each protects the other and hides the faults and complements the characteristics of the spouse. Among the most impressive verses about marriage in the Noble Qur'an is the verse number 21 of Chapter 30 which states, "***And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and he has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect***".

Islam ensures wives several rights. The Noble Qur'an specifically decreed that the woman has the full right to her marriage gift (Mahr), which is presented to her by husband and is included in the nuptial contract, and that such ownership does not transfer to her father or husband (Gabri, 2000). In that respect, The Noble Qur'an states, "***And give to the women (whom you marry) their Mahr*** (obligatory bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) ***with a good heart***" (verse 4, Chapter 4). The concept of Mahr in Islam is neither an actual or symbolic price for the woman, as was the case in certain cultures, but rather it is a gift symbolising love and affection (Badawi, 1971).

The second right of the wife is maintenance. Despite any wealth the wife may have, it is the duty of the husband to secure her food, clothing and appropriate shelter within the range of his financial capabilities (Yamani, 2004 and Afifi, 1988). In that respect, the Noble Qur'an states, "***Let the rich man spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him***" (Chapter 65, verse 7).

The third right for Muslim wives is kind treatment. Husbands ought to be tender and patient to their wives. If wives make mistakes, husbands have to advise and discipline them without harm. According to Badawi (1995), under no circumstances does the Noble Qur'an encourage, allow or condone family violence or physical abuse and cruelty. The maximum allowed, in extreme cases, is a gentle tap that does not even leave a mark on the body. As punishment to women with ill-conduct the Noble Qur'an states, "***As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them*** (first), (next), ***refuse to share their beds***, (and last) ***beat them*** (lightly, if it is useful); ***but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means*** (of annoyance). ***Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great***" (verse 34, Chapter 4). However, there are many traditions of the Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) which warn men against meting out an ill-treatment to women, beating or detaining them (Yamani, 2004 and Al Turabi, 1999). The Noble Qur'an urges husbands to be kind and considerate to their wives even if they do not like them as verse number 19 of Chapter 4 states, "***O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will; and you***

*should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr (marital gift) you have given them unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse; and live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good*". Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) had many honourable sayings urging for the kind treatment and companionship of women, such as: *"The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and best of you are those who are best to their wives"* (Ibn-Hanbal, 1955; Hadith no.7396). Ali and Ali (undated) mentioned that the Prophet also said, *"Behold, many women came to Mohamed's wives complaining against their husbands (because they beat them)—those (husbands) are not best of you"*. Citing from At-tirmithy, Al Turabi (1999) mentioned that the Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) said, *"The best of you is one who is best towards his family and I am best towards the family"* and *"None but a noble man treats women in an honourable manner. And none but an ignoble treats women disgracefully"*. Badawi (1995) added that the Prophet also said, *"I command you to be kind to women"*.

On the physiological and psychological level, both men and women have equal rights and claims on one another, except for one responsibility, that of leadership of the family (Badawi, 1971 and Hasan, 1985). The Noble Qur'an emphasises men's leadership of the family as it says, *"And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expense) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) to what is reasonable, but men have a degree (of responsibility) over them"* (Chapter 2, verse 228).



Such degree is the so-called “Quiwama” which refers, as explained by Badawi (1971), to maintenance and protection as the natural differences between the sexes entitles the weaker sex (women) to protection. In that respect the Noble Qur’an states *“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means”* (Chapter 4, verse 34). However, Quiwama implies no superiority or advantage for man’s role of leadership in relation to his family and does not mean the husband’s dictatorship over his wife. In spite of men’s leadership of the family, Islam gives wives a fourth right, which is the right of counselling and emphasises the importance of taking counsel and mutual agreement in family decisions. In that respect the Noble Qur’an states, *“If they both decide on weaning (the child) by mutual consent and after due consultation, there is no sin on them”* (Chapter 2, verse 233).

The Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence) gives wives a fifth right which is the right of having a servant if her husband is well off. According to Afifi (1988) Muslim wives have the right not to do housework by themselves if their husbands can afford for a servant to assist them. However, the wives of rich men might volunteer to do housework at their own will. Yamani (2004) mentioned that the wives of Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) used to do the housework by themselves.

As the woman’s right to decide about her marriage is recognised, so also her right to seek an end for an unsuccessful marriage is recognised. In that respect the Noble Qur’an states, *“Then if you fear that they would not be able to keep the limits ordained by Allah, then there is no sin on either of them if she*

*gives back* (the Mahr or part of it) *for her Al-Khul* (the parting of a wife from her husband by giving him a certain compensation). *These are the limits ordained by Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgressed the limits ordained by Allah, then such are the Zalimun* (wrongdoers) (Chapter2, verse 229). Considering the relatively more emotional nature of women a good reason for asking for “Al-Khul” should be brought before the judge. A footnote in the Nobel Qur’an [English Translation of the meanings and commentary, King Fahd Complex for the printing of the Noble Qur’an, Madina Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia, 1417 A.H. (after Higraph): 50] tells the following story:

*Narrated Ibn Abbas: the wife of Thabit bin Qais came to the Prophet (Prayers and peace be upon him) and said, “O Allah’s messenger! I do not blame Thabit for defects in his character or his religion, but I, being a Muslim, dislike to behave in an un-Islamic manner (if I remain with him).” On that Allah’s Messenger (Prayers and Peace be upon him) said (to her), “Will you give back the garden which your husband has given you (as Mahr)?” She said, “Yes.” Then the Prophet (Prayers and Peace be upon him) said to Thabit, “O Thabit! Accept your garden, and divorce her once. (Cited from Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol.7, Hadith no. 197).*

Like the man, however, the woman can divorce her husband without resorting to the court, if the nuptial contract allows that (Islambouly, 2001; Badawi, 1971).

As a mother, Islam considers kindness to parents next to worship of God. The Noble Qur’an sates, *“And we have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents: His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning in two years – give thanks to Me*

*and to your parents*” (Chapter 31, verse 14). Islam further recognises mothers with special recommendation for the good treatment as it states in verse 23 of Chapter 17, *“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour”*. A famous Hadith of the Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) says, *“Paradise is at the feet of mothers”*. When a man came to Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) asking, O Messenger of God, who among the people is the most worthy of my good company? The Prophet said, *“Your mother”*. The man said then who else? The Prophet repeated, *“Your mother”*. The man asked again then who else? And the Prophet repeated once more *“Your mother”*. The man continued asking then who else? Only then did the Prophet say, *“Your father”* (Afifi, 1988).

- **Economic aspects**

Islam decrees four main economic rights for women. These are the rights of independent ownership and possession of personal property, financial security, inheritance and work. The Muslim woman has the privilege to earn money, the right to own property, to enter in legal contracts, and to manage all her assets in any way she wants. She can run her own business and no one has any claim on her earnings. The Noble Qur'an recognised such economic rights in several positions (Ali and Ali, undated).

As for the right of independent ownership and possession the Noble Qur'an states, *"And wish not for the things in which Allah has made some of you to excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned (and likewise) for women there is reward for what they have earned, and ask Allah for His Bounty. Surely, Allah is Ever All-Knower of everything"* (Chapter 4, verse 32). Therefore, woman's right to her money, real estate, or other properties is fully acknowledged. This right undergoes no change whether she is single or married. She retains her full rights to buy, sell, mortgage or lease any or all her properties (Afifi, 1988; Badawi, 1971 & 1995; Abdul-Ati, 1977).

Regarding the right of financial security the Noble Qur'an states, *"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means"* (chapter 4, verse 34). Women are entitled to receive marital gifts without limit and to keep present and future properties and income for their own security even after marriage. Married women are not required to spend any amount at all from their property or income on the household. They are also entitled to full financial support during marriage as well as during the waiting period (Iddah) in case of divorce (three months after divorce) or widowhood (four months and ten days after the death of the husband). Generally, the Muslim woman is guaranteed financial support in all stages of her life, as a daughter, wife, mother or sister. Furthermore, the women who bear children are entitled for child support from the children's fathers (Badawi, 1995; Abd-Albaki, 1977).

As mentioned by Abdul-Ati (1977), before Islam women were not only deprived of the right of inheritance but also were themselves considered as property to be inherited by men. Islam recognised woman's right in inheritance in verse number 7 of Chapter 4 of the Noble Qur'an that states, *"There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether the property is small or large – a legal share "*.

Woman, whether a mother, wife, sister or daughter is entitled to a certain share of the deceased kin's property depending on her degree of relationship to the deceased and the number of heirs. This share is hers and no one can take it away or disinherit her. Even if the deceased wishes to deprive her, by making a will to other relatives or in favour of any other cause, the law does not allow him to do so. However, in principle both man and woman are equally entitled to inherit the property of the deceased relations but the portions they get vary (males inherit double the share of females). This is no sign of giving preference or supremacy to man over woman but because men are solely responsible for the complete maintenance of their wives, families and any other needy relations while, in contrast, women have no financial responsibilities whatsoever (Yamani, 2004; Gabri, 2000; Badawi, 1995; Afifi, 1988; Abdul-Ati, 1977).

Islamic law, as revealed from the doctrines of God, has laid down detailed rules and regulations regarding work. Islam has discouraged all persons from remaining unemployed without reason. It encourages all to work for earning livelihood (Mawdudi, 1999). Therefore, every man and woman has the right to work, whether the work consists of gainful employment or voluntary service.

The fruits of labour belong to the one who has worked for them regardless of whether it is a man or a woman (Hassan, undated). The Noble Qur'an recognised the right of women to work as it states, *"For men there is reward for what they have earned (and likewise) for women there is reward for what they have earned"* (Chapter 4, verse 32). Furthermore, there is no decree in Islam that forbids women from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it especially in the positions that fit their feminine nature best and in which the society needs them most. No jurist was able to point to an explicit text in the Noble Qur'an or Sunnah that categorically excludes women from any lawful type of employment except for the headship of the state (Yamani, 2004). However, Afifi (1988) referred that women may work if they are in need to support their livelihood or whenever the society requires their feminine contributions. Nevertheless, women must secure their husband's consent if they wish to work unless their right to work is mutually agreed to as a condition at the time of marriage (Badawi, 1995).

- **Legal aspects**

From the legal point of view, Muslim men and women are equal before the law and courts (Badawi, 1995). The sole exception for this rule is the right of testimony where the man's testimony equals that of two women (Afifi, 1988). In that respect, the Noble Qur'an states, *"And get two witnesses out of your own men. And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women, such as you agree for witness, so that if one of them (two women) errs, the other can remind her"* (Chapter 2, verse 282).

As men and women are equal in rights, they are also equal in punishments for evil deeds. The Noble Qur'an sets equal punishments for men and women who commit crimes. For theft, it states *"And (as for) the male thief and the female thief, cut off (from the wrist joint) their (right) hands as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah.* (Chapter 5, verse 38). Also for fornication crime the Noble Qur'an states, *"The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment"* (Chapter 24, verse 2). For murder and injury crimes the Noble Qur'an further states *"And We ordained therein for them: ' Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal.' But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it shall be for him expiation. And whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed such are the Zalimun* (polytheists and wrong-doers) (Chapter 5, verse 45).

- **Political aspects**

The Islamic religion recognises the participation of women in public affairs. According to Badawi (1971), any fair investigation of the teachings of Islam or into the history of the Islamic civilisation will surely find a clear evidence of woman's equality with man in what we call today "political rights". This includes the right of election as well as the nomination to political offices. Abdul-Ati (1977) mentioned that historical records show that women participated in public life with the early Muslims in times of emergencies.

Women used to accompany the Muslim armies engaged in battles to nurse the wounded, prepare supplies and serve the warriors. Badawi (1995) added that Islam provides for the participation of women in the state, society and all social and political activities such as parliamentary life, representation of all sectors of society, the making of laws and regulations and the supervision of the public affairs. He further added that there is no text in the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah that precludes women from any position of leadership except in leading the prayers.

The Islamic history refers to several women who participated in serious decisions and argued even with the Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) himself. Yamani (2004) mentioned that The Qur'an praised the Queen of Saba for her wisdom that saved her people from being vanished. In that respect the Noble Qur'an states, ***"But the hoopoe stayed not long: he (came up and) said: I have grasped (the knowledge of a thing) which you have not grasped and I have come to you from Saba' (Sheba) with true news. I found a woman ruling over them: she has been given all things that could be possessed by any ruler of the earth and she has a great throne"*** (Chapter 27, verses 22 & 23) and ***"She said my Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself and I submit (in Islam) together with Sulaiman (Solomon) to Allah the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, Jin and all that exists) (Chapter 27, verse 44).***

As mentioned by Ali and Ali (undated), there were occasions when Muslim women expressed their views of public interest and their sound arguments were accepted. For example, during the Caliphate of Omar Ibn-Al-Khattab, a woman



argued with him in the mosque, proved her point, and caused him to declare in the presence of people: "A woman is right and Omar is wrong".

The recent history includes many examples of women who reached Minister positions in many of the Islamic countries. Also in some Asian Islamic countries, like Pakistan and Bangladesh, women occupied the Prime Minister position. Women even reached the Presidency in Indonesia, which is an Islamic country.

#### **3.2.4.b Women's duties in Islam**

Apart from the basic spiritual duties of the Islamic religion, which equally apply to men and women on equal basis (Shahadah, Salat, Syiam, Zakat and Hajj), Islam sets certain duties on Muslim women. Some of these duties apply to all women while others apply only to wives.

The verse number 31 of Chapter 24 of the Noble Qur'an sharply defines the duties of all Muslim women as it states, *"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things, and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer palms of hands or dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.), And to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms) And not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their (Muslim)*

*women (i.e. their sisters in Islam), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigour, or small children who have no sense of feminine sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful*". Also, the verse number 56 of Chapter 33 of the Noble Qua'an states, *"O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (i.e. screen themselves completely except the eyes to see the way). That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"*.

Yamani (2004), Afifi (1988) and Ali and Ali (undated) briefed the duties of the Muslim wives in keeping their husbands' secrets and protecting their marital privacy, never sharing the issues of intimacy or faults of their husbands, guarding husbands' property, safeguarding husbands' homes and possessions to the best of their ability from theft or damage, managing the household affairs wisely so as to prevent loss or waste and not allowing anyone to enter the house whom their husbands dislike nor incur any expenses of which their husbands disapprove. Also, Muslim wives ought to obey their husbands and co-operate with them unless the husbands request them to do something unlawful. The Noble Qur'an emphasised on wives duties as it states, *"Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husbands property) (Chapter 4, verse 34).*

Emphasising on the significance of wives' obedience to their husbands, Prophet Mohamed (Prayers and Peace be upon him) said, *"If I were to order someone to bow to someone else, I should have ordered the wife to bow to her husband"* (Ibn Maja, 1952; Hadith no. 1853).

#### **3.2.5 Social structure**

In Eastern Arab societies, women are nowadays faced by a number of international, regional and local challenges. At the international level, the new trends of globalisation and the revolution in communication and information technologies require changes in some of the oriental concepts concerning women's participation and sharing in both social and public life. At the regional level, the issues of peace and war, development and democracy have a strong impact on women and their participation in all aspects of life. At the local level, women are faced by governmental legislation and public policies as well as the cultural backgrounds that, sometimes, put limits to the promotion of women in many Arab countries (Goma'h, 2000).

Talaat (2000) mentioned that the situation of women in the Arab countries is influenced by a number of social factors that vary from one country to another according to the prevailing cultural backgrounds and traditions in each country. Such factors have a great influence on women's participation in the different activities and affect their occupational position and status in the work field.

Ghassal (2000) referred that despite the awareness with the importance of women's role in achieving development in Arab countries, and the fact that all

Arab labour legislation approves the equality between men and women at work, the economic participation of women in these countries is still limited (3.6% - 14%). At the national level, women's participation in economic activities in the Arab world is only about 9% compared to 34% at the international level. The participation of Arab women in the production process is very limited and mainly concentrated in low pay traditional activities, especially in the service industries and agriculture.

Abou Zeid (2000) discussed the negative impact of social stereotypes on women's career development in the Arab countries. Many Arabs still think that the natural role of women is their familial obligations and domestic responsibilities, which should be their major concern. Such thoughts ignore women's talents and mental capabilities and deprive them playing their proper role in the society.

Several authors conducted social studies on women in the different Arab countries. Among those reference might be made to the works of Al-Ali (2000) who reported on the media, cultural, legislative, political, social and economic issue related to women in Kuwait; Goma'h (2000) who contributed to empowering the Arab woman in power and decision-making positions; Sharaf El-Din (1998) who studied the role of woman in the sustainable development in Lebanon; Ghabbash (1996) who conducted a study on woman and development in the United Arab Emirates; Selim (1994) who studied the role of Arab woman in development, education, media, legislation and work in different Arab countries; Abd-El-Wahab (1990) who studied the impact of

religion on the social awareness of the Arab woman; Al-Bizri (1990) who studied the role of women in the non-governmental work in the Arab world; Khaled (1990) who studied the effect of petroleum on woman's issue in Saudi society; Oraby (1990) who studied the socio-cultural factors influencing the status of women in the Arab society; El-Baz (1989) who contributed to the social values of women in the petroleum era; El-Naggar (1989) who studied the social rights of the Arab woman; Zureiq (1988) who studied the role of women in the socio-economic development of the Arab countries; Azzam (1981) who studied the participation of the Arab women in work and development and Mostafa (undated) who conducted a study entitled "Arab woman in development, present challenges and future prospects".

Prior to starting this study, I met with Dr. S. S. Goma'h, who is a female Professor of Economics and Political Sciences at the College of Economics and Political Sciences, Cairo University, Egypt, and also a member of the Egyptian National Council for Women (NCW) in February, 2000 to discuss the issues related to the social role of women in the Egyptian society. She pointed out that, in Egypt, the number of women who reach senior positions - in almost all professions - is quite limited compared to either the number of women in the Egyptian workforce or the total population of females in the country. In her opinion, the principal limitation for women's career development in Egypt is not unlike western concepts of glass ceilings or sticky floors as obstacles to women's promotion but what she referred to metaphorically as the "*thick wall*" between women's public and private lives. She explained that thick walls have been built up over the years, due to the strong influence of women's social

responsibilities towards their husbands and children on one hand and the impact of religion, culture, and traditions on the other hand. She further added that she believes that women themselves took part in building such thick walls because they failed to bring up their children on the principles of sharing each other physically and emotionally in all of the aspects of life.

In this part of my literature review I will try to concentrate on the social structures and norms that currently shape the position of women in the Egyptian society. As identified by Al-Saati (2000), three different social attitudes towards women exist in Egypt: the traditional conservative attitude, the mid-stream (less conservative) attitude and the feminist attitude. Traditional conservatives view women as weak creatures with limited mental abilities. According to their thoughts, women's roles are limited to their domestic duties and responsibilities towards their husbands and children and, thus, the family should be their only concern. Such attitudes deprive females the right to be educated, except in the girls' schools and up to the age of marriage which is - usually - an early age, opposes the idea of women's work and also forbids their contact with men. Believers of the conservative tradition approve the social variances between men and women and refer them to the biological differences between sexes as well as the natural capabilities of each sex. Therefore, they claim that women's employment contradicts with the traditional social structure on one side and with the traditions of the Islamic teachings on the other side. Advocates of the mid-stream attitude tend to be less conservative, less restrictive to women's abilities and more reasonable towards their participation in economic and social activities but, still, neither

permit nor recommend women's participation in the political activities. Midstream attitude advocates represent the majority of the men and women in the Egyptian society. They often approve women's rights in work and recommend the idea of women's work as long as the work atmosphere is suitable to their feminine nature and allows them to perform familial and household duties and responsibilities. Feminists believe in the equality between sexes in all aspects of life. They assume that women are capable of doing all sorts of work, being creative and bearing responsibilities. They also appreciate woman's equal partnership to men and emphasise that women's participation in the society does not affect their familial role in life. Feminists regard both the society and the government as responsible for offering women the facilities that help them in managing between their indoor and outdoor roles.

A comprehensive detailed report prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress (FRD) entitled "*Egypt - A Country Study*" and edited by Helen Metz in 1991 devoted separate sections for each of the social organisation and the family and kinship. The following is a summary of the rich information, relevant to my study, in these two sections.

- i. It is difficult to generalise on the status of women and the extent of their involvement in both public and private spheres of life within the Egyptian community. The social status of Egyptian women and the attitudes towards them are shaped according to two main factors: the class division of the society, and the area from where women originate. In lower social classes, women are generally believed to be morally inferior to men. They

are expected to defer to senior male relatives, to avoid contact with men and to veil themselves in public.

- ii. During childhood, females learn to accept dependency on their fathers and older brothers and after marriage they expect their husbands to make all decisions. Lower-class families tend to withdraw girls from school in early ages to minimise their interaction with men. Lower-class men frequently prefer marriage from women who secluded rather than those who had worked or attended secondary school.
- iii. What happens in the lower-class families cannot be generalised to the middle and upper-class families, the higher the class division is, the more flexible it is in accepting the change in the status of women, and understanding the importance of their role in society. Values and traditions are related to the area from which women originate. Each specific area in Egypt has its own tradition that copes generally with the main theme of the Egyptian social behaviour but differs in terms of social practice from a geographical area to another. The Upper Egypt area is far more conservative and traditional than is Cairo and its surrounding suburb. The Delta region is less conservative than Upper Egypt, whereas it is more conservative than Cairo. There are differences also between village and urban women, the latter being less conservative and less traditional.
- iv. The conviction that women's role is primarily domestic negatively affects Egyptian women from all geographical areas and on all social levels. Poorer, disadvantaged women who live in more conservative areas are the ones who suffer most from discrimination and oppression. Since



childhood, disadvantaged girls in conservative families are in most cases prevented from acquiring education, and are considered house-helpers. They are not allowed to be formally employed outside the home, even though they are responsible for numerous jobs whether within the homes or in the fields, especially in villages.

- v. The family is the most significant unit of the Egyptian society. An important goal of marriage is to ensure the continuity of a family. The father controls the family's income and wields immense authority over its members. Women defer to men. The traditional Islamic religious code – as outlined in the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah define most Muslims' family matters (marriage, guardianship, and inheritance). Both 'patrilineal descent' and the 'patrilocal extended family' function differently for men and women. Men are the preferred valued members of the lineage. They are valued both as providers and as progenitors. In most cases, marriage merely substitutes a woman's dependence on her husband to dependence on her father.
- vi. Women have traditionally been preoccupied with household tasks and child rearing and have rarely had opportunities for contact with men outside the family. Since the 1952 revolution, social changes, especially in education, have caused many women to spend time in public places among men who were not related to them. To limit women's interaction with men, practices such as veiling and gender segregation at schools, work, and recreation have become commonplace.

In addition to the above study, few other authors contributed to the social structure in Egypt *e.g.* Khalifa (2004) who commented on the culture and traditions; Amin (2000) who described the changes in the Egyptian society within the post revolution period (after 1952) and Abou Zaid (2000) who referred to the positive feminine values in the Egyptian cultural heritage. Almost all of the information that was provided by those authors was included in the FRD study.

### **3.2.6 Legislative and political context**

Egypt introduced to humanity the oldest legislative system in the world. The ancient Egyptians forged out their genuine unprecedented laws and legislation, which continually progressed with time. Legal and legislative texts were found on the walls of palaces and temples or papyri. About 5200 years ago, King Menes laid down the oldest legislative system in human history. The personal status legal system in the old Kingdom set the following rules: every individual had the right to acquire any property of his choice, each Egyptian had the right to marry only one woman, woman is equal to man and has the right to have her own property and father's wealth shall be inherited equally by his sons and daughters without distinction between males and females. Later many decrees and legislations were issued most important of which were one specifying farmer working hours and another abolishing forced labour. During the era of the modern Kingdom (1570 BC – 1304 BC), the ancient Egyptians decreed marriage contracts, enshrined public freedoms and civil rights, tax legislation and emphasised the concept of public posts as a means to serve rather than to overpower the people. Under the Greco-Roman rule, Egyptians managed to

maintain most of their rules until the advent of Christianity into Egypt during the first century. The Egyptian church contributed to the establishment of several rules and traditions. Under the Islamic era, systems of government and legislation were derived from the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah on the "Shura" (consultative) principle which is an essential principle of the Islamic rule. Under Fatimid Caliphate (969 – 1171 AD) systems of government and legislation progressed. Under the Ayyobid era (1171 – 1250 AD), a variety of legislative and judiciary councils were set up. Under the Mameluq era (1250 – 1517 AD), the "House of Justice" was established and a "Ruling Council" was mandated to issue and enforce legislations. Under the Ottoman era (1517 – 1805 AD), The judiciary system was based on "Sharia" courts. This situation prevailed up to the end of the eighteenth century. After being declared ruler in 1805, Mohamed Ali started a total administrative revolution to found modern institutions of government including a modern representative council. In 1866, Khedive Ismail established the "Advisory Council of Representatives". In 1878 the first "Council of Ministers" was established (InterCity Oz, 1999-2004).

In 1883, the Egyptian parliament consisted of two chambers: the "Advisory Council of Laws" and the "General Assembly". In 1913, both the Advisory Council of Laws and the General Assembly were dissolved and the "Legislative Assembly" was established but after a very short period (five months) its sessions were postponed indefinitely due to the break out of the first World War and was dissolved in 1923. As a result of the Egyptian Revolution, which broke out in 1919 calling for liberty, independence and democracy the first Egyptian constitution was promulgated in 1923. The

constitution adopted a bicameral system, *i.e.* the “House of Representatives” and the “Senate”. Political life in the period 1923 – 1952 varied between tides of limited popular democracy and ebbs due to intervention by the British occupation forces and the palace, which led to the dissolution of the parliament ten times. A new constitution was issued in 1930 and lasted for five years until the 1923 constitution was restored in 1935 (The Peoples Assembly, A.R.E., 2000).

The establishment of a sound democratic life was among the fundamental principles of the 1952 revolution, in the wake of abrogation of the constitution, the declaration of the republic and the dissolution of parties. Therefore, in 1956 a new constitution was proclaimed stipulating for the formation of the “National Assembly” in 1957. In 1964, a further provisional constitution was declared giving birth to a “National Assembly” of 350 elected members half of whom at least from workers and farmers. In 1971, the now effective constitution was proclaimed to update the democratic representative system in assertion of the rule of law, independence of judiciary and party plurality. In 1980 the “Shura” Council was set up. This signalled the start of a new political phase built around sovereignty of law, respect of pluralism and cherished values of freedom and equality (The Peoples Assembly, A.R.E., 2000).

The modern Egyptian legislature guarantees women equality of opportunity in all aspects of life including, of course, the right of employment. In that respect, reference should be mainly made to the 1971 constitution and the labour law and its executive Ministerial Decrees. Also Egypt is a signatory to the

“Covenant on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women” issued in 1979 which was given the force of law through a Presidential Decree in 1981 (Abo-Zahra, 2001).

The Egyptian constitution guarantees women equality of opportunity, protection of motherhood and childhood, co-ordination between duties towards the family and work in the society and equality before the law as it sets:

- **Article no. 8:** *“The state shall guarantee equality of opportunity to all Egyptians”.*
- **Article no. 10:** *“The state shall guarantee the protection of motherhood and childhood, look after children and youth and provide the suitable conditions for the development of their talents”.*
- **Article no. 11:** *“The state shall guarantee co-ordination between woman’s duties towards her family and her work in the society, considering her equal to man in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres without detriment of the ruler of Islamic jurisprudence (Sharia)”.*
- **Article no. 40:** *“All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination due to sex, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed”.*

The Egyptian labour law no. 137 for the year 1981 (Ali and Gado, 2000) and its executive Ministerial Decrees (published in the Egyptian Archives, “Al-Waqaa’ Al-Misriah”, Vol. no. 36 on 13/2/1982) set regulations that guarantee the rights of working women. On top of these rights comes the principle of “equal pay for equal jobs (article no. 151). The law guarantees also certain

family-friendly arrangements such as maternity leave, breast feeding hours, childcare leave, and childcare facilities. Specifically, the labour law sets the following rights for working women to help them co-ordinate between work responsibilities and familial obligations:

- *Article no. 154: “Women, who worked for at least six months for the establishment, have the right to have three full-paid maternity leave of 50 days each throughout their whole work- life”.*
- *Article no. 155: “Working women have the right to have a full-paid breast-feeding hour daily for a period of 18 months starting from the day of delivery”.*
- *Article no. 156: “Women working for establishments employing 50 employees or more have the right to have three separate or consecutive childcare leaves without pay of no more than 12 months each throughout their whole work-life”.*
- *Article no. 158: “Any employer, who employs 100 or more women at the same workplace, has to provide a child care facility for their children. Any group of establishments located at the same area and employing less than 100 women each have to co-operate in providing similar childcare facilities”.*

Apart from the amendment of the “Personal Status Law” in 1985, no significant contributions to the laws related to women took place during the 1980’. However, starting from 1993, interest in women’s issues flourished nation-wide with the formation of the “National Commission for Women”

which changed later in the year 2000 to the “National Council for Women” (Abo-Zahra, 2001).

### **3.3 History of Egyptian women**

The history of the Egyptian women extends along five distinct eras: the Ancient Egyptian, the Greco-Roman, the Arabic Islamic, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the post-revolution (after 1952) eras. Therefore, it seems significant to examine the history of the Egyptian women across these different eras to understand how they acquired their current recognised position in the Egyptian society.

#### **3.3.1 Women in Ancient Egypt**

In Ancient Egypt, women acquired a unique position that no women in any other ancient civilisation had. Seven thousand years ago, Egyptian women enjoyed rights equal to those of men. That the ancient Egyptian society was based on the principle of equality between sexes appeared clearly in all pieces of art and contemporary manuscripts produced by the Ancient Egyptian civilisation. In the Ancient Egyptian drawings and statues men and women were shown equal in length as a sign of their equality in all aspects of life. They were also shown standing side by side as a sign of the everlasting co-operation between husbands and wives (Radwan, Z., 2001).

Several authors (*e.g.* Fletcher, 2001; Arnold, 1996; Tyldesley, 1994; Robins, 1993; Watterson, 1991 and Troy, 1986) coincided that the Egyptian historical treasures present signs of women’s active participation in different aspects of

the economic, social, cultural, political and familial life in ancient Egypt. At the social level, women were equal partners to men. They shared their husbands in all life activities and stood side by side in facing different life circumstances and in managing family affairs (Radwan, Z., 2001). At the economic level, women had the right of possession and ownership of property as well as the right of managing their financial position on their own (Amin, 1926). At the legal level, women had rights and responsibilities equal to those of men (Al-Akaad, 1973). At the political level, women held significant positions and shared men in demonstrating the political life and ruling the Ancient Egyptian kingdom (Elsadda and Abu-Ghazi, 2003; Al-Salous, 2003).

### **3.3.2 Egyptian women under the Greco-Roman rule**

The respectable position attributed to women in Ancient Egypt continued to flourish until Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in the year 332 BC. During the Ptolemaic reign, an attempt to impose the Greek values, which were based on discrimination between the two sexes in favour of men, took place. Such discriminatory attitude against women appeared in different forms within the Egyptian society by that time. The Greeks set legal regulations that deprived women their right to handle their property, prohibited men from seeking women's opinion and gave men the absolute right in dealing with all and every particular thing related to their wives, sisters, mothers and daughters. It seems, yet, that the Egyptian traditions were stronger than the discriminatory regulations set by the Greeks and followed after them by the Romans. The historian Herodotus, who visited Egypt in the sixth century BC, noticed the prominent position occupied by Egyptian women in running their families and



the society at large, and hence, considered women to be the supreme decision-makers in Egypt. Similar observations were made later on by other historians, such as Theodore the Sicilian and Al-Maqrizi, as well as the scientists of the French Campaign on Egypt (Elsadda and Abu-Ghazi, 2003).

### **3.3.3 Egyptian women under the Arabic Islamic rule**

During the Arabic Islamic reign, the Islamic civilisation dominated. Within this civilisation, which is based on the principles of equality between all human beings and equity between sexes, Egyptian women retained their prominent position in society and some of the rights taken away from them by the Greco-Roman laws were returned. Discrimination against women vanished and the devaluation of them disappeared as women's position in the Egyptian society were regulated according to the Islamic legislation that approved women rights equal to those of men (Radwan, Z., 2001).

However, the highly recognised position that Egyptian women gained throughout the early years of the Islamic rule gradually diminished starting from the second half of the Abbasid State (749-1258). Diminishing continued until the onset of the Ottoman (Turkish) rule in the year 1517. Ottomans practised discrimination against women again, blocked them in the domestic sphere, forbidden them from participating in public life and deprived them access to education except for limited means of religious education and domestic skills that took place at homes (Abd-Albaki, 1977).

As mentioned by Al Salous (2003), the devaluation of Egyptian women during the Turkish reign and their deprivation the right to acquire education started to vanish gradually when Mohamed Ali ruled Egypt between 1805 and 1840 as he strongly supported women's education in Egypt and started by the education of women from the ruling family employing a specialised British female teacher. Aristocrats followed Mohamed Ali's initiative and contracted with foreign, mostly European, female teachers to educate the female members of their families. Elsadda and Abu-Ghazi (2003) added that those of the lower classes, who could not afford to have private teachers at home, went to the "Katateeb" (plural of kuttab: venue offering basic religious education) which were spread all over the country.

In the year 1832, Mohamed Ali established the Midwives' school as an Egyptian State institution that offers specialised medical training to females. The school faced public rejection and the Egyptian families refused sending their daughters to it (Al- Salous, 2003). Midwives school remained the sole governmental school for girls until "Al-Suyufiya" Girls' school was established in 1873 with the financial assistance of the wife of Khedive Ismail. In 1889, Al-Suyufiya school was expanded and given the new name "Al-Saniya school" that offered its graduates a degree in elementary education, followed by a Diploma in Teacher Training (Elsadda and Abu-Ghazi, 2003).

Other venues of women education appeared during and after Mohamed Ali's reign. The missionary schools, which played a notable role in creating a strata of educated women spread. Among these missionary schools was the Anglican School established in 1835. Other foreign schools also existed but many

families were worried about their daughters falling under foreign influences. In 1860, the Coptic associations established a girls' school, and the Islamic Charity Organisation established its first private school for girls in 1878 (Al Elsadda and Abu-Ghazi, 2003).

### **3.3.4 Egyptian women in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Women's movements in Egypt started by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Most of the efforts supporting that movement until the rise of the Egyptian revolution in 1952 were non-governmental. Eladda and Abu-Ghazi, (2003) reviewed the women's movement in Egypt between the beginning of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century in their excellent text which comprised 151 pages and included many pictures and personal photographs of the recognised events and male and female persons who have had distinguished fingerprints on the advancement of women's movement. This text is entitled "*Significant Moments in the History of Egyptian Women* (Volume One)" and was produced in the year 2003 as one of the publications of the Egyptian "National Council for Women". Throughout enjoying reading such an interesting text I summarised the highlights of the Egyptian women's movement in a chronological order as follows:

- i. In 1798 Egyptian women participated hand in hand with men in confronting the armed forces of the French Campaign on Egypt lead by , Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799 the first women's conference in modern Egyptian history was held in the city of Rasheed (Rosetta) when a group of Egyptian women met in a public bath to discuss the conditions of women and work towards improving them. Following the departure of the

French campaign in 1801 Egyptian women continued to participate in the struggle against the oppression and injustice of the Turkish pashas and took part in a national protest movement against the financial policies of the Ottomans. This movement forced the Ottomans to respond to the Egyptian people's demands. A few months later injustice was resumed and, thus, the protest started once again –this time- under the leadership of women. In 1804 women went out in a huge demonstration protesting the exaggerated rates of taxes levied on the people. In 1805 Egyptian women participated in a demonstration protesting against the constant attacks by the soldiers against the people. This demonstration marks the spark that brought about the popular revolt lead by “*Omar Makram*” which forced the Ottomans to dismiss the unjust Turkish ruler and replace him with “*Mohamed Ali*” pasha.

- ii. The earliest remarkable steps on the path of enlightenment and civilisation in Egypt go back to a number of significant Egyptian pioneer reformers and thinkers who had great influence in refining the social Egyptian traditions related to women. The first reformer was “*Refaaa Al Tahtawi*” who viewed women as equal partners to men, and was behind the ideas of encouraging education of females and women's work. After his return from his educational mission in France, he published a book entitled “*Takhliis al-Ibriz fi Takhliis Paris*” (The Manners and customs of Parisians) where he described the conditions of French women in comparison to those of Egyptian women and advocated raising the age of marriage for women so as to enable them to get education. In 1872, Al Tahtawi published another book entitled “*Al- Murshid al-Amin fi Ta'lim*

*al-Banat wal-Banin*” (The Honest Guide to the Education of Girls and Boys) in which he called for the education of girls on equal footing with boys and advocated women’s right to work. Therefore, Al-Tahtawi is the first modern Egyptian to call for women’s awakening and demand educational and cultural opportunities equal to those of boys.

- iii. In 1892, the first feminist monthly journal, “*Al – Fatah*”, was published in Alexandria with “*Hend Nowfal*” as its editor – in chief. The journal aimed at improving the position of Arab women and offering them a venue through which they can speak out and be heard by the society. In 1894, another female pioneer: “*Zainab Fawaz*” printed a book entitled “*Al Durr al – Manthur fi Tabaqaat Rabbaat al Khudur*” (Scattered Pearls Among the Classes of Secluded Women). In this book she adopted the form and style of Arab biographies of contemporary female writers establishing the tradition of women writing on women and emphasising the participation of women in history writing and documenting their tradition within the mainstream culture.
- iv. Other pioneer male reform advocates like “*Fathi Zaghlul*”, “*Sa’d Zaghlul*”, “*Ibrahim al Muweilhi*”, “*Jamal al Din al Afghani*”, “*Adib Ishaq*” and “*Mohamed Abdou*” exerted efforts aiming at changing some of the misleading concepts that deprived Egyptian women their natural rights in acquiring knowledge and participating in public life. The efforts of the above-mentioned pioneer reformers were followed by those of “*Qasim Amin*”, who called for the liberation of Egyptian women from all misleading boundaries and for approving their right in education and acquiring knowledge. To support his view that the improvement of

women's educational status is the way to the improvement and development of the whole Egyptian society, *Qasim Amin* published his books: "*Tahrir al-Mar'a*" (The Liberation of Women) in 1899, and "*Al Mar'a al- Gadida*" (The New Woman) in 1900. By that time, both books provoked harsh criticism. *Qasim Amin* was attacked for being westernised, and accused of heresy and atheism. Nevertheless, a group of writers and contemporary thinkers supported his attempt to liberate women from the hard cultural and social boundaries surrounding them.

- v. In 1906, one of the female pioneers of the Egyptian feminist movement, "*Labiba Hashim*", published a feminist magazine named "*Fatat al sharq*" (Woman of the East). The magazine was mainly concerned with social and educational issues, rectifying the misconceptions and advising against the bad habits within the society. Another feminist magazine: "*Al Gins al Latif*" (The Fair Sex) was published in 1908 under the proprietorship of "*Malaka Sa'd*". This magazine was particularly interested in dealing with women's pressing problems on the social and psychological level. In 1908 also, the association of "*Tarqiyat al Mar'a*" (The Refinement of Women) under the leadership of "*Fatma Rashid*" advocated that women writers disclose their real names. By that time, it was very common among women to conceal their identities by using pseudonyms when writing for newspapers or magazines, to protect themselves and their families from the social disdain of women's appearance on the public sphere that was socially unacceptable.
- vi. The year 1908 further witnessed another challenge on the path of women's movement in Egypt. "*Nabaweya Musa*", who obtained a

Diploma in Teacher – Training at Al – Saniya School, started her career as an Arabic teacher in the girls’ section at Abbas Primary School. She discovered that the salary of women teachers who graduated from Al – Saniya School was lower than that of their male colleagues. At that time, the Ministry of Education explained such discrepancy pointing out that men graduates carried bachelor degrees and, therefore, have a wider range of general knowledge than their female counterparts who were deprived from applying to this degree because there were no secondary schools for girls. Yet, *Nabaweya Musa* insisted on taking the exam challenging *Douglas Dunlop* (the British educational consultant) and received her bachelor degree and, thus, her salary became equal to those of male teachers. However, the Ministry did not allow women to apply to that exam until the year 1928. The battle of *Nabaweya Musa* did not end at this point as she further considered girls’ education a national issue of highest priority and confronted all forms of negligence and neglect in relation to women.

- vii. In December 1908, the Egyptian University was inaugurated under the financial support of “*Princess Fatma*” (the daughter of Khedive Ismail). The following year (1909) witnessed the beginning of the women’s section at the Egyptian university. The lectures in this section were held on Fridays (the weekends) to avoid women’s contact with men students. In 1910, the female writer and warrior “*Malak Hifni Nasif*” published her book “*Al Nisa’iyat*” (Women’s issues) which was, due to its importance, reprinted a number of times. She was after the opinion that raising women’s position had to be concomitant to their own experiences

and needs, not in accordance with men's requirements and wishes. She further defended Egyptian women and directed much criticism to the conservatives who belittled women's abilities and confronted the common attitudes which attribute the division of gender roles between men and women to the natural biological differences between the two sexes.

- viii. In 1911, "*Nabaweya Musa*" published her book "*Kitab al-Mutala'a al Arabiya*" (An Arabic Reading Book). The book included a number of topics and essays of interest to girls. It praised work and shed light on the debates around women's work and the conflict between women's right to work and Eastern traditions. In 1920, "*Nabaweya Musa*" published another book; "*Al mar'a wal Amal*" (Women and work) in which she argued against all views opposing women's work. As increasing numbers of girls acquired school education and began to look forward to joining the labour force, the issue of women's work rose on the socio – cultural scene. Men and women concerned with women's social rights openly expressed their views while the conservative attitudes used arguments of virtue, chastity and honour, warning against the danger of breaking against women's seclusion from men.
- ix. Egyptian women significantly participated in the revolution of 1919, as seen in the major women's demonstration organised by Egyptian women on 16 March 1919. They demonstrated to express their support for the national revolution, and to protest against the exile of several nationalist leaders and the acts of violence exercised by the forces of the British occupation in dealing with the peaceful demonstrations, which started on



9 March. More than 300 women took part in the women's demonstration, having composed a letter of protest to be delivered to the representatives of the foreign countries in Egypt.

- x. In 1920, "*Hoda Sha'rawi*" received an invitation to represent Egypt at the International's Women's Conference. She formed a delegation of women to attend the conference under her leadership but, unfortunately, the husbands of the delegation members refused to allow their wives to travel abroad to participate in the conference. In 1923, "*Hoda Sh'rawi*" established the "*Egyptian Feminist Union*" which was chaired by her. The union realised major achievements for Egyptian women, and succeeded in mobilising the woman's movement for the sake of improving women's conditions. On top of the union's agenda was the issue of marital age where the union succeeded in persuading the government to issue a law regulating marriage. Other issues included: restricting polygamy and divorce, protecting women from '*beit al ta'a*' (house of obedience) which entails the husband's right supported by the legal system to force his wife to live with him against her desire, extending women's custody of their children and women's political rights particularly their right to vote and run for parliamentary elections. Although the union failed to achieve these demands it succeeded in creating a public opinion which continued discussing these issues. The union further engaged in public services by establishing an elementary school for girls in 1924, a school for embroidery in 1942 and a workshop for economic studies for disabled young women. In 1923, a delegation from the Egyptian Feminist Union headed by "*Hoda Sha'rawi*"

participated in the “International Feminist Conference” held in Rome. Upon the return of this delegation, “*Hoda Sha’rawi*” removed the veil and uncovered her face in front of the crowds. Similarly did the other delegates as well as all the women gathered performing a revolutionary act in the history of Egyptian women (removal of veils). In 1924, the Egyptian Feminist Union issued a statement including woman’s demands (offering equal educational opportunities for both sexes, modifying election laws to allow women to participate in elections, and reforming the marriage law) and sent it to the newspapers, the parliament and to several international organisations.

- xi. In 1921, a group of Egyptian women artists participated, for the first time, in the spring art salon held by the Egyptian Society of Fine Arts where their works were exhibited together with the generation of Egyptian plastic arts pioneers as well as amateur artists. The decades following the 1920s witnessed the rise of numerous women artists in various forms of plastic arts: sculpture, engraving, painting and drawing. The year 1925 witnessed the publication of three magazines whose editors-in-chief were women. Between 1926 and 1930 the Egyptian women achieved progress in many fields like art, science and medicine. In 1926 “*Fatma Rushdi*” established a theatre troop and in 1927 “*Aziza Amir*” produced the first Egyptian silent feature film.
- xii. In 1928, the first class of girls obtained the baccalaureate degree in sciences, and in 1929 the first class of girls obtained the same degree in humanities. In 1929, the Egyptian university employed the first woman teacher, “*Zainab Kamal Hassan*”, who got a high degree in chemistry

from England. In 1933, the Egyptian Feminist Union celebrated the graduation of the first woman from the Egyptian university, and in 1941 *"Suheir Al-Qalamawi"* was the first woman to obtain a Doctoral degree from the Egyptian university. She was also the first woman to be awarded the first prize of the *"Arabic Language Council"* in Egypt.

- xiii. In 1938, *"Hoda Sha'rawi"* called for an Eastern Woman's Conference in Cairo with the purpose of seeking ways to promote the Palestinian cause and support the Palestinian people. This was the first conference that succeeded in bringing together Arab women, who convened to discuss the Palestinian problem at the height of a national revolution in Palestine. Another women's conference was held in Cairo in 1944 that led to the establishment of the *"Arab Feminist Union"* attended by the representatives of six Arab countries.
- xiv. In 1951, Egyptian women participated in the national demonstration, which was staged in support of the Egyptian government's decision to cancel the Treaty of 1936 with Great Britain. In the same year Egyptian women organised a campaign to boycott British merchandise. Also a group of Egyptian women formed the *"First Women's Committee of Popular Resistance"* which worked in support of the commandos in their armed struggle against the British occupation in the Suez Canal zone. In 1952, Egyptian women organised a demonstration demanding women's right to representation in the parliament where the demonstrators held a sit-in-hunger strike at the press syndicate.

**3.3.5 Egyptian women in the post-revolution era**

After the 1952 revolution the Egyptian government made conscious efforts to promote women's participation in social, economic and political areas. The constitution was amended to secure equality between the sexes and women were given the right to vote and to stand for election. The Government has ratified several UN conventions on gender issues and adapted national legislation accordingly but the gap between legislation and practice remained wide. Nevertheless, awareness with women's rights, and the urgent need to promote a more favourable environment to exercise them increased progressively. In 1977, a Department for Women's Affairs in the Ministry of Social Affairs was established. Until then, Egypt lacked a mechanism in the government to address women's problems and gender gaps. This department, however, proved weak, focusing its activities exclusively on small-scale projects for women.

In 1993, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, the President's wife, established the "National Commission for Women" with a clear mandate to address gender issues in Egypt. In 1994, this commission organised a national conference on women that recommended addressing some gender gaps in the legislation, education and employment sectors. In the year 2000, the "National Commission for Women" was changed to the "National Council for Women" (NCW) which is a government body that has a moral personality and operates directly under the President of the Republic.

The National Council for Women was established by a presidential decree. Article three of the establishment decree of NCW sets the mandate of the Council in eleven topics as follows (NCW, 2003:2-5):

**First:** *“To propose public policy matters for the society and its constitutional institutions concerning the development and the empowerment of women to enable them to play their social and economic role, and to integrate their efforts in comprehensive development programs”.*

**Second:** *“To draft a national plan for the advancement of women and to solve the problems facing them”.*

**Third:** *“To monitor and evaluate the implementation of public policy concerning women’s issues and to submit relevant proposals to the concerned institutions”.*

**Fourth:** *“To advice on draft laws and decisions pertaining to women prior to their submission to the competent authority and to recommend draft laws and decisions needed for the advancement of women”.*

**Fifth:** *“To advice on all agreements relating to women”.*

**Sixth:** *“To represent women in international fora and organisations dealing with women’s issues”.*

**Seventh:** *“To establish a documentation center, to collect information, data and research pertaining to women and to conduct relating research and studies”.*

**Eighth:** *“To hold conferences, seminars, symposia and debates on women’s issues”.*

**Ninth:** *“To organise training sessions to raise awareness of the role, rights and duties of women”.*

**Tenth:** *“To issue newsletters, magazines and other publications to inform the public of the goals and functions of the council”.*

**Eleventh:** *“To carry out issues referred to the council by the President of the Republic”.*

Since its establishment, the NCW has been like a beehive, bustling with activity and work in countless directions. Over the years 2000 – 2003 it has established branches in the governorates, held national annual conferences to discuss priority issues relating to women, reviewed several laws and convened tens of workshops, seminars and training sessions across the country. Furthermore, NCW initiated several innovative pilot programs for the social, economic and political empowerment of women and forged partnership nationally and globally (NCW, 2004).

### **3.4 Egyptian women in the public sphere**

#### **3.4.1 Women and illiteracy**

According to 1996 census, the percentage of illiteracy among Egyptian males was 20% in urban areas and 36% in rural areas. Among Egyptian females, this percentage reached 34% in urban areas and jumped to 63% in rural areas (see Table 2 App.). Such considerably high illiteracy rate, particularly among females, forms a big obstacle facing their participation in the different economic activities nation-wide and, consequently, drastically affects the image of their involvement in the different aspects of the Egyptian life (CAPMAS, 2003).

The Egyptian government has taken outstanding actions to get rid of illiteracy completely by the year 2007. In that respect, the government set the law 139 for the year 1981 (compulsory primary education law) amended by the law 233 for the year 1988 that compels parents to send all of their male and female children to school to receive at least six years of free of charge primary education. Parents are penalised if they decline to send children to school. Furthermore, free primary schools are established all over the country and provided with necessary teachers. According to CAPMAS (2003), the statistics for the school year 2001/2002 (see Table 3 App.) refer that the number of primary schools was 15,653 comprising 174,451 classes. The number of students in these classes was 7,141,303 (including 3,758,391 males representing 52.6%, and 3,382,912 females representing 47.4%) and the number of teachers was 317,438 (including 148,226 males representing 46.7%, and 169,212 females representing 53.3 %). The government also established the **“National Authority for Illiteracy Deletion and the Education of Adults”** in 1986. The classes of this authority spread all over the country and implement free of charge special educational programs for illiterate men and women at any age. Thousands of teachers and university graduates are employed to teach in these programs and thousands of well-educated people volunteer to assist in implementing them. Millions of illiterates had already been graduated from illiteracy deletion classes during the last few years. Persons attending illiteracy deletion programs have to pass an examination by the end of their study. Those who pass are offered a certificate stating that they are capable of reading and writing. Having this certificate is now a must to apply for any job if the applicant doesn't prove that he got the primary

education or a higher certificate. Since its establishment, NCW puts on top of its agenda supporting and promoting the national program for fighting illiteracy.

### **3.4.2 Women and education**

Despite the above-mentioned illiteracy problem, there is a great educational renaissance in modern Egypt. Education upgrading and improvement is a top priority for the government and enormous resources are allocated annually to support it. Government education is free from the pre-primary school to the university and post-graduate studies are also free. In the fiscal year 2004/2005, the estimated budget for education is 25.8 billion Egyptian Pounds (equivalent to approximately 4.2 billion \$US) representing about 15% of the total government annual budget (Al-Ahram, 2004). Males and females have equal opportunities at all education levels. Enrolment in the different educational levels for the school year 2000/2001 is shown in Table 4 App. About 14.8 million students were enrolled in the primary, preparatory and secondary schools including about 7.8 million males representing 53%, and about 7 million females representing 47%. Moreover, about 1.5 million students (54% males and 46% females) were enrolled in universities (NCW, 2002).

Currently, females have an almost equal share to males in all education opportunities. In the year 2000/2001, the percentage of female students in pre-university levels ranged 47% - 51% while at the university level this percentage was 46% (see Table 4 App.). The average percentage of enrolled



female post-graduates in the same academic year was 40% [41% for diploma, 40% for Master and 34% for Ph.D. degrees, see Table 5App., (NCW, 2002)].

### **3.4.3 Women and the management**

Women's representation in management in Egypt is generally low. According to 1996 census, women occupied on the average 12% of the senior managerial positions. The percentages of women senior managers were about 25%, 10% and 6% in the government, public & business sector and private sector, respectively. As for the middle management, women held 31% of the positions in the government while no statistics were available for the public or private sectors (see Table 6 App., NCW, 2000 b).

In a more recent survey, CAPMAS reported the percentages of women representation in the high administrative positions in the government, and the public & business sector in the years 1998 - 2000 (see Table 7 App.). Women representation as a Minister or higher was <3% and none of them held the position of a Deputy-Minster. Women held about 6% of the First Under-Secretary positions and 13% of the Under-Secretary positions. The percentage of women representation as General Managers was 21% (NCW, 2002).

### **3.4.4 Women in the different professions**

The percentages of women practising different professions in the government, public & business sector and private sector as calculated from 1996 CAPMAS census are shown in Table 8 App. Women formed 83% of the nursing staff, 56% of the social & welfare specialists, 48% of the secretaries, 40% of the

teachers, 39% of the clerks, 38% of the accountants, 31% of the doctors and 10% of the engineers (NCW, 2000 b).

Statistics for the school year 2001/2002 refer that the percentage of female teachers increased to an average of 47%. In pre-primary education the percentage of female teachers was 99% but this percentage decreased gradually with every step upward in the level of education to record about 54%, 44% and 35% in the primary, preparatory and secondary education, respectively [see Table 9 App., (CAPMAS, 2003)].

NCW statistics indicate that the average percentage of women representation in university teaching staff in the academic year 2000/2001 was 35%. Women formed 24% of the professors, 26% of the associate professors, 34% of the lecturers, 40% of the assistant lecturers and 52% of the instructors (see Table 10 App.). In 2002, the percentage of female staff in the different scientific institutions and centres affiliated to the Ministry of Scientific Research reached 43% [see Table 11 App.; (NCW, 2002)].

#### **3.4.5 Women and the awards**

The Egyptian woman proved herself as eligible for the highest state awards in the different fields of sciences and technology. Seventy-four women gained State awards between the years 1980 and 2000. Of those, two women gained the highly recognised State Award of Appreciation and three others gained the State Award of Excellence. Sixty-nine women gained the State Incentive Award [see Table 12 App.; (NCW, 2002)].

### **3.4.6 Women and the diplomatic corps**

According to NCW, women occupy 19% of the positions in diplomatic corps. The percentages of women representation are 4.1% for Ambassadors, 1.9% for Ministers of Plenipotentiary, 2.6% for Counsellors, 2% for 1<sup>st</sup>. Secretaries, 3.3% for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretaries and 5% for diplomatic attaches [see Table 13 App.; (NCW, 2002)]

### **3.4.7 Women and the political participation**

According to NCW (2002), women's political representation in Egypt is generally poor. The percentage of females registered in electorate lists in the year 2000 was 35%. The percentage of females nominated and elected in the People's Assembly in the year 2000 was 1.6% and the percentage of females nominated and elected in Al-Shura Council (Senate) in the year 2002 was 5.7%. The percentage of females in the local councils in 1997 was 1.2%.

## **3.5 Women and the Egyptian labour force**

A comprehensive essay on "Egyptian Women in the Labour Market" published in volume 6 of the National Council for Women's newsletter (NCW, 2001a) highlighted the following:

- i. Working women have historically been influenced by the phases of Egypt's economic development. At the outset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt had a rural economy where women in the countryside assumed a central role with their major activities centred on agriculture. With Egypt's economic development early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came an ambitious manufacturing program initiated by the State creating certain industries

based on agriculture. Foremost was the textile industry whose factories used a high percentage of women workers to the point where they became the core of the female industrial workforce. At the same time women's major role in the agricultural sector persisted and they continued to take on heavy duties related to the sector, including irrigation and planting. In addition, they engaged in rural commerce.

- ii. The July 1952 revolution caused radical changes to take place in the social economic and political spheres of life in Egypt. The laws and constitution of the revolution asserted the principle of complete equality of rights and duties between men and women. In addition, they underlined the commitment to motherhood and childhood, and to help women manage their duties towards the family and work. Laws setting down the rights of women working in the government agencies, public and private sectors were deemed to be the major factors that drove women to join the workforce at a quick and assertive rate, a fact that led to the increase of the number of women working in various fields.
- iii. Labour migration to other countries over the past few decades created vacancies in the labour force that have given women further opportunities. At the same time, many women found themselves as the sole heads of the household forcing them to join the working force. Currently, women can be found working throughout the various sectors of both the formal and informal economy. The degree of women's participation varies from an area to another, though it is generally low, especially in the formal private sector. In general, government agencies

are women's main employer. The informal sector provides rural women in particular with considerable opportunities.

In July 2001, the National Council for Women held the Third Intellectual Forum under the title "Women and the Labour Market, The Formal and Informal sectors". In this Forum four papers relevant to women in the Egyptian labour market were presented. These papers dealt with women in the informal sector, Egyptian women in the formal labour market, the difficulties facing woman in the informal sector and the suggested policies to overcome them, and a future view of Egyptian woman in the labour market. An integrated overview of these papers revealed the following:

- i. During the last decade the economic reform policies decreased women's opportunities in holding jobs in the government and encouraged them to start small-business projects (Al-Mahdi, 2001),
- ii. In 1998, women represented 21% of the labour force in Egypt. The rate of unemployment among economically active women (15 – 64 years old) reached 16%. Women's labour force is concentrated in agriculture and services sectors whereas their participation in the economic activities is limited. The government is the main employer for women as they represent 33% of the total government employees. Future opportunities for women employment are greater in the private sector (El-Hamaky, 2001),
- iii. The most important difficulties facing women employment in the informal sector include finance difficulties, marketing difficulties, bureaucracy of governmental agencies and authorities, low returns of

working in the informal sector, lack of effective social security regulations, relatively long work-hours and the annoying behaviour of customers or employers. Recommendations to overcome such difficulties include encouraging economic growth, increasing employment in the formal sector, modifying the governmental policies and practices standing against informal work, simplifying administrative formalities and decreasing its cost, facilitating projects' finance and encouraging NGO's on establishing joint business activities with the informal sector (Rizk, 2001).

- iv. Women form about 40% of the total workforce in Egypt. Working women are concentrated in the agricultural sector followed by the government. Women prefer certain professions like agriculture, clerical jobs, technical professions, and sales. Women's representation in management is modest as they occupy less than 16% of the managerial positions. Despite the great achievements of women throughout the past five decades they still have to fill in four serious gaps; employment, rights, social security and social debate gaps. Employment gap refers to the low demand on women employment and their concentration in the low-productivity sectors. The rights gap refers to excluding all types of discrimination against women in all job opportunities. The social security gap refers to empowering the existing social security policies and procedures. The social debate gap refers to empowering women's political participation and enlarging their role in the decision-making process (Radwan, S., 2001).

CAPMAS (2003) estimated the labour force in Egypt in 1-1-2003 at approximately 20 million. Labour opportunities were estimated at nearly 18 million. Thus, there are about two million citizens suffering unemployment. The average percentage of unemployment nation-wide is, therefore, 10% (see Table 14 App.). The statistics of NCW refer that in the year 2000 men unemployment was 5% in both urban and rural areas while women unemployment reached 24% in the urban areas and 22% in the rural areas [see Table 15 App.; (NCW, 2002)].

The classification of the estimated Egyptian labour force in 1-1-2003 by economic activity (CAPMAS, 2003: 11) shows that five million persons representing 28% of the total labour force worked in agriculture & fisheries. Approximately 2.4 million representing 13% worked in industry & mining. Another 2.3 million representing about 13% practised internal trade. Nearly two million representing 11% worked in education. The other activities included construction (7.4%), transport, storage & communications (6.4%), services (4.3%), health & social welfare (3.3%) and tourism (1.9%). The economic activities of about 1.7 million persons (12%) were not adequately described. The percentages of female participation in the above-mentioned economic activities were 18.5% for agriculture & fisheries, 12.4% for industry & mining, 1% for internal trade, 38.4% for education, 2.5% for construction, 5.9% for transport storage & communications, 15.3% for services, 47.6% for health & social welfare and 13.9% for tourism. These percentages emphasise that females have a strong participation in health and social welfare and education activities. Females' participation in agriculture & fisheries, industry

& mining, tourism and services activities is relatively less. The participation of females in construction, transport, storage & communications and internal trade activities is apparently poor.

According to NCW (2002), the economically active labour force (15 – 64 years old) is classified according to employment status into paid labour and unpaid labour. Paid labour includes employers, employees and self-workers while unpaid labour includes family workers. NCW statistics for the year 2000 refer that among the economically active female labour force 57.2% of the females practised paid labour, 20.1% of them practised unpaid labour and 22.7% were unemployed. Female employers, employees and self-workers formed 3.5%, 44.2% and 9.5% of the female economically active labour force, respectively. About 74% of the female economically active labour force in the urban areas practised paid labour while only 44% of them practised this kind of labour in the rural areas. On the contrary, only 2% of the economically active labour force in urban areas practised unpaid family work while in rural areas 34% of the female economically-active labour force were involved in unpaid family work (see Table 16 App.).

NCW (2002) statistics (see Table 17 App.) further refer that about 6.5 million employees work for the government, public & business sector and the private sector. Government employees are 5.1 million and represent 78% of the total number of employees. The public and business sector employs about 0.8 million persons representing 13% of the total number of employees. Employment in the private sector amounts 0.6 million persons representing 9%



of the total number of employees. The percentage of female employment nation-wide is relatively low (23.5%), with approximate averages of 26%, 12% and 16% for government, public and business sector and private sector, respectively.

Statistics show that in the year 2000, 42% of the total government employees worked in the fields of education research & youth, 16% of them worked in defence, security & justice, and 12.5% worked in health, social welfare & labour force fields. Less than 30% of the total number of government employees worked in all other activities. The percentages of female employment as government employees were quite considerable in tourism (47%), insurance & social affairs (44%), supply & internal trade (40%), education, research & youth (37%), health, social welfare & labour force (36%) and culture & information (36%). Females were relatively less represented as government employees in economy & finance (24%), local councils & general departments (20%), industry & petroleum (18%), Presidential services (18%), agriculture & fisheries (15%), construction & new communities (12%) and electricity & power (12%). The representation of females in government employment was low in defence, security & justice (5%) and transportation & civil aviation (5%) (NCW, 2002).

In the public & business sector, 43% of the total employment was in industry & petroleum. Construction, economy & finance, transportation and provision & internal trade employed 14%, 10%, 9% and 9% of the total employment, respectively. Employment was relatively low in defence, security & justice

(4%), agriculture & water resources (3.5%), health & social services (3%) and tourism (3%) but rather poor in electricity (0.6%) and culture & information (0.3%). Females occupied 34% of the jobs in health & social services, 24% of them in economy & finance, 19% in provision & internal trade, 17% in tourism, 16% in culture & information, and 14% in agriculture & water resources. The representation of females in the other economic activities was markedly less being 9% in industry and petroleum, 8% in transportation, 7% in electricity, 7% in defence, security & justice and 5% in construction (NCW, 2002).

In the private sector, 24% of the total employment was concentrated in food and beverage industry. Spinning and weaving industry, clothes manufacturing, non-metal industries and chemical industries employed 15%, 10%, 9% and 6% of the total employment, respectively. Several other industries and activities employed fractions of the total employment ranging between <1% and 4%. Females formed 54% of the employment in clothes manufacturing and 48% of it in tobacco industry. They also formed 36% of the employment in coal & petroleum industries and 30% of it in radio, television & communications industries. The percentage of female employment ranged 18%-15% in spinning & weaving, leather tanning & leather clothes, chemicals, computers and medical industries. Female representation dropped to 10% - 6% in mining & quarrying, food and beverage, paper, printing, publishing & press copying, rubber, metal, non-metal, light transportation and recycling industries. Females occupied <5% of the available jobs in wood, felt & straw, alkaline metalloids,

heavy machinery, electronic appliances, motor vehicles and furniture industries (NCW, 2002).

### **3.6 Women in the Egyptian tourism workplace:**

Information on women's employment in tourism in Egypt is very scarce. However, the latest statistics refer that in 1-1-2003 about 337,000 persons were employed in tourism activities. Of those, 290,000 (representing 86.1%) were males and 47,000 (representing 13.9%) were females. Employment in tourism represented 1.9% of the total employment in the whole country (CAPMAS 2003). Female employment in tourism in the year 2000 was 47% in the government and 17% in the public & business sector (CAPMAS 2002).

There are no recent statistics of female employment in tourism in the private sector establishments in Egypt. The sole available data in that respect are the results of an old survey on employment in the tourism sector in Egypt conducted in 1991 by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics and published in 1993. This study figured out the status of employment in tourism sector until December 1992. Volume four of the above-mentioned study (CAPMAS, 1993) dealt with employment in travel agencies. Unfortunately, no effort has been done later to update these statistics.

Statistics refer that, in December 1992, the percentage of permanent employees in the Egyptian travel agencies was 93.5%. Male and female percentages of employment in these agencies were 81.5% and 18.5%, respectively. Class (A)

travel agencies employed 82.7% of the total employment in all travel agencies (Classes A, B and C). Women represented 20.3% of the employment in Class (A) travel agencies versus 79.7% for men employment.

### **3.6.1 Women senior managers classified according to job title**

In December 1992, women senior managers owning travel agencies formed 13.1% of Class (A) agency ownership. Women's representation in the senior management positions in these agencies was 6.4% as Heads or members of the Boards of Directors, 7.8% as General Managers and 15.8% as Deputy General Managers (CAPMAS, 1993).

### **3.6.2 Women middle managers classified according job title**

Women's representation in the middle management of Class (A) travel agencies was, in general, relatively low (12.6%). However, women were more represented as sales (17.1%) and public relations (15%) managers than as accounting (12.6%) or personnel and training (9.5%) managers. Women's representation as transport managers was poor (5.6%) (CAPMAS, 1993).

### **3.6.3 Women employees classified according to department**

In December 1992, women occupied 56%, 38%, 38%, 27%, 25%, 3% and 1% of the jobs in reservation, marketing & sales, information technology, accounting, tourism, finance & administration and transportation departments, respectively, thus indicating that women employees dominated in the reservations, marketing & sales and information technology departments. Women were relatively less represented in accounting, tourism and finance &

administration departments while their representation in transportation department was too poor (CAPMAS, 1993).

#### **3.6.4 Women technical staff classified according to job**

In December 1992, women occupied 89%, 30%, 26%, 22%, 18 % and 11% of the technical staff in secretarial, clerical, tour operator, auditing, cashier and sales jobs, respectively. These percentages refer to the dominance of women in secretarial jobs and their moderate representation in the other technical jobs (CAPMAS, 1993).

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter provides a brief overview of Egypt's geographical location, population and historical background from the emergence of ancient Egyptian culture to the current day. It explains the role of the Islamic doctrine in shaping the prevailing culture and customs with a special emphasis on women's rights and duties. It further describes the social structure of the Egyptian community and its legislative and political context and then focuses on the history of the Egyptian women's movement. The chapter further provides information and statistics related to the current participation of Egyptian women in the public sphere and work force with reference to women's illiteracy, education, employment, involvement in management and role in the political life. It also includes information and statistics on women in the Egyptian tourism workplace and their status as managers and employees in travel agencies.

## **CHAPTER FOUR INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL RESEARCH**

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## CHAPTER 4

### INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL RESEARCH

#### 4.1 Chapter outline:

This chapter highlights the important aspects of inquiry in the social sciences. It discusses the role of science in human inquiry then presents the concept, criteria and ethics of research in addition to an exploration of the elements of social research. The chapter further clarifies the role and place of theory in social research, explains the different ways of doing social research and overviews the different inquiry paradigms in the social sciences.

#### 4.2 Role of science in human inquiry

Inquiry is a natural human activity where people tend to seek general understanding about the world they live in. Some inquiries are easy and can be answered quickly while others are more complex. According to Kerlinger (1986), there are four methods of human inquiry. First: the method of "*tenacity*" (where people hold to the truth because they know it to be true). Second: the method of "*authority*" (where things are believed to be true if they are stated in religious books or said by someone of authority *e.g.* a Prime Minister or a teacher). Third: the method of "*intuition*" (where reason is the criterion of truth). Fourth: the method of "*science*" (where logic and observation are the criteria of knowing).

However, science gained superiority over the other methods of knowing because scientific inquiries are based on theory, data collection and data analysis, thus guard against the pitfalls that may result either from the inaccuracy of the agreed on body of

knowledge derived from tradition and authority or from errors of direct personal experience: “inaccurate observations”, “overgeneralization”, “selective observation” and “illogical reasoning” (Burns, 2000; Babbie, 1998; Punch, 1998; Bouma and Atkinson, 1995; Gay and Diehl, 1992):

*Some of the problems associated with experience and authority as sources of knowledge are graphically illustrated by a story told about Aristotle. According to the story, one day Aristotle caught a fly and carefully counted and recounted its legs. He then announced that flies have five legs. No one questioned the word of Aristotle. For years his finding was uncritically accepted. Of course, the fly that Aristotle caught just happened to be missing a leg! Whether or not you believe the story, it does illustrate the limitations of relying on personal experience and authority as sources of knowledge.*

(Gay and Diehl, 1992: 5)

As explained by Babbie (1998), errors of inaccurate observation that generally occur in normal life settings are avoided in scientific inquiries by making observation a careful and deliberate activity where scientists in many cases use both simple and complex measurement devices and add a degree of precision well beyond the capacity of the unassisted human sense. Errors of overgeneralization are also avoided in scientific inquiries because scientists commit themselves in advance to a sufficiently large sample of observations and tend as well to repeat the studies in order to check and see if the same results are produced each time. Similarly, errors of selective observation and illogical reasoning are avoided in scientific inquiries as scientists on one hand commit themselves in advance to a set of observations to be made regardless of apparent patterns and on the other hand try to be as careful and deliberate in their reasoning as in their observations.

Accordingly, when individuals, groups and organizations fail to find reasonable, convincing answers for their questions or proper solutions for their problems through



the ordinary methods of knowing (agreed on body of knowledge and/or direct personal experience) they begin formally or informally to engage in research (Bouma 2000; Bouma and Atkinson, 1995; Dixon *et al.*, 1987):

*Research skills are important for living and working in our world- a world in which information is becoming one of the most valuable commodities and in which the ability to handle information is one of the most valued and marketable skills.*

(Bouma and Atkinson, 1995: ix)

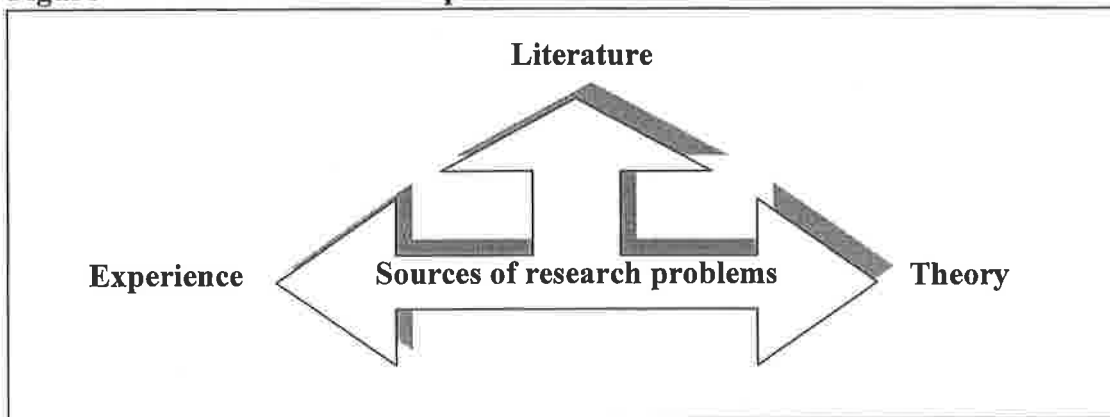
### **4.3 Concept, criteria and ethics of research**

Research is a disciplined way of coming to know more about our world and ourselves and of clarifying and settling argues and debates about the nature and operation of some aspects of the universe in which we live (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995). It is a systematic investigation carried out to find answers for certain questions or problems (Burns, 2000) through a series of linked activities moving from a beginning to an end (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995). According to Ghauri, *et al.* (1995: 11) research problems are "*questions that indicate gaps in the scope and the certainty of our knowledge*". "*They point to problematic phenomena, observed events that are puzzling in terms of our currently accepted ideas, or current ideas that are challenged by new questions*".

Sources of research problems vary: "*An observation, something we read, a claim someone made, a hunch about something, each may serve as a stimulus to begin the research process*" (Dixon *et al.*, 1987: 29). Burns (2000) identified three main sources of research problems: experience, theory and the related literature and stated that each of these three sources contributes to the process of problem formulation in a way or another (Figure 4.1). As he explained, everyday experience from one side can

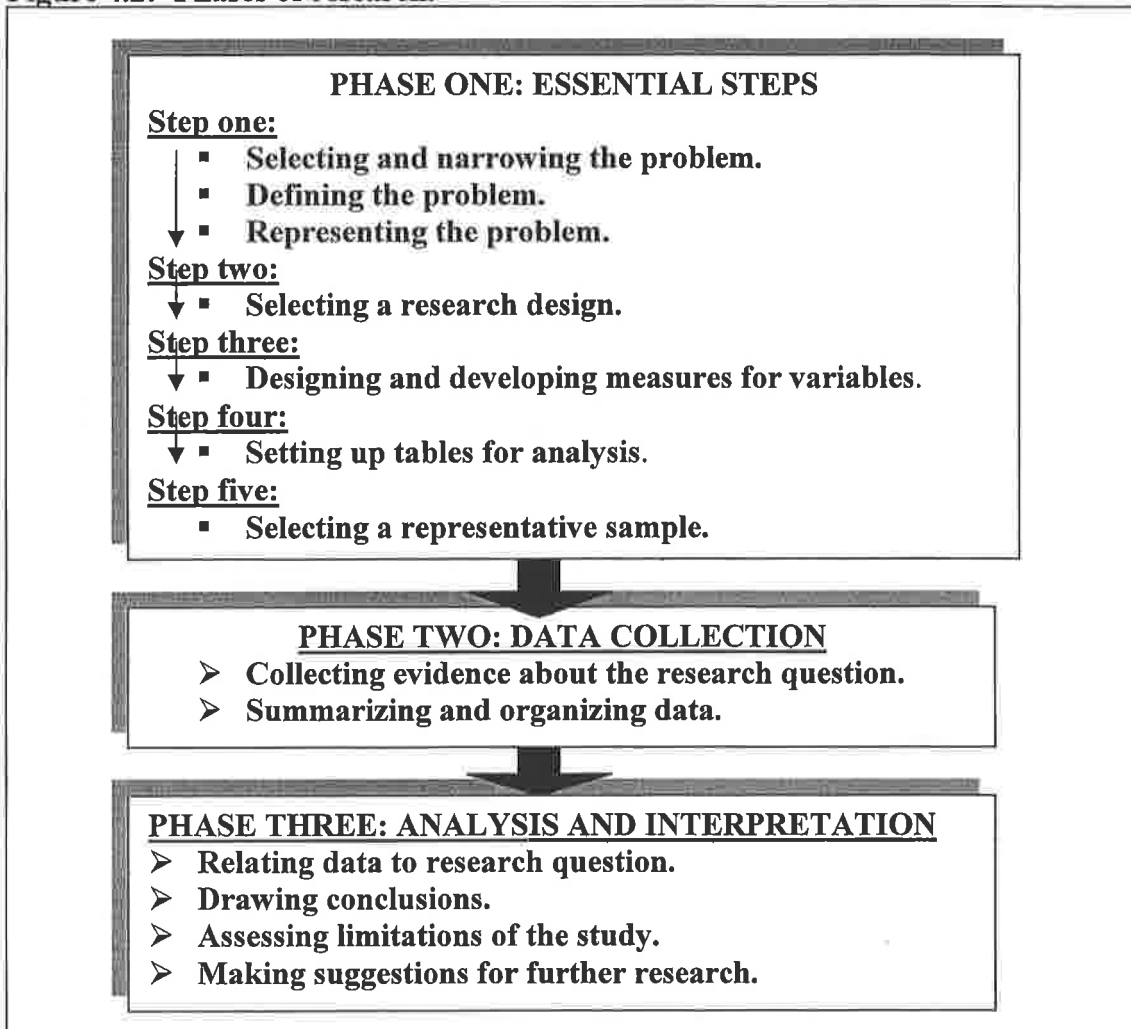
yield worthwhile problems for investigation. Theories from another side are an important source for formulating research problems or research questions (as they need to be tested by a variety of specific hypotheses to see in what ways/contexts/conditions they may or may not hold). The review of literature from a third side helps in limiting research problems and in defining them more clearly.

**Figure 4.1: Sources of research problems.**



According to Bouma and Atkinson (1995), any research process should pass through three successive phases (Figure 4.2). The first phase deals with clarifying the issues to be researched and selecting a research method. In this phase five essential steps should be carried out. First: selecting, narrowing, and formulating the problem to be studied. Second: selecting a research design. Third: designing and devising measures for variables. Fourth: setting up tables for analysis. Fifth: selecting a sample for the study. The second phase deals with the process of data collection where evidence about the research question is being collected. The third phase deals with the process of data analysis and interpretation. It involves relating the collected evidence to the research question asked, drawing conclusions about the question, acknowledging the limitations of the research and making suggestions for further research.

Figure 4.2: Phases of research.



Source: Adapted from Bouma and Atkinson (1995: 9-13).

According to Dixon *et al.* (1987), undergoing a research process involves learning several disciplines. First: asking the right questions through moving from global questions to more specific researchable ones. Second: being honest and accurate (researchers should be as objective as possible, to avoid bias in the way they ask questions and to ensure that they correctly record the data and honestly report the results because honesty in recording the data and accuracy in reporting the research findings increase the reliability of the research process). Third: being careful in record keeping so that others can see exactly what was done and why. Fourth: accepting the limitations of the research done.

#### 4.4 Elements of social research

In natural world inquiries researchers aim to explain, predict and/or control phenomena by undergoing experiments in laboratories under specific controlled conditions (Gay and Deihl, 1992). In social and behavioural inquiries researchers aim to study the world in its real context and draw attention to some of the issues and complexities involved within this context through investigating people in 'real life' situations. Thus, social research is often referred to as the *"real world"* or the *"field inquiry"* (Robson, 1993:2).

One of the challenges about carrying out investigations in the 'real world' is in seeking to say something sensible about a complex, relatively poorly controlled and generally 'messy' situation. However, real world studies (social and behavioural research) not only try to understand situations but also try to change them:

*Wanting to say something helpful raises the issue that we are often seeking not simply to understand something, but also to try to change it. Effectively, many real world studies are evaluations. They try to provide information about how some intervention, procedure, system or whatever is functioning; and how it might be improved.*

(Robson, 1993: xi)

Social research, like research in any other field of knowledge, is based on the two main pillars of science, i.e. *"logic"* and *"observation"*. These two elements strongly relate the social investigation to the three major aspects of the overall scientific enterprise (theory, data collection and data analysis) in a way that distinguishes the social science research from other ways of looking at social phenomena:

*As a gross generalisation, scientific theory deals with the logical aspect of science, data collection deals with the observational aspect, and data analysis looks for patterns in what is observed and, where appropriate, compares what is logically expected with what is actually observed.*

(Babbie, 1998: 24)

According to Schutt (2001), social and behavioural inquiries require greater breadth of vision and more sources of information than relying on ordinary causal explanations. Thus, social researchers commit themselves to logical and systematic methods to answer social questions and they do so in a way that allows others to inspect and evaluate their methods.

Within the same context, Babbie (1998) reported that the way scientists view and comprehend the social world is quite different from the way ordinary people do because scientists in their attempt to make sense of social phenomena commit themselves to theories (which are always subject to testing and disconfirmation) whereas ordinary people tend to comprehend the surrounding world and predict future circumstances relying on many strategies that vary from one society to another according to the variance of habitual and traditional patterns between different cultural life settings:

*If you study the traditions of various societies, however, you'll tend to find explanations that attempt to make sense out of the prescribed and proscribed ways of doing things. Many of those explanations are religious, reporting supernatural intentions. Others may simply sound like silly superstitions to you. Whatever the tradition and the explanation for it, you'll find people quick to report anecdotal evidence to substantiate it.*

(Babbie, 1998: 458)

Babbie (1998: 458) further reported that the way people handle their belief systems and anecdotal evidence of cultural traditions in their attempt to understand and predict their future corresponds roughly to the roles of theory and data analysis in social research because *“once traditional patterns have been established in practice and have been rationalised by religion or by any other system of belief, they are difficult to shake”*.

### 4.5 Role and place of theory in social research

Theories are abstract notions about the way that concepts relate to each other. They are '*ideas*' or '*mental pictures*' of how the world might be (Dixon *et al.*, 1987: 23). Robson (1993: 18) stated that a theory is "*a general statement that summarises and organises knowledge by proposing a general relationship between events*". Silverman (2000: 77) defined theory as "*a set of concepts used to define and/or explain some phenomenon*". The term "*concept*" in this sense refers to "*an idea derived from a given model*" whereas the term "*model*" refers to "*an overall framework for looking at reality*". Babbie (1998: 52) further defined theory as "*a systematic set of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspects of social life*".

Theories have three main functions: first, to prevent people from being taken in by flukes; second, to make sense of observed patterns in a way that can suggest other possibilities and third, to shape and direct efforts pointing toward likely discoveries through empirical observation (Babbie, 1998).

Mann (1985: 39) pointed out that the real meaning of the word "*theory*" is often misunderstood because it is always thought of as synonymous with speculation, and that thinking of theory as purely speculative leads to a division not only between the concept of theory and fact but also between who are called '*theorists*' and '*empiricists*' or '*field workers*':

*The mistaken view is that theory refers to ideas, which have never been tested. If theories are ever put to test and proved right, then the theories disappear and they are replaced by facts, or perhaps even laws.*

Mann (1985) further added that developing a theory is the process of ordering facts and findings in a meaningful way and putting them in a systematic framework, which is, as described by May (2001:29) a mark of a mature discipline:

*The idea of theory, or the ability to explain and understand the findings of research within a conceptual framework that makes 'sense' of the data, is the mark of a mature discipline whose aim is the systematic study of particular phenomena.*

Babbie (1998:52) identified six elements used in the construction of theory: **"observation"** (a term generally used in reference to the process of gathering information which is in the case of social research typically limited to seeing, hearing and –less commonly- touching), **"fact"** (a term generally used in the social sciences to refer to some phenomenon that has been observed), **"law or principles"** (universal generalizations about classes of facts), **"axioms or postulates"** (fundamental assertions on which a theory is grounded), **"prepositions"** (conclusions drawn about the relationships among concepts derived from the axiomatic groundwork. The term **"axioms"** here refers to means and ends of a society) and **"hypothesis"** (specified expectations about empirical reality derived from prepositions) as the main elements of theory.

Babbie (1998) further identified two levels of social theory: a macro level and a micro level. **"Macrotheory"** deals with large, aggregate entities of society or even whole societies whereas **"microtheory"** deals with issues of social life at the level of individuals and small groupings. Macro theorists focus their attention on the society at large or at least on large portions of it where topics like the struggle between economic classes in a society, the international relations and the interrelations among major institutions in society, such as government, religion and family come on top of

their agenda. On the contrary, micro theorists take a more intimate view of social life as they are more focused on individual and small group relationships rather than on the society as a whole. Examples of topics of study for microtheory are: student-faculty interactions, jury deliberations and dating behaviour.

Several authors (e.g. May, 2001; Finn *et al.*, 2000; Silverman, 2000; Babbie, 1998 and Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) referred to a strong mutual relationship between theory and research in the social and behavioural sciences where, on one hand, research needs theory as a framework for analysis and interpretation while, on the other hand, theory needs research to constantly review, modify and challenge theoretical details. This mutual interaction between theory and research in the social sciences occurs in a cycle consisting of two alternate reasoning approaches, which are “**induction**” and “**deduction**”:

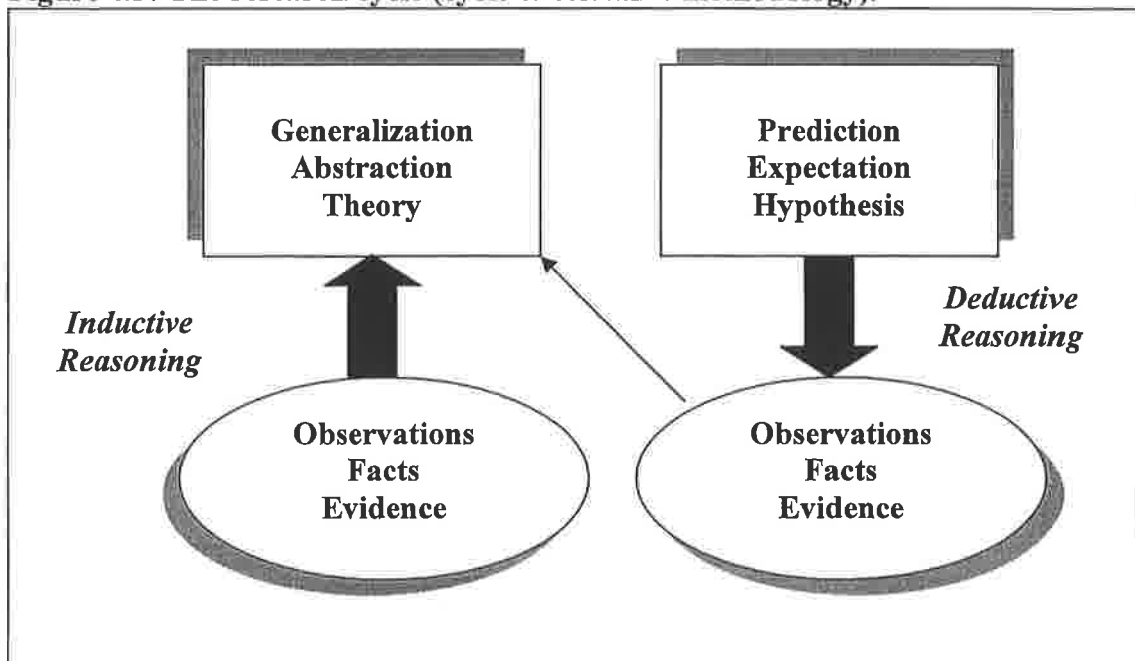
*Research on any given question at any point in time falls somewhere within a cycle of inference processes, often referred to as the research cycle, the chain of reasoning, or the cycle of scientific methodology. The cycle may be seen as moving from grounded results (facts, observations) through inductive logic to general inferences (abstract generalizations, or theory), then from those general inferences (or theory) through deductive logic to tentative hypothesis or predictions of particular events/outcomes.*

(Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998: 24)

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: 25), research might start at any point in the reasoning cycle. Some researchers tend to start their projects from theories or abstract generalizations while others tend to embark from observations and evidence (Figure 4.3). However, “*regardless of where the researcher starts (facts or theories), a research project always starts because there is a question that needs a satisfactory answer, and partially travels through the cycle at least once*”



Figure 4.3: The research cycle (cycle of scientific methodology).



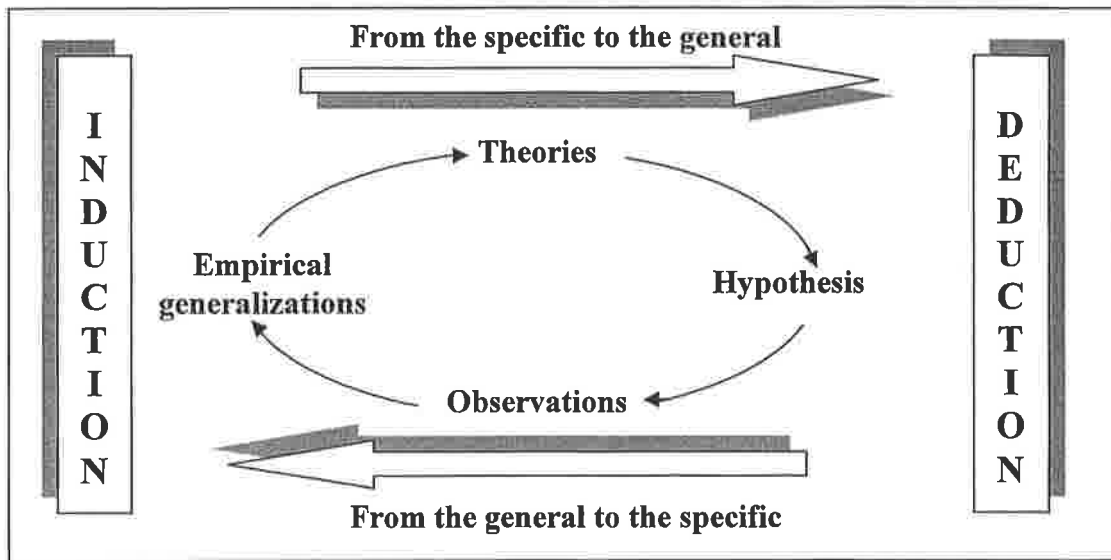
Source: Adapted from Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:25)

Babbie (1998: 59) emphasized that “in actual practice, theory and research interact through a never ending alternation of deduction, induction, deduction and so forth” (Figure 4.4) explaining that “*deductive reasoning*” moves from the general to the specific, from a pattern that might be logically or theoretically expected to observations that test whether the expected pattern actually occurs whereas, “*inductive reasoning*” moves from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events:

*Logicians distinguish between inductive reasoning (from particular instances to general principles, from facts to theories) and deductive reasoning (from the general to the particular, applying a theory to a particular case). In induction one starts from observed data and develops a generalisation, which explains the relationships between the objects observed. On the other hand, in deductive reasoning one starts from some general law and applies it to a particular instance.*

(Beveridge, 1950 cited in Babbie, 1998: 54)

Figure 4.4: The wheel of science (The chain of reasoning).



Source: Adapted from Babbie (1998: 59).

May (2001) further explained that “*induction*” is based on the belief that researchers can proceed from a collection of facts concerning social life, then make links between these facts to arrive at theories whereas “*deduction*” on the contrary, calls for making the theories, hypothesis or ideas guiding the research explicit, and if the researchers’ hypotheses are true, then they will be substantiated by the data proceeded. Accordingly, theorising in social research may either take place before the research inquiry where existing theories (grand theories) are being subject to testing through testable prepositions (hypothesis), or after undergoing the research process where new theories (grounded theory) are being constructed from patterns in the data derived from fieldwork.

However, although deductive reasoning (theory-testing approach) and inductive reasoning (theory-building approach) move in opposite directions, they are both valid avenues for science as they work together to provide more powerful and complete understandings (Finn *et al.*, 2000).

## 4.6 Ways of doing social research

Social research can be conducted quantitatively, qualitatively or by combining elements of both approaches in a single study as in the mixed method and mixed model studies (Schutt, 2001; Bouma 2000, Finn *et al.*, 2000; Denscombe, 1998; Punch, 1998; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Bouma and Atkinson, 1995; Creswell, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Brannen, 1992; Bryman, 1992; Morse, 1991; Brewer and Hunter 1989; Greene *et al.*, 1989; Bryman, 1988 and Mathison, 1988):

*There are three possibilities for any study. It can have all quantitative data, it can have all qualitative data or it can combine both types in any proportions. Which of these three should apply is not a matter for rules. The type of data we finish up with should be determined primarily by what we are trying to find out, considered against the background of the context, circumstances and practical aspects of the particular research project.*

(Punch, 1998: 61)

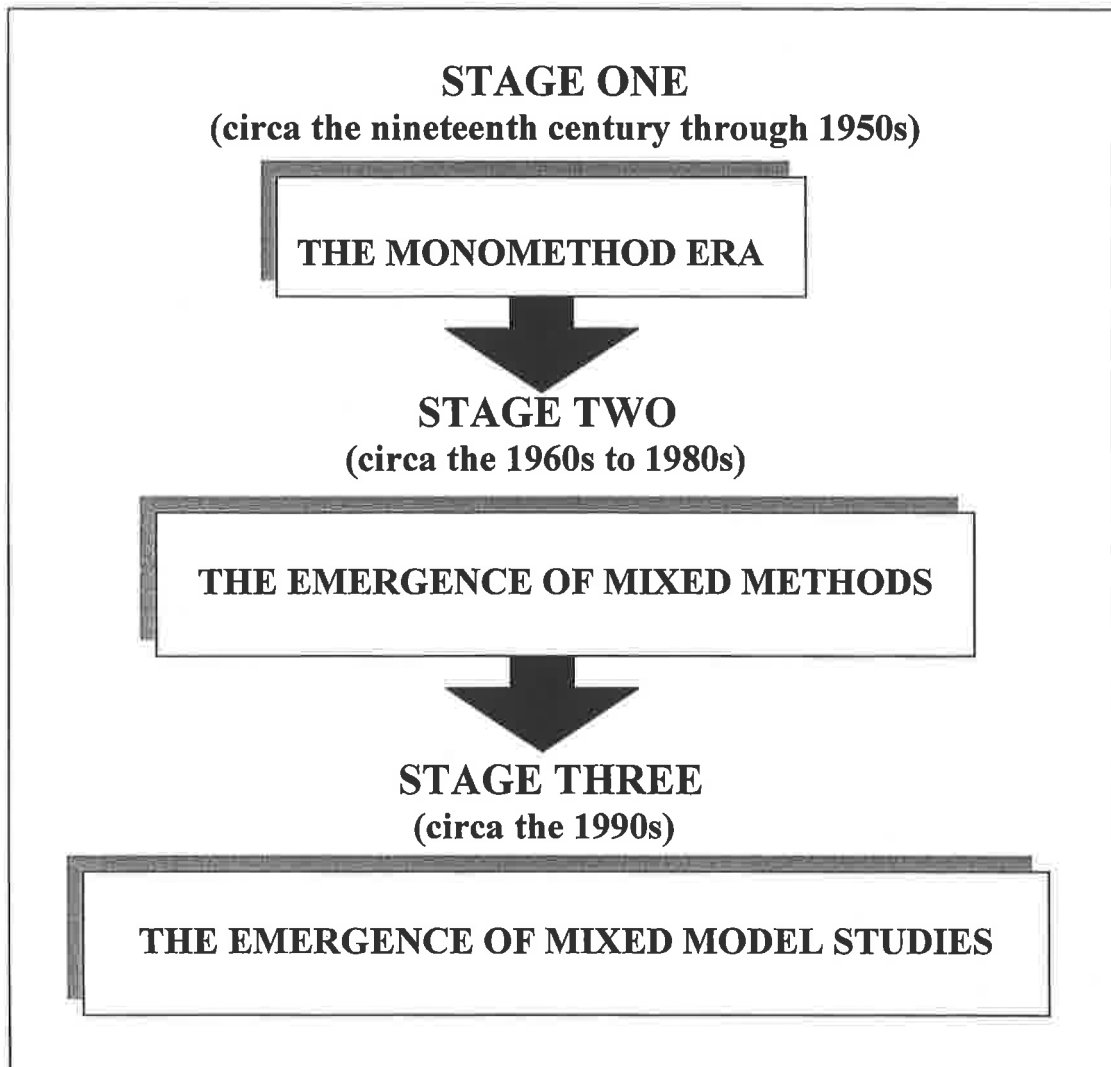
*Some subjects are best investigated using quantitative whilst in others, qualitative approaches will give better results. In some cases both methods can be used.*

(Bouma and Atkinson, 1995: 208)

In this sense, the term “**quantitative**” stands for research which deals with data that are usually expressed in numbers, percentages and rates to answer questions like: How much? How many? and How often? The term “**qualitative**” stands for research which deals with data that are usually expressed in the language of images, feelings and impressions to describe what is going on, what kinds or types of ‘something’ there are or what is it like to be, do or think something. The terms “**mixed method**” and “**mixed model**” stand for the studies, which deal with both quantitative and qualitative data to answer questions seeking both measurements and descriptions (Bouma, 2000).

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), the evolution of methodological approaches in the social and behavioural sciences occurred in three successive stages: “*The Monomethod or Purist Era*”, “*The emergence of Mixed Methods*” and “*The emergence of the mixed model studies*” (Figure 4.5).

**Figure 4.5: Stages of the evolution of methodological approaches in social sciences.**



As explained by the afore-mentioned authors, the term “*monomethods*” refers to the use of one basic scientific method – which is either quantitative or qualitative - in the study of social and behavioural phenomena (Table 4.1), the term “*mixed methods*” refers to the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches into the

methodology of a single study or multiphase study as in the data collection stage (Table 4.2) and the term “*mixed models*” refers to the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches across all phases of the research process as in conceptualisation, data collection, data analysis and inference (Table 4.3). A detailed discussion of the mixed method and mixed model designs will be presented later in chapter five (see pages 5.2 -5.9).

**Table 4.1: The evolution of methodological approaches (Stage one).**

Period 1: The monomethod or purist era (Circa the nineteenth century through 1950s)	
The purely quantitative orientation	The purely qualitative orientation
1- Single data source (QUAN).  2- Within one paradigm/model, multiple data sources:  <b>a. Sequential*</b> (QUAN/QUAN)  <b>b. Parallel/Simultaneous**</b> (QUAN+QUAN)	1- Single data source (QUAL).  2- Within one paradigm/model, multiple data sources:  <b>a. Sequential*</b> (QUAL/QUAL)  <b>b. Parallel/Simultaneous**</b> (QUAL+QUAL)

Source: Adapted from: Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: 15).

\* A **sequential study** is a two-phase study where the two phases are conducted separately one after the other and the results of the first phase are used for designing the second phase.

\*\* A **parallel/simultaneous study** is a two-phase study where the two phases are conducted at the same time.

Table 4.2: The evolution of methodological approaches (Stage two).

Period 2: The emergence of mixed methods (Circa the 1960s to 1980s)		
Equivalent status designs* (across both paradigms/methods)	Dominant – less dominant designs** (across both paradigms and methods)	Designs with multilevel use of approaches***
<b>1- Sequential:</b>  a. QUAL/QUAN  b. QUAN/QUAL  <b>2- Parallel/Simultaneous:</b> a. QUAL+QUAN  b. QUAN+QUAL	<b>1- Sequential:</b>  a. QUAL / quan b. quan /QUAL  c. QUAN / qual d. qual /QUAN  <b>2-Parallel/Simultaneous:</b> a. QUAL +quan b. quan + QUAL  c. QUAN + qual d. qual + QUAN	<b>Different types of methods at different levels of data aggregation.</b>

Source: Adapted from: Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:15).

\* **Equivalent status designs** are studies in which the researchers use both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches about equally to understand the phenomena under study. Equivalent status studies may either be **sequential** (where the researcher first conducts a qualitative phase of a study and then a quantitative phase, or vice versa) or **parallel/simultaneous** (where the researcher conducts the qualitative and quantitative phases at the same time).

\*\***Dominant - less dominant designs** are the studies conducted within a single dominant paradigm with a small component of the overall study drawn from an alternative design. As in the equivalent status studies, the dominant – less dominant studies may also be either **sequential** or **parallel/simultaneous**.

\*\*\***Designs with multilevel use of approaches** are the studies that use different types of methods at different levels of data aggregation where the data could be analysed quantitatively at one level and qualitatively at another level (*i.e.* quantitatively at the student level, qualitatively at the class level, quantitatively at the school level and qualitatively at the district level).

Table 4.3: The evolution of methodological approaches (Stage three).

Period 3: The emergence of mixed model studies (Circa the 1990s)		
Criteria	Single application within stage of study*	Multiple applications within stage of study**
Type of inquiry	QUAL or QUAN	QUAL and/or QUAN
Data collection/operations	QUAL or QUAN	QUAL and/or QUAN
Analysis/inferences	QUAL or QUAN	QUAL and/or QUAN

Source: Adapted from: Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:15).

\* **Single Application within Stage of Study:** There must be a mixing between the quantitative and qualitative approaches such that each approach appears in at least one stage of the study.

\*\* **Multiple Applications within Stage of Study:** There must be a mixing between the quantitative and qualitative approaches such that both approaches appear in at least one stage of the study.

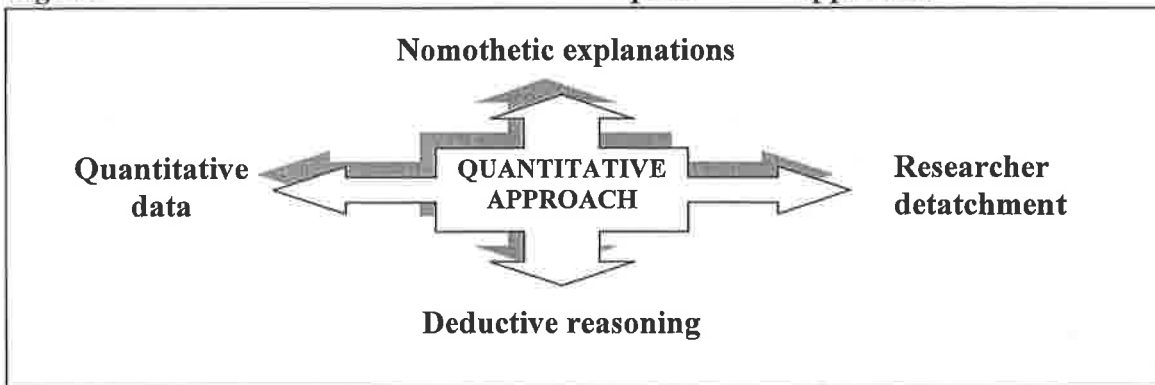
Historically, researchers in professional social science areas have generally followed the “*traditional quantitative approach*” (positivist/empiricist model) applied in the natural sciences assuming that social reality is objective and external to the individual until a strong move towards the “*naturalistic qualitative approach*” (constructivist model) which regard social reality as a creation of individual consciousness began to flourish. This move created a long debate between the “*QUANs*” (social scientists favouring the use of quantitative methodologies and methods in an attempt to establish general laws or principals) and the “*QUALs*” (social scientists favouring the use of qualitative methodologies and methods in an attempt to understand the subjective experience of individuals rather than general law-making) regarding the superiority of one of these two major competing approaches. Such debate is often

referred to – in the social research literature - as the “*quantitative/qualitative debate*” or the “*paradigm wars*” and participants in these wars are referred to as “*wrestlers*” or “*warriors*” (Hollyday, 2002; Burns 2000; Flick, 1998; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998 and Datta, 1994).

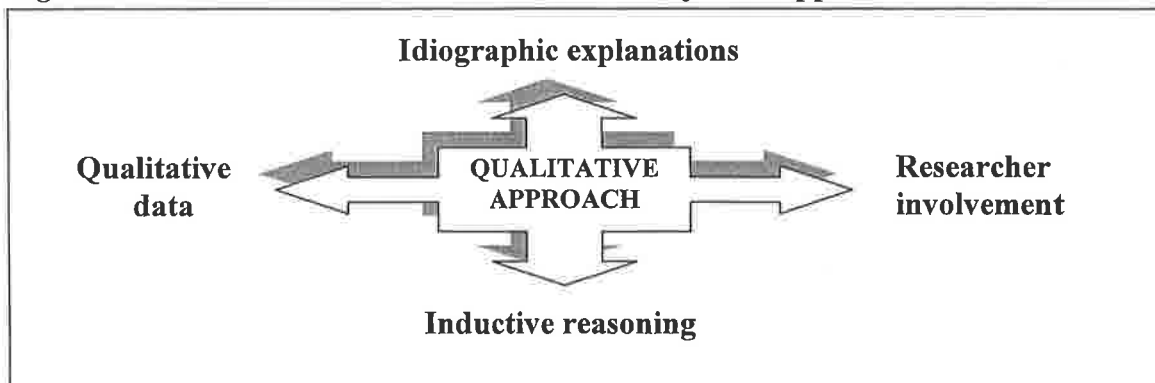
#### **4.6.1 Traditional scientific versus naturalistic research avenues**

Central to the contradiction between the concepts of the traditional scientific and the naturalistic qualitative approaches to social inquiry are four broad and interrelated distinctions. First: “*idiographic versus nomothetic explanations*”. Second: “*inductive versus deductive reasoning*”. Third: “*quantitative versus qualitative data*”. Fourth: “*involvement versus detachment of researchers*” (Figures. 4.6, 4.7 and Table 4.4).

**Figure 4.6: Characteristics of the traditional quantitative approach.**



**Figure 4.7: Characteristics of the naturalistic subjective approach.**





**Table 4.4: The traditional scientific versus naturalistic subjective approach.**

<b>Traditional quantitative approach (Positivist/empiricist model)</b>	<b>Naturalistic qualitative approach (Constructivist/phenomenological model)</b>
<b><u>Nomothetic explanations:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek a generalised, though superficial understanding of many cases.</li> <li>• Focus on establishing general laws or principals.</li> </ul>	<b><u>Idiographic explanations:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to understand specific cases fully.</li> <li>• Focus on individual cases rather than general law making.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Deductive reasoning:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves from the general to the specific.</li> <li>• Starts with hypotheses.</li> <li>• Ends up with verification or falsification of existing theories.</li> </ul>	<b><u>Inductive reasoning:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves from the particular to the general.</li> <li>• Starts with observations.</li> <li>• Ends up with generating new theories (grounded theory).</li> </ul>
<b><u>Quantitative data:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerical (information in the form of numbers, percentages and rates).</li> <li>• Subject to and product of measurements.</li> <li>• Hard and reliable.</li> </ul>	<b><u>Qualitative data:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive (information in the form of words, images and feelings).</li> <li>• Subject to and product of interpretations.</li> <li>• Rich and deep.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Researcher detachment:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher and subject are distant.</li> <li>• Researcher is an outsider.</li> </ul>	<b><u>Researcher involvement:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher and subject are close.</li> <li>• Researcher is an insider.</li> </ul>

Sources: Adapted from Bouma, 2000; Burns, 2000; Babbie, 1998; Denscombe, 1998; Bouma and Atkinson, 1995 and Robson, 1993.

These four major distinctions were - in one way or another - the basis on which comparisons between quantitative and qualitative research in the social sciences were made. Tables 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 are examples of comparisons between quantitative and qualitative social research as cited in a number of social research texts.

**Table 4.5: Differences between quantitative and qualitative research.**

Aspect of research	Quantitative	Qualitative
Relationship between researcher and subject	Distant	Close
Research strategy	Structured	Unstructured
Nature of data	Hard, reliable	Rich, deep
Relationship between theory and research	Confirmation	Emergent

Source: Bouma and Atkinson (1995: 208).

**Table 4.6: Contrast dimensions of qualitative and quantitative research.**

Contrast dimensions	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Words versus numbers	Tends to be associated with words as the unit of analysis.	Tends to be associated with numbers as the unit of analysis.
Description versus analysis	Tends to be associated with description.	Tends to be associated with analysis.
Small-scale versus large-scale	Tends to be associated with small-scale studies.	Tends to be associated with large-scale studies.
Holistic versus focus	Tends to be associated with holistic perspective.	Tends to be associated with a specific focus.
Researcher involvement or detachment	Tends to be associated with researcher involvement.	Tends to be associated with researcher detachment.
Emergent versus predetermined research design	Tends to be associated with an emergent research design.	Tends to be associated with a predetermined research design.

Source: Denscombe (1998:174-176).

**Table 4.7: Quantitative versus qualitative research.**

Criteria	Quantitative	Qualitative
View of the role of qualitative research	Preparatory	Means to exploration of actors' interpretations
Relationship between researcher and subject	Distant	Close
Researcher's stance in relation to subject	Outsider	Insider
Relationship between theory/concepts and research	Confirmation	Emergent
Research strategy	Structured	Unstructured
Scope of findings	Nomothetic	Idiographic
Image of social reality	Static and external to actor	Processual and socially constructed by actor
Nature of data	Hard and reliable	Rich and deep

Source: Bryman (1988: 94).

**Table 4.8: Comparison between quantitative and qualitative social research.**

Quantitative research	Qualitative research
<b>Activities</b>	
1- Counts occurrences across a large population.	1- Looks deep into the quality of social life.
2- Uses statistics and replicability to validate generalization from survey samples and experiments.	2- Locates the study within particular settings, which provide opportunities for exploring all possible social variables; and set manageable boundaries.
3- Attempts to reduce contaminating social variables.	3- Initial foray into the social setting leads to further, more informed exploration as themes and focuses emerge.
<b>Beliefs</b>	
1- Conviction about what it is important to look for.	1- Conviction that what it is important to look for will emerge.
2- Confidence in established research instruments.	2- Confidence in an ability to devise research procedures to fit the situation and nature of the people in it, as they are revealed.
3- Reality is not so problematic if the research instruments are adequate; and conclusive results are feasible.	3- Reality contains mysteries to which the researcher must submit, and can do no more than interpret.
<b>Steps</b>	
1- Decide the research focus (e.g. testing a specific hypothesis).	1- Decide the subject is interesting (e.g. in its own right or because it represents an area of interest).
2- Device research instruments (e.g. survey, questionnaire or experiment).	2- Explore the subject and let focus and themes emerge.
3- Approach the subject.	3- Devise research instruments during process (e.g. observation or interview)
<b>Rigour</b>	
1-Disciplined application of established rules for statistics, experiment and survey design.	1-Principled development of research strategy to suit the scenario being studied as it is revealed.

Source: Holliday (2002: 6).

#### 4.6.2 Paradigm wars and the evolution of pragmatism

The paradigm wars had been fought across several battlefields concerning important conceptual issues as the nature of reality (*ontology*), the relationship between the knower and the known (*epistemology*), the role of values in inquiry (*axiology*), the place of theory (*logic* or *reasoning*), the possibility of causal linkages (*causality*), the ways of knowing the world or gaining knowledge of it (*methodology*) and the techniques employed for gaining that knowledge (*methods*) (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

No discipline in the social and behavioural sciences has avoided manifestations of these wars, which resulted in the evolution of what is known by the “*incompatibility thesis*” that called for the “*paradigm purity*”. Paradigm purists (incompatibility theorists) argued that positivism and constructivism are incompatible as their ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions are quite different. They further positioned the incompatibility thesis with regard to research methods considering that the compatibility between quantitative and qualitative methods is impossible due to the incompatibility of the paradigms that underlie the methods, and thus researchers who try to combine the two methods are doomed to failure (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Although purists suggested shutting down the dialogue between the two camps claiming that the incompatibility between positivism and constructivism makes further dialogue unproductive, there have been numerous attempts in the social and behavioural sciences to build bridges between the two major paradigmatic positions. Some social scientists – known as pacifists - argued that quantitative and qualitative

methods are indeed compatible and that combining both methods in a single study is not in any way problematic. This approach, known as “*pragmatism*”, seemed acceptable especially for social scientists who adopted the tenets of “*paradigm relativism*” that stood for the use of whatever philosophical and /or methodological approach works for particular research problems under study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Pragmatism, which called for the possibility of combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies and methods in social research, played an important role in putting an end to the long debate that took place between positivists and constructivists along the history of social research (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Inquiry paradigms in the social sciences will be discussed in more detail in section 4.7.

#### **4.7 Inquiry paradigms in the social sciences**

The term “*paradigm*” has been defined by the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1993) as “*a mode of viewing the world which underlies the theories and methodology of science in a particular period of history*” (Vol. 2:2093). In some social research texts, other terms like “*theoretical perspective*” and “*philosophical orientation*” are sometimes used within the same context (e.g. Crotty, 1998 and Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Kane and O'Reilly- de Brun (2001: 14) defined paradigm as “*a set of underlying beliefs and assumptions about the way things are*”. Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 107-108) further defined paradigm as “*a set of basic beliefs (metaphysics) that deals with ultimate or first principles*” and described it as “*a worldview that defines, for its*

*holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts". In their opinion, "Inquiry paradigms define for inquirers what it is they are about and what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry". Thus, "any given paradigm represents simply the most sophisticated view that its proponents have been able to devise" given the way they have chosen to answer three defining questions: First, the ontological question: "What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?" Second, the epistemological question: "What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?" Third, the methodological question: "How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?"*

Babbie (1998:51) distinguished between the terms "**paradigm**" and "**theory**" arguing that they are sometimes used interchangeably:

*Paradigms are general frameworks or viewpoints: literally "points from which to view". They provide ways of looking at life and grounded in sets of assumptions about the nature of reality. A theory, by contrast, is a systematic set of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspects of social life. Thus theories flesh out and specify paradigms. Whereas a paradigm offers a way of looking, a theory aims at explaining what we see.*

Rossmann and Rallis (1998: 28) stated that philosophers and sociologists of science have used the concept of paradigm in their attempt to understand and describe the complexity of thought that guides definitions of science:

*They have used the concept of paradigm to capture the idea that definitions of science (whether natural or social) are the products of shared understandings of reality - that is, worldviews (complete complex ways of seeing and sets of assumptions about the world and actions within it).*

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) referred the importance currently attributed to paradigms in the social and behavioural sciences to Kuhn (1970) who argued in his book “*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*” that paradigms are the models that are imitated within any given field and that competing paradigms may exist simultaneously especially in immature sciences. Holliday (2002:14-15) further referred to Kuhn’s contribution as follows:

*Within social science, Kuhn’s (1970) treatise on how the internal politics, culture and ideology of a scientific community can influence the development of scientific thinking has had a major impact. Kuhn helped establish the notion that science is characterized by a series of paradigms which display ‘universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions’ to a scientific community of parishioners. This community bases its reputations, standards, hierarchies and modes of work on the concepts produced by the paradigm-until eventually an ‘anomaly’ emerges and brings a ‘crisis’ that precipitates revolution. Then a new paradigm is formed, often completely overturning established structures.*

According to Babbie (1998), the concept of paradigms in social sciences is quite different from that of natural sciences. Natural scientists generally believe that the succession from one paradigm to another represents progress from a false view to a true one where new theories are perceived as coming closer to truth. On the contrary, social scientists do not really replace old paradigms by new ones. Paradigms in social sciences cannot be true or false as ways of looking at the social world but they can only be more or less useful. Theoretical paradigms in social research may gain or lose popularity, but they are seldom discarded:

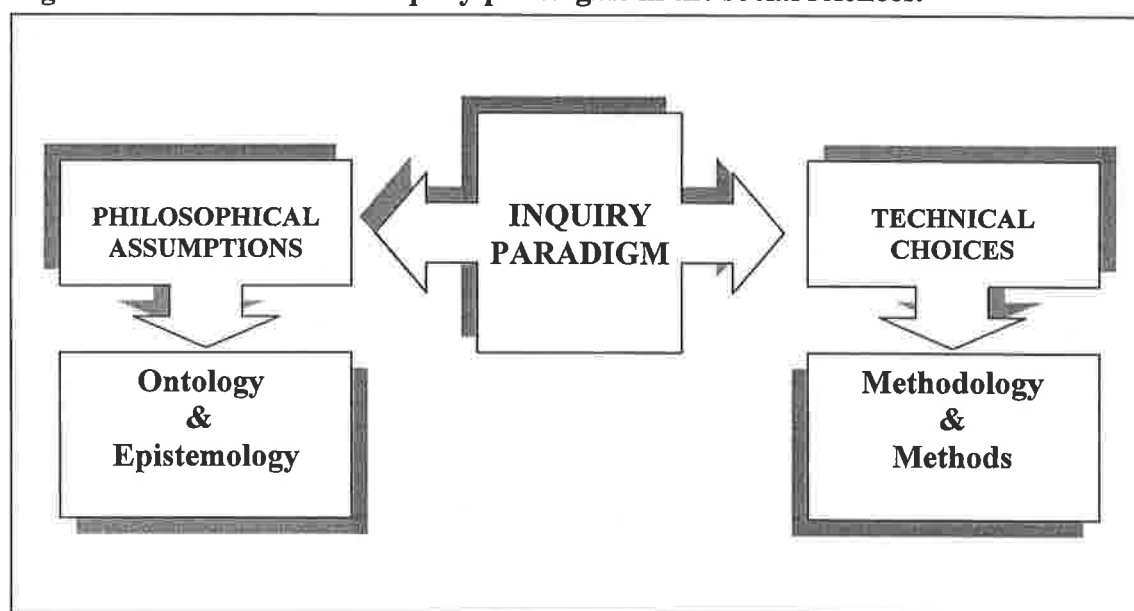
*The paradigms of the social sciences offer a variety of views, each of which offers insights the others lack-but ignores aspects of social life that the others reveal.*

(Babbie, 1998: 43)

Central to the concept of paradigm in social inquiries are two major dimensions: one is philosophical and the other is technical/practical (Figure 4.8). The philosophical

dimension on one hand reflects the researcher's assumption about the structure of existence (what kind of being is the human being?), the nature of reality (what is the nature of reality?) and the nature of human knowledge (what is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?). On the other hand, the technical dimension reflects the researcher's methodological focus (how do we know the world or gain knowledge of it?) and thus his or her tendency to employ specific research methods for inquiring into the social world (what are the suitable tools for gaining that knowledge?).

**Figure 4.8: Dimensions of inquiry paradigms in the social sciences.**



In several social research texts (*e.g.* Holliday, 2002; Kane and O'Reilly-De Brun, 2001; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994 and Silverman, 1993) the bulk of discussion relates in one way or another to the two afore-mentioned dimensions where the terms "*ontology*" (a branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being), "*epistemology*" (a branch of philosophy that addresses the philosophical problems surrounding the theory of knowledge. It is



concerned with the definition of knowledge and related concepts, the sources and criteria of knowledge, the kinds of knowledge possible and the degree to which each is certain, the limits of knowledge, and the exact relation between the one who knows and the object known), “**methodology**” (the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes) and “**methods**” (the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis) are widely discussed in various ways.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:108), referred to ontology, epistemology and methodology as the fundamental notions defining inquiry paradigms in the social sciences (Figure 4.9) because responses to the ontological, epistemological and methodological questions - referred to earlier in this section- are often linked to and built upon one another:

*The basic beliefs that define inquiry paradigms can be summarized by the responses given by proponents of any given paradigm to three fundamental questions, which are interconnected in such a way that the answer given to any question, taken in any order, constrains how the others may be answered.*

The statements below – cited in Denzin and Lincoln (1994:108) - briefly explain how such interrelated relationships between the three defining questions work:

- **At the ontological level:**

*If a real world is assumed, then what can be known about it is “how things really are” and “how things really work”. Then only those questions that relate to matters of “real existence” and “real action” are admissible; other questions, such as those concerning matters of aesthetic or moral significance, fall outside the realm of legitimate scientific inquiry.*

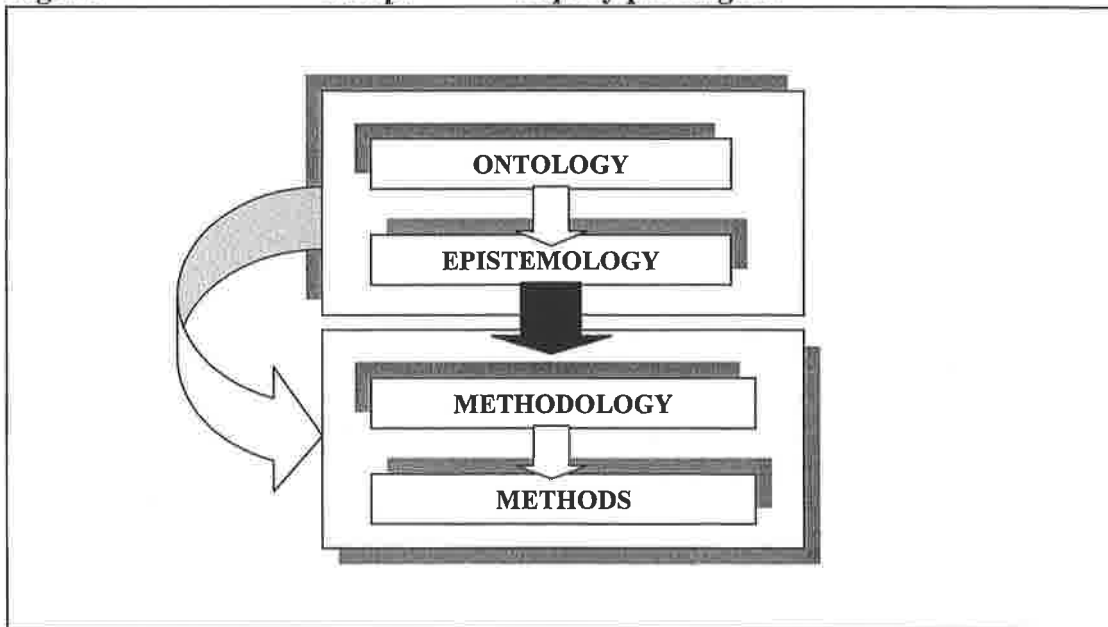
- **At the epistemological level:**

*If a real world is assumed, then the posture of the knower must be one of objective detachment or value freedom in order to be able to discover “how things really are” and “how things really work”. (Conversely, assumption of an objectivist posture implies the existence of a “real” world to be objective about).*

- **At the methodological level:**

*Not just any methodology is appropriate. For example, a “real” reality pursued by an “objective” inquirer mandates control of possible confounding factors, whether the methods are qualitative (say, observational) or quantitative (say, analysis of covariance). (Conversely, selection of a manipulative methodology - the experiment say - implies the ability to be objective and a real world to be objective about).*

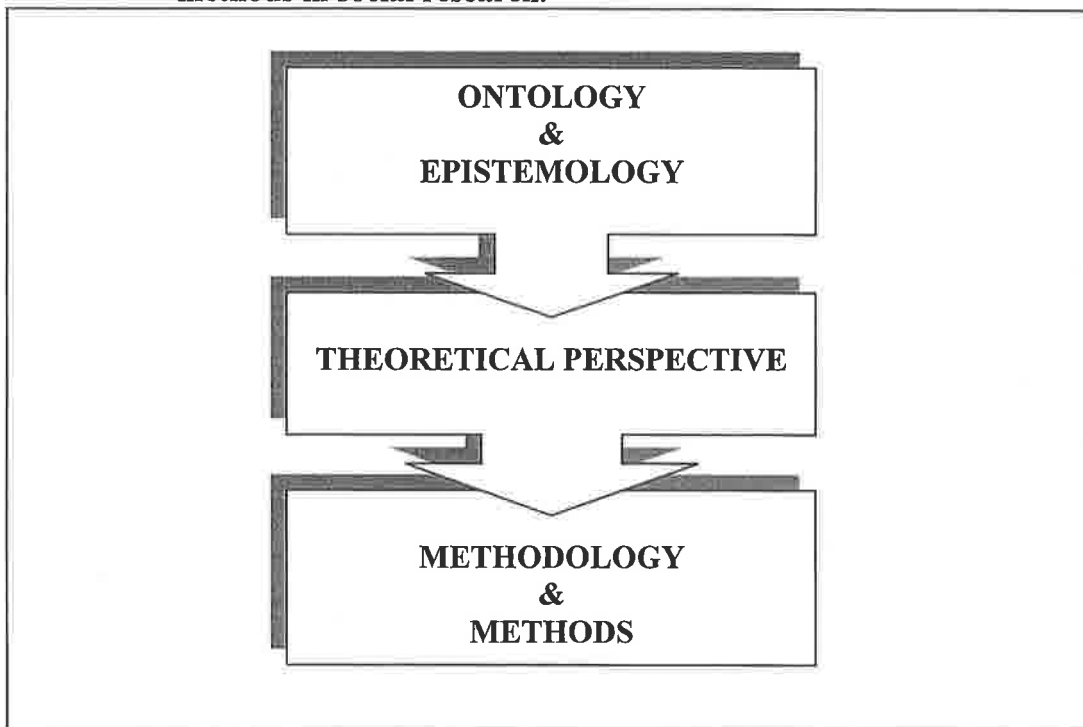
**Figure 4.9: Interrelationships within inquiry paradigms.**



Crotty (1998:2) reported that the researcher’s theoretical perspective (view of the world), which embodies certain ways of understanding ‘*what is*’ (ontology) and ‘*what it means to know*’ (epistemology) has great implications on the way in which the research is conducted in terms of methodologies and methods (Figure 4.10):

*Justification of our choice and particular use of methodology and methods is something that reaches into the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work. To ask about these assumptions is to ask about our theoretical perspective. It also reaches into the understanding you and I have of what human knowledge is, what it entails. And what status can be ascribed to it. What kind of knowledge do we believe will be attained by our research? What characteristics do we believe that knowledge to have? Here we are touching upon a pivotal issue.*

**Figure 4.10: Implications of philosophical assumptions on methodologies and methods in social research.**



Source: Adapted from Crotty (1998: 4).

Roseman and Rallis (1998) further reported that different epistemological and ontological assumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowing, the nature of reality and the nature of human agency have their implications on the strategies and methods employed in any social research. Table 4.9 shows the different implications of the subjectivist versus objectivist epistemologies on the research process.

Table 4.9: Comparison between subjectivist and objectivist epistemologies.

Subjectivist assumptions	Objectivist assumptions
Contextual dependency	Generalizing tendency
“Working understandings”	“Universal verities” or laws
Getting close to the subject	Systematic protocol and technique
Focus on understanding subjective experience	Focus on testing hypotheses
Comparative logic	Logic of probabilities
Case study designs	Experimental or quasi-experimental designs
Researcher as instrument	Reliable instrumentation
Interpretive analysis of data	Statistical manipulation of data
Data in the form of words	Data in the form of numbers

Source: Roseman and Rallis (1998:29).

Numerous authors contributed to the classification of inquiry paradigms in the social sciences. However, most classifications focused on the subjectivist qualitative views/models: “*constructivism* or *interpretivism*”, “*critical theory*”, “*feminism*”, “*Marxism*”, “*postmodernism*” etc. versus the objectivist quantitative ones: “*positivism*” and “*post positivism*” while the relativist pragmatic model: “*pragmatism*” was rarely referred to as a paradigm on its own (see Table 4.10).

Nevertheless, in most social research texts, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and methods is often presented under the umbrella of “*triangulation*” which is as described by Flick (1998:229) a key word “*used to name the combination of different methods, study groups, local and temporal settings and different theoretical perspectives in dealing with a phenomena*”.

**Table 4.10: Examples of the classifications for inquiry paradigms in social sciences.**

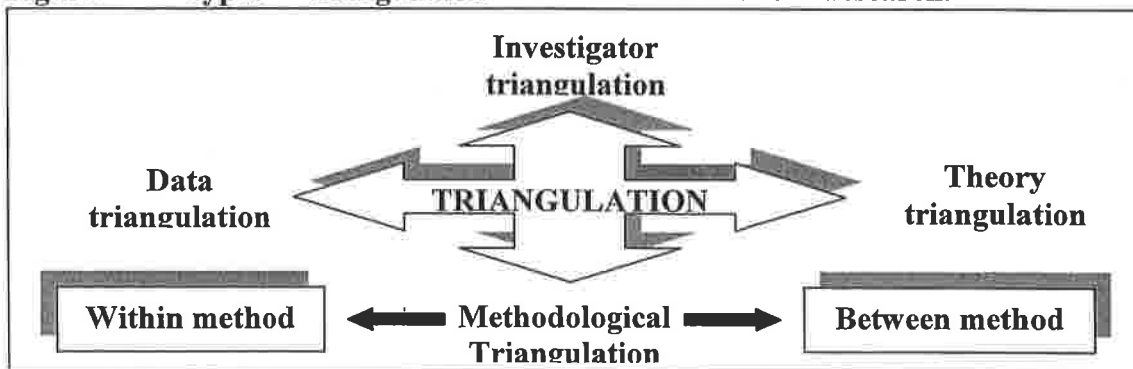
Inquiry paradigms	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative research: Positivism</li> <li>Qualitative research: Naturalism (<i>postpositivism, realism</i>) and Progressivism (<i>Critical theory, constructivism, postmodernism, feminism</i>)</li> </ul>	Holliday (2002:5-23).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positivism: (Traditional scientific approach/ Nomothetic approach)</li> <li>Naturalism: Qualitative subjective approach / Idiographic approach</li> </ul>	Burns (2000:3-15).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early positivism</li> <li>Social Darwinism</li> <li>Conflict paradigm</li> <li>Symbolic interactionism</li> <li>Role theory</li> <li>Ethnomethodology</li> <li>Structural functionalism</li> <li>Feminist paradigm</li> <li>Exchange Paradigm</li> </ul>	Babbie (1998:41-49).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positivism and post – positivism</li> <li>Interpretivism (<i>symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics</i>)</li> <li>Critical inquiry</li> <li>Feminism</li> <li>Postmodernism</li> </ul>	Crotty (1998:5).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positivism</li> <li>Interprativism</li> <li>Radical subjectivism</li> <li>Radical objectivism</li> </ul>	Rossmann and Rallis (1998:34-37).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logical positivism</li> <li>Post-positivism</li> <li>Constructivism</li> <li>Pragmatism</li> </ul>	Tashakkorie and Teddlie (1998:23)*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positivism</li> <li>Post-positivism</li> <li>Critical theory</li> <li>Constructivism</li> </ul>	Denzin and Lincoln <i>et al.</i> (1994: 109-116).

\* Tashakkorie and Teddlie's (1998) classification to inquiry paradigms focused on the examination of ongoing phenomena thus critical theory and its variants were not included in their taxonomy as they emphasize historical methods.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:41) stated that the term “*triangulation*” which originally refers to “*a surveying/nautical process in which two points (and their angles) are used to determine the unknown distance to a third point*” was first used by Denzin (1978) in a book on sociological methods to refer to the combination of data sources in studying the same phenomena.

Flick (1998) cited Denzin’s (1989) distinction between four types of triangulation: “*data triangulation*” (using different data sources), “*investigator triangulation*” (employing different observers and/or interviewers), “*theory triangulation*” (approaching the data with multiple perspectives and hypothesis in mind) and “*methodological triangulation*” (using multiple methods in a study to investigate the same problem using both qualitative and quantitative methods and data to study the same phenomena within the same study or in different complementary studies). Methodological triangulation according to Denzin’s distinction is further classified into two subtypes: “*within method triangulation*” (e.g. the use of different subscales for measuring an item in a questionnaire) and “*between method triangulation*” (e.g. the combination of a questionnaire with a semi-structured interview) (Figure 4.11).

**Figure 4.11: Types of triangulation of data sources in social research.**



However, according to Bryman (1988), triangulation is one out of eleven reasons for the combination of quantitative and qualitative research (Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11: Aims behind combining quantitative and qualitative research.**

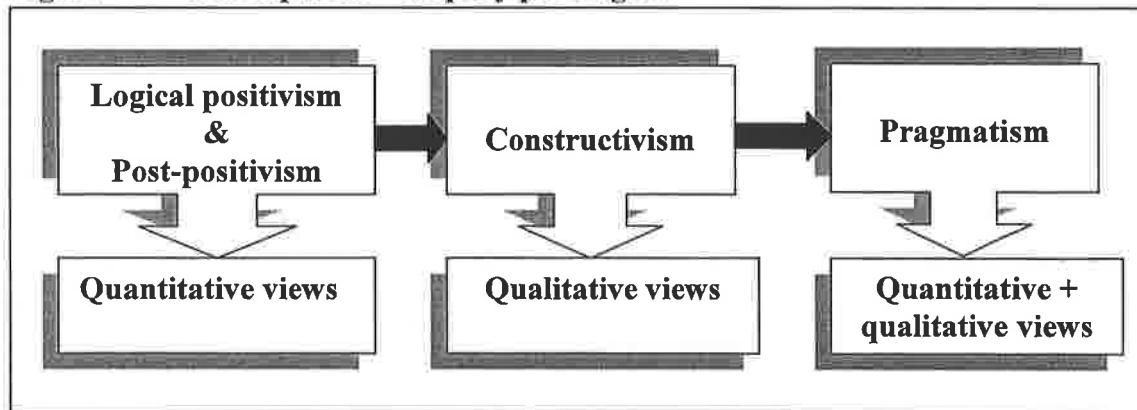
<b>Reason</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>1- Triangulation</b>	The findings from one type of study can be checked against the findings from the other type.
<b>2- Facilitating quantitative research</b>	Qualitative research may help to provide background information on context and subjects; act as a source of hypotheses, and aid scale construction.
<b>3- Facilitating qualitative research</b>	Usually, this means quantitative research helping with the choice of subjects for qualitative investigation.
<b>4- Providing a general picture of the phenomena under investigation</b>	Quantitative and qualitative researches are combined in order to provide a general picture of the studied phenomena.
<b>5- Exploring both structural and processual aspects in a single study</b>	Quantitative research is especially efficient at getting to the structural features of social life, while qualitative studies are usually stronger in terms of processual aspects. These strengths can be brought together in a single study.
<b>6- Presenting both researchers' and subjects' perspectives in a single study</b>	Quantitative research is usually driven by the researcher's concerns, whereas qualitative research takes the subject's perspective as point of departure. These emphases may be brought together in a single study.
<b>7- Overcoming problems of generalization in qualitative research</b>	The addition of some quantitative evidence may help to mitigate the fact that it is often not possible to generalise (in a statistical sense) the findings deriving from qualitative research.
<b>8- Facilitating the interpretation of relationship between variables in quantitative research</b>	Quantitative research allows the researcher to establish relationships among variables, but is often weak when it comes to exploring the reasons for those relationships. A qualitative study can be used to help explain the factors underlying the broad relationships that are established.
<b>9- Exploring both small-scale and large-scale social phenomena in a single study</b>	Quantitative research can often tap large-scale, structural features of social life, while qualitative research tends to address small-scale, behavioural aspects. When research seeks to explore both levels, integrating quantitative and qualitative research may be necessary.
<b>10- Stage in the research process</b>	Quantitative and qualitative research may be appropriate to different stages of a longitudinal study.
<b>11- Hybrids</b>	The chief example tends to be when qualitative research is conducted within a quasi-experiment ( <i>i.e.</i> quantitative) research design.

Source: Adapted from Bryman (1988:131-151) and Punch (1998:247).

From a personal point view, theory and methodology triangulation lend themselves to pragmatism in a way that gives the mixed method/model approach all the right to be

classified as a paradigm on its own. Thus, in my opinion, one of the remarkable contributions in relation to the classification of inquiry paradigms in the social research literature was that of Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) who identified the development of four successive paradigms along the history of social research: *“Logical positivism”*, *“post-positivism”*, *“constructivism”* and *“pragmatism”*. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie’s classification, advocates of positivism and post-positivism (QUANs) favoured the use of quantitative methodologies and methods in investigating social phenomena, advocates of constructivism favoured the use of qualitative methodologies and methods (QUALs) and advocates of pragmatism favoured the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and methods (Fig 4.12 and Table 4.12).

**Figure 4.12: Development of inquiry paradigms in the social sciences.**



Below are explanations for each of the previously mentioned paradigms:

#### **4.7.1 Logical Positivism:**

Logical positivism is a philosophical system recognizing only facts and observable phenomena (Oxford pocket dictionary, electronic version). Logical positivism is based on the assumption that reality is objective and external to the individual where *“meaning and therefore meaning reality, exists as such apart from the operation of*



*any consciousness*” (Crotty, 1998:8). Positivism considers scientific knowledge the only valid form of knowledge (Burns, 2000) and assumes that rules governing the social life settings could be discovered through employing the quantitative research methods employed in the natural sciences to establish general laws and principles (Burns, 2000; Babbie, 1998). Logical positivists believed that there is a single reality, the knower and the known are independent, inquiry is value free, time-and context-free generalizations are possible and that there are real causes that are temporally precedent to or simultaneous with effects (Tashakkorie and Teddlie 1998).

#### **4.7.2 Post-positivism:**

Post-positivism is a philosophical system that developed after the Second World War as a result of the widespread dissatisfaction with the axioms of logical positivism in relation to the role of values in inquiry, the role of theory and the nature of reality. Unlike logical positivists, post-positivists believed that research is influenced by the values of investigators (value-ladenness of inquiry). However, they believe that it is possible to control the degree to which values influence results and interpretations. Post-positivists further believe that research is influenced by the theory or hypothesis or framework that an investigator uses (Theory-ladenness of facts) and that understanding of reality is constructed (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

#### **4.7.3 Constructivism:**

Constructivism is a philosophical system assuming that social reality is a creation of individual consciousness with meaning and considered the evaluation of events as a personal and subjective construction. Constructivism “*emphasises the importance of the subjective experience of individuals, with a focus on qualitative analysis*” (Burns,

2000:3). Under the umbrella of constructivism various approaches are summarized which are different in their assumptions, in the way they understand their objects and in their methodological focus. These approaches orient towards three basic positions: the tradition of “*symbolic interactionism*”, concerned with studying subjective meanings and individual ascriptions of sense; “*ethnomethodology*”, interested in routines of everyday life and their production; and “*structuralist or psychoanalytic positions*”, starting from processes of psychological or social unconsciousness (Flick, 1998). Constructivists believe that there are multiple constructed realities, that the knower and the known are inseparable, that inquiry is value-bound, that time-and-free generalizations are not possible, that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects and that there is emphasises on arguing from the general to the particular (Tasakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

#### **4.7.4 Pragmatism:**

Pragmatism is a philosophical system that rejects the forced choice between positivism (including post-positivism) and constructivism with regard to methods, logic and epistemology. It is a “*reactive debunking philosophy that argues against dominant systematic philosophies, making mocking critiques of metaphysical assertions such as “the grand Either-Or”*” (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998: 23). Pragmatists believe that researchers may be both objective and subjective in epistemological orientation over the course of studying a research question and that values play a large role in conducting research and in drawing conclusions from their studies and they see no reason to be concerned about that influence. As Cherryholmes (1992: 13-14) stated:

*For pragmatists, values and visions of human action and interaction precede a search for descriptions, theories, explanations, and narratives. Pragmatic research is driven by anticipated consequences. Pragmatic choices about what to research and how to go about it are conditioned by where we want to go in the broadest of senses...Beginning with what he or she thinks is known and looking to the consequences he or she desires, our pragmatist would pick and choose how and what to research and what to do.*

On the ontological level, the pragmatist point of view regarding reality consists of two parts:

- 1- There is an external world independent of our minds.
- 2- Truth can not be determined once and for all and no explanation of reality is better than another.

According to Cherryholmes (1992: 15), the pragmatists' choice of one explanation over another "*simply means that one approach is better than another at producing anticipated or desired outcomes*". Howe (1988: 14-15) further explained the pragmatists' views regarding truth as follows:

*For pragmatists, "truth" is a normative concept, like "good", and "truth is what works" is best seen not as a theory or definition, but as the pragmatists' attempt to say something interesting about the nature of truth and to suggest, in particular, that knowledge claims cannot be totally abstracted from contingent beliefs, interests, and projects.*

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie, (1998: 30):

*Pragmatism is appealing (a) because it gives us a paradigm that philosophically embraces the use of mixed method and mixed model designs, (b) because it eschews the use of metaphysical concepts (Truth, Reality) that have caused much endless (and often useless) discussion and debate, and (c) because it presents a very practical and applied research philosophy: study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system.*

**Table 4.12: Comparison between the four major inquiry paradigms in social sciences.**

<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Logical Positivism</b>	<b>Postpositivism</b>	<b>Constructivism/ Interpretivism</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>
<b>Methods</b>	Quantitative	Primarily quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative + Qualitative
<b>Logic</b>	Deductive	Primarily deductive	Inductive	Deductive + Inductive
<b>Epistemology</b>	Objective point of view  Knower and Known are dualism	Modified dualism  Findings probably objectively "true"	Subjective point of view  Knower and Known are inseparable	Both objective and subjective points of view
<b>Axiology</b>	Inquiry is value-free	Inquiry involves values, but they may be controlled	Inquiry is value-bound	Values play a large role in interpreting results
<b>Ontology</b>	Naïve realism	Critical or transcendental realism	Relativism	Accept external reality. Choose explanations that best produce desired outcomes
<b>Causal linkages</b>	Real causes temporally precedent or simultaneous with effects	There are some lawful, reasonable relationships among social phenomena  These may be known imperfectly  Causes are identifiable in probabilistic sense that changes over time	All entities simultaneously shaping each other  It's impossible to distinguish causes from effects	There may be causal relationships, but we will never be able to pin them down

Source: Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:23).

## **4.8 Summary**

This chapter highlighted the important aspects of inquiry in the social and behavioural sciences. It emphasised on the supremacy of scientific inquiry over the other methods of knowing, explained the concept, criteria and ethics of any research process and distinguished between natural world and social world inquiries as well as between the social science research and the other ways of looking at social phenomena stressing on theory, data collection and data analysis as the main elements of social research. The chapter further discussed the role and place of theory in social research and the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning in social inquiries, then explained the different ways of doing social research and the stages of the evolution of methodological approaches in social sciences starting by the mono-method era, to the development of the mixed-method studies ending by the mixed-model studies. It also differentiated between the traditional scientific and the naturalistic research avenues to social investigation and overviewed the paradigm wars in the social sciences and the evolution of pragmatism. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the concept of the term “paradigm”, the philosophical and technical dimensions of social paradigms in relation to ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods then presented examples of the classifications of inquiry paradigms in the social science as drawn from a number of social research text books placing special emphasis on Tashakkorie and Teddlie’s (1998) classification of social paradigms (logical positivism, post-positivism, constructivism and pragmatism) with reference to the different ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological aspects of each of these paradigms.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESEARCH DIMENSIONS**

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## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

#### 5.1 Chapter outline

This chapter discusses the philosophical and technical dimensions of my research. It begins with a discussion of the adopted research approach followed by a presentation of the research design in terms of strategy and methods of data collection and analysis. The chapter further describes the implementation of the two phases of the study and refers to the limitations to the research process.

#### 5.2 Research approach

*In practice good social research is a matter of 'horses and courses', where approaches are selected because they are appropriate for specific aspects of investigation and specific kinds of problems. They are chosen as 'fit for purpose'. The crucial thing for good research is that the choices are reasonable and that they are made explicit as part of any research report.*

(Denscombe, 1998: 3)

This study is conducted under the realm of pragmatism, which I define as **“a theoretical perspective that calls for the use of both quantitative and qualitative evidence at different proportions and in different stages of any social investigation”**. In fact, the advocacy of pragmatism as the philosophical orientation guiding this study emerged from the need of both quantitative and qualitative evidence in answering the research question and fulfilling the study's specific objectives listed in chapter one (see pages 1-16 & 1-17).

Like other research paradigms in the social sciences, pragmatism has two main dimensions: a philosophical dimension and a technical one. The philosophical issues (ontology and epistemology) on pragmatism have been introduced earlier in chapter four (see pages 4-37 to 4-39). As for the technical issues (methodology and methods), pragmatism involves two types of research designs: the mixed method designs and the mixed model ones. Mixed method research designs are based on the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in the methodology of a study such as in the data collection stage. Mixed model designs, on the other hand, are based on the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches across all phases of the research process such as conceptualization, data collection, data analysis and inference.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:x) mentioned that the study of mixed methods and mixed model research is in its infancy and that the growth of the field has been retarded to date by the vestiges of the paradigm wars adding that nowadays as these wars are over, researchers are free to use the methods most appropriate to their research question:

*We believe that research should be done with a clear intent to answer a question, solve a problem or evaluate a program. We stress the importance and predominance of the research question over the paradigm, and we encourage researchers to use appropriate methods from both approaches to answer their research question.*

In terms of the philosophical - technical relationship (paradigm - methodology link) in social inquiries, pragmatists impose greater emphasis on the research question or research problem than on the methods they use or the world view that underlies these methods as Tashakkorie and Teddlie (1998: 21) comment:



*Pragmatists consider the research question to be more important than either the method they use or the world view that is supposed to underlie the method. Most good researchers prefer addressing their research questions with any methodological tool available, using the pragmatist credo of "what works".*

On the other hand, non-pragmatists (constructivist, positivist and post-positivist researchers) are often more concerned with the philosophical aspects of investigation (ontological and epistemological assumptions) and their implications on the technical aspects (methodology and methods) where one may find links between specific paradigms and specific methods like the links between post-positivism and the following methodologies: modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypothesis and the link between constructivism and what is known by the hermeneutical/dialectical methodology:

*Guba and Lincoln continue to link specific paradigms with specific methods; for instance, they (1994) linked post positivism with the following methodologies: "modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypothesis; may include qualitative methods". On the other hand, they linked constructivism with a methodology that they called the "hermeneutical/dialectical"*

Tashakkorie and Teddlie (1998:21)

According to Greene *et al.* (1989), there are five purposes for using mixed method and mixed model designs: "**triangulation**" (seeking convergence of results), "**compementarity**" (examining overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon), "**initiation**" (discovering paradoxes, contradictions, and fresh perspectives), "**development**" (using the methods sequentially, such as results from the first method inform the use of the second method) and "**expansion**" (mixed methods adding breadth and scope to a project).

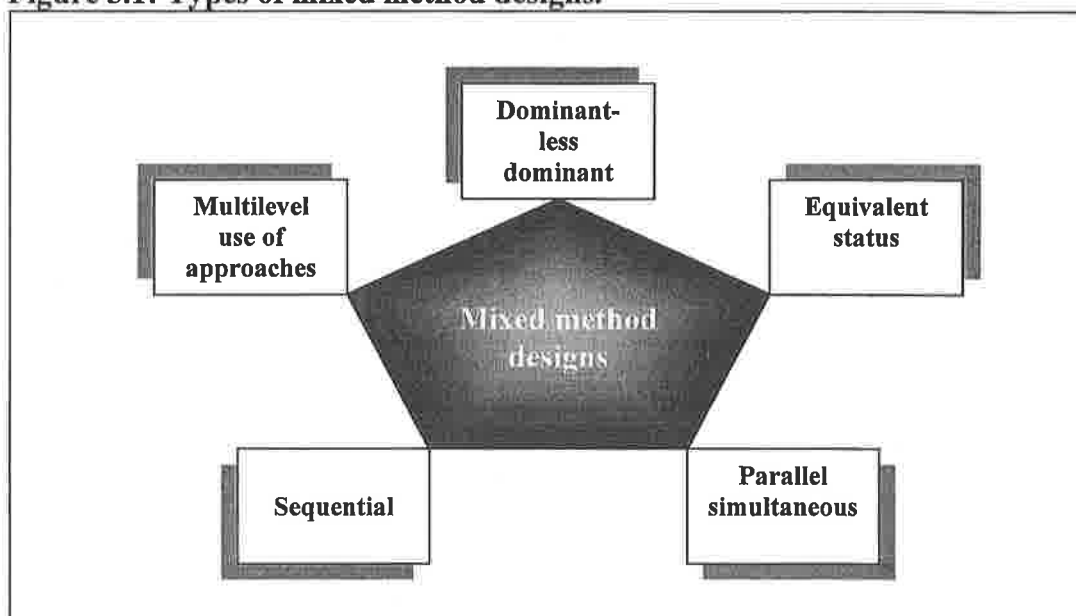
**5.2.1 Design issues for mixed method studies**

According to Tasakkori and Teddlie (1998: 17-18), "*mixed method studies are those that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology of a single study or multiphase study*". Mixed method studies are subdivided into five specific types of designs (see Figure 5.1), the first four of which were defined by Creswell (1994) while the fifth design was defined by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). These designs are "***Sequential / two-phase studies***" where the researcher first conducts a qualitative phase of a study and then a quantitative phase or vice versa and the two phases are separate, "***Parallel/simultaneous studies***" where the researcher conducts the qualitative and quantitative phase at the same time, "***Equivalent status designs***" where the researcher conducts the study using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches about equally to understand the phenomena under investigation, "***Dominant – less dominant designs***" where the researcher conducts the study within a single dominant paradigm with a small component of the overall study drawn from an alternative design and the "***Designs with multilevel use of approaches***" where the researcher uses different types of methods at different levels of data aggregation (studies in which data from more than one level of organizations or groups are used to reach more comprehensive inferences regarding behaviours and/ or events).

Miller and Crabtree (1994) further presented a set of what they called "tools" for multi-method clinical research that closely resembled the four types of studies that Creswell defined (Figure: 5.2). These tools are "***Concurrent designs***" (analogous to parallel/simultaneous studies), "***Nested designs***"

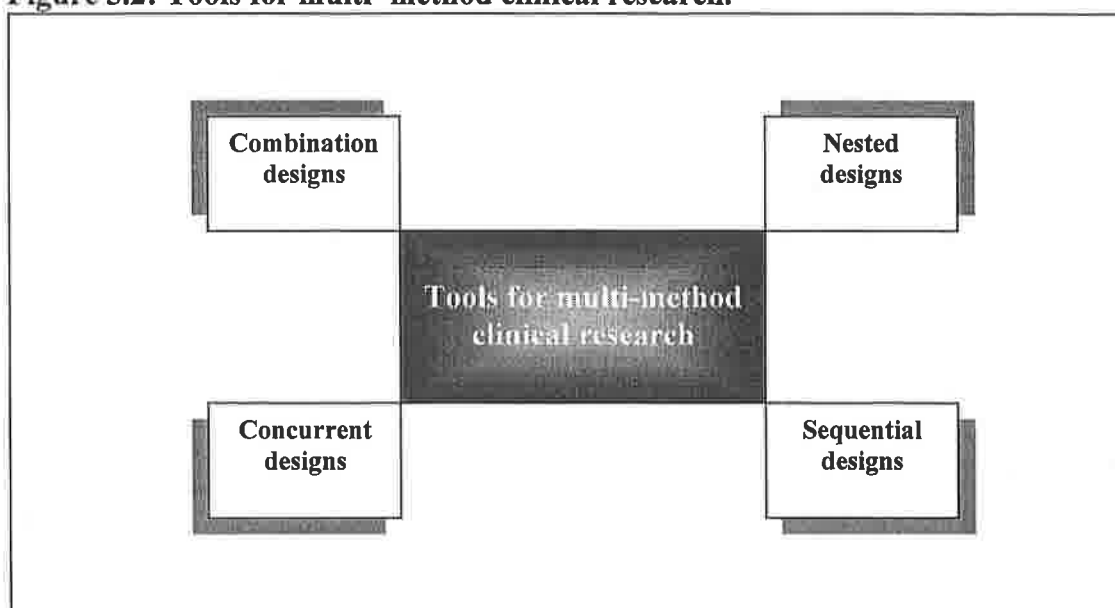
(similar to dominant – less dominant studies), “*Sequential designs*” (analogous to sequential studies) and “*Combination designs*” (some combination of the three above design options).

**Figure 5.1: Types of mixed method designs.**



Source: Adapted from Creswell (1994) and Tashakkorri and Teddlie (1998).

**Figure 5.2: Tools for multi -method clinical research.**



Source: Adapted from Miller and Crabtree (1994).

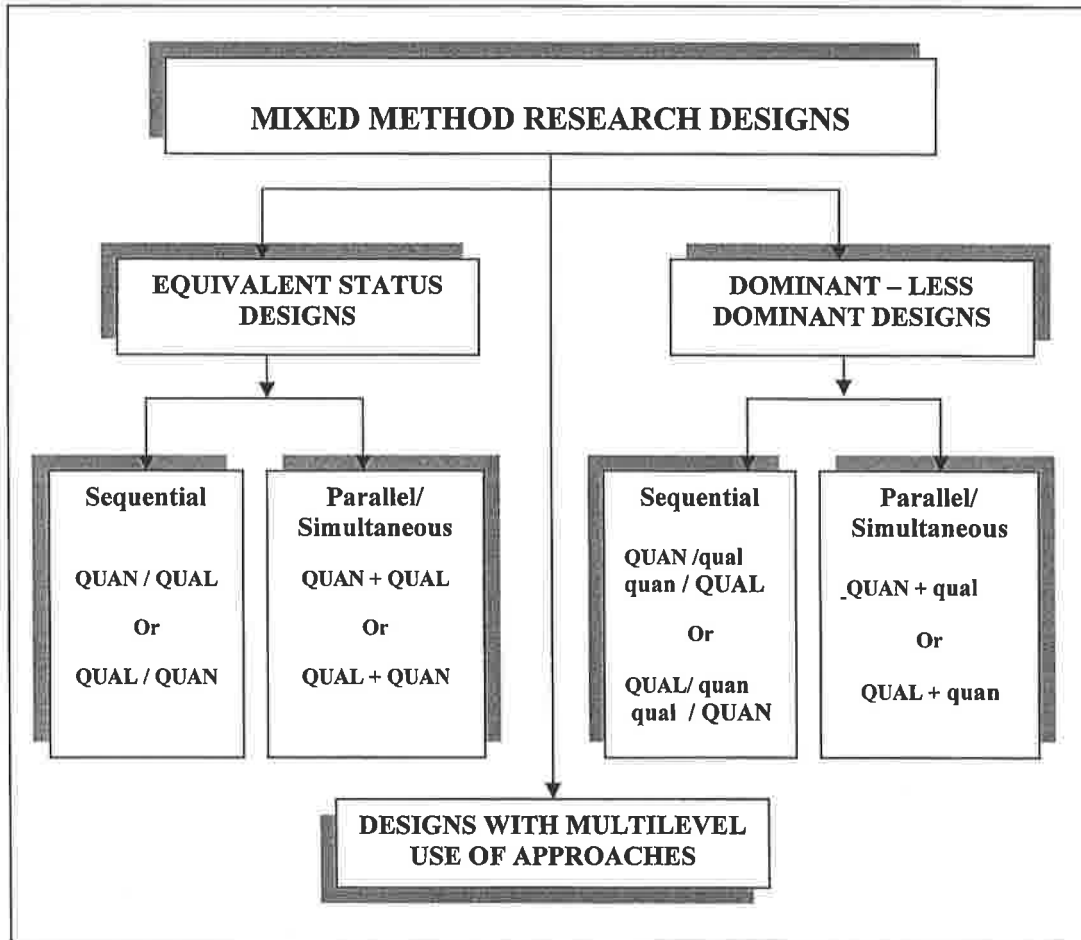
Based on Creswell's (1994) classification, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:43) developed taxonomy for organising the different types of mixed method designs (Fig.5.3). This taxonomy included three types of designs as follows:

First: *"Equivalent status designs"*: *Sequential* (QUAN/QUAL and QUAL/QUAN) and *parallel/simultaneous* (QUAN + QUAL and QUAL + QUAN).

Second: *"Dominant – less dominant designs"*: *Sequential* (QUAN/ qual and QUAL/ quan) or vice versa and *parallel/simultaneous* (QUAN + qual and QUAL + quan).

Third: *"Designs with multilevel use of approaches"*.

Figure 5.3: Taxonomy of mixed method research designs.



Source: Adapted from Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998).

**5.2.2 Design issues for mixed model studies**

Creswell (1994: 177-178) referred to the mixed model studies as “*mixed methodology studies*” which he defined as studies that represent “*the highest degree of mixing paradigms*” where “*the researcher would mix aspects of the qualitative and quantitative paradigm at all or many... steps*”. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: 19) further defined the mixed model studies as “*studies that are products of the pragmatist paradigm and that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process*”. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), mixed model studies may either include “*single applications of approaches*” within phases of the study such as a quantitative (experimental) design, followed by qualitative data collection, followed by quantitative analysis after the data are converted into numbers using the “quantizing” technique or “*multiple applications of approaches*” within phases of the study. Designs of multiple applications are further divided into two types: the parallel mixed model designs and sequential mixed model ones. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:19), examples of multiple applications within phases of the study include:

- a) Mixing both research hypothesis (indicating a confirmatory study) and very general research questions (indicating an exploratory study) when planning a research project as in the case of “*a research design that calls for a field experiment and extensive ethnographic interviewing to occur simultaneously and in an integrated manner*”.
- b) Mixing the collection of both qualitative (ethnographic interviews, non structured observations) and quantitative (structured interview protocols, observational rating scales) data sources when conducting a

study as in the case of *“data collection that includes closed – ended items with numerical responses as well as open ended items on the same survey”*.

- c) Mixing the analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data sources in an interactive fashion designed to expand the meaning of the numerical results using the narrative results, or vice versa as in the case of *“Data analysis that includes factor analysis of Likert scaled items from one portion of a survey, plus use of the constant comparative method to analyze narrative responses to open – ended questions theoretically linked to Likert scales”*.

### **5.2.3 Adopting a sequential dominant – less dominant mixed method approach (quan/QUAL)**

In this research I adopted a sequential dominant - less dominant mixed method design (quan / QUAL) where a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed in two consecutive phases of data collection and analysis. The first phase aimed at producing quantitative information on the current status of women's employment in the Egyptian travel agencies (*i.e.* representation, hierarchical distribution and departmental distribution) and the organisational policies set in place to support their career development. The second phase mainly aimed at producing qualitative information on the factors influencing women's career development and the key forces working for and against their careers in the Egyptian travel agencies. In my opinion, this study falls under the dominant - less dominant mixed method category because it is mainly conducted within the qualitative interpretive approach (*phase two:*

*QUAL*) with a small component drawn from the quantitative approach (*Phase one: quan*).

### **5.3 Research design**

The term “*research design*” refers to “*the overall plan for a piece of research*” (Punch, 1998:149) which is concerned with making the research problem researchable by setting up the study in a way that produces specific answers to specific questions (Oppenheim, 1992). According to Brewerton and Millward (2001:52), “*the design of a project pertains to the particular way in which hypothesis or questions are tested or investigated*”. In other words, it pertains to “*the strategy or schedule used to collect evidence, to analyse the findings and from which to draw conclusions*”.

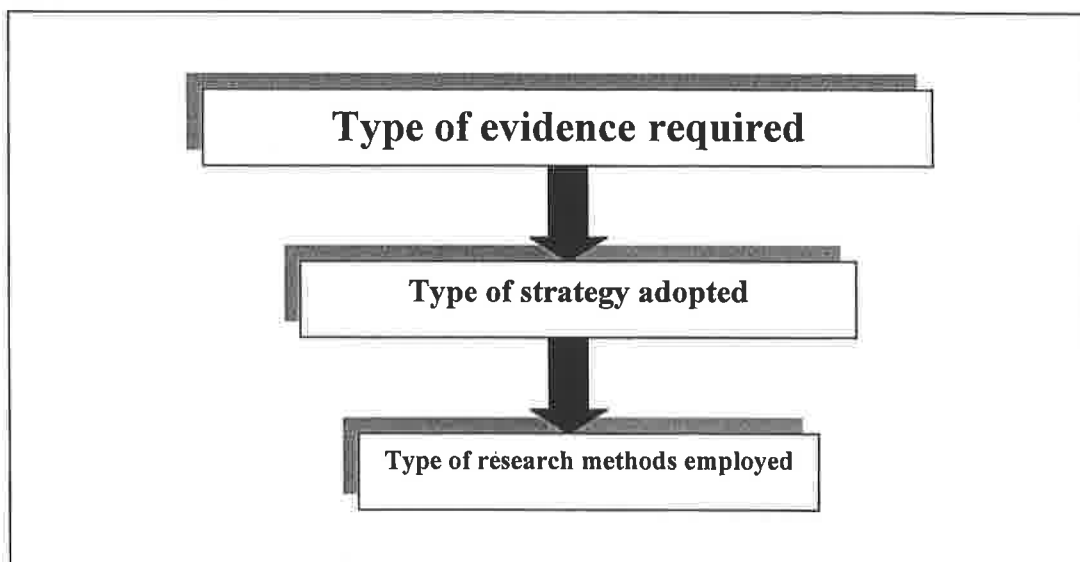
Oppenheim (1992) mentioned that research designs help the researchers in drawing their study samples and in deciding the sub-groups that should be included as well as the comparisons that should be made. He further added that research designs show the researchers what variables will need to be measured (if any) and how these measures are related to external events. In his opinion, the good research design should make it possible for researchers to draw valid inferences from the data in terms of generalisation, association and causality.

According to Punch (1998), research designs include four main ideas: the strategy, the conceptual framework, the question of whom or what will be suited and the tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analysing empirical materials. In terms of the afore-mentioned ideas Punch (1998: 66)

emphasized that research designs must give answers for the following four questions: *“What is the most appropriate strategy to be followed?”* *“What is the research’s framework?”*, *“From whom will the data be collected?”* and *“How will the data be collected and analysed?”*

In their book **“Organizational Research Methods”**, Brewerton and Millward (2001), pointed out that the process of setting a research design involves three levels of decision-making (Figure 5.4). At the broadest level, the researcher must decide whether the investigation is going to be largely quantitative, largely qualitative or both (*i.e.* what type of evidence is required). At the next level of consideration the actual design of the study must be decided upon (*i.e.* what type of strategy will be adopted). At the lowest level, a decision is made about how evidence is to be collected and analysed (*i.e.* what type of research methods will be employed).

**Figure 5.4: Levels of decision making in the process of setting a research design.**



Source: Adapted from Brewerton and Millward (2001).



In setting the research design for my study I followed Brewerton and Millward's (2001) three levels of decision-making procedure and asked myself the following questions: What type of evidence do I need to answer my research question? What type of strategy fulfils my research's aim and objectives? and how am I going to collect the required evidence and analyse it? At this point, I found myself confronted by a number of puzzling issues in terms of the different ontological and epistemological considerations of social research on one side and its different methodological and technical issues on the other side. Although I understood that answering my research question requires collecting both quantitative and qualitative evidence but, until that time, I was still trapped in the dilemma of the quantitative/qualitative debate. Practically speaking, I knew that methodologically, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques is nowadays a common trend in social science research but on the philosophical level, I had no justification for it. Thus I began digging into the social research literature searching for such justification until I came across the issue of pragmatism. By then, I was ready to set my plan and start conducting my research. In the following two sub-sections the components of this plan (research strategy and research methods) as well as the theoretical backgrounds guiding my choices for these particular components are discussed.

### **5.3.1 Research strategy**

My research employed a *case study methodology* that comprised two sequential phases of data collection and analysis. The first phase was conducted between June 2001 and March 2002 and involved undertaking

a factual survey of the two existing public travel agencies and a sample of 10% of the Class (A) private travel agencies operating in Cairo Metropolitan (60 travel agencies). Detailed information on the implementation of phase one is presented later in section (5.3.3).

The second phase (field study) was conducted between April 2002 and March 2003 and involved undergoing a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews and four focus groups. Forty persons, representing the different employment positions and interests in the travel business, were interviewed. Interviewees included four agency owners (three males and one female), six senior managers (five males and one female), ten middle managers (five males and five females) and fourteen employees (seven males and seven females) from the two public agencies and a number of Class (A) private travel agencies in addition to two male tourism consultants and four tourism academics (three females and one male) from the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo (Figure 5.8, page 5.47). As for the focus groups, all participants were students in the final year in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo, who represent the expected future employees to the travel job market. One focus group included females only (six participants), the second focus group included males only (seven participants) while the third and fourth focus groups were mixed and included five male and four female participants for the former group (FGXa) and three male and five female participants for the later one (FGXb) (Table 5.10, page 5.52). Detailed information on the implementation of phase two is presented later in section (5.3.4).

My decision to choose the case study strategy was guided by the following six methodological facts:

- *"Case studies can answer the question what is going on?"* (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995: 110).
- *"The case study is the method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context"* (Yin, 1993: 3).
- *"Case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context"* (Finn et al., 2000: 81).
- *"Case studies can provide a richness and uniqueness in data"* (Finn et al., 2000: 81).
- *"The decision to use a case study approach is a strategic decision that relates to the scale and scope of an investigation, and it does not, at least in principle, dictate which method or methods must be used. Indeed, strength of the case study approach is just this- that it allows for the use of a variety of methods depending on the circumstances, and the specific needs of the situation"* (Denscombe, 1998: 32).
- *"Case studies focus on one instance (or a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance"* (Denscombe, 1998: 32).

**5.3.1.a Defining case studies**

Case studies are defined in different ways. The most frequently encountered definitions of case studies have merely repeated the types of topics to which case studies have been applied. However, citing the topic is insufficient for establishing the aimed definition. Another common flow has been to confuse case studies with ethnographies or participant observation. Nevertheless, one of the most remarkable definitions of case studies is that of Yin (1984: 23) who defined the case study as *“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”*. Another remarkable definition is that of Stake (1988: 258) who further defined the case study as *“a study of a bounded system, emphasising the unity and wholeness of that system, but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at the time”*.

**5.3.1.b The idea of case study research**

The basic idea of the case study research is that one case or perhaps a small number of cases are studied in detail, using whatever methods seem appropriate in an attempt to develop as full an understanding of that case (or cases) as possible. The term *“case”* in such context is defined as *“a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”* (Miles and Huberman, 1994 cited in Punch, 1998: 152).

Almost anything can serve as a case. The case may be simple or complex. As identified by Brewer and Hunter (1989), there are six types of units which can be studied in social science research: individuals; attributes of individuals; actions and interactions; residues and artefacts of behaviour; settings, incidents and events and finally collectivities. Accordingly, a case may be a person, a group, an episode, a process, a community, a society, or any other unit of social life. In the same sense, a case study research as stated by Punch (1998: 152) may be of *"an individual, or a role, or a small group, or an organisation, or a community, or a nation"*. It may also be of *"a decision, or a policy, or a process, or an incident, or an event of some sort, and therefore are other possibilities as well"*.

#### **5.3.1.c The method/strategy debate**

For sometime, it has been debated that the case study is a research method not a research strategy. In opposition to such view Punch (1998: 150) argued that *"the case study is more a strategy than a method"* and supported his argument by citing Goode and Hatt (1952: 331) who pointed out many years ago that *"the case study is not a specific technique; it is a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied"*. Similarly, Yin (1994) further argued that the case study is one of several ways of doing social science research pointing out that other ways include experiments, surveys, histories and the analysis of archival information. According to him, each of the afore mentioned research strategies has peculiar advantages and disadvantages, depending on three conditions: (a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control an investigator has over

actual behavioural events, and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena. Table 5.1 displays these three conditions and shows how each is related to the five previously mentioned major social research strategies.

**Table 5.1: Relevant situations for the different research strategies.**

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events	Focuses on contemporary events
Experiment	How, Why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, What, Where, How many, How much	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, What, Where, How many, How much	No	Yes / No
History	How, Why	No	No
Case study	How, why	No	Yes

Source: Yin (1994:6).

However, despite the differences between the five social research strategies shown in table 5.1, Yin (1994: 9) emphasized that *“there are some situations in which all research strategies might be relevant (such as exploratory research), and other situations in which two strategies might be considered equally attractive”*. Furthermore, Yin (1994: 9) explained that researchers can use more than one strategy in any given study as he says:

*We also can use more than one strategy in any given study (for example, a survey within a case study or a case study within a survey). To this extent, the various strategies are not mutually exclusive.*

#### **5.3.1.d Aim of case studies**

Case studies aim to *“provide an analysis of the context and processes of whatever is being researched”* and *“to understand the particular and unique features of the case but to draw out analysis that has a wider applicability”* (Finn et al., 2000: 81).

**5.3.1.e Characteristics of case studies**

According to Denscombe (1998: 32) the case study research characteristically emphasizes six main features: *“Depth of study rather than breadth of study”, “The particular rather than the general”, “Relationships/ processes rather than outcomes and end-products”, “Holistic view rather than isolated factors”, “Natural setting rather than artificial situations”* and *“Multiple sources rather than one research method”*.

**5.3.1.f Advantages of the case study approach**

Denscombe (1998: 38-41) identified different advantages of the case study approach. First: The focus on one or few instances allows the researcher to deal with the subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations. In particular, it enables the researcher to grapple with relationships and social processes in a way that is denied to the survey approach. Second: It allows the use of variety of research methods. More than this, it more or less encourages the use of multiple methods in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny. Third: In parallel with the use of multiple methods, the case study approach fosters the use of multiple sources of data. This, in turn facilitates the validation of data through triangulation. Fourth: The case study approach is particularly suitable where the researcher has little control over events. Because the approach is concerned with investigating phenomena as they naturally occur, there is no pressure on the researcher to impose controls or to change circumstances. Fifth: The case study approach can fit in well with the needs of small- scale research through concentrating effort on one research site

(or just a few sites). Sixth: Theory-building and theory-testing research can both use the case study approach to good effect.

Brewerton and Millward (2001) summarised the advantages of the case study design in the following: enabling more in-depth examination of a particular situation than other designs, yielding rich and enlightening information that may provide new leads or raise questions that otherwise might never have been asked and the people involved usually comprise a fairly well-circumscribed and captive group, making it possible for the researcher to describe events in detail.

#### **5.3.1.g Types of case studies**

Case studies have been classified in many different ways. According to Yin (1993), case studies are classified into three types: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory where the first aims at gathering information so that a description of what is going on can be made, the second aims at presenting a complete description of a phenomenon within its context and the third aims at presenting data bearing on cause-effect relationships explaining which causes produced which effects. Yin (1993) further classified each of the afore-said types into two categories: the single case studies and the multiple case studies. Thus it could be said that, according to Yin (1993), there are six types of case studies: single and multiple exploratory case studies, single and multiple descriptive case studies, and single and multiple explanatory case studies.



As for Bouma and Atkinson (1995: 121) case studies were classified into four different types: the single case study, the longitudinal case study, the comparison case study and the longitudinal comparison one. Such classification was built on the principle that by combining two case studies of the same group at two different times a longitudinal study is produced. Similarly by combining two case studies, each one of two groups at the same time, the comparison study is produced while when the comparison and the longitudinal types are combined the longitudinal comparison research design is produced. Table (5.2) shows the four different types of case studies defined by Bouma and Atkinson (1995: 121).

**Table 5.2: Types of case studies.**

Type	Key features
The simple case study	The key element in the simple case study is that one group is focused on and that no comparison with another group is made.
The longitudinal case study	Involves two or more case studies of the same group with a period of time between each.
The comparison case study.	Involves comparing one measure of two or more groups at the same time. It combines two case studies, each one of two groups at the same time.
The longitudinal comparison case study	It is a combination of the comparison and the longitudinal type.

Source: (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995:121).

A third classification for the case study approach was presented by Stake (1994) who distinguished between three types of case studies: the intrinsic case study, the instrumental case study and the collective case study where the first is undertaken to provide a better understanding of this particular case, the second is undertaken to give insight into an issue, or to refine a theory and the third is undertaken when the instrumental case study is extended to cover

several cases, to learn more about the phenomenon, population, or general condition.

In accordance with the three above-mentioned classifications, I would say that my case study is “*exploratory*” in terms of its tendency to explore how women are represented in the Egyptian travel agencies and the perceptions of the factors influencing their career development, “*simple*” in terms of its tendency to focus on one group (women in the Egyptian travel agencies) and that no comparison with another group is made and “*intrinsic*” in terms of its tendency to provide a better understanding of this particular case (women employment in the Egyptian travel agencies and the factors influencing their career development).

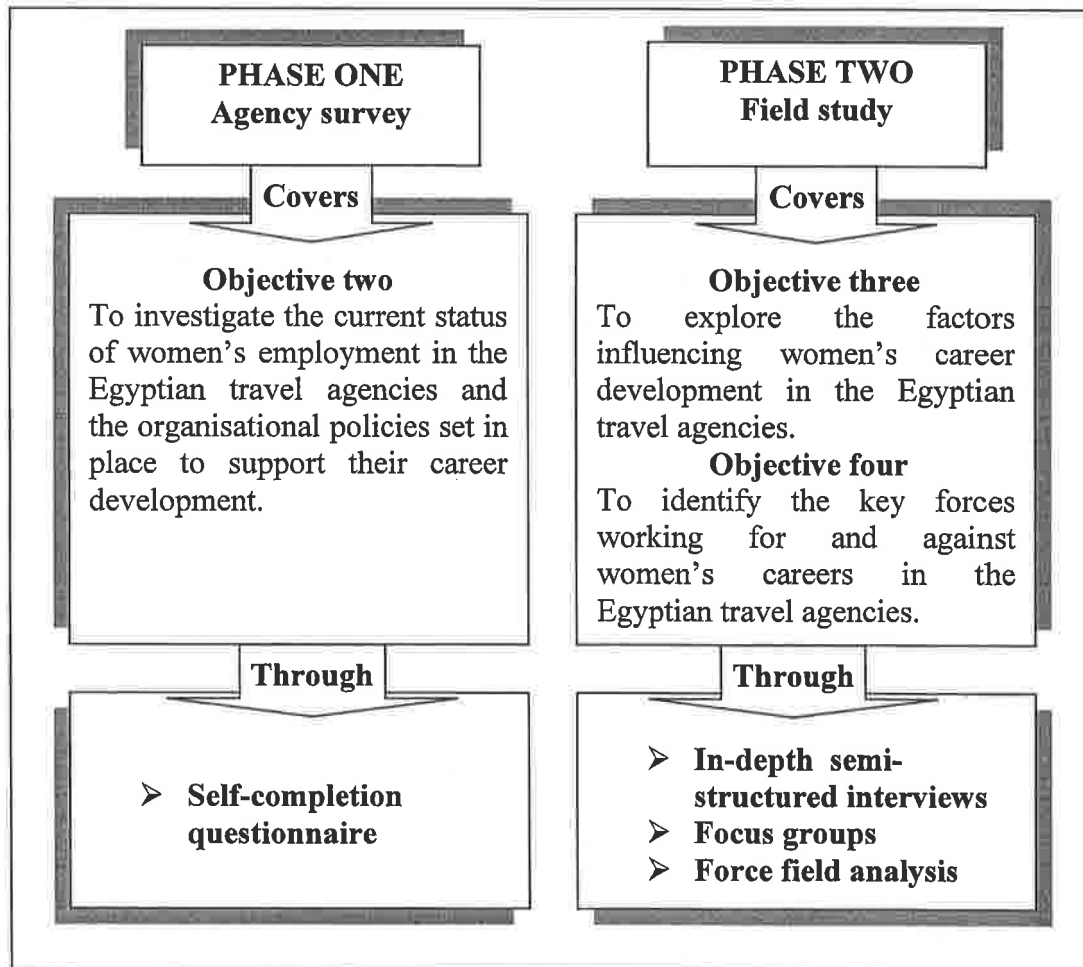
### **5.3.2 Research methods**

The term “*methods*” in the research text books refers to “*the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis*” (Crotty, 1998: 3). According to Punch (1998:5) “*methods should follow from questions*”. In other words, “*How we do something in research depends on what we are trying to find out*” (Punch, 1998: 5) and thus, “*the way the question is asked has implications for what needs to be done in research, to answer it*” (Punch, 1998: 19).

In this sense, answering quantitative research questions requires employing quantitative methods of data collection and analysis; answering qualitative research questions requires employing qualitative methods of data collection

travel agencies in Cairo Metropolitan. Factual surveys as stated by May and Williams (2001: 89), “aim to gain information from individuals concerning their material situation rather than attitudes or opinions”. This survey was followed by a series of *in-depth semi-structured interviews* with a number of tourism consultants, tourism academics, employers, managers and staff members in a number of Egyptian public and private travel agencies as well as four *focus groups* with tourism undergraduates. The travel agency survey represented the first phase of primary data collection in my study and aimed at fulfilling its second objective. The interviews and focus groups (field study) represented the second phase of primary data collection and aimed at fulfilling the study’s third and fourth objectives (Figure 5.5).

**Figure 5.5: Phases of the study’s primary data collection.**



**5.3.2.b Methods of data analysis:**

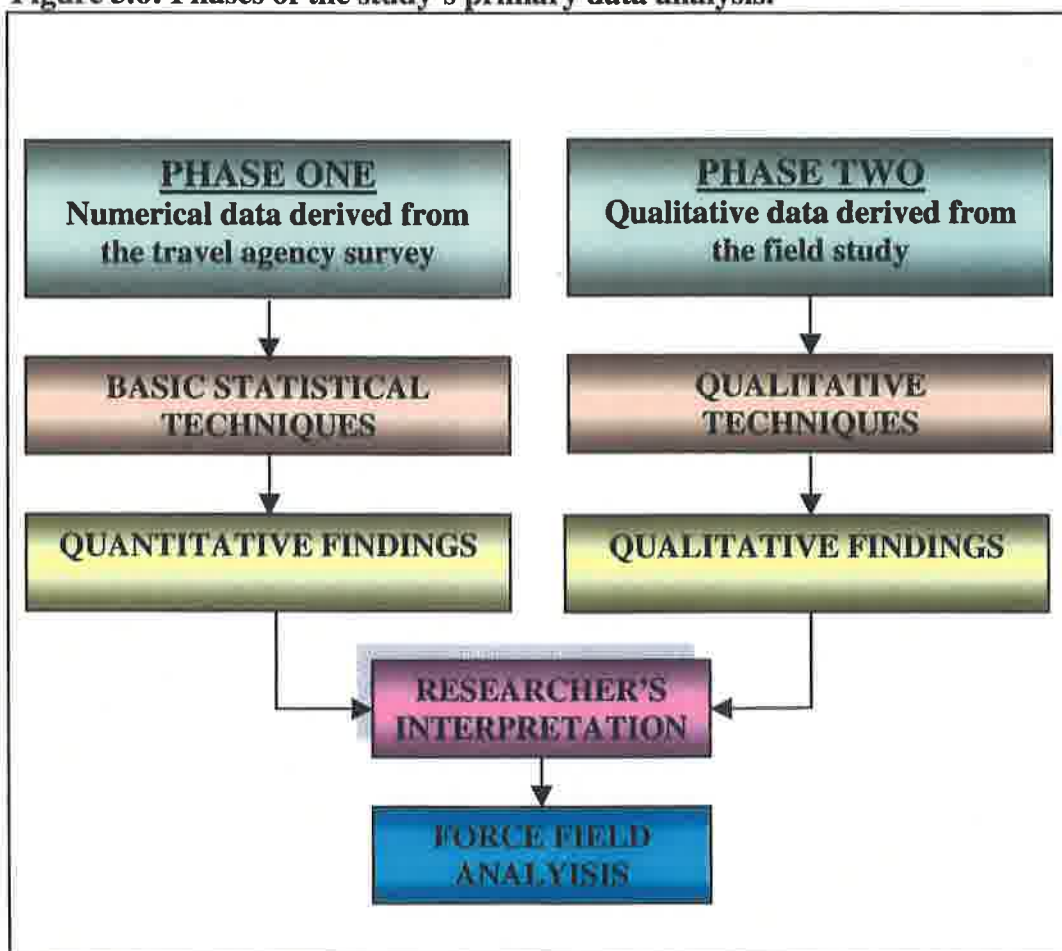
Central to the distinction between secondary data and primary data in social research is a distinction between the terms “*secondary data analysis*” and “*primary data analysis*” where the former refers to “*any further analysis of an existing data set which presents interpretations, conclusions, or knowledge additional to, or different from, those presented in the first report on the inquiry as a whole and main results*” (Hakim, 1982: 1) while the latter refers to the analysis of data derived from the primary data collection process.

Secondary data analysis in social research can be applied either to quantitative data like government/official statistics, or to qualitative data driven from letters, reports, television and radio broadcasts *etc.* (Finn *et al*, 2000). Similarly, primary data analysis in social research is either quantitative or qualitative in nature (Neuman, 1994; Neuman, 2000). However, some research traditions do mix qualitative data with quantitative analysis or vice versa (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

In my research, both secondary and primary data analysis techniques were employed. Secondary analysis was applied mainly to quantitative data driven from governmental statistics on the occupational structure in Egypt as driven from the annual reports of the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS). As for the primary data analysis, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed. Quantitative methods, in the form of a basic statistical analysis (arithmetic means) were used on the data collected from the travel agency survey (phase one of data collection). Qualitative

techniques on the other hand, were used on a larger basis to analyse the data collected from the interviews and focus groups (phase two of data collection). Results of the two phases were then combined - whenever felt necessary – in my interpretation to the research findings. Such combination will be noticed in different parts of the results chapters. The outcome of the interpretation process was further used in achieving the study's fourth objective (to identify the forces working for and against women's careers in Egyptian travel agencies) through the implementation of a force-field analysis technique (Figure 5.6). Detailed information on the processes of data collection and analysis is presented in the next two sections.

**Figure 5.6: Phases of the study's primary data analysis.**



## **5.4 Implementation of phase one (Travel agency survey)**

This phase of the study aimed at exploring the representation, hierarchical distribution and departmental distribution of women in the Egyptian travel agencies as well as the extent to which there are organisational policies set in place to support women's career development in these agencies. It involved five successive stages: designing the questionnaire form, selecting a representative sample of travel agencies, conducting a pilot study, distributing and collecting the questionnaire forms and finally data analysis.

### **5.4.1 Designing the questionnaire form**

This sub-section deals with two main issues: the parameters considered in designing the questionnaire form, and the structure of this form.

#### **5.4.1.a Parameters considered in designing the questionnaire form**

The following parameters were considered in designing the questionnaire form:

- i. Writing the form in the Arabic language – the mother tongue of Egyptians  
- to make sure that it is quite understood by the person filling it in.
- ii. Attaching to the form an introductory letter explaining the nature and purpose of the research and assuring the confidentiality of the respondents' answers.
- iii. Giving the respondents the choice to skip any question (s) or part (s) of question (s) that is/are not allowed to be released by the agency.
- iv. Including very clear instructions regarding the completion of the form.
- v. Seeking the respondents' feedback on the feasibility of the form.

- vi. Investigating the possibility of interviewing some of the agency's staff members in the future if required.

#### **5.4.1.b Structure of the questionnaire form**

The questionnaire form consisted of four sections. **Section one** (questions 1-6) dealt with the agency profile. **Section two** (questions 7-9) dealt with women's representation and departmental distribution. **Section three** (questions 10-14) dealt with the organizational policies and was in turn divided into three sub-sections: **3A-** Selection and recruitment policies (questions 10-12), **3B-** Equal opportunity (EO) policies (question 13) and **3C-** Family friendly-arrangements (question 14). **Section four** (questions 15 & 16) dealt with inquiries on the feasibility of the form and the possibility of interviewing some of the agency's staff members in the future if required. Copies of an English translation of the form as well as the Arabic version of it are enclosed in the appendix (pages App. 7- 10 and App-11 –14).

#### **5.4.2 Selecting a representative sample**

The term "**sample**" refers to "*a portion or a subset of a larger group called population*" (May and Williams, 2001: 93). Logically, it is neither feasible nor effective to include every person or potential item of any population in a study. Consequently, most research involves some kind of sampling. Finn *et al.* (2000) describes sampling as the process of obtaining a representative sample of the units within a research population. He emphasizes that researchers should give some consideration to the reliability of the data obtained pointing out that if the sample is representative and free from bias, the results obtained

would not be dissimilar to other potential data sets obtained from the simultaneous sampling of the same population. According to Weisberg *et al.* (1996) selecting a representative sample for a piece of research involves two important steps: defining the target population (identifying the population of interest) and determining the sampling frame (listing all Known cases in such population). In designing my sampling plan for the travel agency survey I considered two more steps: determining the sample size and choosing the sampling technique.

#### **5.4.2.a Defining the target population**

According to Finn *et al.* (2000), the target population in a piece of research is not necessarily individuals. Sampling units can also be organisations, businesses, geographical areas or households. In this phase of the study, my target population is determined as Class (A) Egyptian travel agencies in Cairo Metropolitan.

One may ask why class (A) in particular and why Cairo Metropolitan? In fact, the decision of determining Class (A) travel agencies located in Cairo Metropolitan as the population of interest in this phase of the study was built upon the following considerations:

First: According to the Egyptian classification of travel agencies set by the law 38 for the year 1977, Class (A) travel agencies are involved in all travel activities (incoming and outgoing travel services, ticketing services and transportation services) which makes them a better representative of the



Egyptian travel business than class (B) which offers only ticketing services or class (C) which offers only transportation services.

Second: As listed in the Travel Agencies' directory issued by the Egyptian Travel Agents Association (ETAA, 1999/2000), the total number of travel agencies in Egypt in the three classes (A, B and C) is 932, out of which 746 agencies are classified as class (A), 54 agencies are classified as class (B) and 132 agencies are classified as class (C). As the majority of the Egyptian travel agencies belong to class (A) the agencies of this category seem to be more representative of the travel business than those belonging to classes (B) or (C).

Third: Choosing Cairo Metropolitan - which comprises the urban areas in the governorates of Cairo, Giza and Qalioubia - as a geographical boundary for the study came in accordance with the records of the Travel Agencies' directory which revealed that the number of class (A) travel agencies located in this particular area by the time of conducting the survey was 587 agencies out of 746 class (A) travel agencies in all Egypt. Thus, class (A) travel agencies operating in Cairo Metropolitan were considered a suitable population for selecting a representative sample. Besides, due to limited physical and financial resources it was felt feasible to restrict sampling to Cairo Metropolitan only.

#### **5.4.2.b Determining the sampling frame**

The term "*sampling frame*" refers to the list of units from which a research sample is drawn. Weisberg *et al.* (1996) stated that ideally, sampling frames should be identical to the populations of interest, but often that is not possible. According to them, sampling can just generalise to the sampling frame from

which the sample was drawn, rather than to the full population. Thus, the researcher should try to use a sampling frame that corresponds as close as possible to the targeted population. In order to determine an appropriate sampling frame that is identical to my population of interest in this phase of the study, I included all class (A) travel agencies operating in Cairo Metropolitan as listed in the Travel Agencies' directory (587 agencies).

#### **5.4.2.c Choosing the sample size**

Several authors referred to choosing sample size in social research. According to May (2001: 93- 94)

*A question often asked is how big should a sample be? The mathematical reasoning underlying the determination of the size of a sample is complex...However, suffice to say that, in sampling size is not necessarily the most important consideration! A large poor quality sample, which does not reflect the population characteristics, will be less accurate than a smaller one that does. The ratio of sample size to population will depend on the level of statistical error that is acceptable versus the resources available. A rule of thumb is that the smaller the population the bigger the ratio of sample to population has to be. Larger populations permit smaller sampling ratios.*

Burton (2000; 319) stated that *"The issue which tends to concern research students undertaking a survey research more than any other is how large a sample should be. This is a very sensible question but unfortunately there are no definite answers"*. Denscombe (1998: 21-22) added:

*In order to generalise from the findings of a survey the sample must not only be carefully selected to be representative of the population: it also needs to include a sufficient number. The sample needs to be of an adequate size. This, of course, begs the question 'What is an adequate size for a sample?'- a straightforward and perfectly reasonable question. However, it is a question which does not lend itself to a correspondingly straightforward answer. The answer, in fact, depends on a*

*number of factors connected with the research which need to be born in mind and weighed up by the researcher in the process of reaching a decision about the necessary size of the sample.*

As mentioned by Bouma (2000: 131) “*in general, large samples are not necessarily better than smaller ones... practical considerations of time, money and effort often combine to keep sample sizes relatively small*”. Denscombe (1998: 24) contributed to the same issue saying:

*The use of surveys in social research does not necessarily have to involve samples of 1000 or 2000 people or events. Whatever the theoretical issues the simple fact is that surveys and sampling are frequently used in small-scale research involving between 30 and 250 cases... The smaller the sample, the simpler the analysis should be...Samples should not involve fewer than 30 people or events.*

Choosing an adequate number of travel agencies to be included in the agency survey sample was controlled by a group of time, facility and effort limitations. First, there were 587 travel agencies scattered all over the vast area of Metropolitan Cairo. Second, only two of these agencies were public while the number of private agencies was huge (585 agencies). Third, I was based in UK and allowed a very limited period of time in Cairo to distribute and collect the agency survey forms. Fourth, I was required to visit by myself every agency included in the sample at least twice; once to distribute the forms and explain the aim of the survey to the owner and/or the General Manager (or any of his assistants) and again to collect and revise them after being filled in. Fifth, a portion of the respondents to the survey required a relatively long period to have the forms filled in and frequent visits to them were necessary until the forms were collected. Sixth, the agency survey represented a relatively small portion of my whole research plan.

Considering the above-mentioned limitations, I chose my sample size to represent all of the public travel agencies in addition to 10% of the private agencies. Therefore, the final sample size consisted of 62 travel agencies including the two public agencies and 60 private agencies (10% of the 585 private agencies operating in Cairo Metropolitan).

#### **5.4.2.d Choosing a sampling technique**

Marshall (1997) classified sampling techniques into two groups: random techniques and non-random or purposive techniques. In random sampling techniques, every unit in the population has an equal chance of being a part of the sample. In non-random or purposive techniques; the chances of any element being selected are either unknown or guaranteed to be 0 percent or 100 percent. According to him, each of the two previously mentioned groups of sampling techniques has its advantages and disadvantages. Purposive samples can provide better descriptive data, while random samples are better if the researcher is seeking to explain or predict something rather than describe its nature.

Marshall (1997) further classified each of the two broad groups of sampling techniques into a number of subgroups. Random sampling techniques included pure random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified cluster sampling. On the other hand, purposive sampling techniques included heterogeneous sampling, homogeneous sampling, structured sampling and haphazard sampling. Table 5.3 compares these two sub-groups.

Table 5.3: Sampling techniques.

Random sampling (probability sampling)	Purposive sampling (non probability sampling)
<b>1- Pure random sampling:</b> Also referred to as simple random sampling. Each element/unit in the population has an equal chance of being chosen. It requires a list of all the units in a population then a sample is randomly selected from that list.	<b>1- Heterogeneous sampling:</b> Samples are selected from people or things that are in some way alike in relevant details. Another kind of heterogeneous sampling is the <i>quota sampling</i> that attempts to match the sample to the general population on a number of dimensions.
<b>2- Systematic sampling:</b> Is a convenient variant of the pure random sampling. It requires a list of all the units in the population. A random number is then selected to choose the first unit to be included in the sample, and then a specific number of units on the list are skipped to choose the next unit and so on.	<b>2- Homogeneous sampling:</b> There are two types of homogeneous sampling: <i>Extreme cases sampling</i> and <i>rare case sampling</i> . In Extreme cases sampling the units are selected with a quality that lies at the top or bottom of the range of such qualities found in the general population. In rare cases sampling the units are selected with a quality, or qualities found only rarely.
<b>3- Cluster sampling:</b> Samples are taken of clusters of the population.	<b>3-Structured samples:</b> Fall into two main types: <i>Strategic informant sampling</i> and <i>snowballing</i> . In strategic informant sampling the researcher depends on selecting units who are thought to give the most information. In snowballing the researcher depends on asking a selected member of population whom else, he/she ought to ask to obtain useful information and repeats this process with each of those he/she is told about.
<b>4-Stratified sampling:</b> Depends on dividing the population into small chunks and randomly sampling from each chunk.	<b>4- Haphazard samples:</b> A haphazard sample is one that is readily available.

Source: Adapted from Marshall (1997: 57-61) and Weisberg *et al.* (1996: 39-48).

In this phase of the study (factual agency survey), I applied a stratified systematic sampling technique. Class (A) travel agencies listed in my sampling frame were classified as public and private. As mentioned earlier, such classification revealed the existence of only two public agencies and 585 private ones. Private agencies were then reclassified into two groups: one included the agencies with unknown number of employees and the other

included the agencies with known number of employees. Such grouping was based on information derived from the agencies' directory where some agencies reported the number of employees while others did not report it. The group with unknown number of employees (group X) comprised 326 agencies and that with known number of employees (group Y) comprised 259 agencies. The agencies belonging to group (Y) were, in turn, stratified (divided) into three sub-groups: Y1, Y2 and Y3 according to the number of employees. Sub-group (Y1) represented the agencies employing <30 employees and comprised 197 agencies, sub-group (Y2) represented the agencies employing 31 - 60 employees and comprised 37 agencies and sub-group (Y3) represented the agencies employing >60 employees and comprised 25 agencies. The names of the agencies belonging to group (X) and each of the three sub-groups (Y1), (Y2) and (Y3) were then arranged alphabetically and numbered serially in separate lists. Private travel agencies included in the study sample were then randomly selected from these lists according to the selection procedure described below.

Applying the following simple equation to the alphabetical agency lists lead to determining the private travel agencies selected to fill in the agency survey form:

$$N = X / S_x$$

where:

N: is the **sampling interval** (*i.e.* the number of travel agencies skipped

between any two agencies included in the sample).

X: is the **total number of travel agencies**.

$S_x = X/10 = 10\%$  of the targeted population (= Number of agencies to be included in the chosen sample).

Sampling interval calculations for groups (X), (Y1), (Y2) and (Y3) were as follows:

**Group (X):**

$X = 326$  agencies

$S_x = 326/10 = 32.6 =$  approximated to 33 agencies.

$N = 326 / 33 = 9.87 =$  approximated to 10.

Thereafter, a number between 1 and 10 was randomly selected with the aid of a computer. The agency corresponding to this number in the list of agencies was considered a stating unit. Every 10<sup>th</sup> unit in the list was then systematically included in the sample.

**Sub-group (Y1):**

$X = 197$

$S_x = 197/10 = 19.7 =$  (approximated to 20 agencies).

$N = 197 / 20 = 9.85 = 10$  (approximated to 10)

Thereafter, a number between 1 and 10 was randomly selected with the aid of a computer. The agency corresponding to this number in the list of agencies was considered a stating unit. Every 10<sup>th</sup> unit in the list was then systematically included in the sample.

**Sub-group (Y2):**

$$X = 37$$

$$S_x = 37/10 = 3.7 = (\text{approximated to 4 agencies}).$$

$$N = 37/4 = 9.25 = (\text{approximated to 9})$$

Thereafter, a number between 1 and 9 was randomly selected with the aid of a computer. The agency corresponding to this number in the list of agencies was considered a stating unit. Every 9<sup>th</sup> unit in the list was then systematically included in the sample.

**Sub-group (Y3):**

$$X = 27$$

$$S_x = 27/10 = 2.7 = \text{approximately 3 agencies}.$$

$$N = 27/3 = 9$$

Thereafter, a number between 1 and 9 was randomly selected with the aid of a computer. The agency corresponding to this number in the list of agencies was considered a stating unit. Every 9<sup>th</sup> unit in the list was then systematically included in the sample.

**5.4.3 Conducting the pilot study**

To make sure that the questions in the questionnaire form are quite clear and understandable to respondents as well as to introduce any necessary modifications, if required, a pilot study was conducted. It was intentionally determined that the pilot study includes six travel agencies to represent 10% of the total size of the original sample (60 travel agencies). These six agencies were randomly selected from group-X (private travel agencies with unknown



number of employees) to avoid bias if selecting from agencies with known numbers of employees (sub-groups Y1, Y2 and Y3).

Selected agencies were contacted on the phone to fix appointments. In these appointments, I explained to the agencies' representatives the aim of my study, the contents of the questionnaire form and the nature of information required. One week later, the agencies were revisited to collect the forms. The six selected agencies were co-operative and answered all of the questions in the form without reporting any difficulty, which meant that the questions are quite clear, perfectly understood and require no modification. Data collected from the pilot study agencies were then excluded.

#### **5.4.4 Distributing and collecting the questionnaire forms**

Questionnaire forms were distributed to the 62 travel agencies forming the research sample (60 private + 2 public agencies) following the same distribution and collection procedure used in the pilot study. Table 5.4 shows the responses of the original sample travel agencies towards completing the questionnaire forms.

**Table 5.4: Response of surveyed agencies towards completing the questionnaire form.**

Travel agencies	No.	%
Co-operative	48	77.42
Non co-operative	9	14.52
Closing down	4	6.45
Could not be located	1	1.61
Total	62	100.00

The above table indicates that 77% of the sample agencies were co-operative while 23% of them were non co-operative, had closed down or could not be

located. These agencies (14 agencies) were replaced by alternate ones to keep the final sample size constant at over 10% of the total number of Class (A) agencies in Cairo Metropolitan (585 private sector and 2 public sector agencies). In the case of group (X) travel agencies (agencies with unknown number of employees) the selected alternative agencies were the nearest in location to the replaced ones. As for the agencies with known number of employees (Group-Y), every alternative agency was chosen to correspond with the same sub-group (Y1, Y2 or Y3) to which the replaced agency belongs according to the following priorities:

- 1- The alternative agency is located in the same building.
- 2- The alternative agency is located in the same street within a range of less than approximately 200 yards.
- 3- The alternative agency is located in the same area within a range of less than approximately 500 yards.

Fortunately, all alternative travel agencies responded positively to the questionnaire. Therefore, replacing the non co-operative, closing down and not located private travel agencies as described above created a final sample of the actually surveyed agencies equal to the targeted sample size (60 private sector agencies in addition to the two existing public sector agencies).

#### **5.4.5 Data analysis**

After collecting the completed questionnaire forms, data was tabulated in spread sheets to calculate means. Answers to questions (1-6) represented the agency profiles. Careful view of the answers in the completed questionnaire forms revealed the following:

All respondents in both public and private agencies reported agency names similar to those listed in the directory of the Egyptian Travel agencies except for one agency which has changed its name from El-Sayer Travel to Zekri Tours (question no.1). All respondents filled in their names (question no. 2). Answers to question no. 3 "*Position of person filling in the form*" revealed that in nine agencies (one public and eight private) representing about 15% of the surveyed agencies the questionnaire was answered by the general manager or his deputy. In about 34% and 21% of the agencies the tourism manager and the ticketing manager, respectively, filled in the questionnaire forms. In 13 private agencies representing about 21% of the agencies the administration, marketing, transport and accounting managers answered the questionnaire. In only one private agency (representing 1.67% of the sample) the personnel manager completed the form. In one public agency (representing 1.67% of the sample) a tour operator filled in the form and in four private agencies (representing about 6% of the sample) a secretary answered it. Table 5.5 shows the classification of the surveyed agencies according to the job title of the person filling in the questionnaire form.

**Table 5.5: Job titles of respondents to questionnaire in the public and private travel agencies.**

No.	Job title	No. of travel agencies			%
		Public	Private	Total	
1	General manager or his/her deputy	1	8	9	14.516
2	Tourism manager	0	21	21	33.870
3	Ticketing manager	0	13	13	20.968
4	Personnel manager	0	1	1	1.613
5	Administration manager	0	3	3	4.838
6	Marketing manager	0	1	1	1.613
7	Transport manager	0	4	4	6.452
8	Accounting manager	0	5	5	8.065
9	Tour operator	1	0	1	1.613
10	Secretary	0	4	4	6.452
Total		2	60	62	100.00

As previously designed, the respondents to question no. 4 *"Type of agency"* were sixty private and two public travel agencies. Answers to question no. 5 *"How many departments are there in the agency?"* indicated that in both public and private sectors the names of the departments varied and their functions and responsibilities overlapped according to the activity practiced by the agency. One of the two public agencies (Karnak for Travel and Touristic Services) had seven departments while the other (Misr travel) had six. The former agency sub-divided the external tourism department on regional basis into four smaller sections *i.e.* the Arab Market, East Europe, West Europe and Japan and Americas. In the private agencies the number of departments ranged one to nine. Four agencies (representing about 7% of the sample) had 1-2 departments. In 49 agencies (representing about 82%) there were 3-5 departments. In the remaining seven agencies (representing about 12 %) the number of departments ranged 6-9 (Table 5.6).

**Table 5.6: Classification of private travel agencies according to the number of departments.**

Number of departments	Number of travel agencies
1	3
2	1
3	16
4	23
5	10
6	4
7	2
9	1
Total	60

Answers to question no. 6 *"How many employees are there in the agency?"* reflected the numbers of employees actually existing by the time the questionnaire was conducted. In most cases answers for this particular question

were derived from employment records or payroll sheets while in few cases, answers depended on the personal knowledge of the respondent.

Based on the answers to question no.6, all of the surveyed agencies [the two public travel agencies, the private agencies with unknown number of employees (group X), the private agencies with known number of employees (group Y) and the six alternative agencies] were reclassified according to the sub-grouping pattern previously set for group (Y) agencies (*i.e.* Y1, Y2 and Y3). By applying such sub-grouping pattern, 75% of the private agencies (45) fell into sub-group (Y1) with 4-28 employees, about 13% (8 agencies) fell into in sub-group (Y2) with 31-58 employees and about 12% (7 agencies) fell into sub-group (Y3) with 64 –700. The two public agencies also fell into sub-group (Y3) with approximately 150-2100 employees. Agency reclassification resulted in the disappearance of group (X).

Inclusion of group (X) travel agencies (with unknown number of employees) together with group (Y) agencies (with known number of employees) and the alternative agencies in a new final sample insignificantly affected the distribution of agencies among the agency-size sub-groups. Table 5.7 shows the sub-grouping of group (Y) travel agencies before inclusion versus the sub-grouping of all the surveyed agencies after inclusion. The percentages of agencies belonging to sub-groups Y1, Y2, and Y3 before inclusion were 73%, 13%% and 14%, respectively, while the corresponding percentages after inclusion were almost very close (74%, 15% and 11%, respectively).

Table 5.7 indicated a wide variability in the number of employees within each of the above mentioned sub-groups, especially in sub-group Y1. To represent the existing situation more accurately, it seemed rather practical to arbitrarily split out this sub-group (Y1) according to the number of employees into three size groups (very small, small and medium agencies). Accordingly, sub-groups Y2 and Y3 were renamed as big and large agencies, respectively.

**Table 5.7: Sub-grouping of the surveyed travel agencies.**

Sub-group	Group (Y) (before inclusion)		All surveyed travel agencies (after inclusion)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Y1 (<31 employees)	20	74	45	73
Y2 (31 – 60 employees)	4	15	8	13
Y3 (> 60 employees)	3	11	9	14
Total	27	100.00	62	100.00

Classifying the surveyed agencies into size groups based on the number of employees resulted in a new grouping pattern as shown in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Classification of surveyed agencies into size groups.**

Group	No. of employees	No. of agencies
Very small (VS)	< 5	4 (private)
Small (S)	6-10	8 (private)
Medium (M)	11-30	33 (private)
Big (B)	31-60	8 (private)
Large (L)	> 60	7 (private) + 2 (public)
Total		60 (private) + 2 (public)

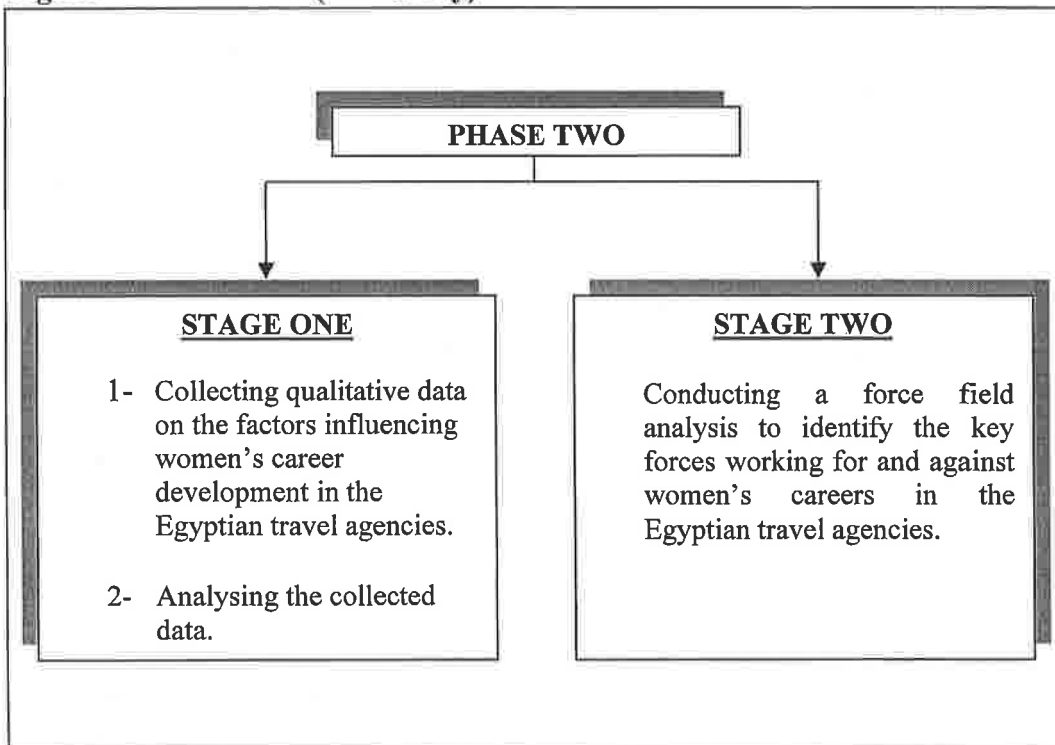
Answers to questions 7-9 (section 2: women's representation and departmental distribution), questions 10-14 (section 3: organizational policies) are discussed later in chapter six. Answers to question 15 were used to follow up the feasibility of the questionnaire form during the process of data collection. Answers to question 16, which dealt with the possibility of interviewing some

of the agency's personnel in the future if required, helped in determining the agencies willing to take part in the second phase of my research (field study).

### **5.5 Implementation of phase two (field study)**

This phase of the study aimed at fulfilling the research's third and fourth objectives. It was conducted in two successive stages (Figure 5.7). Stage one comprised two steps: collecting qualitative data on the factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies, and analysing the collected data. Stage two involved conducting a force field analysis to identify the key forces working for and against women's careers in the Egyptian travel agencies.

**Figure 5.7: Phase two (field study).**



**5.5.1 Stage one: Data collection and analysis****5.5.1.a Data collection**

The data collection process for this stage depended on two qualitative techniques: Interviews and focus groups.

**5.5.1.a.1 Interviews**

- **Theoretical background**

Interviewing is a research strategy that aims at moving away from fixed answer questions (Stroh, 2000). Interviews yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings. Broadly speaking, there are four types of interviews used in social research: the structured interviews, the semi-structured interviews, the unstructured or focused interviews and the group interviews (May, 2001:120).

➤ *Structured interviews*

The theory behind structured interviewing is that each person is asked the same question in the same way so that any differences between answers are held to be real ones and not the result of the interview situation itself. Validity may then be checked by asking the respondent about the same issue, but employing a different form of question wording and then comparing the answers (May, 2001). According to Fontana and Frey (1994), standardisation of explanations, leaving little room for deviating from the schedule, eliciting only the responses of the person with whom the interview is being conducted, not prompting or providing a personal view, not interpreting meanings and simply repeating questions, and finally, not improvising are the rules for conducting structured



interviews. The structured interviewing method is said to permit comparability between responses. It relies upon a uniform structure, while a calculated number of people are interviewed so that they are held to be statistically a representative sample of the population for the purposes of generalisation (May 2001).

➤ *Semi-structured interviews*

Semi structured interviews lie between the structured and unstructured (focused) interviewing techniques as questions are normally specified, but the interviewer is freer to probe beyond the answers in a manner which would appear prejudicial to the aims of standardisation and comparability. Semi-structured interviews are said to allow people to answer more on their own terms than the standardised interview permits, but still provide a greater structure of comparability over that of the focused (unstructured) interview (May, 2001).

➤ *Unstructured or focused interviews*

The central difference of this form of interviewing from both the structured and semi-structured interview is its open-ended character which is said to provide it with an ability to challenge the preconceptions of the researcher, as well as enable the researcher to answer questions within their own frame of reference. The unstructured (focused) interview obviously involves the researcher having an aim in mind when conducting the interview, but the person being interviewed is freer to talk about the topic. Thus flexibility and the discovery of meaning, rather than standardisation or concern to compare through

constraining replies by a set of interview schedule, characterize this method (May, 2001).

➤ *Group interviews*

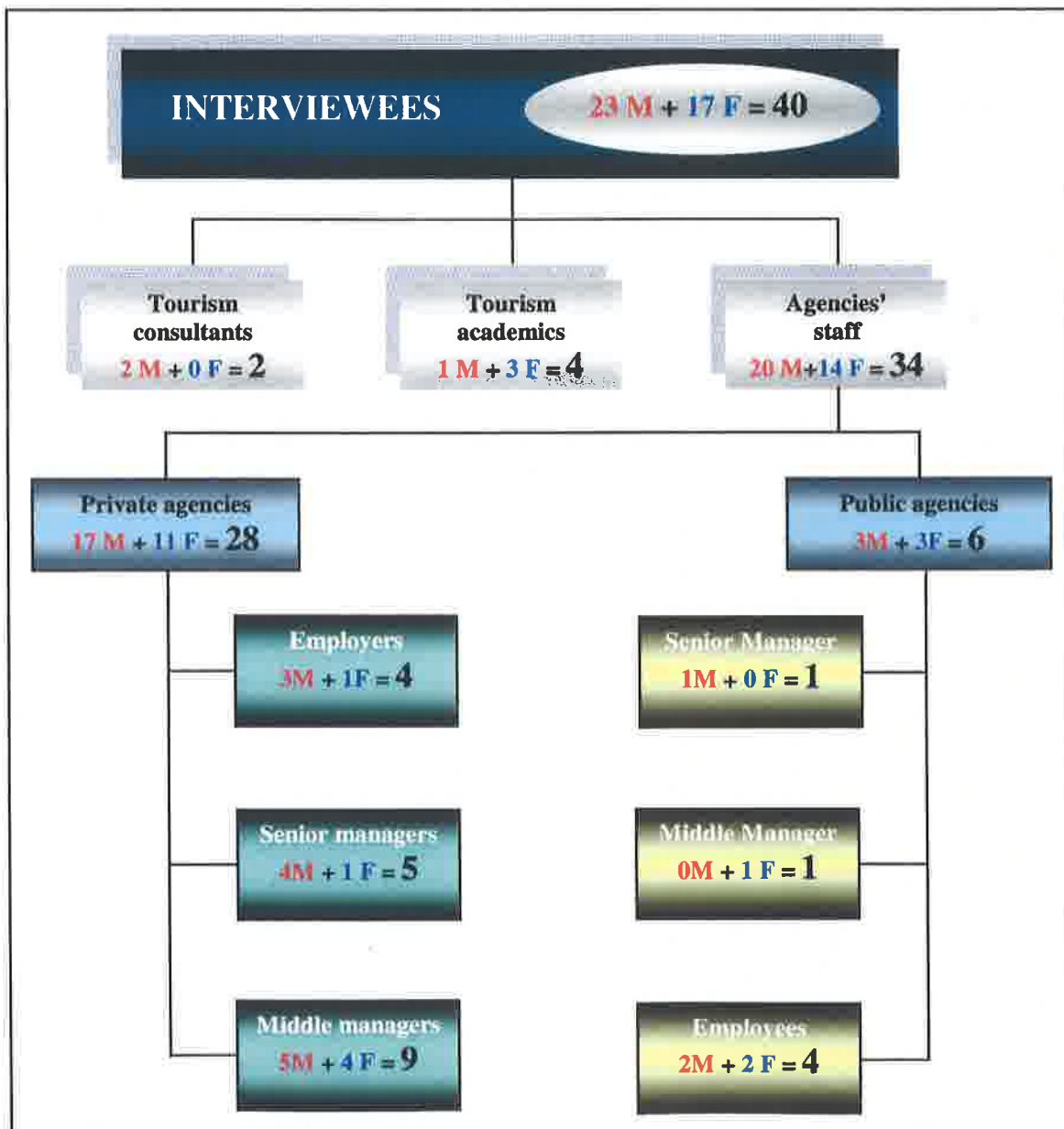
Group interviews constitute a valuable tool of investigation, allowing researchers to explore group norms and dynamics around issues and topics which they wish to investigate. One method within this broad category of interview techniques is the focus group technique. However, the main difference between the group and focus format is that in the latter participants are more explicitly encouraged to talk to one another, as opposed to answering questions of each person in turn (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999).

• **Interviews in practice**

Forty semi-structured interviews were conducted with key decision makers and staff members of a number of selected Class (A) Egyptian travel agencies, tourism academics and tourism consultants. The interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and two hours according to the response of the interviewee and the time he/she allowed. All interviews were conducted in the Arabic language and were oriented towards encouraging the participants to express their perceptions, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings regarding women's employment and career development in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies. Each participant was informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and how the findings would be used. It was emphasised to the interviewees that they were under no obligation to participate in the study and that taking part in it was

voluntary. It was also made clear to all participants that they had the right to discontinue the interview whenever they wished to do so. All of the interviewees were assured the confidentiality of the interviews and that it will never be used for any purpose other than scientific research. As recommended by Schutt (2001), follow up questions tailored to the preceding answers were frequently asked during the interviews. All interviews were tape-recorded and necessary field notes were taken as well. The distribution of interviewees according to affiliation and sex is summarised in figure 5.8.

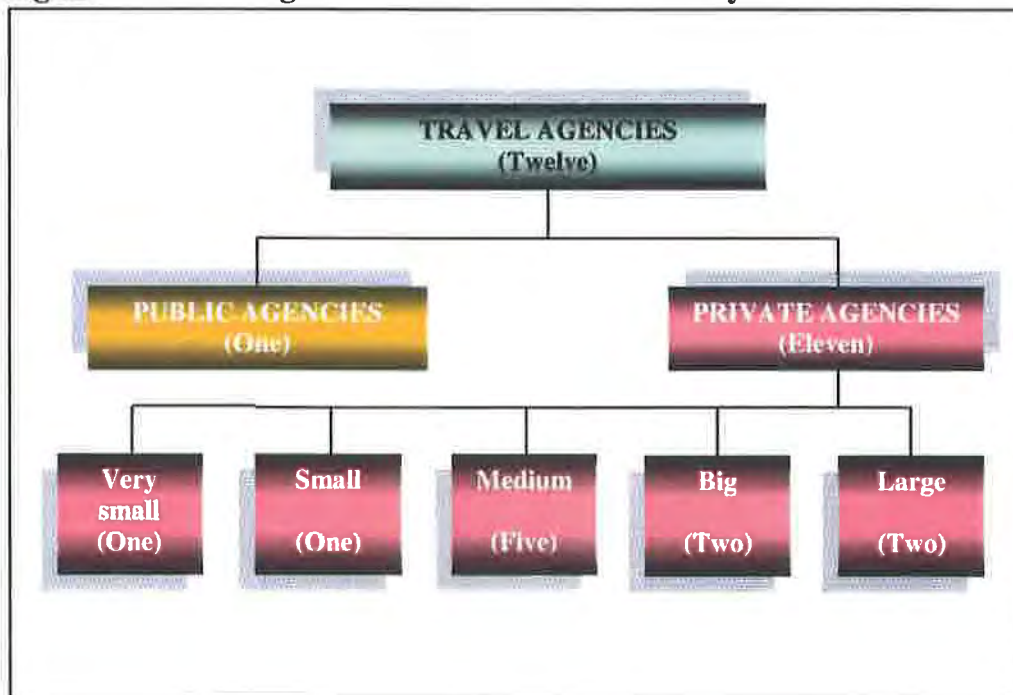
**Figure 5.8: The distribution of interviewees by affiliation and sex.**  
(M: Males, F: Females)



➤ *Participating travel agencies*

Interviews were conducted in twelve travel agencies (one public and eleven private agencies, representing about 20% of the 62 surveyed agencies). Participating agencies were selected among the 37 agencies that positively responded to question no. 16 in the questionnaire form which checked the approval of the agencies for interviewing some of their employees and managers. The bigger of the two public agencies (Misr Travel, with over 2100 employees) was selected to participate in the interviews. Participating private agencies were intentionally selected to represent all agency sizes. Each size group was represented by a number of agencies that more or less corresponds to the frequency of its occurrence in the surveyed agencies. Therefore, very small, small, medium, big and large private agencies were represented by 1, 1, 5, 2 and 2 agencies, respectively. The distribution of the travel agencies included in the field study is further shown in Figure 5.9.

**Figure 5.9: Travel agencies included in the field study.**



The General Manager of every selected travel agency was contacted on the phone to explain to him/her the objective of the intended interviews and to fix appointments. He/she was asked to allow at least four persons from his/her agency to be interviewed preferably including a senior manager, a middle manager and two employees taking into consideration the representation of both males and females. Fortunately, four owners were interested to be interviewed in addition to the interviewees representing their agencies. The public and the large private agencies were too co-operative and allowed up to six interviewees while the other agencies allowed less than four persons to be interviewed. At the end the total number of agency interviewees reached 34 persons (20 males & 14 females) including four employers (3 males & 1 female), six senior managers (5 males & 1 female), ten middle managers (5 males & 5 females) and fourteen employees (7 males & 7 females).

➤ *Participating tourism academics*

Based on collegueship, four tourism academics (1 male and 3 females representing different academic positions in the faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo) were selected to participate in the interviews. The male academic was a professor and ex-dean while the three females were a vice-dean, an associate professor and an assistant lecturer. All academics were contacted in person to fix appointments for the interviews which were held at their offices.

➤ *Participating tourism consultants*

Two male highly experienced tourism consultants participated in the interviews. One of them was the director of studies for my master degree and at

the meantime the ex-Director of the Egyptian Tourist Authority; Ministry of Tourism. He introduced me to the second tourism consultant who was the Director General of the Egyptian Federation of Tourism Chambers. Interviews were held at the private office of the first consultant and the headquarters of the Egyptian Federation of Tourism Chambers in Cairo for the second consultant.

#### **5.5.1.a 2 Focus groups**

- **Theoretical background**

Focus groups have been used by market researchers since the 1920s and by social scientists since the 1940s. Merton was the first to use this technique in his research on the public's reaction to morale films during the Second World War and he coined the phrase the 'focused interview'. Since then focus groups have become an increasingly frequent technique for interviewing research participants in the social sciences. However, despite its popularity, there is uncertainty about what the term focus group actually means. There are several books devoted to the definition, use and analysis of focus groups, yet the term remains vague and is often used interchangeably with others such as 'group discussions' or 'group depth interviews' (Oates, 2000: 186).

Kitzinger (1994: 103) defined focus groups as "*group discussions organised to explore specific set of issues such as people's views and experiences of contraception, drink driving, nutrition or mental illness*" and distinguished them from the wider range of group interviews by their explicit use of the group interaction as research data. Catterall and Maclaran (1997) referred that although focus groups can provide insight into the experiences of individual

participants, their value lies in the opportunity to analyse the interaction between participants that occurs as they question each other, or challenge views which might differ from their own.

Focus groups can be used for a variety of purposes and with different populations. It is suggested that the ideal number for a group is between eight and twelve. Nevertheless, there may be little choice for the researcher (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Focus groups can be used alone or combined with other methods (Oates, 2000). Lunt and Livingstone (1996) suggest that the use of focus groups as a self-contained method is becoming more frequent in the social sciences. However, focus groups can be combined with other sources of data in the triangulation method, where the different forms of data on the same topic are collected, which applies to the current phase of the study. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of focus groups are presented in table 5.9.

**Table 5.9: Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups.**

Advantages	Disadvantages
Participants can react to and build on the responses of other group members.	The small number of respondents limits generalisation to the wider population.
Focus groups allow the researcher to interact indirectly with respondents.	The results may be biased by a particularly dominant group member.
Focus groups allow the researcher to obtain rich data in the participants' own words.	The open-ended nature of responses may make interpreting results difficult.
Focus groups provide data from a group of people more quickly than interviewing individuals.	The researcher as interviewer may influence the responses of the group member
Focus groups are flexible in their suitability for investigating a wide range of topics.	
The results of focus groups are accessible and understandable.	
Focus groups are suitable to use with children.	

Source: Adapted from Oates (2000: 194-195).

- **Focus groups in practice**

Being the expected future recruits to the business, I felt that an exploration of the perceptions of final year tourism students regarding women's work in travel agencies is an important issue to be considered in my research. The targeted population for the focus groups was the male and female final year tourism department students at the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo, who are regarded as the potential newcomers to the Egyptian travel business. Four focus groups were planned to be conducted at the Educational hotel of the same faculty. Verbal permission to conduct the focus groups was obtained from both the Dean of the faculty and the head of the tourism department. The faculty announced the target of the focus groups and asked for volunteer students to participate in it. Thirty two students (15 males & 17 females) were interested in participation. Those were randomly divided into four groups according to their time availability as shown in the table 5.10.

**Table 5.10: Focus groups' participants.**

Group	Group type	Number of participants		
		Males	Females	Total
FGM	Males only	7	0	7
FGF	Females only	0	6	6
FGXa	Mixed male dominated	5	4	9
FGXb	Mixed female dominated	3	7	10
Total		15	17	32

For every focus group, I started by introducing myself to the participants and asked each of them to introduce himself/herself. Then, I explained to the group the objectives of my study and the scope of the desired discussion. As in the case of the interviews, the focus groups were conducted in the Arabic language



and the participants were assured the confidentiality of the discussion and the right to discontinue whenever they wished to do so. The discussion in each focus group lasted for 90 – 120 minutes and was tape-recorded. Permission was obtained from the group before recording and it was explained to the participants that the outcome of the research might be published. Brief notes about the discussion or any particular comments which were unusual were taken straight after each focus group. Morgan (1988:63) calls these '*field notes*' and suggests they are an essential element of focus groups because they are both part of the data collection and a preliminary form of analysis.

#### **5.5.1.b Data analysis**

*"Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data"* (Marshall and Rossman, 1989:112). Coffey and Atkinson (1996) mentioned that there is a variety of perfectly proper analytic approaches to qualitative research and many of them can be aided with computer software. On the other hand it would be wrong for qualitative researchers to allow the available software to drive their general research strategy. It is important to guard against the development of a single orthodoxy predicated on the assumptions and procedures built into contemporary software applications.

At the core of the process of qualitative data analysis is the decision whether to analyse data manually or with the aid of a software computer packages (e.g. QSR-NUD\*IST, Ethnograph or Atlas). According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), there is no implication that the qualitative researcher is bound to use

any of the computer aided strategies. The important issue is that none of the computer programs will perform automatic data analysis. They all depend on researchers defining for themselves what analytic issues are to be explored, what ideas are important and what modes of representation are most appropriate. Dey (1993:55) pointed out that *“computers can do many things, but they cannot think - and we can. Unfortunately, that also means the thinking is up to us. A computer can help us to analyse our data, but cannot analyse our data”*.

Seale (2000) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using software packages in qualitative analysis. Advantages included speed at handling large volumes of data, improvement of rigour, facilitation of team research and help with sampling decisions while disadvantages included need for entering data in a word processing package which is a major time-consuming element, imposing a narrow exclusive approach of the analysis of qualitative data and little help in examining small data extracts.

Considering the above advantages and disadvantages of software computer packages for qualitative data analysis together with the apparent complexity, overlap and interaction of the pieces of data gathered from the interviews and focus groups I felt it more appropriate and rather feasible to use the manual analytical technique which gave me a greater opportunity to go deep into the raw data and get the real sense of it in a way that strengthens my interpretation for the research findings.

The analysis of the data derived from both the interviews and focus groups depended on a grounded approach which is described by Stroh (2000: 196) as “*a system whereby the research themes all emerge from the data*” rather than being predetermined before the research is conducted. The process of data analysis passed through five steps: transcription, translation, coding, categorization and interpretation.

#### **5.5.1.b.1 Transcription and Translation**

Before transcription, I carefully listened to the tapes several times in order to get familiar with and form general impressions about the perceptions, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings of the research participants then I precisely transcribed them in Arabic. In the following step, the Arabic transcriptions were translated as precisely as possible into English. Due to my fears of depending on authorised translators, who usually translate blank words without scientific sense, I preferred to do the translation of the Arabic transcriptions into English by myself which enabled me to understand the data more and to be more familiar with the interviewees perceptions before getting involved in the process of identifying common themes from the collected data. To ensure the reliability of my English translation, the English transcripts were revised by two persons to make any necessary corrections. One of them was an Egyptian colleague studying tourism at UWIC and the other was a highly experienced Professor at Cairo University.

**5.5.1.b.2 Coding**

Next to transcription and translation came the process of coding the interviewees and focus groups participants as follows:

➤ *Coding tourism consultants*

Tourism consultants were coded by the code (TC) followed by a serial number referring to the sequence of the interviewee within his group. The number was followed by a dash followed by the capital letter 'M'. For example, the first and second interviewed men tourism consultants were coded (TC1-M) and (TC2-M), respectively.

➤ *Coding of tourism academics*

Tourism academics were coded by the code (AC) followed by a serial number referring to the sequence of the interviewee within his/her group. The number was followed by a dash followed by the letter 'M' for males and 'F' for females. For example, the first female tourism academic was coded (AC1-F) and the third male tourism academic was coded (AC3-M).

➤ *Coding for the public agency's interviewees*

The code for any interviewee affiliated to a public travel agency started by the abbreviation 'Pu' followed by either the letter 'M' or the letter 'S' followed by a slash where 'M' stands for senior or middle managers and 'S' stands for subordinates. After the slash the job position of the interviewee was mentioned followed by a number representing his/her serial sequence in his/her job group. The following abbreviations were used: 'GM' for General Manager, 'STS' for

senior tourism specialist, 'TS' for tourism specialist, 'ITS' for information technology specialist and 'TO' for tour operator. The job position was followed by a dash and finally followed by the letter 'M' for males or 'F' for females. For example, the second male tourism specialist was referred to by the code (PuS/TS2-M) and the first female senior tourism specialist was referred to by the code (PuM/STS1-F).

➤ *Coding for the private agencies' interviewees*

The code for any interviewee affiliated to a private travel agency started by the abbreviation 'Pr' followed by either the letter 'M' or the letter 'S' followed by a slash where 'M' stands for senior or middle managers and 'S' stands for subordinates. After the slash the job position of the interviewee was mentioned followed by a number representing his/her serial sequence in his/her job group. The following abbreviations were used: 'EM' for employers, 'GM' for General Manager, 'DGM' for Deputy General Managers, 'CS' for counter supervisor, 'TM' for tourism manager, 'SM' for sales manager, 'FM' for finance manager 'TO' for tour operator, 'Acc' for accountants. The job position was followed by a dash and finally followed by the letter 'M' for males or 'F' for females. For example, the first male counter supervisor was referred to by the code (PrM/CS1-M), the first female sales manager was referred to by the code (PrM/SM1-F) and the fifth female tour operator was referred to by the code (PrS/TO5-F). Codes for employers included neither the affiliation nor the job position abbreviations. For example, the fourth female employer was referred to by the code (EM4-F).

➤ *Coding for focus group participants*

As seen in table 5.7, the abbreviations 'FGM', 'FGF', 'FGXa' and 'FGXb' were used to refer to the female only, male only, male dominated and female dominated focus groups, respectively. The code for any focus group participant consisted of the code of his group followed by a dash followed by the letter 'M' for males or 'F' for females and finally followed by his/her serial number in his/her group. Males were numbered separately from females. For example, the code for the first male in the males' group was (FGM-M1), the code for the second female participant in the females' group was (FGF-F2) and the code for the third male participant in the male dominated focus group was (FGXa-M3).

#### **5.5.1.b.3 Categorisation**

The coding process was followed by the process of identifying common themes or patterns from the collected data (categorisation). In this step, the transcriptions were read carefully and quotes referring to common themes were stripped, coded and put together in labelled envelopes where each label referred to one of the identified themes. This process was applied to the data derived from both the interviews and focus groups.

#### **5.5.1.b.4 Interpretation**

After the identification of common themes, I started interpreting the data derived from phases one and two altogether. Such interpretation is presented in chapter six for women employment in the Egyptian travel agencies and in chapters seven, eight and nine for the personal, organisational and societal

factors influencing women's career development in these agencies, respectively.

### **5.5.2 Stage two: Force field analysis (FFA)**

This stage is designed to fulfil the study's fourth objective. Force field analysis is a management technique used for diagnosing situations and characterising the conflicting forces in such situations (Mycoted Ltd., 2003-2004). In his contribution to organisational development, the social scientist Kurt Lewin developed the concept of FFA to provide a framework for looking at the forces in any given situation that are either driving movement towards a goal (helping forces) or blocking movement towards a goal (hindering forces). Lewin viewed organisations as systems in which the present situation was not a static pattern but a dynamic balance of forces working in opposite directions. He assumed that, in any situation there are both driving and restraining forces influencing any change that may occur. In this sense, the term "*driving forces*" refers to the forces that help in achieving a desired change while the term "*restraining forces*" refers to the forces that work against such proposed change (ISUE, undated). In other words, driving forces are all the factors, pressures and issues that exist in support of the change while restraining forces are all the factors, pressures and issues that can restrict or prevent a change from a successful completion. (Bolero Associates LLC, 2000).

Force field analysis is defined in different ways. It is "*a method for listing, discussing and evaluating the various forces for and against a proposed change*" (ISUE, undated), "*a framework for looking at the factors (forces) in*

*any given situation that are either driving movement towards a goal (helping forces) or blocking movement towards a goal (hindering forces)” (Wikipedia, undated), “a method used to get a whole view of all the forces for or against a plan so that a decision can be made which takes into account all interests” (Mind Tools Ltd., 1995-8), a technique that “can be used to generate and analyze forces that facilitate or hinder adoption of a proposed change” (TLTC, 2002), “a management technique...in the field of social science... for diagnosing situations” (Creativity, 2003) “the characterisation of the conflicting forces in a situation” (Mycoted Ltd 2003-2004), “a tool for analysing the opposing forces involved in change (Safer Pak Ltd., 2004) or “a management technique developed for diagnosing situations” (Accel-Team.com, 2004).*

Force field analysis is a widely used tool in change management and process improvement circles. It aims, typically in a brainstorming session, to focus on the driving forces in the current situation and the restraining forces that might get in the way of attaining the desired situation (Bolero Associates, LLC, 2000). It further helps looking at the big picture by analysing all the factors impacting the change and weighing the pros and cons to help developing strategies to reduce the impact of the opposing forces and strengthen the supporting forces. Also it can be used in developing an action plan to implement a change through determining if the proposed change can get the needed support, identifying the obstacles to successful solutions and suggesting actions to reduce the strength of the obstacles (ISUE, undated).FFA is an undoubtedly useful technique in determining effectiveness as well as when



planning and implementing a change management program (Accel-Team.com, 2004).

The types of forces to be considered in the force field analysis may include, available resources, traditions, vested interests, organisational structures, relationships, social or organisational trends, attitudes of people, regulations, personal or group needs, present or past practices, institutional policies or norms, agencies, values, desires, costs, people and events (ISUE, undated).

According to Mind Tools (1995-8) and ISUE (undated) the implementation of a force field analysis for any given situation involves four sequential procedures:

First: listing all forces for change in one column and all forces against change in another column.

Second: assigning a score to each force using a numerical scale. The score is based on (a) the strength of the force and (b) the degree to which it is possible to influence this force.

Third: drawing a diagram showing the forces for and against and the size of these forces.

Fourth: calculating a total score for each of the two columns.

Based on the outcome of the above procedure, decisions concerning the feasibility of the proposed change or desired goal are taken.

ISUE (undated) described in steps how to use the force field analysis as follows:

1- Start with a well-defined goal or change to be implemented.

2- Draw a force field diagram

a. At the top of a large sheet of paper write the goal or change to be implemented.

b. Divide the paper into two columns by drawing a line down the middle. At the top of the left column, write "Driving Forces". Label the right column "Restraining forces".

3- Brainstorm a list of driving and restraining forces and record them on the chart in the appropriate column.

4- Once the driving and restraining forces have been identified, ask the following questions: Are they valid?, How do we know?, How significant are each of them?, What is their strength?, Which ones can be altered?, Which cannot?, Which forces can be altered quickly?, Which ones only slowly?, Which forces, if altered, would produce rapid change?, Which only slow change in the situation?, What skills and/or information is needed and available to alter the forces?, Can we get them?

5- Assign a score to each force, from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong). The score is based on (a) the strength of the forces and (b) the degree to which it is possible to influence this force".

6- Calculate a total score for each of the two columns".

7- Decide if the goal or change is feasible. If so, devise a manageable course of action which: strengthens positive forces, weakens negative forces and creates new positive forces.

When identifying the brain storming group(s) the participants should be members of the system targeted for the change. Their intimate knowledge of

the system is necessary for generating realistic hindering and facilitating forces. A facilitator is needed to guide groups of three to five participants each and any number of participants may take part in the brainstorming process (TLTC, 2002).

The decision to conduct a force field analysis in this study was initiated by my desire to preliminary identify the key forces working for and against women's career development in class (A) Egyptian travel agencies as a step forward in my journey towards achieving a comprehensive understanding of women's careers in the Egyptian travel business. It is my intention, and hope, when I return back home, to utilize the outcome of the current force field analysis in undertaking further specific and detailed research on the forces driving or restraining women's career development in the Egyptian travel business.

Initially, my hope was to conduct the force field analysis study in Egypt utilising men and women selected among those who participated in the interviews and focus groups. However, time-factor limitation made it impossible to achieve this goal. Therefore, I went to the alternative of conducting a small-scale force field analysis in UK instead. I took the opportunity of the presence of a group of well-educated Egyptian men and women, who were visiting Cardiff during the summer of 2004, and hosted them for a whole day. The group consisted of three men and three women in addition to me as a facilitator. All of the group members were quite familiar with the Egyptian culture, customs and traditions and lived in Egypt for most of their life.

Before I receive the group, I listened once more to all of my interview and focus group tapes and reviewed the results of my investigation on the personal, organisational and societal factors influencing women's career development. Throughout this comprehensive revision of the study components I practised a deep self-think storming to anticipate all possible forces that might influence women's career development either positively (pro's) or negatively (con's). Such think storming process lead me to determine nine driving forces and twelve restraining forces (see Figure10.1, page 10.3).

During the group's visit, every guest was given two separate sheets of paper; one including a list of the driving forces and the other a list of the restraining forces. Participant guests were requested to revise the two lists independently then asked to discuss every listed force with regard to its validity, significance and strength. The participants regarded all of the listed forces as valid and significant.

To determine the relative strength of every considered driving or restraining force, a five-grade rating scale was applied. Rate (1) referred to the very weak effect, rate (2) to the weak effect, rate (3) to the moderate effect, rate (4) to the strong effect and rate (5) to the very strong effect. After completion of the discussion related to every force each participant was requested to write his individual rating for the strength of that force according to the above-mentioned rating scale on the distributed sheets. The individual ratings for every force were then gathered and their means worked out. Means were arithmetically approximated to the nearest number then forces were plotted in a descending order according to their strength in the force field diagram shown

in figure 10.1, page10.3. The numbers next to every force in the diagram refer to its rating strength.

## **5.6 Limitations to the research process**

The noticeable shortage of literature or reliable statistics on women's employment and career development in the tourism business in general and in the travel agencies in particular represented a major limitation to the current study. As a second limitation, the vast array of disciplines relevant to my research topic made it impossible, while planning for my literature review chapters, to fully cover the knowledge in all of these disciplines in a limited number of pages.

The complexity, interaction and overlap of the qualitative evidences derived from the interviews and focus groups represented a third limitation to the study. It was not possible to have a comprehensive overview of the findings altogether during the early data analysis stage. Even after finishing the analysis and determining the generated themes the picture appeared rather incomplete because of the interactions and overlaps within the comments of interviewees and focus group participants. It required plenty of patience and time to reorganise the bits and pieces of data together to establish the whole mosaic of the findings of the qualitative part of the study. Due to overlaps and interactions within quotes it was necessary, in some cases, to split some of the long quotes into more than one quote to be used at different positions in the text or to use the same quote in more than one position.

The fourth limitation to the study was the validity of the qualitative data derived from the interviews and focus groups that were conducted and tape-recorded in the Egyptian Arabic slang then translated into English. Throughout the translation process words and common expressions might unintentionally acquire different meanings.

## **5.7 Summary**

This chapter discussed the technical dimensions of pragmatism and justified adopting it as my research approach. It also explained the different design issues for mixed-method and mixed-model studies with particular emphasis on the sequential dominant-less dominant mixed method design employed in this study. The chapter further described my research design (*i.e.* strategy and methods). In terms of strategy, it discussed the reasons for employing the case study methodology, the definitions of case studies, the idea of case study research, the method/strategy debate, the aim of case studies, the characteristics of case studies, the advantages of the case study approach and the types of case studies while in terms of research methods it described the methods of secondary and primary data collection and analysis.

The chapter further presented the issues related to the implementation of phase one of this study (travel agency survey) including the design and structure of the questionnaire form, the target population and the representative sample, sampling frame and sampling technique, sample size, distribution and collection of the questionnaire forms and analysing the questionnaire results. It also accounted on the implementation of phase two (the field study) with

emphasis on the theoretical and practical backgrounds of the interviews and focus groups approaches as well as the process of data analysis through transcription, translation from Arabic to English, coding, categorisation and finally interpretation. The last two sections of the chapter were devoted for the implementation of a force field analysis of the forces acting for and against women's careers as determined from the field study followed by the limitations to the research process.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN THE EGYPTIAN TRAVEL AGENCIES**

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## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN THE EGYPTIAN TRAVEL AGENCIES**

#### **6.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter highlights the current status of women's employment in the Egyptian travel agencies through the combination of quantitative information derived from the agency survey and qualitative evidence derived from the interviews and focus groups. The chapter begins with a discussion of women's representation in the Egyptian travel agencies at both the lower organizational levels and the different managerial levels then moves on to discuss the departmental distribution of women as employees and middle managers in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies. The chapter ends up with a discussion of the organizational policies set in place to support women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies.

#### **6.2 Women's representation**

Statistics on women's representation in the Egyptian travel agencies are apparently very few. The sole effort done in that respect is a survey entitled "**A Study of Employment in the Tourism Sector**" conducted in 1991 by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). This study was published in April 1993 and came in six volumes of which volume four dealt with employment in travel agencies.

At the very early stage of planning for this study in July 2000 I met with the General Manager of the Egyptian Federation of Tourism Chambers in Cairo

and asked him about the availability of statistics on women's employment in the Egyptian travel agencies. He said:

*Very little research has been conducted on women's employment in the Egyptian travel business and no up to date statistics are available. The latest survey on employment in the Egyptian tourism sector was conducted in 1991 but the results of this survey are too old to rely on. You have to explore the current situation by yourself.*

I repeated the same question, also in July 2000, to one of the most experienced Egyptian tourism consultants, who was formerly the General Manager of the Egyptian Tourism Authority, and he answered: *"There is no up to date information on women's employment in Egyptian travel agencies. You better investigate the situation by yourself"*.

When I started the interviews and focus groups in 2002 I asked the participants to give their arbitrary estimates for the representation of women in the Egyptian private travel agencies. Forty-six per cent of those participants gave quantitative estimates ranging 10-60%, while 54% of them described women's representation qualitatively using words as *"small"* (PrM/TM1-M), *"present"* (PrM/CS3-F), *"considerably high"* (PrM/CS4-F), *"nearly equal"* (AC4-M), *"well"* (PrM/FM1-M), *"very well"* (PrM/CS2-F), *"good"* (FGXb-M1), *"very good"* (FGXb-F1 & FGXb-F2) or *"relatively high"* (TC1-M). However, all given estimates and descriptions depended on personal experiences rather than accurate documented information. In most cases, the interviewees and focus group participants figured out the representation of women in the agency or agencies they worked for or trained at, respectively. Nevertheless, some of these estimates came in line with the information derived from the current

agency survey while others were either extremely high or extremely low. Thirty nine per cent of those who gave quantitative estimates of women's representation in the private travel agencies figured out that women occupy less than 30% of the jobs, thirty three per cent of them estimated that women's representation ranged 31- 50% while twenty eight per cent of them were of the opinion that women dominate men in the private travel agencies (over 50%).

As for women's representation in the public travel agencies, the interviewees from these agencies estimated that women occupy about 30-40% of the jobs. Interviewees from the private sector, tourism academics, tourism consultants and focus group participants hesitated to give estimates of the percentage of women's employment in the public sector. Nevertheless, most of them agreed that women are better represented in the public than in the private sector agencies as a male tourism manager said, "*The representation of women in public travel agencies is generally greater than in private ones*" (PrM/TM1-M) and a male academic added, "*Women are better represented in the public than in the private travel agencies*" (AC4-M).

The agency survey results (answers to question no 7, questionnaire form) indicated that women formed 26% of the workforce in the surveyed agencies with approximate means of 21% of the jobs in the private sector and 30% in the public sector, thus confirming that women employment is relatively greater in the public than the private sector (Table 6.1). Literature refers that the percentage of women's employment in the Egyptian travel agencies in 1992 was 18.5% (CAPMAS, 1993).

**Table 6.1: Representation of women as employees and managers in the public and private travel agencies.**

Sector	Job	No. of			%	
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Public	Employees	1499	621	2120	70.71	<b>29.29</b>
	Managers	84	46	130	64.62	<b>35.38</b>
	Sub- total	1583	667	2250	70.36	<b>29.64</b>
Private	Employees	1268	318	1586	79.95	<b>20.05</b>
	Middle managers	156	56	212	73.58	<b>26.42</b>
	Senior managers	64	16	80	80.00	<b>20.00</b>
	sum	220	72	292	75.34	<b>24.66</b>
	Sub-total	1488	390	1878	79.23	<b>20.77</b>
Public & Private altogether	Employees	2767	939	3706	74.66	<b>25.34</b>
	Managers	304	118	422	72.04	<b>27.96</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>3071</b>	<b>1057</b>	<b>4128</b>	<b>74.39</b>	<b>25.61</b>

The agency survey further indicated that 5% of the private agencies (one small and two medium agencies) employed no women at all (Table 6.2). In the private agencies employing both men and women (57 agencies), women occupied 39% of the jobs in the very small agencies, 33% in the small agencies, 23% in the medium agencies, 23% in the big agencies and 17% in the large agencies. These percentages give rise to the observation that in the private travel agencies women's representation tends to decrease with the increase of agency size (Table 6.3).

**Table 6.2: Women's employment in private travel agencies.**

Travel agencies	Group of agencies	No. of agencies	%
Employing men only	Very small	0	0.00
	Small	1	1.67
	Medium	2	3.33
	Big	0	0.00
	Large	0	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5.00</b>
Employing both men and women	Very small	4	6.67
	Small	7	11.67
	Medium	31	51.66
	Big	8	13.33
	Large	7	11.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>95.00</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 6.3: Representation of women in the private agencies employing both men and women.**

Sector	Agency size	No. of agencies	Number of employees			%	
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Private	Very small	4	11	7	18	61.11	<b>38.89</b>
	Small	8	48	24	72	66.67	<b>33.33</b>
	Medium	33	477	143	620	76.94	<b>23.06</b>
	Big	8	230	68	298	77.18	<b>22.82</b>
	Large	7	722	148	870	82.99	<b>17.01</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1488</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>1878</b>	<b>79.23</b>	<b>20.77</b>
Public		2	1583	667	2250	70.36	<b>29.64</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>62</b>	<b>3071</b>	<b>1057</b>	<b>4128</b>	<b>74.39</b>	<b>25.61</b>

### 6.2.1 Women's representation at the lower organisational levels

Most of the interviewees agreed that, in general, *"Women are well represented at the lower organisational levels in Egyptian travel agencies though men often outnumber them"* (PrS/Acc3- F). However, few of them believed that women are dominant at that level as a male sales manager said, *"Personally, I believe that the numbers of women at the lower organisational levels in Egyptian travel agencies are larger than the numbers of men"* (PrM/SM2-M). A female counter supervisor added, *"The representation of women at the lower*

*organisational level in Egyptian travel agencies is considerably high and they may even dominate men at that level"* (PrM/CS4-F).

Table 6.1 further indicates that at the lower organisational level women occupied on the average 25% of the jobs in both public and private agencies altogether, with approximate means of 29% of the jobs in the public agencies and 20% of them in the private agencies. Excluding the agencies not employing women changed the approximate mean percentages of women representation at the lower organisational levels to 21% for the private agencies, 30% for the public agencies and 26% for both public and private agencies altogether (Table 6.3).

### **6.2.2 Women's representation in management**

Almost all interviewees agreed that in both public and private Egyptian travel agencies women are reasonably represented in middle management whereas their representation in senior management is considerably poor. Several interviewees commented on women's representation in the management of the Egyptian travel agencies. A male deputy General Manager said, *"In most of the travel agencies women occupy middle management positions but few of them reach senior management"* (PrT/DGM1-M). A female counter supervisor added, *"Women's representation as middle managers in several travel agencies is considerable. However, their representation in senior management is remarkably very low"* (PrM/CS2-F). Another female sales manager further added, *"There are many women in middle management but few of them reach senior management"* (PrM/SM1-F). A third female senior tourism specialist

contributed, *"In the public travel agencies, there are many women in middle management. However, very few of them may become senior managers"* (PuM/STS1-F). A male tourism consultant concluded:

*To the best of my knowledge, women are well represented as middle managers in the Egyptian travel agencies but as senior managers their representation is relatively low in comparison to that of men.*

(TC1-M)

Some interviewees shed light on the role of small family businesses in determining women's representation at the senior management level in the Egyptian travel agencies. They pointed out that most of the women actually holding senior managerial positions in the private agencies are owners or members of the owner's family. They added that a non-family member woman might have the opportunity to occupy a middle management job but her chances to reach senior management within a family business establishment seem to be quite rare. Commenting on this issue a female senior tourism specialist said, *"It is very difficult for a woman to become a senior manager in a private travel agency. Most of the women senior managers in these agencies are either owners or members of the owner's family"* (PuM/STS1-F). A female academic added, *"Women occupying senior management jobs in private travel agencies are usually owners or members of the owner's family"* (AC3 -F). A third female tourism specialist further added: *"In the private travel agencies a considerable number of the women managers are either owners or relatives to owners"* (PuS/TS1-F). A male tourism consultant commented:

*In private travel agencies, the owner and his or her family members often hold all the senior managerial positions. If you count the senior managers who are not owners or members of the owner's family you will find them very few. With such very*

*few numbers of senior managers the opportunities for women become very rare.*

(TC2-M)

The arbitrary estimates given by the interviewees and focus group participants for women's representation as managers in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies ranged 20% -30%. Such estimates came in line with the agency survey results (answers to questions 8 and 9, questionnaire form) which indicated that women occupied, on the average, 28% of the managerial positions in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies altogether, with approximate means of 35% for the public agencies and 25% for the private ones (Tables 6.1).

The agency survey further indicated that men occupied all of the managerial positions in 17 agencies (representing 28% of surveyed private agencies). In the remaining agencies (43 agencies representing 72%), as well as in the two public agencies managerial positions were simultaneously shared between men and women (Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4: Classification of private travel agencies according to employing managers.**

Travel agencies	No.	%
Employing men managers only	17	28.33
Employing men and women managers	43	71.67
Total	60	100.00

The survey also indicated that in the agencies occupying both men and women managers women occupied 0, 24, 29, 21 and 19% of the managerial jobs in the very small, small, medium, big and large private agencies, respectively (Table 6.5). Such percentages lead to the conclusion that men occupied at least 70% of



the managerial positions in the private travel agencies regardless of agency size.

**Table 6.5: Representation of women managers in public and private agencies.**

Sector	Number of managers				%	
	Agency size	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Private	Very small	4	0	4	100.00	<b>00.00</b>
	Small	19	6	25	76.00	<b>24.00</b>
	Medium	115	46	161	71.43	<b>28.57</b>
	Big	38	10	48	79.16	<b>20.84</b>
	Large	44	10	54	81.48	<b>18.52</b>
	Total	220	72	292	75.34	<b>24.66</b>
Public		84	46	130	64.62	<b>35.38</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		304	118	422	72.04	<b>27.96</b>

Estimates given by the interviewees on the representation of women in middle management ranged between 30% - 40% for the public sector agencies and 20% - 50% for the private sector agencies whereas estimates for women's representation in senior management ranged 10% -15% for both sectors.

Unfortunately, the breakdown of women as middle and senior managers in the two existing public agencies was not possible because the information given by the respondents to the agency survey in these two agencies on the numbers of men and women managers were approximate and collective for both middle and senior managers altogether. However, the survey indicated that women occupied 60% of the managerial jobs in one public agency and 33% of these jobs in the other agency (Table 6.6). As for the private sector agencies, the survey indicated that women held 26% of the middle management positions and 20% of the senior management ones (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.6: Representation of women into the management of the two public travel agencies .**

Travel agency	Number of managers			%	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Karnak Travel and Touristic Services	4	6	10	40.00	<b>60.0</b>
Misir Travel	80	40	120	66.67	<b>33.33</b>
Total	84	46	130	64.62	<b>35.38</b>

The agency survey further indicated that, in the private agencies, the representation of women as Heads of Board of Directors or General Managers was obviously weak (8% and 15%, respectively). Meanwhile, their representation as Deputy Heads of Board of Directors and as Deputy General Managers was considerably high (57% & 38%, respectively). The survey also indicated that in the very small agencies all senior managers were men. Women held 14% of the senior managerial positions in small agencies, 27% in medium agencies, 21% in big agencies and 23% of the senior management positions in large ones (Table 6.7). These percentages emphasise the dominance of men in senior management regardless of agency size as they occupied, on the average, at least three quarters of the senior management positions.

The relatively high representation of women as Deputy Heads of Board of Directors and Deputy General Managers is attributed to the role of small-family business in the Egyptian private travel agencies where owners (who are mostly the Heads of the Boards of Directors and/or the General Managers) appoint their wives, daughters and/or sisters or other female family members in these senior managerial positions to guarantee loyalty to the agency.

**Table 6.7: Representation of women in senior management in private travel agencies.**

Senior managerial position	A G E N C Y S I Z E													
	Very small		Small		Medium		Big		Large		TOTAL		%	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Head of Board of Directors	0	0	1	0	4	1	4	0	2	2	11	1	91.67	8.33
Deputy Head of Board of Directors	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	1	0	3	4	42.86	57.14
General Manager	4	0	5	0	24	6	5	2	4	0	45	8	84.91	15.09
Deputy General Manager	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	1	5	3	62.50	37.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	4	0	6	1	30	11	11	3	10	3	64	16	80.00	20.00
<b>%</b>	100.00	0.00	85.70	14.30	73.17	26.83	78.57	21.43	76.92	23.08	80.00	20.00		

### 6.3 Departmental distribution

Evidence derived from the interviews and focus groups indicated that women's representation, either as employees or middle managers, in both public and private Egyptian travel agencies is generally higher in the departments that practice office work (e.g. ticketing, administration & personnel and accounting) than in the departments that practice operational and ground handling jobs (e.g. sales & marketing, tourism and transportation). A female academic who formerly worked as a tour operator for seven years said, "Women occupied more than 80% of the office jobs in the agency I used to work for while men held all outdoor jobs" (AC3-F). A male tourism specialist added, "Women generally dominate men in ticketing, reservations and secretarial jobs, while men are always dominant in all outdoor activities and

*night work*" (PuS/TS2-M). Such evidence came in line with the information derived from the agency survey (question no.7, questionnaire form) on the departmental distribution of women employees and middle managers in both public and private Egyptian travel agencies.

### **6.3.1 Departmental distribution of employees**

According to the survey results, women outnumbered men in the ticketing departments and the secretarial jobs whereas men outnumbered women in all of the other departments. However, men's dominance was remarkably higher in sales & marketing, tourism and transportation departments that often deal with outdoor jobs. On average, women occupied 83% of the secretarial jobs and 51% of the jobs in ticketing departments. Women employees were relatively less represented in administration & personnel and accounting departments (37% and 31%, respectively). The percentages of women employees in the tourism, sales & marketing and transportation departments were low and recorded 22%, 19% and 1%, respectively (Table6.8).

**Table 6.8: Departmental distribution of women employees in public and private travel agencies.**

Department	No. of employees			%	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Secretarial jobs *	3	15	18	16.67	83.33
Ticketing *	86	90	176	48.86	51.1
Administration & Personnel **	304	181	485	62.68	37.32
Accounting **	367	156	532	68.98	31.02
Tourism**	501	131	632	79.27	20.73
Sales & Marketing**	166	40	206	80.58	19.42
Transportation**	951	10	961	99.01	00.99

\*Based on information derived from private agencies only.

\*\* Based on information derived from both public and private agencies.

**6.3.2 Departmental distribution of middle managers in private travel agencies**

Interviews gave evidence that women occupy middle management positions in almost all departments in the Egyptian travel agencies. However, they are more likely to be represented in the management of the ticketing departments (counters) than in the management of the other departments. A male Deputy General Manager commented on women's distribution to the management of the different departments in travel agencies saying, *"In Egyptian travel agencies women hold managerial positions in almost all departments. However, they are more likely represented as counter supervisors (PrT/DGM1-M).*

Such evidence more or less agrees with the survey findings (question no.8, questionnaire form) which, similarly, indicated that women occupied middle management positions in all departments in the surveyed private travel agencies with percentages of 68% in the ticketing departments, 33% in the administration & personnel departments, 22% in the tourism departments, 20% in the sales & marketing departments, 19% in the accounting departments and only 8% in the transportation departments. These percentages indicate that women middle managers dominated in ticketing departments and occupied about one third of the middle management positions in administration & personnel departments. Representation of women as middle managers was relatively less in tourism, sales & marketing and accounting departments and obviously poor in the transportation department (Table 6.9).



**Table 6.9: Departmental distribution of women in middle management in private travel agencies.**

Department	No. of middle managers			%	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Ticketing	10	21	31	32.26	67.74
Administration & personnel	4	2	6	66.67	33.33
Tourism	74	21	95	77.89	22.11
Sales & marketing	4	1	5	80.00	20.00
Accounting	35	8	43	81.40	18.60
Transportation	24	2	26	93.31	7.69
Other*	5	1	6	83.33	16.67
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>73.58</b>	<b>26.42</b>

\* Cargo, legal, information and public relations departments.

In some travel agencies the tourism department is split into sections like external tourism, internal tourism and religious tourism. The information provided by the agency survey further revealed that the percentages of women managers in these sections were 23, 67 and 7%, respectively. Such percentages refer that women middle managers dominate in internal tourism sections, are much less likely to manage external tourism sections and rather rarely act as managers of religious tourism sections (Table 6.10).

**Table 6.10: Distribution of women as middle managers in the different sections of tourism departments in private travel agencies.**

Section	No. of middle managers			%	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
External tourism	10	3	13	76.92	23.08
Internal tourism	2	4	6	33.33	66.67
Religious tourism	25	2	27	92.59	7.41
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>80.43</b>	<b>19.57</b>

### 6.3.3 Departmental distribution of middle managers in public travel agencies

As a matter of fact, it was not possible to collect quantitative information on the departmental distribution of women middle managers in the public travel

agencies because of two main reasons. First: the public agencies provided only the approximate and collective numbers of managers without their breakdown as middle and senior managers. Second: the departmental structure of the two public agencies was totally different. In "Misr Travel" the structure was sectarian (tourism, transportation, branches, personnel, finance and investment sectors), while in "Karnak Travel & Touristic Services" the structure was partially regional (Arab market, East Europe, West Europe, Japan & the Americas and internal tourism departments) and partially administrative (public relations, administration & personnel, sales, pricing and accounting departments).

### **6.4 Organisational policies**

This section deals with the organisational policies set in place to support women's career development in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies. These include selection and recruitment policies, equal opportunity policies and family-friendly arrangements. In this section I will concentrate only on the quantitative findings as revealed from the agency survey. The qualitative side of the organisational policies will be presented in detail later in chapter eight when discussing the impact of the organizational factors on women's career development.

#### **6.4.1 Selection and recruitment policies**

In terms of written policies for selection and recruitment (question no. 10, questionnaire form), the two public agencies reported that they had such policies. Among the private agencies, 33 representing 55% had written

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policies while 27 agencies representing 45% had not. The presence of policies for selection and recruitment in the private agencies appears to be dependent on agency size. The percentages of agencies having such policies were 25%, 50%, 55%, 50% and 86% for the very small, small, medium, big and large agencies, respectively (Table 6.11).

**Table 6.11: Presence of policies for selection and recruitment in Egyptian travel agencies.**

Sector	Group of travel agencies	Agencies having policies		Agencies not having policies	
		No.	%	No.	%
Private	Very small	1	25.00	3	75.00
	Small	4	50.00	4	50.00
	Medium	18	54.55	15	45.45
	Big	4	50.00	4	50.00
	Large	6	85.71	1	14.29
	Total	33	55.00	27	45.00
Public	Very large	2	100.00	0	00.00
GRAND TOTAL		35	56.45	27	43.55

All sampled travel agencies, except for only a private one, refused to give copies of their policies for selection and recruitment claiming that the release of such information is against the agency regulations. Nevertheless, all agencies claimed that they strictly stick to and apply the Egyptian labour law (no. 137 for the year 1981) that guarantees equality of opportunities. However it is difficult to assess the validity of agency claims in this respect.

Survey results in relation to reference to sex (question no. 11, questionnaire form) indicated that the two public travel agencies as well as 73% of the private agencies had no reference to sex in their selection and recruitment policies. Meanwhile, 27% of the sampled private agencies admitted that their selection and recruitment policies refer to sex. The majority of the latter group



of private agencies belonged to the medium group (11 agencies representing 69 %) while the rest of them belonged to the very small (one agency 6%), small (one agency), big (one agency) and large (two agencies representing 13%) groups (Table 6.12).

**Table 6.12: Reference to sex in selection and recruitment policies in public and private travel agencies.**

Sector	Group of travel agencies	Refer to sex		No reference to sex	
		No.	%	No.	%
Private	Very small	1	1.67	3	5.00
	Small	1	1.67	7	11.67
	Medium	11	18.33	22	36.66
	Big	1	1.67	7	11.67
	Large	2	3.33	5	8.33
	Total	16	26.67	44	73.33
Public	Large	0	00.00	2	100.00
GRAND TOTAL		16	25.81	46	74.19

In fact, article no. 151 of the Egyptian labour law guarantees equality between men and women in selection and recruitment for job opportunities. However, reference to sex in recruiting for certain jobs in some private travel agencies, especially the jobs including night work, is socially acceptable and not regarded as contradictory to the equality principle set by the law. Article no.152 of the same law sets out "*night work restrictions to female employment between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m.*". Meanwhile, the Ministerial Decree no.23 for the year 1982 sets the rules and regulations concerning the employment of women for night work. This decree stipulates "*employers employing women for night work must provide for the protection, care and security of, and transportation for, women workers*". In order to save the extra cost of implementing the rules and regulations set in the Ministerial Decree for employing women at night some of the agencies refer to sex in their selection and recruitment policies and

prefer men when recruiting for the jobs that require night work. Nevertheless, through such gap some agencies might undermine the equality legislation.

Generally speaking, reference to sex in the selection and recruitment policies of the travel agencies, when it occurs, always considers as a priority the needs and benefit of the agency as long as there is no violation to the labour law. Agencies that refer to sex in their selection and recruitment policies may have their own reasons to do so. On the one hand the tourism business may require the employee to be available at any time and he or she may stay away from home and family for long periods. In the Egyptian context, it would be very difficult for women to cope with such circumstances without drastically affecting their social responsibilities and life especially if they are married and /or take care of children. On the other hand, women are traditionally preferred to men for recruitment to certain jobs like ticketing and secretarial work (see Table 6.8).

A summary of the selection and recruitment criteria applied by the Egyptian travel agencies (question no.12, questionnaire form) is shown in Table 6.13. In the two public agencies only experience and qualifications are the criteria used. As for the private agencies, the criteria considered are experience, qualifications, marital status and sex in 98%, 85%, 8% and 5% of the sampled travel agencies, respectively. All very small, small, big and large agencies as well as 97% of the medium agencies reported experience as a first selection criterion. Qualifications came as a second priority in all very small, big and large agencies as well as in 88% and 76% of the small and medium agencies,

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respectively. Marital status was regarded as a selection criterion in 13% of both small and large agencies and 9% of the medium ones. Sex was referred to as a selection criterion in 25% of the agencies belonging to the big group (two agencies) and 3% of those belonging to the medium group (one agency).

One large and 12 medium agencies reported other additional selection criteria including fluency in foreign languages, living nearby the place of work, not used to continuous change from one job to another, previous personal knowledge of the applicant, previous training in the field of work, ability to do more than one job, suitable age, good appearance, efficiency, decency, personality, self-confidence, intelligence, politeness and honesty and good reputation.

**Table 6.13: Selection and recruitment criteria used by travel agencies.**

Selection criterion	No. & %	Public sector (Large)	Private sector					GRAND TOTAL
			Very small	Small	Medium	Big	Large	
Experience	No. %	2 100.00	4 100.00	8 100.00	32 96.97	8 100.00	7 100.00	61 98.39
Qualifications	No. %	2 100.00	4 100.00	7 87.50	25 75.76	8 100.00	7 100.00	53 85.48
Marital status	No. %	0 00.00	0 00.00	1 12.50	3 9.09	1 12.50	0 00.00	5 8.07
Sex	No. %	0 00.00	0 00.00	0 00.00	1 3.03	2 25.00	0 00.00	3 4.84
Other*	No. %	0 00.00	0 00.00	0 00.00	12 36.36	1 12.50	0 00.00	13 20.97

The classification of the criteria used for the process of selection and recruitment in private travel agencies indicated that 11 agencies (representing 18%) depended on only one criterion, which is either experience or qualifications. Thirty-three agencies (representing 55%) depended on two criteria one of which was always experience and the second was qualifications,

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marital status or other. Fourteen agencies (representing 23%) depended on three criteria that always included experience and qualifications in addition to marital status, sex or other. One agency (representing about 2%) depended on experience, qualifications, marital status and sex simultaneously while another (representing about 2%) depended on all above-mentioned criteria as well as other additional ones (Table 6.14).

Tables 6.13 and 6.14 lead to the conclusion that different selection and recruitment criteria are used in the public and private travel agencies. In public agencies, emphasis is mainly made on experience and qualifications. In private agencies, experience came on top of the selection and recruitment criteria followed by qualifications (98% and 85% of the agencies, respectively). Few private agencies considered marital status (8%) and sex (6%) as selection and recruitment criteria besides experience and qualifications. Private agencies used one or more of the four above-mentioned selection and recruitment criteria and some of them added other criteria. The percentages of private agencies using one, two, three and four selection and recruitment criteria were 18%, 55%, 23% and 2%, respectively. Less than 2% of the sampled private agencies used more than four selection and recruitment criteria.

**Table 6.14: Classification of selection and recruitment criteria used by private travel agencies.**

No of criteria used	Selection criterion/ criteria	Number of agencies					Total	
		Group of travel agencies						
		VS.	S.	M.	B.	L.	No.	%
One	Experience only	0	1	6	3	0	10	16.66
	Qualifications only	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.67
Two	Experience + qualifications.	3	6	13	2	6	30	50.00
	Experience + marital status.	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.67
	Experience + other *.	0	0	2	0	0	2	3.33
Three	Experience + qualifications + marital status.	0	1	5	0	0	6	10.00
	Experience + qualifications +sex.	0	0	0	2	0	2	3.33
	Experience + qualifications + other *.	1	0	4	0	1	6	10.00
Four	Experience + qualifications +marital status + other *.	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.67
Five	Experience + qualifications + marital status + sex +other	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.67
GRAND TOTAL		4	8	33	8	7	60	100.00

VS. = Very small, S. = Small, M. = Medium, B. = Big and L. = Large.

## 6.4.2 Equal opportunity policies

### 6.4.2.a Equal pay policies

Article no. 151 of the Egyptian labour law set equality of pay for equal jobs for all employees. Thus, equality of pay is always guaranteed nation-wide. As a matter of fact, all interviewed employers and General Managers emphasised that commitment to equality of pay is always in action. Answers to the first item of question no. 13 in the questionnaire form in relation to commitment to equal pay for equal jobs are summarised in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15: Commitment to equality of pay between sexes.

Sector	Group of travel agencies	Commitment to equality of pay			
		Committed agencies		Uncommitted agencies	
		No.	%	No.	%
Private	Very small	3	5.00	1	1.67
	Small	7	11.67	1	1.67
	Medium	25	41.67	8	13.33
	Big	5	8.33	3	5.00
	Large	5	8.33	2	3.33
	Total	45	75.00	15	25.00
Public	Large	2	100.00	0	00.00
GRAND TOTAL		47	75.81	15	24.19

The two public agencies and 75% of the private agencies reported that they are committed to equality of pay for equal jobs by the power of the labour law. Fifteen agencies (representing 25% of the private agencies) claimed that, although they cannot abide by the rules set by labour law, their policies relate pay to the efficiency, performance and productivity of the employee.

#### 6.4.2.b Sex discrimination policies

Responses to the second item of question no.13 in the questionnaire form on having special policies for handling sex discrimination in the Egyptian travel agencies were negative as all the sampled agencies claimed that they do not practice any type of sex discrimination. They further ascertained that sex discrimination is entirely prohibited by the Egyptian constitution (article no.40). However, the previously discussed data on women's representation at both the lower organisational and the managerial levels (see pages 6-7 to 6-9 and Table 6.1) seem to deny such claims as it emphasises the dominance of men over women and reflects the adverse impact of sex discrimination on women's career opportunities.

**6.4.2.c Sexual harassment policies**

All responses to the third item of question no.13 in the questionnaire form on having special policies for handling sexual harassment in the Egyptian travel agencies were also negative. All respondents pointed out that sexual harassment is a very rare phenomenon all over Egypt. They further emphasised that such practices are very strictly prohibited in the Egyptian society by the powers of both religion and culture. In addition, there is quite sufficient legislation to combat sexual harassment whenever it incidentally happens (article no. 268 of the law no. 58 for the year 1937).

**6.4.3 Family-friendly policies**

This sub-section will concentrate on the quantitative aspects of the family-friendly arrangements that are actually in action in the Egyptian travel agencies. The qualitative aspects of this issue will be presented in more detail in chapter eight. Answers to the question on the family friendly arrangements applied in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies (question no. 14, questionnaire form) are summarised in Table 6.16.

**Table 6.16: Family-friendly arrangements applied in the Egyptian travel agencies.**

Family friendly arrangement	A G E N C I E S													
	P R I V A T E										P U B L I C		T O T A L	
	V e r y s m a l l		S m a l l		M e d i u m		B i g		L a r g e		Yes	No	Yes	No
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No				
Paid maternity leaves	No. 4 %* 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	33 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	7 100	0 0	2 100	0 0	62 100	0 0
Paid breast - feeding hours	No. 4 %* 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	33 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	7 100	0 0	2 100	0 0	62 100	0 0
Unpaid childcare leaves	No. 0 %* 0	4 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	33 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	7 100	2 100	0 0	2 3	60 97
Unpaid special leaves	No. 0 %* 0	4 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	33 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	7 100	2 100	0 0	2 3	60 97
Flexible work hours	No. 0 %* 0	4 100	0 0	8 100	1 3	32 97	1 13	7 87	1 14	6 86	2 100	0 0	5 8	57 92
Part-time jobs	No. 0 %* 0	4 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	33 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	7 100	0 0	2 100	0 0	62 100
Job sharing	No. 0 %* 0	4 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	33 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	7 100	0 0	2 100	0 0	62 100
Childcare facilities	No. 0 %* 0	4 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	33 100	0 0	8 100	0 0	7 100	0 0	2 100	0 0	62 100

\*Approximated.

The above table indicates that all public and private travel agencies offer mothers paid maternity leave and paid breast feeding hours. Public agencies further allow mothers unpaid childcare leave for taking care of the family and unpaid special leave for joining the husbands working abroad. On the contrary, private agencies do not allow women employees childcare or special leaves. Public agencies and few private ones (one medium, one big and one large, representing 5% of the sampled agencies) reported that they might allow working women flexible work hours in the unlikely events of having unsuitable family circumstances. All public and private agencies declined to allow part-time jobs or job sharing and none of them provided in-site or off-site childcare facilities.

## 6.5 Summary

The status of women's employment in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies was investigated quantitatively and qualitatively. The arbitrary



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estimates for women's representation were 30-40% in public and 10-60% in private agencies while their representation in middle management was estimated at 30-40% in public and 20-50% in private agencies. Surveys indicated that women formed 26% of the total workforce in the Egyptian travel agencies (30% and 21% in public and private agencies, respectively) and occupied 28% of the managerial positions (35% in public and 25% in private Agencies). Women dominated office works and were less involved in operation and ground handling activities. They outnumbered men in secretarial jobs and ticketing departments whereas men outnumber them in the other departments.

Public agencies and 55% of private agencies applied written policies for selection and recruitment. In 27% of the private agencies these policies referred to sex. Selection and recruitment criteria were experience and qualifications only in public agencies while in private agencies criteria were experience, qualifications, marital status and sex. Public agencies and 75% of private agencies were committed to "equal pay for equal jobs" principle and all agencies reported that they have no written policies for handling sex discrimination or sexual harassment.

Public and private agencies practice certain family-friendly arrangements to support working women. Public agencies allowed paid maternity leave, paid breast-feeding hours, unpaid childcare leave and unpaid special leaves while private agencies allowed paid maternity leave and breast feeding hours only.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

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## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

#### **7.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter discusses the different personal factors that influence women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. It begins with a theoretical background of the different factors influencing career development in general as identified by Powell (1993) then moves to a comprehensive view of the three types of factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies as revealed by the current research findings. The core of the chapter is focused on the personal factors (*i.e.* family-related and individual-related) influencing women's career development. The chapter ends up with a brief summary.

#### **7.2 Theoretical background**

Chapter seven, as well as the next two chapters, will discuss the different factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. Dividing these three chapters into sections will be more or less guided by the classification set by Powell (1993) for the factors that influence career development. Powell's classification theoretically comprised three groups of factors: the personal, organisational and societal factors. In his context, the term "*personal*" refers to two types of factors. The first type pertains to the woman as a member of a family unit and includes career interruptions, dual-career demands and parenting demands while the second type considers a woman as an individual and includes work motivation and

career choices. The term “*organisational*” refers to four types of factors: practices regarding alternative work schedules and family supports, initial staffing decisions, career pathing and promotion decisions, and mentoring, networking and feedback practices. The term “*societal*” refers to three types of factors: legal requirements, government programs and social mores (Figure 7.1).

**Figure 7.1: Factors influencing career development.**



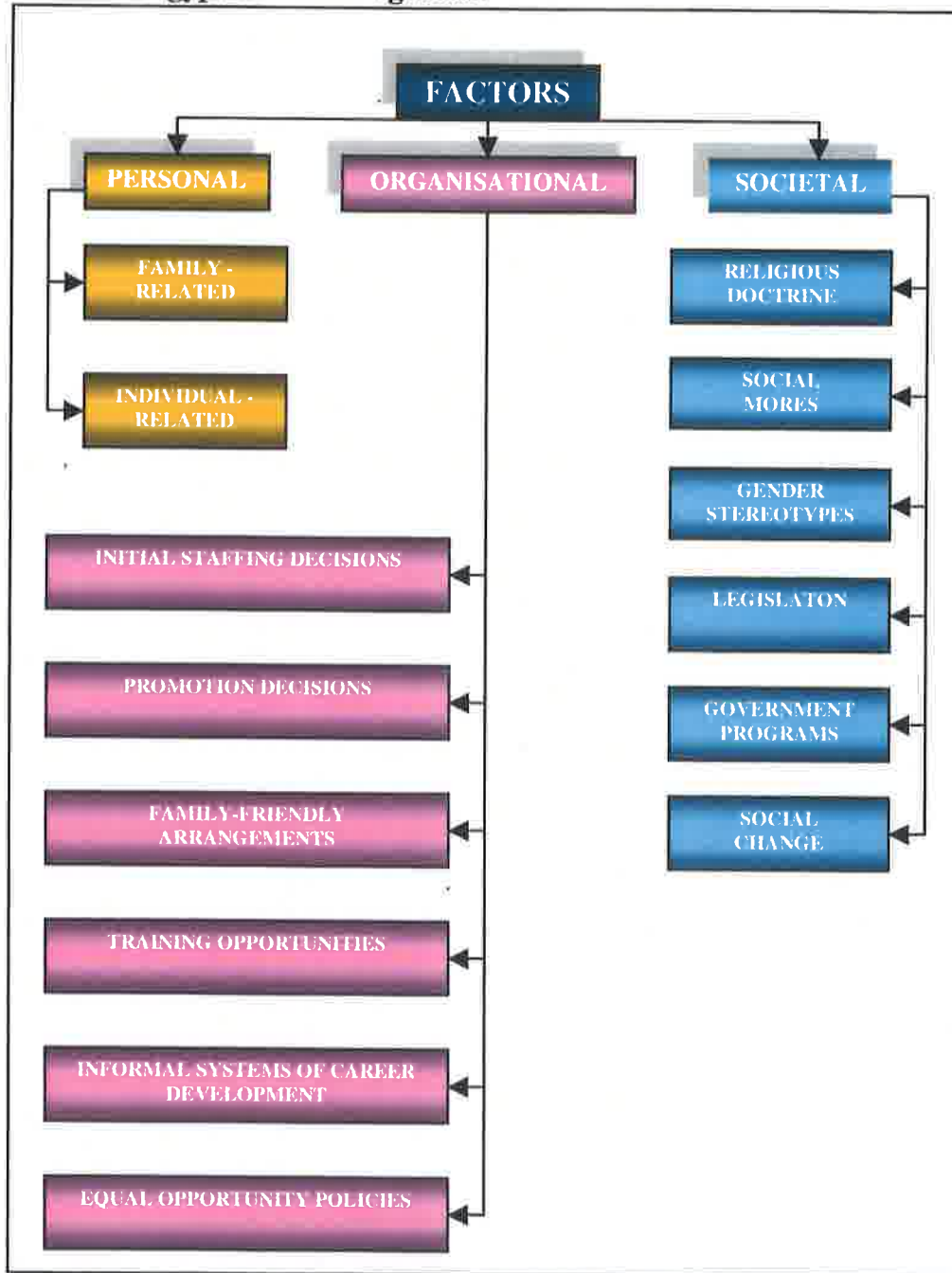
Source: Adapted from Powell (1993: 200-209).

### **7.3 Classification of the factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies**

It is worth noting that certain modifications to Powell's above-mentioned sub-classifications were necessarily required to cope with the current research findings in relation to the Egyptian travel agencies. In fact, it seemed impractical to typically transfer Powell's western conceptions without slightly modifying them to suit with the Egyptian context. Figure 7.2 gives a comprehensive view of the main groups of factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies as determined from the current research findings. Due to the relatively large amount of findings I thought it

more feasible to discuss each group of factors in a separate chapter. Therefore, chapter seven deals with the personal factors, chapter eight deals with the organisational factors and chapter nine deals with the societal factors.

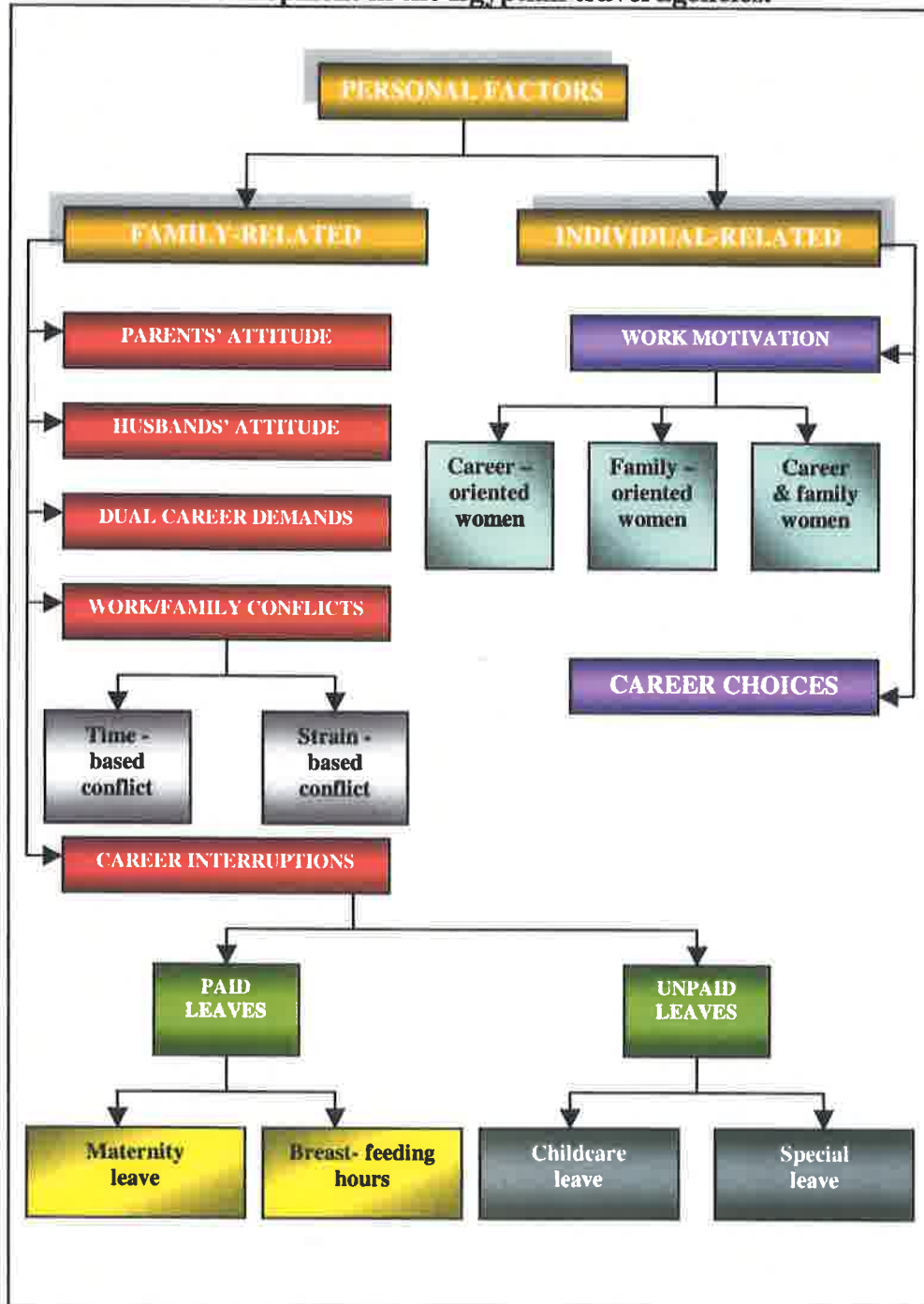
**Figure7.2: Factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies.**



## 7.4 Classification of the personal factors

The personal factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies are classified as *"family-related"* and *"individual-related"*. A diagram of the classification of these factors is shown in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Classification of the personal factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies.



## **Chapter 7: Personal factors influencing women's career development**

Family-related factors include *“parents’ attitude towards unmarried daughters”, “husbands’ attitude towards wives’ careers”, “dual career demands”, “work/family conflicts”* and *“career interruptions”* while individual-related factors include *“work motivation”* and *“career choices”*.

### **7.4.1 Family-related factors**

*Women are more likely than men to take a “slow burn path to career success”. They may end up at the same level as men with similar personal characteristics, but they require a longer time to reach it because they make more accommodations to family and personal life along the way.*

(Powell, 1993:201)

Interviewees and focus group participants agreed that family-related factors have a noticeable impact on women's career development in the Egyptian travel business as a female sales manager said:

*Familial circumstances affect women's opportunities for career development. They might be forced to career interruptions. The result is that women cannot compete with their men or unmarried female counterparts.*

(PrM/SM1-F)

These family-related factors may frustrate women and hinder them from building careers, as in many cases, they become obliged to prioritise family considerations to work. In that respect a female employer said:

*I am a woman and I can understand the problems of working women. They are trapped between familial obligations and work responsibilities. This situation hinders them from building career. They often prioritise the family to work.*

(EM4-F)

**7.4.1.a Parents' attitude towards unmarried daughters**

In oriental societies, like the Egyptian society, patriarchy is a dominant life pattern (Abu Zaid, 2000:7). A highly respected and strictly implemented tradition is that females are always kept under the control and close watch of male guardians. If the female is single, divorced or a widow guardianship is for the father. Brothers followed by uncles inherit guardianship after the death of the father. Immediately upon marriage, guardianship on wives turns to their husbands.

Nowadays, many Egyptian parents allow their unmarried daughters to work but they put some restrictions on them. From my experience, as an Egyptian female who is familiar with the prevailing mores and traditions of the Egyptian society, I would say that women – either single or married - are not allowed to wear culturally unacceptable work-uniforms or to stay out of home alone in the evenings or at night. They are also entirely prevented from travelling away from home without being accompanied by a mature male family member.

Confirming these mores a female student said:

*My family will totally reject that I work for a travel agency if work conditions require wearing short or tight uniforms, delays after the regular work hours, travelling away from home on business trips or dealing with people whom I don't know.*

(FGF-F2)

A male student further confirmed the impact of the above-mentioned cultural norms on women's work for travel agencies as he said:

*Work in travel agencies requires women to wear special uniforms that may not meet with the oriental traditions. It also involves anti-social work conditions like delays at night and long stays away from home. Many parents do not allow their daughters to work under such conditions.*

(FGXa-M2)



## **Chapter 7: Personal factors influencing women's career development**

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Some parents are rather conservative to the extent that they object to women working in the same place as men or to women working side by side men including, of course, in travel agencies. Commenting on this issue a female student said, "*My parents will never allow me to work in a travel agency under any circumstances for any salary*" (FGXb- F3). These restrictions are quite common and some parents might force their daughters to quit working whenever work conditions contradict with the prevailing cultural or societal understandings. Such restrictions represent a bottleneck for women's work and career development in the Egyptian travel agencies where work conditions require frequent delays in the evening, night work, travelling away from home for long periods and continuously interacting with men colleagues and customers. Such restrictions make it difficult to enforce equality regardless of legal situations, so women's career prospects are actually aborted from the start.

However, another female student from the same focus group argued that not all parents refuse their daughters' employment in the travel agencies. Although she represents an isolated example, she emphasised her argument by the fact that she herself receives much encouragement from her father to work in the travel business after graduation as she said:

*It is not a rule that all parents refuse to allow their daughters to work for travel agencies. My father works in the field of tourism. Despite that he is well aquatinted with the challenges for women's employment in the travel business he always encourages me to build myself a career in it.*

(FGXb-F5)

**7.4.1.b Husbands' attitude towards wives' careers**

In addition to parental concerns, the husbands' attitude towards their wives' careers is a key factor for women's success and career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. A female tour operator referred to this issue saying:

*Women's career development depends in many cases on their husband's attitudes. If husbands appreciate the anti-social nature of work in the travel business, their wives smoothly proceed in building up careers. If not, it becomes quite difficult for wives to go beyond certain limits in their career paths.*

(PuS/TO1-F)

By religion, traditions and social norms, women in eastern societies like the Egyptian society ought to obey their husbands' orders even if these orders are against their will. In many cases, the husbands put restrictions on the amount of time their wives can devote to work. Such restrictions frustrate women's opportunities for career development especially in a dynamic business like the travel business that involves plenty of anti-social work patterns. Commenting on that issue a female tourism student said:

*No Egyptian husband accepts that his wife returns home late at night, travels away from home for business purposes or establishes business relationships with other men unless he fully understands the nature of the business in which she is involved.*

(FGXb-F3)

Another female tourism student immediately argued, "*Egyptian men who understand and appreciate the nature of women's work in the travel business are quite rare*" (FGXb-F1). A third female student from the same focus group contributed that even among men who are involved in the travel business and are supposed to understand its challenges some do not encourage women's work in travel agencies as she said, "*Although my uncle works in tourism and knows much about*

*the travel business he advised me not to work in this field after graduation” (FGXb-F4).*

Husbands holding negative attitudes may reach the extreme that they force their wives to quit working for the sake of caring about the family especially if they are not in need of the financial contributions made by their wives to household expenses as a male counter supervisor said, *“If the husband can financially support his family without relying on his wife's income, he may force her to quit work for the sake of the family” (PrM/CS1-M).*

However, some husbands might show a positive attitude that supports women's career development. Those are usually co-operative by nature in addition to their appreciation for the wives taking dual career responsibilities in order to support the family income. A male student commented on this issue saying, *“If the husband is co-operative and understandable, he becomes a strong support for his wife's career progression”* and further added, *“The extra income of the wife compensates for the shortage resulting from her being busy at work” (FGM-M1).* Co-operative husbands are less likely to place restrictions on their wives' involvement in the different travel business activities and continuously assist them in housework and childcare. Referring to the importance of mutual understanding between husbands and wives for supporting women's career development a female tourism student said, *“Women can successfully manage to achieve career development through co-ordination and co-operation with their husbands” (FRXb-F3).* Nevertheless, understandable co-operative husbands are rare because social mores and values always place household and childcare responsibilities on women.

**7.4.1.c Dual career demands**

In Middle Eastern societies women's position has continually been directed towards the domain of family and home. The family is at the core of women's position and the centrepiece of the society. The family is held in very high regard and is even considered sacrosanct by men. The contemporary Muslim view sees the family as responsible for the rearing of dedicated generations instilled with the proper cultural values. This responsibility rests exclusively on the shoulders of women. The role of the wife in the family is multi-faceted. It is the wife's responsibility to maintain the household and to work towards sustaining the social status and position of their families. The most crucial duty of women is that of bearing and raising children. The fact that women have been placed in charge of such important responsibilities has influenced the ideas of many people regarding women's possible external economic activities. Females entering the economic sphere experience some disadvantages one of which is the dual nature of women's work. After a full day's work, women's "real jobs" await them at home and they are expected to perform all their household duties and familial responsibilities as well. However, some women favour finding employment outside of the home for a variety of reasons including the rising economic need in addition to viewing employment as a path towards independence, freedom, self-actualisation, equality, participation in society and responsible enfranchisement (Courtney Spivey, undated).

Interview and focus group participants agreed that the dual career demands factor is the result of the interaction between women's work responsibilities and career development requirements on one hand and their household

burdens, parental duties and familial obligations on the other hand. The domestic role of the working women is a constraint for their career development in the Egyptian travel industry regardless of legislation. Therefore, they always try to balance work responsibilities and familial obligations through several approaches like benefiting from extended family support, paid-labour support and/or career breaks. Commenting on this issue a male accountant said: *"Marriage and family responsibilities definitely affect women's careers. If such constraints are excluded, women's position within the travel business will be much better"* (PrS/Acc1-M).

A male General Manager attributed women's low representation in the management of the Egyptian travel agencies to their increased involvement in family responsibilities. Accordingly, women fail to invest enough time in their careers and hence become less eligible for promotion to the managerial positions that require full-time dedication.

*The low representation of women in the management of the Egyptian travel agencies is not because they are less efficient than men but because their personal circumstances in relation to family, children and social burdens often prevent them from devoting enough time to their careers.*

(PrT/GM1-M)

Interviewees further indicated that reaching a managerial position in the Egyptian travel business, especially at the senior levels, is a quite difficult aim to achieve. Managerial positions require extended effort, complete dedication and a lot of travel for business purposes. Such requirements are not easy to fulfil by married women in an eastern society like Egypt. The mission becomes rather difficult, and probably impossible, if the woman is pregnant or raises

## Chapter 7: Personal factors influencing women's career development

young children. Traditionally, women are the principle home carers regardless of being involved in paid work or not. Therefore, they might not be able to cope with the overstressing pressures of holding managerial positions. A female tour operator summarised the whole story in brief saying, *"It is very difficult for a married woman to meet with the requirements of management in the travel business* (PrS/TO4-F). A male Deputy General Manager added:

*Management is a tedious job that requires much effort and complete dedication. If the woman's personal circumstances are not suitable it will be difficult for her to reach a managerial position in the Egyptian travel business.*

(PrT/ DGM1-M)

An employer confirmed the two above-mentioned quotes rather precisely as he said:

*Women cannot cope with the demands of managerial positions in the travel business except under very special conditions that rarely exist in Egypt. I know some very successful Egyptian women managers but I believe that their success is very much related to the suitability of their personal circumstances that enable them to pursue career without interruption. Suitable circumstances might be being unmarried, having no children, strong support of husband, extended family support and/or financial ability to depend on external paid labour support.*

(EM1-M)

Most interviewees were of the opinion that women's success in career development in the Egyptian travel business depends on their marital status. Generally speaking, career opportunities open for married women responsible for children and families are always less than those available for the unmarried women or women with no children. Commenting on this observation a male information technology specialist said:

*Reaching a managerial position in the travel business is difficult for married women especially those who have small children as they have obligations towards their families and thus, their time cannot be completely devoted to their jobs.*

(PuS/ITS1-M)

As a matter of fact, sacrifice with the familial life is in many cases the cost paid by women for career development. Women willing to build a career usually remain single or delay marriage and, if married, they either decide not to have children or neglect familial responsibilities. In most cases, such women frequently get divorced. In Egypt, women cannot have it all as the success in one field is often accompanied by sacrifice and failure in another. In practice, men are completely insulated from these life challenges and, thus, act as significant barriers to women's advancement.

#### **7.4.1.d Work/family conflicts**

Work/family conflicts occur whenever women's familial obligations contradict with their work responsibilities or vice versa. Examples of such conflicts are when a child's overnight illness leads to tardiness or reduced functioning at work or when long hours at work prevent a woman from devoting the usual time or energy to family responsibilities (Powell, 1993).

My research findings brought to light the fact that working women having suitable personal circumstances less likely suffer work/family conflicts. Meanwhile, women bound to social obligations towards their families, having childcare difficulties or lacking support suffer work/family conflicts and cannot achieve as much progress in the business as their more privileged counterparts. Normally, they require a much longer time to reach a managerial position (if they could reach it) because they are less capable of devoting enough effort and time to their careers. In that respect, a male tour operator said, *"After marriage, women are bound to familial obligations. Most of their time and effort are*

*devoted to their families. This attitude reflects negative effects on their career progression opportunities"* (PrS/TO1- M). A male tourism specialist added:

*Among my female colleagues, those who were totally devoted to their jobs became managers while those who failed to give enough time and effort to work because of their familial and social burdens achieved no progress.*

(PuS/TS2-M)

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined three types of work/ family conflicts:

**"time-based conflict", "strain-based conflict" and "behaviour-based conflict"**. Time-based conflict results from the limited time that is available to handle both work and family roles. Strain-based conflict results when strain in one role spills over into the other role. Behaviour-based conflict occurs when incompatible behaviours are required for work and family roles. Interviewees and focus group participants referred to both time-based and strain-based conflicts as factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies but none of them referred to the behaviour-based conflict. This is, apparently, because behaviours are so ingrained in the Egyptian society to the extent that they are not subject to articulation or question.

#### **7.4.1.d.1 Time-based conflict**

Time limitations due to women's familial responsibilities may stand as an obstacle for women's full involvement in the different activities of the travel business, particularly those practised at anti-social hours. In Egypt, most of the married women tend to avoid getting involved in such activities and, thus decrease their opportunities for career progression. A male tourism specialist said, *"One of the main obstacles facing women's career development in the*



*Egyptian travel agencies is time. If women are not fully dedicated to their jobs they cannot achieve career progression” (PuS/TS2-M).*

Women's familial responsibilities are always at the core of their time-based conflict problems as a male tour operator said, *“Because married women are always loaded with familial responsibilities and have no opportunity to invest extra time in their jobs they often have slow or no career progression in the travel business (PuS/TO1-M).* A female senior tourism specialist also commented, *“Most married women are not fully dedicated to their jobs. They devote plenty of time to fulfil familial commitments. As a result, their career advancement tends to be rather slow” (PuM/STS1-W).*

### **7.4.1.d.2 Strain-based conflict**

In oriental societies, women are traditionally responsible for all parental and household duties regardless of whether they work or not. Culturally, women ought to prioritise familial responsibilities over anything else including, of course, work. Meanwhile, men - who are the principal breadwinners - are required to work only and when they return home they just sit and relax without sharing in parental or household responsibilities. Unemployed women cope with such situations easily while working women, especially those raising young children, hardly manage to live with it. On the other side, employers always expect women to perform at work as equally as men without any consideration to their personal problems. Under these circumstances, women are required to seek a balance between familial responsibilities and work obligations. In their attempt to achieve such a balance they always suffer the strain-based conflict. Commenting on this type of conflict a male tourism

consultant said, *"Women are overloaded with familial burdens in addition to their work obligations while men have nothing to think about except work"*

(TC2-M). A female counter supervisor added:

*At work, women are committed to the same work hours and workload. When they return home, they are required to do all the housework and look after the children as well while their husbands sit and relax. Egyptian men are convinced that their sole duty towards the family is to work and earn living.*

(PrM/CS3-F)

A male tourism specialist further added:

*In the travel business, married women whose personal circumstances allow them to be totally devoted for their jobs succeed in building careers while those who are stressed by family burdens fail to achieve career progression.*

(PuS/TS2-M)

### **7.4.1.e Career interruptions**

It has been indicated earlier that, in many cases, the familial responsibilities of working women might force them to career interruptions and, consequently, negatively affect their career prospects in the workplace. A tourism consultant highlighted this issue saying:

*In the Egyptian travel business, men have better career opportunities than women. Men persevere their careers without interruption while women, especially those who have young children, are often forced to career interruptions under the pressure of familial burdens.*

(TC1-M)

Commenting on the same issue a female counter supervisor added:

*Because of parental responsibilities and familial obligations women frequently have career breaks like maternity and childcare leaves, which interrupt their career progression. On the contrary, men are rarely subject to career interruptions whatever happens in their private lives.*

(PrM/CS3-F)

## **Chapter 7: Personal factors influencing women's career development**

Interviewees and focus group participants agreed that one of the recognised factors causing career interruptions for working women is the variety of leave they are entitled for and mostly compelled to take to be able to cope with their parental and familial responsibilities. The Egyptian labour law entitles women working for the government, public sector and private sector establishments for a three-month "***paid maternity leave***" for every delivery. Government and public sector women employees are also entitled for up to three years of "***unpaid childcare leave***" twice throughout worklife as well as for "***unpaid special leave***" of up to ten consecutive or separate years to join their husbands who work abroad and keep holding their jobs along such long periods. Meanwhile, private sector women employees including of course those working for the private travel agencies are not entitled to the childcare or special leaves and, if circumstances impose the need for any of these leaves women employees have to leave their jobs. Later, they might be able to return to their original jobs or to hold new jobs, according to job market circumstances, but only after a period of unemployment. All women employees are also entitled to "***paid breast-feeding hours***" for one year after every delivery. Such interruption(s), particularly with a very delicate and dynamic industry like tourism and travel business, lead to great skill and experience variations between those who maintain their jobs continuously and those who are out of the business, may be, for relatively long periods. Consequently, career interruptions drastically affect career development.

In practice, childcare leaves are the most common in the travel business. Women returning back to work after a childcare or a special leave rarely have the same jobs they used to occupy before they quit unless the travel agencies

## Chapter 7: Personal factors influencing women's career development

are in great need of their experience. Very frequently, however, women working for the private travel agencies loose their jobs forever when they quit working because of parental or familial obligations. Most of the interviewees pointed out that the majority of the Egyptian women prefer to prioritise social life to career development as soon as they become mothers. A male tourism manager commented on this saying:

*Most of the Egyptian women prefer to quit work and stay at home after having the first baby. They prioritise their children to any other interest. At least 75% of those women stay at home for the first two years after delivery.*

(PrM/ TM2-M)

Several interviewees pinpointed that, in Egypt, as well as in other oriental societies **“men's careers take precedence to women's careers”** (see pages 9-17 to 9-20). Culturally, men are always regarded as the primary financial sponsors to their families and the main breadwinners while women, in most cases, are the weak partners who are expected to sacrifice their careers for the sake of husbands whenever women fail to co-ordinate between work responsibilities and familial obligations. A male finance manager commented on this issue saying:

*When women fail to co-ordinate between job responsibilities and familial obligations they might decide to quit working, forget about career and willingly give precedence to their husbands' careers. Classically, women are expected to be the first to sacrifice for the sake of the family.*

(PrM/FM1-M)

A female sales manager further commented on the same issue saying:

*Working women may face pitfalls in their career path especially when they have small children. If a working woman has childcare problems she or her husband has to quit working to take care of the baby(s). Of course it will not be the husband who will quit simply because, traditionally, men's careers take precedence to those of women. The option will be that she*

## **Chapter 7: Personal factors influencing women's career development**

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*herself quits work for sometime and sacrifices for the sake of the family. Such sacrifice will eventually be a barrier for her career advancement when she decides to return to work again.*

(PrM/SM1-F)

Women in Egypt, like women anywhere, tend to make more accommodations to the family and social life than men. As a result, women's careers are more likely to be affected by familial concerns rather than men's careers. Accommodations made by the married women to satisfy marriage and family demands along their work life like unpaid childcare leave and / or special leave (career breaks) certainly have a negative impact on the opportunities for their career development. On one hand, career interruptions widen the promotional gaps between women and their male competitor counterparts as well as between them and their unmarried and/or childless female colleagues. Unmarried and childless females can pursue careers without interruption and possibly reach managerial positions whereas those who are married and bound to social obligations towards their families seldom achieve much progress. On the other hand, career interruptions enhance employers' negative expectations of women's dedication to their jobs which may, in many cases, lead to favouring men to women when taking recruitment or promotion decisions. A male employer owning a large travel agency stressed on the reflections of married women's career interruptions on the business as well as on his recruitment or promotion decisions saying:

*Women take plenty of leaves because of their familial responsibilities. They never can be as dedicated or keen to build careers as men. I always have a problem in recruiting or promoting a woman for a managerial position especially if she is married and raises children. If I have to recruit or promote a woman she must be at least ten times better than the best available male competitor. The business is time and money and I am not ready to waste my resources with women taking leaves*

*from time to time. I need the fully dedicated person. I prefer the man. He saves me time and money.*

(EM2-M)

#### **7.4.2 Individual-related factors**

The ways in which people think and feel about work (work orientation) closely relate to their wider political and religious doctrines and to their general cultural orientations. The concept of “*work orientation*” (the meaning attached by individuals to their work which predisposes them to both think and act in particular ways with regard to that work) is used to investigate the various ways in which different individuals or groups approach their work. This concept takes as its starting point the fundamental distinction between two extreme ideal types of work meaning: “*the expressive meaning*” (the work which gives intrinsic satisfactions) and “*the instrumental meaning*” (the work which gives extrinsic satisfactions). The expressive meaning involves perceiving work as an enriching experience, a challenge to the individual and a means to develop and fulfil self whereas the instrumental meaning involves perceiving that work yields no value in itself, work becomes a means to an end and human satisfaction or fulfilment is sought outside work (Watson, 1987).

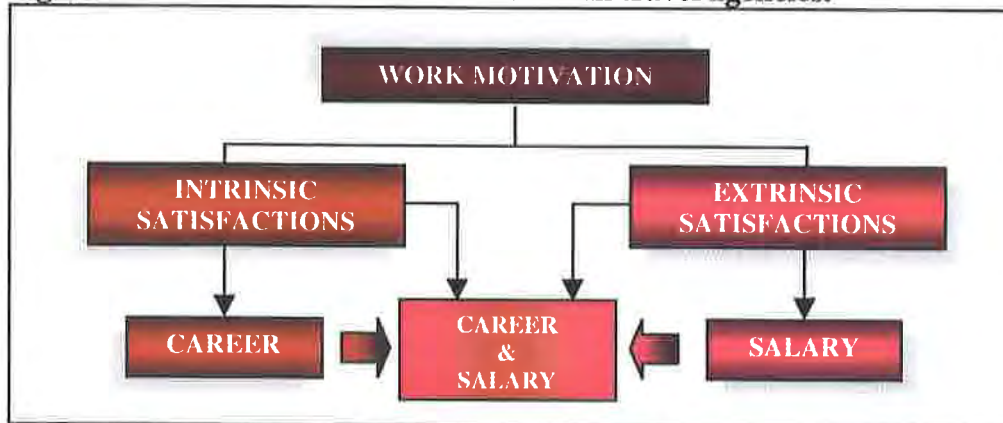
Evidence derived from the interviews and focus groups indicated that besides the implications of the formerly discussed family-related factors on women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies women themselves – as individuals - play a significant role in tracking their career paths within the business. This role is governed by what I refer to here as the “individual-related factors” and will classify into two groups: work motivation and career choices.

**7.4.2.a Work motivation**

According to Halford *et al.* (1997) women, as a group, are heterogeneous and diverse. They hold different values, aspirations and attitudes about their careers. Hakim (1996) pointed to the emergence of two different groups of women with different levels of work commitment. The first group includes women who are committed to paid work and give priority to employment careers (career women) whereas the second group includes women who are uncommitted to the labour market and give priority to their domestic lives if they worked at all (homemakers).

Reviewing the comments of the interviewees and focus group participants in relation to the work motivation factor revealed that women working for – or anticipating working for - the Egyptian travel agencies are driven by one of two motives: either the desire to build a career (intrinsic satisfaction) or the need for a salary (extrinsic satisfaction). However, some women might be motivated by a combination of both motives (see the diagram in Figure 7.4).

**Figure 7.4: Motivation for women's work in travel agencies.**



Based on the comments on the work motivation factor, women working for the Egyptian travel agencies fell into one of the three following distinct categories: “*career-oriented women*”, “*family-oriented women*” and “*career-and-family women*”. These categories seem to be more or less related to the types of concerns that influence the lives of women as identified by Powell (1993:196-197):

*There seems to be two types of concerns that influence the lives of women who are working, contemplating working or temporarily not working: (a) concerns about career and personal achievements at work (called “concern for career” for short) and (b) concerns about family and personal relationships outside of work (called “concern for relationships” or “concern for others” for short). At any point in time women may place primary emphasis on career and personal achievements at work, place primary emphasis on family and personal relationships outside of work, or try to strike some kind of balance between the two.*

#### **7.4.2.a.1 Career-oriented women**

Members of this category may be defined as “**women who prioritise the work role to the family role and aspire to career development**”. As revealed by the interviewees and focus group participants, career-oriented women in the Egyptian travel business are very few but successful. In most cases they are either unmarried (single, divorced or widows) or childless. In that respect, a male General Manager said:

*Very few women succeeded in having recognised career in the Egyptian travel business. In most cases they were single, divorced or widows. The limited examples of successful married women whom I know have no children. To the best of my knowledge, they entirely ignored their familial responsibilities.*  
(PrT/GM1-M)

The characteristic features of this group of women are their prominent ambition, great aspiration to achieve progress in their working lives and



tendency to sacrifice marriage and family for the sake of career. They are keen to avoid any circumstances that might retard or frustrate their career advancement or weaken their capacity to compete on an equal basis with their male counterparts. To avoid interrupting their careers they may choose to remain single or decide not to have children if they are married. Such attitude, which is regarded quite common in the Egyptian context, might be regarded as uncommon and unusual from a Western concept. However, those who have families always prioritise career to family demands. A male employer commented on these characteristic features saying:

*Successful women aspiring to career in the travel business are too ambitious, ready to sacrifice anything for career advancement and challenge the circumstances that might frustrate or decrease their ability to compete with male counterparts. They tend to remain single, decide not to have children if married and always neglect the family concerns.*

(EM3-M)

#### **7.4.2.a.2 Family-oriented women**

Members of this category may be defined as **“women who prioritise the family role to the work role and have no aspirations whatsoever in career development”**. In the Egyptian travel business, family-oriented women represent a majority among women employees. They might be single females awaiting marriage or already married women having family burdens. Single family-oriented females have an increased interest in domestic life and a poor desire for building careers as a single female accountant said *“If work contradicted with my family demands after marriage I will quit work and stay at home”* (PrS/Acc3-F).

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Some family-oriented single females look at work as a temporary means of keeping themselves busy until getting married or as an opportunity to get exposed to the community hoping to find their future husband. Once they get married, family and social life come on top of their priorities. A male employer commented on this issue saying:

*It is good for a single female to work for a travel agency and have the opportunity to meet clients one of whom might be the future husband. After marriage she loses interest in work and the family becomes her top priority.*

(EM2-M)

Another group of family-oriented women aspires to a career as long as they are single and forget about it after marriage quite possibly because of the additional responsibilities of the family. A male tourism consultant said: *"Women are ambitious to career as long as they have no other priorities. Once they have husbands and families their work takes a late priority"* (TCI-M). A male tourism manager ascertained this attitude as he added: *"Some women are ambitious to build themselves career as long as they are single but soon after marriage their ambitions freeze and they become more involved in private life and less interested in work"* (PrM/TM1-M). A female Deputy General manager further commented on the same issue saying, *"Single female tourism graduates are enthusiastic to work and prove themselves in the business but soon after they get married they lose both enthusiasm and interest in work"* (PrT/DGM4-F).

A third type of the family-oriented women are those who *"do not regard career as a principal aim and work just because they need the salary"* (PrM/TM1-M). In fact, *"They never hesitate to quit work if their husband are well off and can afford all family needs"* (FGXa-F4). Although they are mainly

interested in domestic life and almost have no career intentions they cannot quit work due to economic reasons. As a result of their family-oriented nature, *"they become more committed to family rather than to work and achieve no career advancement"* (PrS/TO4-F).

#### **7.4.2.a.3 Career-and-family women**

Members of this category are defined as **"women who simultaneously place equal emphasis on the work role and the family role and aspire to both career development and successful domestic life at the same time"**. To fulfil their aspirations, they struggle hard to strike a kind of balance between work responsibilities and familial obligations aiming to simultaneously perform both duties properly and successfully. Married women might succeed in achieving this goal when their husbands decide to get involved in the domestic realm.

Several interviewees pointed out that career-and-family women struggle hard to create some sort of balance between work and family. A male General Manager said, *"Women aspiring to achieve success in both work and family life must struggle hard to balance between job responsibilities and family obligations"* (PuT/GM1-M). A male counter supervisor added, *"Although it is tough for married women to balance between work and family demands some of them might succeed in realising such difficult equation"* (PrM/CS1-M). Another female counter supervisor further added, *"Some women are highly organised. They can balance precisely between work and family and both go well"* (PrM/CS3-F).

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Married women who succeed in managing between work and family are regarded, as described by Powell (1993), as “**superwomen**”. According to the latter author, superwomen may experience high levels of success in both spheres of life (career and family) but they also experience high levels of stress. In that respect a female counter supervisor said: “*Women who can manage to balance between work and family often suffer a lot of stress*” (PrM/CS4-F).

Although career-and family women succeed in maintaining careers, the rate of their career development tends to be slower than that of their male or unmarried female counterparts as they always make accommodations to family concerns along their career path. According to Powell (1993: 197) they “*are likely to be concerned both with career and others at all times*” However, “*They place different degrees of emphasis on career versus others in their actions and decisions at different times*”. By time, “*Superwomen recognise the difficulty of being “super” in all areas of their lives at once and cut back in their emphasis on either career or relationships. Only then they accept the notion of trade-offs*”. In line with the aforesaid statement the owner of a travel agency told me the following story:

*My wife used to work with me here for several years. She was very active and efficient. After we had our first child she tried to manage between childcare difficulties and work responsibilities. This put her under continuous stress but she struggled to continue working until we had our second child. At this point, she realised that it is impossible to maintain the balance between work and family. Finally, she decided to quit work until the children grow up”.*

(EM3-M)

In their attempt to become superwomen, career-and-family women working for the Egyptian travel agencies rely on different sorts of support to pursue their career without or with minimum interruption such as the assistance of husbands, extended family support and external paid labour support. A female Deputy General Manager commented on this issue saying, *"No woman can be equally successful at both work and home unless she receives support from her husband and family"* (PrT/DGM4-F). A female academic added *"Certain factors help women to manage between work and home such as the assistance of husbands, extended family support and or the availability of some one to look after the children"* (AC4-F).

In conclusion, my arguments with the female tourism students who participated in the focus groups suggest that women's aspirations for the future are quite sharply and evenly divided between those who wanted a career and those who were family-oriented. Only a small minority (two participants) felt that they could combine career and family life successfully.

#### **7.4.2.b Career choices**

In the Western literature on women's work the term "career choices" is commonly used to refer to the choices between full-time and part-time jobs (e.g. Hakim, 1996; Crompton, 1997). As almost all jobs in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies are full-time while part-time jobs rarely exist, the Western perception of this term seemed to be irrelevant to Egypt. Therefore, I felt it suitable to use the same term in a quite different sense to refer to women's choices between the public and private sector travel agencies as well

as to their choices between the two work patterns practised in the travel business: office work and operational work. In fact, women's career choices between public and private sector agencies or between office and operation work patterns are closely related to the advantages and disadvantages of each sector or work pattern which are discussed below.

### **7.4.2.b.1 Advantages and disadvantages of working for public and private travel agencies**

- **Public travel agencies**

A female senior tourism specialist working for a public travel agency summarised **the advantages** of women working for the public sector agencies saying:

*Public sector agencies offer women – especially those who are married and have children – more suitable work circumstances than the private sector agencies. In the public sector, workload is less and working hours are also less. There are plenty of official holidays and opportunities for having unpaid leaves for childcare reasons or accompanying husbands abroad. There is no restriction for employing veiled women and no obligation to wearing special socially unacceptable agency uniforms as is the case of the private sector. Salaries are not affected by the ups and downs of the business. No one has the right to fire a public sector employee unless he or she is trailed, condemned and punished by special investigation and trial committees. Opportunities for senior management positions in the public sector agencies are open for both men and women on equal basis.*

(PuM / STS1-W)

A female student further added that work circumstances in the public sector agencies are rather suitable for women's work than the circumstances in the private travel agencies as she said:

*If a single female looks at the future and takes into consideration the fact that eventually she will have a family, she better chooses working for the public sector where work circumstances are more suitable and the effort required is less.*

(FGXb-F3)

As for **the disadvantages** of women's work for the public travel agencies, a female counter supervisor working for a private travel agency commented:

*Salaries are less and career progression opportunities are quite slow in the public sector agencies than in the private sector ones. Also, the experience gained from working for the public agencies is comparatively much less than that gained from working for the private agencies.*

(PrM/CS2-F)

Also a female tourism student referred to the limited employment opportunities as an additional disadvantage of the public sector travel agencies and said:

*There are only two public travel agencies in Egypt. Job opportunities in these agencies are too few to meet with the increasing numbers of tourism graduates year after another.*

(FGXb-F5)

- **Private travel agencies**

A male tourism consultant briefly mentioned **the advantages** of work for private travel agencies saying:

*There are more job opportunities in the private than in the public sector travel agencies. In the private agencies, salaries are higher, career progression opportunities are better and acquired work experience is quite more.*

(TC2- M)

Commenting on **the disadvantages** of work for the private travel agencies a female counter supervisor added:

*Work for the private travel agencies is tough, tiresome and exhausting. It involves long work hours and plenty of travel. In the private travel agencies women might be prevented from putting on veils or compelled to wear agency uniforms that are in some cases culturally unacceptable.*

(PrM/CS3-F)

#### **7.4.2.b.2 Advantages and disadvantages of office work and operation**

Work in the travel business has a very distinctive nature. It has two main patterns: office work and operational jobs (ground handling). A male finance

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manager said, *"Work in travel agencies covers two areas: office work or indoor jobs and operational or out door jobs"* (PrM/FM1-M).

- **Office work**

Office work has the **advantages** of taking place indoors, at regular work hours and involving no anti-social work activities. A male employer commented on this saying, *"In the travel business, office work is suitable for women because it takes place indoors at regular work hours and involves no anti-social activities"* (EM1-M). A female counter supervisor justified why office work matches the circumstances of married women as she added, *"One of the advantages of office work in the travel business is that it does not involve long extra work hours. A second advantage is that it requires no travel"* (PrM/CS3F).

Meanwhile, office work in the travel agencies has **three disadvantages**: it pays less, yields relatively less experience and allows fewer opportunities for upward career mobility. Referring to these disadvantages a female employer said:

*In the travel business, indoor jobs provide relatively lower salaries than outdoor jobs. Office work also yields relatively less experience in the field and allows relatively fewer opportunities for career progression.*

(EM4-F)

- **Operational jobs**

Operational work has the **advantages** that it pays more, yields more gained experience and offers good opportunities for upwards career mobility. Comparing between office work and operational work a male General Manager



of a private travel agency told me that *“Operational activities offer better salaries, better experience in the business and better opportunities for upwards mobility”* (PrT/GM 1-M).

The **disadvantages** of operational work include the need for too much effort, working outdoors anytime day and night and involving plenty of travel. A male tour operator referred to these disadvantages saying, *“Operational work is a difficult and tedious job that needs much effort, requires plenty of time and involves a lot of travel. It is quite difficult for a married woman to practice such type of work”* (PrS/TO3-M). Another female tour operator added, *“Operational work is an exhausting job that requires long time, much effort and full dedication day and night. I think no married woman can cope with the tough requirements of operational work* (PrS/TO3-F). A male counter supervisor further added:

*Long and anti-social work hours are among the disadvantages of operational work in travel agencies. I believe that this type of work is totally unsuitable for women especially if they are married and have children.*

(PrM/CS1-M)

#### **7.4.2.b.3- Reflections on women's career choices**

The comments of interviewees and focus group participants revealed that women's career choices in the Egyptian travel agencies largely depend on their work motivation, marital status and cultural background.

- **On career-oriented women**

Career-oriented women challenge the business as well as the cultural mores. They are always ready to accept any job opportunity that leads them to rapid

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career advancement regardless of any accompanying disadvantages or cultural and social constraints. As a result, career-oriented women tend to prefer working for the private agencies to the public ones. They also tend to expand their experience in the business through tackling all work fields and thus welcome working in operation and ground handling activities. Because of their ambition and eagerness to build careers they may make concessions like remaining single, delaying marriage and if they are married they may decide not to have children. These are exclusively seen as women's problems which men don't suffer from. In many cases, career-oriented women do not pay enough attention to their familial responsibilities and, consequently, destroy their social lives. Commenting on this issue a male tourism student said, "*The absence of women from their homes for long periods creates social problems that may end up by divorce or the husband gets married to another woman*" (FGXa-M4).

Several interviewees and focus groups participants commented on women's concessions for building career in the Egyptian travel agencies. A male academic said: "*The cost for women's career progression in the Egyptian travel agencies is always no familial life*" (AC3-M). A female tour operator added, "*Women can boost their career in the travel business but at the cost of their private life*" (PrS/TO5-F). Concessions that might be made by career-oriented women are:

- No marriage is a frequent concession made by ambitious women to pursue career in the Egyptian travel business as single women may have better career development opportunities than married ones. A male

employer said, *"Unmarried women represent a phenomenon in the Egyptian travel agencies"* (EM3-M). A male academic added, *"Most of the successful women in the Egyptian travel agencies are either unmarried or divorced"* (AC3-M). A female tourism student further added, *"Many of the women holding managerial positions in the Egyptian travel agencies are not married"* (FGXb-F3).

- Delaying marriage is another concession made by career-oriented women to save ample time for building up their careers. On such concession, a male employer commented:

*Some of the women working for the Egyptian travel agencies remain unmarried until the age of 40 years or more. They never regret it because they know that delaying marriage is the option to remain fully dedicated to their jobs and have career.*

(EM3-M)

A male tourism student further commented:

*One of the sacrifices given by the women working for travel agencies and highly interested in career is delaying marriage until they may reach the age of fifty years or more. They devote 100% of their time to their jobs, and are always very successful at work. They have no husband, childcare or familial responsibilities.*

(FGXa-M1)

- Having no children is a third concession. Women working for Egyptian travel agencies and interested in maintaining both career development and social familial life as well may practice a mid-way solution by deciding not to have children. A male academic commented on this attitude saying:

*Challenging nature, some of the married women working for travel agencies decide not to have children. They do so to hardly manage between their work responsibilities and career aspirations on one hand and their obligations towards their husbands and families on the other hand.*

(AC3-M)

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- Getting divorced is sometimes, the price paid by career-oriented women who neglect their familial obligations in order to maintain career advancement. Several interviewees contributed to the issue of divorce among women working for the Egyptian travel agencies. A male academic said, *"Many women in the Egyptian travel business get divorced"* (AC3-M). A female counter supervisor added, *"Women's strong dedication to their jobs in the Egyptian travel agencies may lead them to get divorced"* (PrM/CS3-F). A male employer further added:

*The rate of divorce is very high in the Egyptian tourism industry. Almost one of every two married women I know gets divorced. Husbands cannot understand or appreciate the challenges for women's work in travel agencies and this leads to divorce.*

(EM3-M)

### • On family-oriented women

Family-oriented women are – by nature – not willing to work. They prefer to be unemployed, and if they do work they are not interested in what they are doing. Confirming such attitudes, a female tourism student said:

*I am created a female to form a new family. My principal duty in life is to take care of my husband and raise my children not to work in tourism or any other job. When it comes to the choice between work and family I will, certainly choose the family. It is nature. If any female denies this, I think, she is not fair with herself.*

(FGXb-F7)

Another female tourism student ascertained the same perception and said:

*My husband and family deserve all my time and attention. My natural function in the society is to raise a new generation. If I have to choose between work and family I will, no doubt choose the family. Frankly speaking, I don't like to suffer the stress of work.*

(FGXa-F1)

A third female tourism student further supported the above view of prioritising family to work and emphasised that, for women, work is not as important as the family as she said:

*For women, work is not as important as the family. As for me, I prefer to devote myself to my family rather than anything else. Taking care of the family is the sacred mission of any woman. The family is the future. It is the everlasting thing.*

(FGXa-F3)

Some men also have similar perceptions regarding women's choices between family and work. A male tourism student argued that, from a religious point of view, the most important function of women in the society is to take care of the family and home as he said:

*The Islamic religion sharply defines certain functions for women in the society. The most important of these functions is to take care of her husband, home and children. To fulfil this function properly she must be totally devoted to her familial duties. If she does so she will not have enough time for work.*

(FGXa-M3)

A male accountant added, "*Personally, I don't recommend that my sister or wife work. I decided not to allow my wife to work because I am convinced that she has plenty of more important things to do at home*" (PrS/Acc2-M). A finance manager further added "*Taking care of the husband, children and home is more valuable for woman than work*" (PrM/FM1-M).

Family-oriented women might have the desire to work as long as they are single but they have a predetermined understanding that they will not be able to co-ordinate between work and home after marriage. Therefore, they quit work by marriage time or shortly after it. They take the quitting decision by their

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own will and are totally satisfied with it. A female tourism student made it clear that after graduation she will keep working as long as she is single but by the time she marries she will quit and for good as she said:

*Now I am single. I feel that after graduation I have the right to work and prove myself. When I get married things will change and I will become responsible for my husband and eventually my children. My family deserves all of my time and worth it. I will never hesitate to quit work for good. I will not regret this decision but, on the contrary, I will be happy and satisfied with it.*

(FGXb-F5)

In practice, some family-oriented single females - who work because they only need a salary - are ready to quit after marriage if their husbands are well off. Some other women, although family-oriented by nature, choose to continue working after marriage because of their need for the additional income they get from their jobs. Unwillingly, those become more tied to familial concerns rather than to work. As a matter of fact, I noticed that none of the women interviewees or focus group participants touched this point, probably because they felt shy to talk about it, and I was keen to respect their feelings. However, I have to refer here that in a developing country like Egypt it is common that women work to share the cost of living with their husbands. Such change in ideology is expected to relax the stresses put on working women in the future.

In that respect a male tourism consultant commented:

*During the last 40 years the Egyptian society stood on the 'family double-income' principle. Nowadays, it is difficult or almost impossible for a large number of Egyptian families to cover the cost of living depending only on the husband's salary. Thus, the wife's salary represents a necessary contribution to the family's income. Further increase of the economic pressures will, subsequently, maximise more and more the need for wives' financial contributions to family income.*

(TC1-M)

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When family-oriented women enter the job market they seek for the non-tedious jobs that require the least effort, take minimum responsibilities and offer maximum advantages. Thus, in most cases, they prefer working for the public travel agencies to the private agencies. When employed by private agencies they choose office work while almost none of them accept to hold operational and ground handling jobs.

Almost all interviewees agreed that women working for the private travel agencies choose indoors or office work and try to avoid outdoor or operational work. A male counter supervisor said, *"In the travel business, women often tend to work indoors and avoid outdoor work"* (PrM/CS1-M). Another female counter supervisor added, *"In the travel business there are some jobs that are socially unsuitable for women like ground handling. Most women prefer office work"* (PrM/CS3-F). A male accountant further added, *"If women have the opportunity to choose they won't choose working in outdoor activities. They prefer office work"* (PrS/Acc1-M).

- **On career -and-family women**

Career choices for career-and-family women integrate the choices of both career-oriented and family-oriented women. This particular group of women chooses work and family together and keeps equal balance between the two spheres of life. Successful career-and-family women are superwomen. A male tour operator commented on superwomen saying, *"Any woman who manages successfully between her work responsibilities and familial life deserves all respect and appreciation"* (PrS/TO7-M).

In an endeavour to co-ordinate between the interest in building a promising career on one hand and maintaining a happy family life on the other, superwomen yield to cut on their emphasis either on career aspirations or family concerns at different stages of their life. In that respect, career-and-family women working for the Egyptian travel agencies choose one or more of three options: career breaks, preference of indoors office work and/or reluctance for holding managerial jobs.

Reluctance for holding managerial jobs is a frequent attitude among career-and-family women. Although they feel confident that they are capable of taking the responsibilities of the managerial jobs they reject them by their own will because they cannot devote the extra time required for such jobs. As a result, the rate of career advancement for career-and-family women is slower than that for their men or career-oriented women competitor counterparts. Several interviewees referred to the reluctance of career-and-family women for holding managerial positions and pointed out that 'lack of time' and 'need for extra effort' limitations are the main reasons for this type of attitude. A female senior tourism specialist working for a public travel agency said, "*If the agency promotes me to a higher managerial position I won't accept it. I need no more demands on my time*" (PuM/STS1-F). Also a female tour operator working for a private agency added, "*Women themselves may not accept promotion to managerial jobs because they are busy with their families and need no more demands on their time*" (PuS/TO1-F). A female academic, who previously worked as a tour operator in a private travel agency for seven years, further added:



*Married women think for long before they accept promotion to managerial positions in the travel business. Management is a tough job that requires full dedication, meetings, conferences, travels abroad and keeps her busy all the time. Responding to such requirements will be too difficult or almost impossible for a married woman responsible for children and a family.*

(AC4-F)

Men also expressed similar views as a male tourism consultant said, *"Sometimes women themselves do not want to hold the managerial positions"* (TC1-M). A male General Manager further commented, *"Rejection for holding managerial positions may come from women themselves who refuse to take over the responsibilities of these positions due to lack of time and commitment to familial obligations"* (PrT/GM1-M). A male Deputy General Manager added:

*Sometimes women may refuse promotion to managerial positions in the travel agencies. To them, promotion means more responsibility than they can bear, more time than they can devote and more effort than they can afford. They are loaded with familial responsibilities and cannot suffer any more burdens.*

(PrT/DGM2-M)

### **7.5 Summary**

Two sub-groups of personal factors influence women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies: the family-related and the individual-related factors. Family-related factors include "parents' attitude towards unmarried daughters", "husbands' attitude towards wives careers", "dual career demands", "work/family conflicts" (which are either time-based or strain-based or both) and "career interruptions". Individual related-factors include "work motivation" and "career choices". Women are divided according to work motivation as career-oriented, family-oriented and career-and-family women. Career-oriented and career-and-family women are very few while

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family-oriented women represent a majority. As for career choices, women usually prefer to work for the public travel agencies than the private ones and in both sectors they prefer office work to outdoor jobs.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

#### **8.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter explores the organisational factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. It is based on qualitative evidence derived from the interviews and focus groups. Identified organisational factors are: the initial staffing decisions, promotion decisions, family-friendly policies, training opportunities, informal systems of career development, and equal opportunity (EO) policies.

#### **8.2 Classification of organisational factors**

Eighty percent of the interviewed key decision-makers (two employers, two General Managers and four deputy General Managers) claimed that there are no organisational factors that confront women's career advancement in their agencies in particular and in the travel business in general. A female employer explained, *"Nothing confronts women's career development in the travel business as long as they themselves are ready to challenge it without being affected or interrupted by their private personal concerns"* (EM4-F).

However, twenty percent of the interviewed decision-makers (two male employers) expressed negative responses towards women's career progression to managerial positions in the business. One of them said, *"As a general rule leadership is for men"* (EM1-M) and the other added, *"I think twice before*

*promoting a woman to a managerial position. In my opinion, she has to be ten times better than a man candidate to occupy a managerial job” (EM2-M).*

Apart from the views of the decision-makers, the research findings identified six main organisational factors that influence women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. These factors are: *initial staffing decisions, promotion decisions, family-friendly policies, training opportunities, informal systems of career development and equal opportunity (EO) policies* (Figure 8.1).

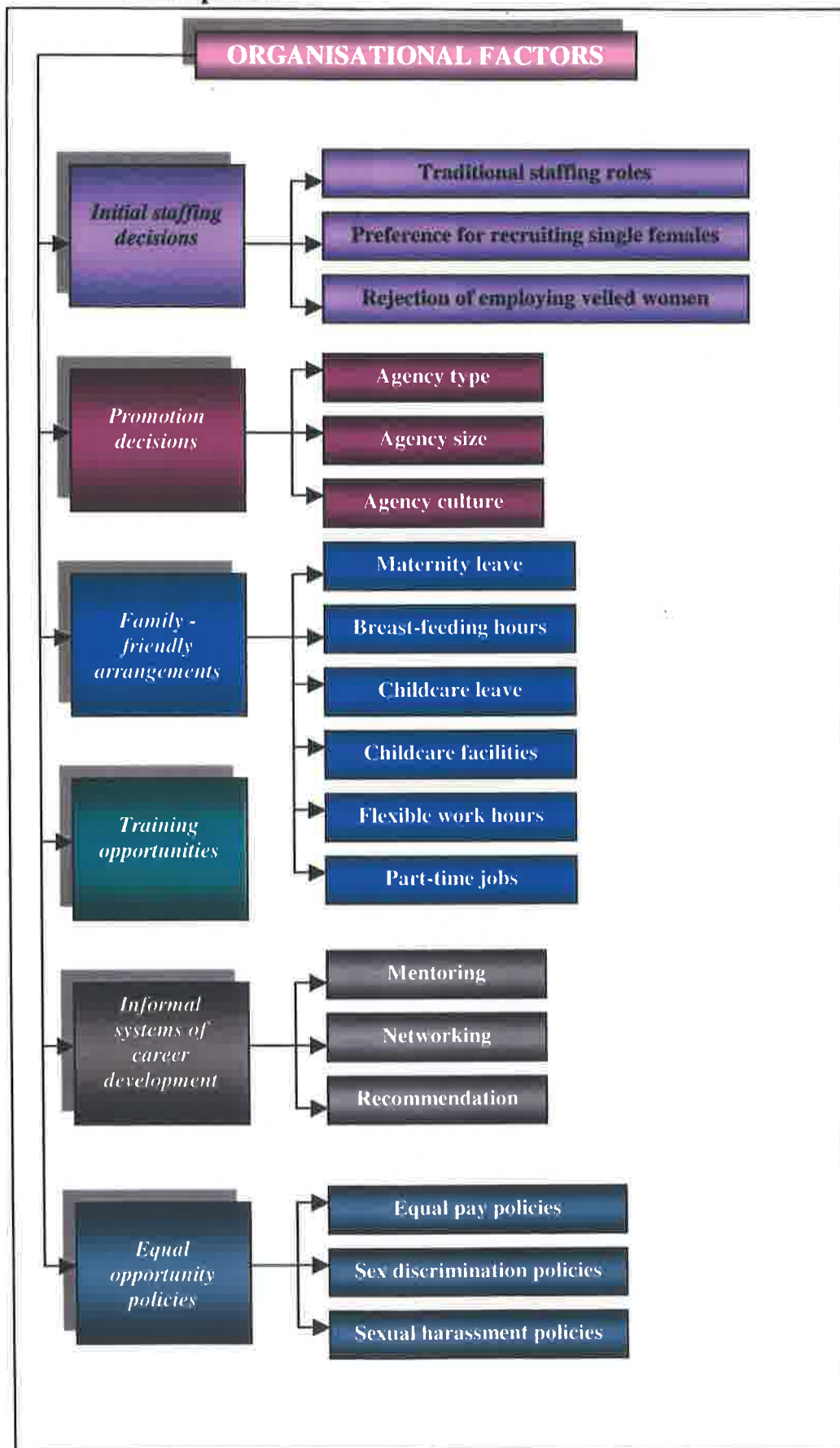
### **8.2.1 Initial staffing decisions**

Based on my personal experience, I would say that the initial staffing decisions might influence women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies through three common practices; first, the traditional staffing roles that impose employing men for certain jobs and women for others, second, the frequent tendency to prefer recruiting unmarried to married women and third, the rejection of employing veiled women.

#### **8.2.1.a Traditional staffing roles**

According to Crompton (1997: 6) “*most societies have allocated particular tasks to men and others to women*”. Alvesson and Billing (1997: 54-55) added that “*there are some areas which are culturally defined as male or female respectively and dependant upon the ideas within the communities about what is a suitable work for women and for men*”.

Figure 8.1: Organisational factors influencing women's career development.



In accordance with the statements of Crompton (1997) and Alvesson and Billing (1997) the research indicated that the initial staffing decisions in the Egyptian travel agencies are strongly controlled by the prevailing socio-cultural mores that make employers tend to employ men in certain jobs and women in others. Traditionally, men are often preferred to occupy the jobs that involve anti-social work patterns as operational activities and ground handling (outdoor jobs) whereas women have better opportunities in office work (indoor jobs), particularly in the activities that involve direct contact with the clients like ticketing, sales and public relations. Summarising the traditional staffing roles in the Egyptian travel agencies a female accountant said, "*The system is built on the principle that women do office work only while all outdoor work is done by men*" (PrS/Acc3-F).

Commenting on the initial staffing roles traditionally practised in favour of men a male General Manager said:

*In recruiting for job vacancies employers take into consideration the nature and requirements of the job. Usually men are preferred for occupying the ground handling jobs that involve long and anti-social work hours which are not culturally suitable for or accepted by women in the Egyptian community.*

(PrT/GM1-M)

A male deputy General Manager explained why men are preferred to women for ground handling and operational jobs saying:

*Ground handling and operational work require being on call 24 hours a day, going to the airport anytime day or night and staying away from home for several successive days. Such work circumstances are definitely unsuitable for women in an eastern society like ours especially if they are married and have children.*

(PrT/GM2-M)

As for the initial staffing roles traditionally practised in favour of women a male sales manager said, *"Owners always prefer employing women in office jobs particularly those that have direct contact with clients"* (PrM/SM2-M). A male tour operator added, *"Most employment opportunities in ticketing departments are for women"* (PrS/TO1-M). Another female tour operator further added: *"Owners often prefer employing women in the ticketing departments because they have excellent capabilities in dealing with clients"* (PrS/TO5-F). A male employer made it rather clear as he said, *"We have to employ females at the counter. It will look odd if they were not there"* (EM2-M).

Based on the above discussed initial staffing roles, the career development opportunities open for women who are mostly employed in office work are comparatively less than those open for men who usually occupy the operational and ground handling jobs. A female Deputy General Manager commented on this issue saying:

*Of course, career progression opportunities available for women are relatively less than those available for men. This is not because women are less qualified or less efficient than men but because the chances of upwards career mobility in the indoor work, where women are commonly employed, are much less than those in the outdoor jobs, where men are commonly employed.*

(PrM/DGM4-F)

A male finance manager attributed staffing indoor jobs by women and outdoor jobs by men to financial reasons as he said:

*Employing women in outdoor jobs is not only rejected by women because it is not suitable for them from a societal point of view but also rejected by the travel agencies because it will cost more to provide women working at night or accompanying*



*groups for several days with safe transportation and single accommodation as set by the labour law.*

(PrM/FM1-M)

#### **8.2.1.b Preference for recruiting single females**

Interviewed decision-makers expressed two different views regarding the initial staffing for the job vacancies that preferably require females. Some of them were totally unbiased for either single or married females while others were in favour of employing only single females. A female employer said, *"I don't care at all whether the female applicant is single or married. I only care about her experience and qualifications"* (EM4-F). Another female Deputy General Manager added, *"In recruiting females, our main concern is the capabilities and experiences regardless of their being single or married"* (PrM/DGM4-F).

On the other hand, a male employer disliked recruiting married women who have young children saying:

*When I am recruiting for a job vacancy that requires a female I go for one of two options; either a recently graduated single female who is young and can be fully dedicated to the job or a woman who already has kids and they are grown ups. Under any circumstances, I will never go for a married woman who is responsible for young children. I hate to go into the dilemma of maternity leave, breast feeding hours and childcare leave...etc. This is dangerous for my business.*

(EM3-M)

A male Deputy General Manager agreed with the idea of preferring unmarried women when taking the initial staffing decisions in the Egyptian travel agencies as he said:

*Although we do not have any reservations regarding employing women, we prefer - at the initial staffing process- to recruit recently graduated young females. Those will be more devoted*

*to their work than the married women - who are often loaded with familial burdens - and will work for the agency for relatively longer periods before they marry and become busy with their families.*

(PrM/DGM2-M)

The tendency of some employers and decision-makers to prefer single females to married women when taking the initial staffing decisions for the job vacancies that preferably require females hinders to some extent the recruitment and, subsequently, career development opportunities available for the married women who - for many reasons - may enter the job market after career breaks or late after marriage.

#### **8.2.1.c Rejection of employing veiled women**

According to the Islamic religion, it is forbidden for any Muslim sexually mature female to expose at anytime any part of her body except for her face and hands in the presence of any sexually mature males excluding the fathers, brothers, uncles, grandfathers and fathers-in-law (The Glorious Qur'an, verse 31, Chapter 24 and verse 56, Chapter 33). Therefore, many Muslim women wear veils and regard veiling as a symbol of female virtue and obedience to god.

In the Egyptian travel business, many employers reject employing veiled women. Several interviewees referred to this phenomenon but none of them gave any justification for its existence. A male tourism consultant said, "*Travel agencies refuse to employ veiled women*" (TC2-M) and a male counter supervisor added, "*Some travel agencies do not employ veiled women at all*

(PrM/CS1-M). A female academic further added, *"There are many red lines against employing veiled women in the Egyptian travel agencies"* (AC4 -F).

Although employers declined to mention any specific reasons for their rejection to employ veiled women I anticipated that they reject them because they refuse to wear the agencies' uniforms or, probably, because the employers fear that clients coming from non-eastern societies might be reluctant to deal with veiled women. My anticipation was based on the comments of two tourism students (a female and a male) who said, *"Some travel agencies regard unveiled women as an attraction factor for clients"*(FGF-F3) and *" Even as trainees, veiled girls are rejected while nice-looking unveiled girls are immediately offered training opportunities* (FGM-M7). Why employers reject employing veiled women? is still an unanswered question. In fact, it is a difficult area to investigate because of its taboo status.

Some Egyptian travel agencies are less conservative regarding employing veiled women. Despite that they refuse employing them for the jobs that involve direct contact with clients, especially counter and sales, they might employ them for other office work activities. A female academic said, *"Some travel agencies refuse to employ veiled women especially at the counter and in sales. However, veiled women may have better opportunities in the departments that do not have direct contact with clients* (AC2-F). A male tourism student added, *"Veiled women may have very limited job opportunities in the Egyptian travel agencies"*(FGM-M5) and a female student further added, *"I trained in a travel agency that allows women employees to wear*

veils" (FGXa-F2). The female academic, who formerly mentioned that "*there are many red lines against employing veiled women in the Egyptian travel agencies*" justified that the future of employing veiled women in these agencies seems to be better saying:

*There is a type of tourism that seems to be very encouraging for veiled women; the religious tourism. Tourism coming from the Arabian Gulf region has plenty of room for veiled women employees. Almost all of the women tourists coming from this region definitely prefer to deal with women employees rather than men employees. Currently, there is a great interest in tourism development all over the Arab nations and the Arab women must take their place in it. Veil cannot be a barrier for the participation of women in the development of the Arab tourism.*

(AC4-F)

Some interviewees and focus group participants strongly criticised the discrimination between veiled and unveiled women when recruiting for job vacancies in the Egyptian travel agencies. A male tourism consultant said,

*How do we accept that women wear extremely short skirts and expose sexy portions of their bodies and blame them for doing the opposite when they wear veils? Wearing or not wearing the veil will never affect the efficiency of the woman or change her capacity to do the job.*

(TC2-M)

A female tourism student further added:

*What is the difference between veiled and unveiled women?... What is the relationship between the veil and women's performance at work?"... I cannot understand this very strange discrimination. Veiled woman might be more efficient in doing their jobs than unveiled women.*

(FGF-F2)

Rejection of employing veiled women reflects that women may lose the opportunity to work in the Egyptian travel business for no reason except that they are veiled. A female tourism student stressed on this point saying:

*About half of the women in the Egyptian community are veiled. This means that nearly half of the women job seekers in the country are veiled. If every employer rejects employing veiled*

*women the result will be that half of women's workforce will remain unemployed. This phenomenon is ridiculous. How come that 50% of the females seeking for jobs in the Egyptian travel agencies are not given equal job opportunities only because they are veiled?*

(FGF-F2)

A female accountant commented on the same phenomenon saying, "*Many women loose good job opportunities in the travel business just because they are veiled*" (PrS/Acc3-F). A male counter supervisor added, "*The tendency to reject employing veiled women decreases the opportunities open to them in the Egyptian travel job market*" (PrM/CS1-M).

As a matter of fact, the phenomenon of rejection for employing veiled women in the Egyptian travel agencies at the initial staffing process has two important adverse effects. First: it decreases the opportunities of the women job seekers in the business by almost 50%, and second: it limits to a great extent the selection opportunities available for employers to recruit the best women job applicants. According to Rees (1999:32), "*the use of gender as a crucial determinant in the allocation of people to sectors and jobs clearly limits the pools from which employers can draw*".

### **8.2.2 Promotion decisions**

Screening the comments of the interviewees and focus group participants indicated that the influence of promotion decisions on women's career development in the Egyptian public and private travel agencies depends on the 'agency type', 'agency size' and the 'agency culture'. Agency type refers to whether the agency is a public or a private sector establishment. Agency size refers to whether it is very small, small, medium, big or large (see Table 5.8,

page 5-42). Agency culture refers to the cultural backgrounds of the agencies' decision-makers.

#### **8.2.2.a Agency type**

- **Public travel agencies**

In the public sector travel agencies promotion decisions are controlled by standard regulations that guarantee equality between sexes and take seniority into consideration (labour law). From the practical point of view, these regulations are often applied for the promotions below or at the middle management level. Meanwhile, promotions to the senior managerial positions depend, in most cases, on selections made by the top decision-makers of the agency.

Therefore, women's career development to middle management in the public sector agencies is directly related to their position in the queue of employees eligible for promotion. In such a case, women's career progression to middle management is often guaranteed but it takes place after long periods of delay that may extend for years. In that respect, a female tourism specialist working for a public travel agency said, "*women's career progression is very slow in the public sector*" (PuS/TS1-F)

Due to the relatively limited number of senior management positions in comparison to the large number of middle managers qualifying to these positions, promotion decisions to senior management in the public travel agencies are often based on selection. A male General Manager in the largest

Egyptian public travel agency ascertained that *“in the public sector women sometimes compete for senior management positions”* (PuT/GM1-M).

In fact, the selection process depends to a great extent on the agency's culture (the cultural background of its decision maker(s) taking the promotion decisions). At this point, women's opportunities for career progression to senior managerial positions might become questionable, especially when the recommendation element interferes with the selection process. The definition of recommendation in the Egyptian context and its influence on women's career development will be mentioned later in this chapter (see pages 8-34 and 8-39 to 8-40). Recommendation in favour of women pushes them forward to the senior management positions while that in favour of men hinders women's career development and keeps them static at the middle management positions.

- **Private travel agencies**

Private travel agencies are economic establishments that mainly aim at achieving profit. Therefore, promotion decisions and career progression opportunities in these agencies are entirely dependent on the interests and desires of its owners who are, in most cases, the senior managers responsible for taking these decisions.

In contrast to the public sector travel agencies, it seems that there are no definite regulations or rules that govern promotion decisions in the private agencies. It has been indicated earlier that 55% of the private travel agencies included in the agency survey claimed that they have written policies for

selection and recruitment while 45% of them were frank enough to report that they haven't (see Table 6.11, page 6-17). However, all of the agencies that claimed having such selection and recruitment policies, except for only one agency, strictly refused to release copies of these policies under the excuse that they are among the agencies' secrets. When I reviewed the information given by the single agency that agreed to release its selection and recruitment policies I found that it merely points out equality of opportunity when taking initial staffing decisions with no reference whatsoever to promotions.

#### **8.2.2.b Agency size**

- **Public travel agencies**

In the two public Egyptian travel agencies promotion decisions are not related to agency size. Both agencies, though quite different in employment (one employing less than two hundred employees and the other employing over two thousand employees), apply similar promotion decision policies that are controlled by strict standard parameters and regulations.

- **Private travel agencies**

One of the characteristic features of the private travel business in Egypt is that, in most cases, it is a sort of family-business owned by one person or by him and the members of his family. Usually, the owner of the agency is the Head of Board of Directors and/or the General Manager. A female academic said, *"Many of the Egyptian travel agencies are small family-businesses where owners are the General Managers while other members of their families are the assistant managers"* (AC4-F).



In such situation, promotion decisions are totally dependent on the choices of the agencies' owners. Experienced owners always run the business by themselves while inexperienced ones depend on hiring professional managers who might be in some cases members of their families. As a rule, when staffing for any job vacancies in the agency owners prioritise family members (wives, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and/or other relatives). With such policies, promotion decisions in the private travel agencies are very strongly controlled by the owners' perceptions, interests and desires. A male tourism manager working for a medium travel agency commented in detail on this issue saying:

*If the owner of the agency is experienced enough in the travel business he manages the agency by himself but if he is not qualified to run the business he hires qualified managers. Those are usually either relatives or very close friends to the owner. If the owner cannot find suitable relatives or friends to hold the key managerial jobs he is forced to employ qualified non-family managers. However, to guarantee loyalty to the agency and the votes in the Board of Directors, the owners always tend to occupy the key managerial vacancies by their relatives and friends even if they were not professionally qualified and compensate by hiring non-family professional employees to assist them. Those assistants, whether men or women, almost have no opportunities for career progression because their bosses block their career path as long as they remain in the assistant jobs. Take this agency as an example. The owner is a businessman who knows nothing about travel business but he is the Head of Board of Directors. When his son graduated from the College of Commerce he established this agency and appointed him as a General Manager at the age of 23 years. Very efficient hired employees run the whole business but none of them exceeded the middle management border. Of course I never look forward to become a General Manager one day as long as I am staying in this agency.*

(PrM/TM1-M)

Surprisingly, the results of the agency survey and the interviews on the relationship between agency size and women's opportunities for promotion to managerial positions in the private travel agencies seemed to be more or less

contradicting. The quantitative study (Table 6.7) revealed no definite relationship between agency size and the approximate percentages of women occupying senior managerial positions which were 0, 14, 27, 21 and 23% in the very small, small, medium, big and large agencies, respectively. However, the corresponding percentages of women managers to total employment (as calculated from data in the spreadsheets) were 0.0, 8.3, 7.0, 3.3 and 1.2%. These percentages roughly suggest that the rate of women's representation in the management of the private travel agencies tends to decrease with the increase of agency size.

On the other hand, the qualitative study referred to an opposite conclusion as it supported the interpretation that women's opportunities for career development and promotion to higher managerial posts tend to increase with the increase of agency size.

Commenting on this issue a female counter supervisor said, *"In small travel agencies there is no career development at all"*(PrM/CS3-F). Another counter supervisor contributed:

*In the very small and small private travel agencies the opportunities of promoting a non-family member to a managerial position are almost nil as the owners always keep these positions for themselves or the close members of their families.*

(PrM/CS2- F)

In medium travel agencies, the situation seems a little bit better. A female sales manager said:

*The owners of some medium-size private travel agencies might employ non-family members in some of the middle management*

*positions but none of those, men or women, reaches the senior management posts which are always monopolised by the owners and their families.*

(PrM/SM1-F)

As for the big and large private agencies, the opportunities for upward career mobility for men and women employees are relatively more open. A female counter supervisor said, *"In big agencies career opportunities are open"*(PrM/CS3-F). A male sales manager recommended working for the big travel agencies saying, *"Whoever wants to build a career in the travel business should start in a big agency"* (PrMSM2-M). A male employer, who owns a large private agency, justified why career development opportunities look better in the big and large agencies saying:

*In big or large agencies the influence of family-business is not too strong and the benefit of the agency is a top consideration. Consequently, there are more promotion opportunities for the qualified and efficient non-family men or women staff members. However, the governing rule remains that those who succeed to capture managerial positions in any private travel agency occupy only the vacancies left after family members.*

(EM1-M)

In spite of the apparent contradiction between the results of the agency survey and the evidence derived from the interviews in regard to the relationship between agency size and women's career development opportunities, it seems rather logic to rely more on the qualitative findings. In fact, the numbers and percentages illustrating women's representation in management might be somehow misleading as they include women managers who occupy managerial positions just because they are either owners or members of the owners' families. Supporting such anticipation, A female senior tourism specialist said, *"Most of the women who hold senior managerial positions in the private travel*

*agencies are either owners or members of the owners' families"*(PuM/STS1-F). Another female tourism specialist further added, "*A considerable number of women managers in the private agencies are owners or relatives to owners*"(PuS/ TS1-F).

However, a male Deputy General Manager referred that in the future small family businesses in the Egyptian travel industry will diminish gradually under the pressure of the recent strict licensing regulations set by the Ministry of Tourism as he said:

*The new rules for the establishment of new travel agencies set that agencies must be owned by a group of partners sharing the membership of the Board of Directors, posses high competitive capabilities and have a capital of not less than two million Egyptian pounds. Although small family business will not be able to meet with these regulations they will remain operating for sometime but will never be able to withstand competition in the globalisation era where only the large agencies will survive.*  
(PrT/DGM3-M)

### **8.2.2.c Agency culture**

The cultural backgrounds of employers play an important role in determining women's career development opportunities in the Egyptian travel agencies. Employers might be classified as "*gender-unbiased*" or "*gender-biased*". Gender-unbiased employers have no predetermined assumptions regarding women's work and believe in absolute equality of opportunity for both men and women in building careers. On the contrary, gender-biased employers always have predetermined generalised assumptions in favour of men and against women. They believe that women can never be as efficient in performance as men.

All four interviewed employers claimed that they practice equality between men and women when taking staffing and promotion decisions. They argued that their principal concern is to achieve profit and thus they seek for and promote the person(s) who is/are most capable of realising their objectives and making the maximum profit regardless of gender considerations. In that respect a male employer said, *"When I think of recruiting or promoting for a job vacancy I absolutely go blind... I choose the best qualified and experienced person regardless of whether he or she is a man or a woman"* (EM3-M). A female employer added, *"In recruiting or promoting for a job vacancy the issue of gender never makes any difference to me... what really counts are experience and qualifications"* (EM4-F). A third male employer further added, *"I have in mind certain recruitment and promotion criteria and gender is not one of them... I will recruit or promote any person, man or woman, who meets with my criteria"* (EM2-M). The fourth male employer contributed, *"The woman who has great potentialities will impose herself... if she qualifies for a certain leadership position I never hesitate to employ her"* (EM1-M).

Supporting such arguments, a male tourism consultant said:

*I don't see that career development opportunities tend to one gender at the cost of the other. Travel agencies operate a commercial business and will recruit or promote the person who fulfils its objectives and makes the best profit regardless of being a man or a woman. The decision-maker mainly considers the candidate's experience, qualifications and efficiency and the last criterion to consider is gender.*

(TC1-M)

However, further discussion with the same three male employers made me feel and, thus, anticipate that they are in reality gender-biased as they later contradicted themselves by mentioning certain statements that totally disagreed with their above-mentioned quotes. Examples of these statements are: *"I think*

*twice before promoting a woman to a managerial post... I prefer a man because he will be fully dedicated to the job... in my opinion the woman has to be ten times better than the man to get the job" (EM2-M), "Our oriental society has not yet digested the idea that women can be leaders... as a general rule, leadership is for men" (EM1-M) and " Women are emotional and have more commitment to their homes than men... in the business you need to use your brain more than your heart" (EM3-M).*

Nevertheless, several female interviewees pointed out that most of the owners of the Egyptian travel agencies seem to be gender-biased and prefer men to women when recruiting or promoting for managerial job vacancies. Examples of the quotes on this issue are: *"When recruiting for managerial positions in travel agencies men are preferred to women" (PuM/STS1-F), "In the travel business the priority in managerial positions is for men" (PrT/DGM4-F), "Usually men are preferred to women in holding the managerial positions" (PrS/TO6-F) and "Some agency owners prefer not to employ women in the managerial positions" (PrS/TO4- F). Also, some male interviewees confirmed the gender-biased behaviour of employers as a male finance manager said, "There is a noticeable preference for men when recruiting for managerial positions" (PrM/FM1-M) and a male Deputy General Manager added, "The nature of managerial jobs in travel agencies imposes the preference of men to women" (PrT/DGM3- M).*

Interviewees attributed employers' preference of men to women in occupying managerial jobs to one or more of the following reasons:

- a) Men are more dedicated to their jobs than women. A male employer said, *"I prefer a man because he will be fully dedicated to the job"* (EM2-M). A tourism consultant added, *"Men have better career development opportunities because they are more committed to their jobs than women and usually stay working for the same agency for long periods"* (TC2-M). A female counter supervisor further added, *"Occasionally men are preferred because they are more dedicated to work"* (PrM/CS4-M).
- b) Men are more capable of strictly controlling all work activities than women. A male General Manager said, *"Even if the owner of the travel agency is a woman, she will prefer to have a man manager to strictly control all work activities"* (PrT/GM1-M). A female tour operator added, *"Management requires leadership, strong personality, aggressiveness and strictness... such attributes are not common among women"* (PrS/TO5-F).
- c) Men are not eligible to the rights set for women by the labour law which put extra operation cost on agencies (maternity leave, childcare leave, breast feeding hours, ...etc.). A male employer said, *"The labour law gives women plenty of rights that cost the agency much"* (EM2-M).
- d) Men do not have any restrictions on availability to their jobs at all times (staying at work after work hours, working at night, staying away from home for long periods, travelling abroad in business trips ...etc.). A male Deputy General Manager said, *"The nature and requirements of managerial jobs in travel agencies impose preferring men as managers"* (PrT/DGM3-M). A male General Manager further added:

*Management in a travel agency is a tough job. It requires dedication and capability to take responsibilities. It also includes plenty of travel abroad for attending meetings as well as conferences for sales and marketing. Women cannot cope*

*easily with such work conditions because of the familial and social constraints which men do not have.*

(PrT/GM1-M)

e) Men are less influenced by emotions than women. A male employer said,

*"Women are emotional and cannot be as strict in management as men"*

(EM3-M). A female employer added, *"It is true that women are emotional*

*and might be less strict than men"* (EM4-F). A tourism consultant further

added, *"Women are more sensitive, kinder, less aggressive and rather*

*emotional than men... such attributes negatively affect their performance*

*as managers"* (TC2-M).

In conclusion, gender-biased employers represent an obstacle for women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies as their preference for men to women in holding managerial positions frustrates women's chances for upward career mobility. However, it is noteworthy to mention here that women themselves might be responsible for limiting their career opportunities when they decide to quit working or refuse to take high managerial duties for personal reasons of which familial obligations are the most significant. Commenting on this issue a male tourism consultant said, *"Women themselves do not like to take high managerial duties"* (TC1-M). A male General Manager added, *"Women themselves may limit their career development opportunities when they prefer familial life and choose to quit working"* (PrT/GM1-M). A male finance manager further added, *"The misbalance comes from the side of women who may decide to quit working and prefer social life"* (PrM/FM1-M). A male academic attributed the inequality between men and women in occupying managerial positions to *"the high rate of women's turn-*



*over in the business in addition to their refusal to take managerial responsibilities" (AC3-M).*

### **8.2.3 Family-friendly arrangements**

Some of the family friendly arrangements commonly applied in the Western world to support women's career development such as job sharing, telecommunications, corporate sabbaticals, referral services and subsidies for off-site or on-site childcare facilities do not exist in the Egyptian travel agencies. However, the Egyptian labour law sets a number of regulations that guarantee working women certain family-friendly rights such as maternity leave, breast feeding hours, childcare leave, and childcare facilities to help them co-ordinate between work responsibilities and family obligations. Reference to these regulations has been made earlier in chapter three (see page 3-38).

Several interviewees commented on the family friendly arrangements available for working women in the Egyptian travel agencies. As selected examples of these comments, a male Deputy General Manager of a private agency said, *"Women employees are offered maternity leave and breast feeding hours but we don't allow them unpaid childcare leave"*(PrM/DGM1-M). A male finance manager of another private agency added, *"Women employees benefit from the advantages set by the labour law in relation to maternity leaves and breast feeding hours"* (PrM/FM1-M).

In practice, all public and private travel agencies strictly apply the labour law regulations in respect of maternity leave and breast-feeding hours. Public travel

agencies also offer mothers childcare leave as set by the law but private agencies do not offer this leave. Meanwhile, both public and private travel agencies legally do not provide childcare facilities for working mothers.

Public agencies as well as 87% of the sampled private agencies (52 agencies) reported that they might consider the extraordinary personal circumstances of women employees and offer them flexible work hours for short periods provided that work efficiency is not affected. In that respect a female counter supervisor said, *"Under certain circumstances women might have flexible work hours through arrangements with the management of the agency"* (PrM/CS2-F). A male tour operator added, *"Employers may consider the personal circumstances of women employees provided that work efficiency is not affected"* (PrS/TO3-M). Eight private agencies (representing 13% of the sampled agencies) reported that they do not allow flexible work hours at all. A male employer sharply said, *"When I say I want someone from 9 AM to 5 PM I mean it whether the employee is a woman or a man, it doesn't matter"* (EM3-M). A female tour operator added, *"Flexible work hours are not allowed"* (PrS/TO6-F).

The two public travel agencies do not allow part-time jobs. Also private travel agencies very rarely offer part-time job opportunities. Only two agencies (representing 3.3% of the sampled private agencies) reported that they might accept part-time employees in case of the bad need for the experience of a certain person who cannot be available on a full-time basis. Commenting on

the availability of part-time jobs in the private travel agencies a tourism manager said:

*There are no part time jobs in the Egyptian travel industry. However, if the agency is in bad need for the experience of a certain person who cannot be available as a full time employee he or she might be offered a part time job".*

(PrM/TM2-M)

A male accountant added:

*Part-time jobs are very rare in Egyptian travel agencies. They might be offered in very special circumstances if the agency is in bad need for someone in person who cannot be available on a full time basis.*

(PrS/Acc2-M)

- **Reflections on family-friendly arrangements**

Although both public and private Egyptian travel agencies apply few family-friendly arrangements to support women's career development, the support for public agencies' women employees is relatively more than that for private agencies' women employees. Women working for the public agencies are eligible for three types of motherhood support: maternity leave, breast feeding hours and childcare leave while those working for the private agencies are entitled for only two types of support; maternity leave and breast feeding hours.

As a matter of fact, childcare leave is very crucial for mothers having newly born babies. Mothers working for public travel agencies can take childcare leave with limited career interruption as they can return to their jobs by the end of the leave. On the contrary, mothers working for private travel agencies suffer drastic career harm when circumstances force them to take childcare leave as the cost they pay is losing their job because private agencies do not

allow such leave. If those mothers return to the job market after a year or more they might or might not find a suitable job and even if they succeed in capturing job opportunities they are – both experience-wise and career-wise – far beyond their male and female colleagues who did not leave their jobs.

Childcare facilities are a very important issue related to women's work in the travel business. Although the labour law sets regulations for providing childcare facilities for working women these regulations are entirely not applicable to travel agencies. Almost none of the private travel agencies employ over one hundred women at the same workplace and, consequently, none of them is legally required to provide on-site childcare facilities. Even the large public travel agency 'Misr Travel' which employs over two thousand employees does not provide any child care facilities simply because its employees are scattered at many workplaces none of which employs one hundred women at the same place. Travel agencies are economic establishments that mainly aim for profit and will not be happy to spend money for the welfare of the children of women employees. Also, off-site childcare facilities for the groups of establishments located at the same area and employing less than 100 women each is not implemented in practice due to the lack of effective government supervision.

Lack of either on-site or off-site childcare facilities available for the women working for the Egyptian travel business is a main reason for the high rate of turnover in this industry. Many women chose to sacrifice their jobs for the sake of the children and take childcare leave because they cannot find suitable

childcare facilities. Any effort(s) to increase the childcare facilities available for the women working for travel agencies will be a strong support to their career in the business.

Apparently, the roles of flexible work hours and part-time employment as supports for promoting women's career development seem to be quite limited because such family friendly arrangements are not common practices in the Egyptian travel business.

#### **8.2.4 Training opportunities**

Training is an important issue in any kind of business. It is the way to continuously upgrade and update the knowledge and experiences of all persons involved in this business and familiarise them with the most recent developments in it. With a delicate and very dynamic industry like the travel business training acquires a significant importance. In practice the economic returns of training are always much more than its cost. In the Egyptian travel agencies, particularly the private ones, little attention is paid to outdoor training and frequently more emphasis is put on indoor training. This is, apparently, because outdoor training adds to the expenditure of the agency while in-house training costs it nothing. A female academic commented on the negligence of training in the private travel agencies saying:

*The owners and managers of private travel agencies will never be willing to invest in training because their main concern is to gain not to spend money. In many private agencies there are no training programs at any level but whenever there are free training opportunities owners and managers may welcome it.*

(AC4- F)

In Egypt, the interest in training is rather obvious in the public than the private travel agencies. Each of the two public agencies has a separate department for training which is responsible for organising and implementing different training programs inside the country as well as abroad. In the private agencies, the philosophy of training is based on work-oriented needs and mainly depends on in-house training. Therefore, there are no separate training departments in the vast majority of the private travel agencies. The agency survey indicated that among the sixty sampled private travel agencies only one large agency (1.7%) had a training department.

Nevertheless, some agency owners and managers understand and appreciate the role of training in flourishing the travel business. A male Deputy General Manager of a big private agency said, *"We allow our employees to attend outdoor training courses whenever required"* (PrT/DGM2-M). Another Deputy General Manager of a large private agency ascertained the importance of training in the travel business as he added, *"Our managers and employees are given the opportunity to attend the training programs held by IATA and ASTA as well as the local one-day courses organised by the Egyptian Chamber of Tourism"* (PrT/DGM3-M). Also an employer owning one of the largest travel agencies stressed on the need for training as he further added:

*We deal with a dynamic market where things change too fast and we have to cope with the changes. We are no longer selling tickets but we are doing consolidation, open-book based trips and management. To become skilled in these areas you ought to have the necessary training. We are linked to BTI (Business Travel International) which is based in UK and it is our management partner. BTI have lots of courses related to the travel business and we send our employees to attend these courses either in UK or in Dubai. Our sales manager, who is a woman, attended over fifteen of these courses. We also train our*

*employees on managerial skills and problem solving. Sometimes, I myself go for training when a new thing evolves in the business.*

(EM2-M)

#### **8.2.4.a Training opportunities in public travel agencies**

Interviewees affiliated to the public travel agencies mentioned that their agencies organise sufficient training programs and assured that training opportunities are fairly distributed to men and women. A female tourism specialist said, *"We have a separate training sector that organises courses for skill development and management... these courses are available for men and women and some of them are given abroad"* (PuS/TS1-F). A male tourism specialist added, *"Training opportunities are equally open to men and women"* (Pu/TS2-M). A male information technology specialist further added, *"Training opportunities are fairly distributed between men and women employees"* (PuS/ITS-M). A male General Manager briefly described the basis for distributing training opportunities in the public travel agencies saying:

*In the public sector travel agencies training opportunities are open for all men and women employees but they are distributed according to the proportion of men to women. Because the number of men employees is relatively greater than that of women employees the number of women trainees is comparatively less than that of men trainees.*

(PuT/GM1-M)

#### **8.2.4.b Training opportunities in private travel agencies**

Interviews with private agencies' employees and managers indicated that some agencies decline to provide any training opportunities for them. The female Deputy General Manager of a medium agency said, *"We don't have any training"* (PrT/DGM4-F). A male tour operator working for a big agency

added, *"Work consumes all of our time, there is no time for training"* (PrS/TO3-M).

Some other agencies concentrate on indoor training as it costs the agency nothing. Several employees and middle managers mentioned that they benefited much from indoor training programs, which are equally open for both men and women. A female tour operator said, *"We practice indoor training and every manager trains his assistants"* (PrS/TO6-F) and a female accountant added, *"Indoor training is equally available for men and women employees"* (PrS/Acc3-F). A finance manager further added: *"We do not have set training courses but every new employee is attached to one of our managers to train him/her"* (PrM/FM1-M). A male Deputy General Manager contributed, *"Any new employee takes an induction course to get acquainted with the agency then he is subject to continuous training under the supervision of his/her manager"* (PrT/DGM2-M).

In addition to indoor training, some agencies have advanced training plans that encourage and support its employees and managers to attend several local outdoor training meetings, seminars, workshops and courses to improve and update their knowledge of the recent trends in the business. A female counter supervisor said, *"The management encourages and supports employees to benefit from any available training opportunity inside the country"* (PrM/CS3-F). A male accountant added, *"Our agency allows us to attend the training courses held outdoors"* (PrS/Acc1-M). Another female counter supervisor added:



*As a part of the training policy of the agency, the management encourages and supports the participation of appropriate managers and employees in any available outdoors training opportunities like meetings, seminars, workshops, and courses to upgrade their knowledge of the recent trends in the business. These training opportunities are available for men and women employees and managers on equal basis taking into consideration that the suitable person gets the suitable training.*  
(PrM/CS4-F)

Very few large travel agencies are highly interested in training. They often practice indoor training, local outdoors training and external training abroad. Due to the high cost of external training it is usually available for owners and senior managers only who, after training abroad, train their subordinates locally and convey to them what they had learnt. In that respect a male employer said, *"We do training abroad on a very small scale... what I do is that I myself go to a specific training topic... when I come back, I convey what I had learnt to my staff"* (EM3-M). A female sales manager working for a large travel agency added, *"Sometimes there are training opportunities abroad... I attended several courses abroad sponsored by my agency"* (PrM/SM1-F). A female tour operator further added, *"I haven't taken an opportunity to train abroad yet but some of my colleagues had it... I am sure I will have this opportunity one day"* (PrS/TO5-F).

#### **8.2.4.c Equality in training opportunities**

In both public and private travel agencies training opportunities are more or less equally available for men and women employees and managers. A male information technology specialist in a public travel agency said, *"Training opportunities are fairly distributed between men and women employees"* (PuS/ITS-M). A male Deputy General Manager of a large private travel

agency further said, *"Men and women have equal training opportunities... you may even say that in this agency women have more training opportunities than men"* (PrT/DGM2-M). However, a female tour operator complained of inequality as she said, *"Men have more training opportunities than women... the agency prepares men for holding higher positions because they will remain working for it while women most probably won't stay for long"* (PrS/TO6-F).

As a matter of fact, equality in training opportunities might be disturbed when women refuse training because of their familial obligations. A male Deputy General Manager said, *"Women may reject training opportunities because of their familial obligations and thus men take all opportunities"* (PrT/DGM1-M). A male General Manager added, *"Women may refuse training opportunities abroad... so, men often use all of these opportunities and, consequently, inequality appears"* (PrT/GM1-M).

- **Reflections on training opportunities**

Egyptian public travel agencies organise different training programs that are implemented either in-country or abroad and opportunities are open for men and women employees on equal basis to benefit from these programs. Women's participation in the training programs increases their experiences and qualifies them to upwards career development.

Very small and small private travel agencies usually have no training plans and thus career development opportunities for their men or women employees seem to be very limited. Larger private agencies are more interested in training

and try to utilise any available training opportunities locally or abroad to improve the experiences of its men and women employees and managers and familiarise them with the most recent trends in the business. Although training opportunities in the private agencies are equally open for both men and women the share of women from these opportunities is frequently less as some women do not accept to do training abroad because they are tied up to familial responsibilities and social constraints. Career development for the women who waist training opportunities is definitely much less than it for their colleagues who capture it.

Training has a very strong impact on career development for both men and women. As the experiences gained through training increase the chances for better careers increase. Since training opportunities are equally open for both men and women in both public and private travel agencies training is not expected to influence women's career development unless they themselves decline to benefit from the available training opportunities and thus allow men to be ahead of them.

In the public travel agencies, competition for training opportunities takes place between queuing employees, whereas in the private agencies competition for these opportunities occurs between experienced ambitious men and women struggling for building careers. Therefore, women who succeed in capturing as much as possible training opportunities move faster towards better career development.

### 8.2.5 Informal systems of career development

Interviewees and focus groups participants pointed out that three informal systems of career development might exist in the Egyptian travel agencies: mentoring, networking and the 'so-called' recommendation. While relatively few comments were made on mentoring and networking plenty of debate was concentrated on recommendation.

The term "**mentoring**" refers to the relationship between a junior individual and a senior individual in a position of power within the same workplace that provides the junior individual with career-enhancing functions such as sponsorship, coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, and offering challenging work or protection, all of which help him or her to establish a role in the organisation, learn the ropes and prepare for advancement (Roche, 1979; Kram and Isabella, 1985 and Noe, 1988).

The term "**networking**" refers to the personal relationships that lead to the exchange of information related to the business between individuals connected professionally or socially.

The term "**recommendation**" refers to the process of practising strong personal pressures by influential persons, relatives and/or friends on someone responsible for taking a certain decision to lead him to act willingly or unwillingly in the way desired by the person(s) who practice these pressures".

#### 8.2.5.a Mentoring

Mentoring seems to be a key element for career development in the Egyptian travel business. As a frequent attitude, the newly recruited employees usually seek for mentors to help them develop their professional skills and identities within the business. Commenting on the importance of mentoring a male tour operator said, *"Beginners need guidance by persons experienced in the field to help them understand the challenging nature of the travel business (PrS/TO3-M)*. A male General Manager added, *"Any newly recruited employee should try to stick to one of the experienced staff members of the travel agency to coach and introduce him/her to the business" (PrT/GM1-M)*.

In practice, males more likely recognise the importance of mentoring than females. A male tourism student said, *"It is not enough to be clever and ambitious... I have to find someone among the agency staff who is experienced enough in the business to lead me and expose my capabilities" (FGM-M1)*. Also a male tourism specialist working for a public travel agency added, *"Success of junior employees in the travel business depends on their ability to find senior experienced persons who are ready to adopt and support them along their career paths" (PuS/TS2-M)*. On the other hand, some females might believe that they could proceed in career development in the travel business without depending on mentors. As mentioned by Powell (1993: 206), *"women naively assume that competence is the only requirement needed to get ahead in an organisation"*. In that respect a female tour operator working for a very small travel agency said:

*It is nice to find someone to encourage and sponsor you but it is not a must... I tried to find a suitable sponsor but unfortunately*

*I failed... thus, I decided to rely on myself and I am now very well acquainted with the business. I think I will be able to build a good career.*

(PrS/TO2-F)

In a male-dominated business culture, like the Egyptian travel business, most of the potential mentors are males. Due to the prevailing oriental socio-cultural mores that control male-female relationships at work place in the Egyptian community, potential male mentors are often reluctant to select female protégés because of their fears of rumours of intimacy and sexual attraction in such male-female mentoring relationships. A male employer owning a small travel agency said, *"I am always ready to sponsor any ambitious active male employee but I think one hundred times before I sponsor a female employee"*(EM3-M). A male deputy General Manager of a big travel agency added:

*Sometimes there are female employees who deserve encouragement and sponsoring but men always hesitate to mentor them because they fear rumours about such male-female mentoring relationships... In our conservative oriental society any false rumour might ruin the careers and social lives of both the male mentor and the female employee... it seems more suitable for females to seek for female mentors in spite of the difficulty of finding them.*

(PrT/DGM2-M)

Female-female mentoring relationships are quite few in the Egyptian travel business due to the shortage of potential senior female mentors on one hand and their lack of interest in mentoring younger female employees on the other hand. As explained by Kanter (1977) women in token positions enjoy the specialness their position affords and view others around them as a potential threat to their achievements. Thus, they avoid involvement in mentoring relationships. Whoever, a female Deputy General Manager mentioned that

female-female mentoring might occur in very few cases when the mentored junior female is a member of the family or a very close friend of the senior female mentor as she said:

*Females occupying senior managerial positions in some of the Egyptian travel agencies might be interested in enhancing the careers of some of their junior female subordinates if they were daughters, sisters, other family members or very close friends.*

(Pr/DGM4-F)

The above quotes indicate that, generally speaking, the opportunities for male-male mentoring are more significant than the opportunities for male-female, female-male or female-female mentoring. The better mentoring opportunities available for male juniors adopted by male seniors reflect the possibility of faster career development for them in the Egyptian travel business. However, female juniors adopted by male seniors, if they could find one, might have similar opportunities for fast career development. Male or female juniors mentored by female seniors, if this happens, might achieve relatively less career development than those mentored by male seniors as the capacity of women for establishing relationships in the business sphere seems to be much less than that of men. In fact, none of the interviewees commented on this particular issue, and I think it needs to be explored in more detail in a future separate study.

#### **8.2.5.b Networking**

Networking is a difficult issue in any business. Many of the effective decisions related to the business might evolve through networking in informal meetings where the mutual relationships between individuals as friends not as officials might shape the future decisions to be taken. In the travel industry, the nature

of the business requires plenty of meetings, conferences and travel and, subsequently, enormous amounts of business and friendship relationships are established between the participants. Through these networking relationships people know each other well and great opportunities for career development are generated. Because men have better opportunities to participate in such gatherings than women, who are usually tied up to familial and social obligations, the chances of men to benefit from networking relationships for career development are much more than those available for women.

Only two interviewees commented on the role of networking in career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. One of them, who is a male General Manager, said:

*Some of the decisions related to the travel business might be taken through networking. Great career development opportunities take place in the informal gatherings of businessmen. For example, if I am seeking for a good manager or even for a junior employee I might meet a suitable person in a business meeting or I might be referred to a suitable person by one of my friends who knows the candidate well. Because men are usually more capable of networking than women they are often more exposed to the job market and benefit from more career development chances than women.*

(PrM/GM1-M)

The other interviewee who commented on the relationship between networking and career development is a female counter supervisor who said:

*Career development opportunities in the Egyptian travel agencies are certainly influenced by networking. You cannot move from one agency to another or from one position to the other within the same agency unless you have very good relationships with your bosses and managers who will recommend you to any available upward career opportunity inside the agency or outside it. Moreover, the recognised relationships and networking you can establish with the other*



*people involved in the business make you familiar to them and support nominating you for future career opportunities. In practice, men are more experienced in networking than women who – due to their oriental nature - try to minimise not to strengthen their relationships with men.*

(PrM/CS3-F)

#### **8.2.5.c Recommendation**

Recommendation is a detrimental factor for initial recruitment in both public and private travel agencies as well as for career development only in the public agencies. Several focus group participants, especially males, commented on the role of recommendation in governing initial recruitment for junior jobs in the private travel agencies. A male tourism student said, *“Without recommendation it is very difficult for a beginner to find a suitable job opportunity in a private travel agency”* (FGXb-M1). A second male student added, *“There is plenty of recommendation in recruiting for junior job vacancies in the private travel business”*(FGM-1). A third male student further added, *“For a new comer to the job market, recommendation is the only way to find a job opportunity”*(FGM-3). Female tourism students also referred to the significant impact of recommendation on recruitment in the private travel agencies as one of them said, *“Nowadays, recommendation is the passport for recruitment in private travel agencies”* (FGXb-F2).

Despite the views regarding the negative role of recommendation on initial recruitment opportunities in the private travel agencies, almost all interviewees and focus group participants agreed that after employment there is no role at all for recommendation in career upward mobility which depends mainly on the efficiency and ambition of the employee and his/her capacity to perform at

work. As an example of the comments in that respect a female counter supervisor said:

*Private travel agencies are commercial establishments that will never employ any person unless he/she is required to do a certain job. Recommendation might lead to employing someone but it will never be able to support his/her career upward mobility. If the person employed through recommendation fails to prove himself/ herself at work the agency will definitely fire him/her. The password to upward mobility in the private travel business is efficiency and hard work.*

(PrM/CS3-F)

On the other hand, recommendation significantly controls upward career mobility in the public travel agencies. A female senior tourism specialist claimed that *"in public travel agencies, priority in promotion to middle or senior managerial posts is always for those who have access to recommendation"* (PuM/STS1-F). A male information technology specialist confirmed the influence of recommendation on upward career mobility in the public travel agencies saying, *"Selection for senior management positions in the public travel agencies is subject to a great deal of injustice because of recommendation"* (PuS/ITS-M).

### **8.2.6 Equal opportunity (EO) policies**

Article 8 of the Egyptian constitution sets "the state shall guarantee equality of opportunity for all Egyptians" and article 40 of it sets "all citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination due to sex, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed". Also, Egypt is a signatory to the 'Covenant on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' that was given the force of law through the Presidential Decree no. 434 for the year 1981. These constitutional articles and covenant

guarantee equality of opportunities for all Egyptians without any sort of discrimination. In case of any violation to equality rights, the Constitutional Court is the judicature authority that judges the dispute and its judgement is final.

#### **8.2.6.a Equal pay policies**

Article no. 151 of the Egyptian labour law sets equality of pay for equal jobs for all employees. However, in some private travel agencies employers may compensate selected employees for their extra efforts and a sort of inequality of pay may arise. Nevertheless, all interviewed employers and General Managers claimed commitment to equality of pay. Answers to the question on equality of pay in the agency survey (question no.13) had been discussed earlier (see page 6-23).

#### **8.2.6.b Sex discrimination policies**

As set by the constitution, sex discrimination is officially prohibited. However, due to the patriarchal nature of the oriental Egyptian society sex discrimination might be of possible occurrence. Apparently, most women got used to accept discriminatory practices as part of their daily-life and cope with them without objection. In that respect a male Deputy General Manager said, *In Eastern societies men regard women as a second-class gender*"(PrT/DGM2-M). A female senior tourism specialist further ascertained such understanding as she added:

*In Eastern societies women are regarded as second-class human beings... they are always dominated by men ...before marriage dominance is for fathers and brothers and after marriage it is transferred to husbands...also at work men*

*usually dominate women...it seems that women got used to men's dominance and most of them accept it...they have no time to think about equality because they are totally busy at both work and home.*

(PuM/STS1-F)

Whenever any hot individual cases related to sex discrimination arise, the Constitutional Court handles the dispute. Answers to the question on sex discrimination in the agency survey (question no.13) had been discussed earlier (see page 6-24).

#### **8.2.6.c Sexual harassment policies**

In Egypt, sexual harassment is absolutely rejected both legally and culturally. Article no. 268 of the law no.58 for the year 1973 prevents all types of sexual harassment at all places and sets severe punishments for those who practice any sexual harassment crime. At the cultural level, it is a great shame for any person, man or woman, to get involved in any type of a sexual harassment attempt. Because of these strict legal and cultural constraints sexual harassment, particularly at the workplaces, rarely occurs. Any individual incidents of sexual harassment are immediately referred to the appropriate court for investigation and the condemned person(s) is/are severely punished. Due to the extreme rarity of sexual harassment practices in Egypt none of the public or private travel agencies set special policies for handling it. Answers to the question on sexual harassment in the agency survey (question no.13) had been discussed earlier (see page 6-24).

### 8.3 Summary

Six organisational factors influence women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. The first factor is the initial staffing decisions, which are strongly controlled by the prevailing socio-cultural mores that make employers tend to employ men in certain jobs and women in other jobs. Initial staffing is affected by the traditional staffing roles, preference for recruiting single females and rejection of employing veiled women. The second factor is the promotion decisions, which depend on the 'agency type', 'agency size' and 'agency culture'. Employers prefer men because they are more dedicated to their jobs, more capable of strictly controlling work activities, not eligible to the rights set for women by the labour law, less influenced by emotions and do not have any restrictions on availability to their jobs at all times. The third factor is the family friendly arrangements *e.g.* maternity leave, breast feeding hours, childcare leave, and childcare facilities. Flexible work hours and part-time jobs are not common. The fourth factor is training opportunities. In private travel agencies little attention is paid to outdoor training and more emphasis is put on indoor training while interest in training is rather obvious in public agencies. In both public and private agencies training opportunities are equally available for men and women though frequently men might have relatively more opportunities. The fifth factor is the informal systems of career development that include mentoring, networking and the 'so-called' recommendation. Newly recruited employees usually seek for mentors to help them develop their professional skills and identities within the business. Through networking relationships great opportunities for career development are generated. Recommendation is a detrimental factor for initial recruitment in

both public and private travel agencies as well as for upward career mobility in public agencies. The sixth factor is the equal opportunity policies. The Egyptian constitution guarantees quality of opportunities for all Egyptians without any sort of discrimination and the labour law sets equality of pay for equal jobs for all employees. Sexual harassment is a very uncommon practice that never represents a phenomenon in the Egyptian society. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment disputes are referred to the appropriate courts and condemned parties are severely punished.

**CHAPTER NINE**  
**SOCIETAL FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S**  
**CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

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## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **SOCIETAL FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

#### **9.1 Chapter outline**

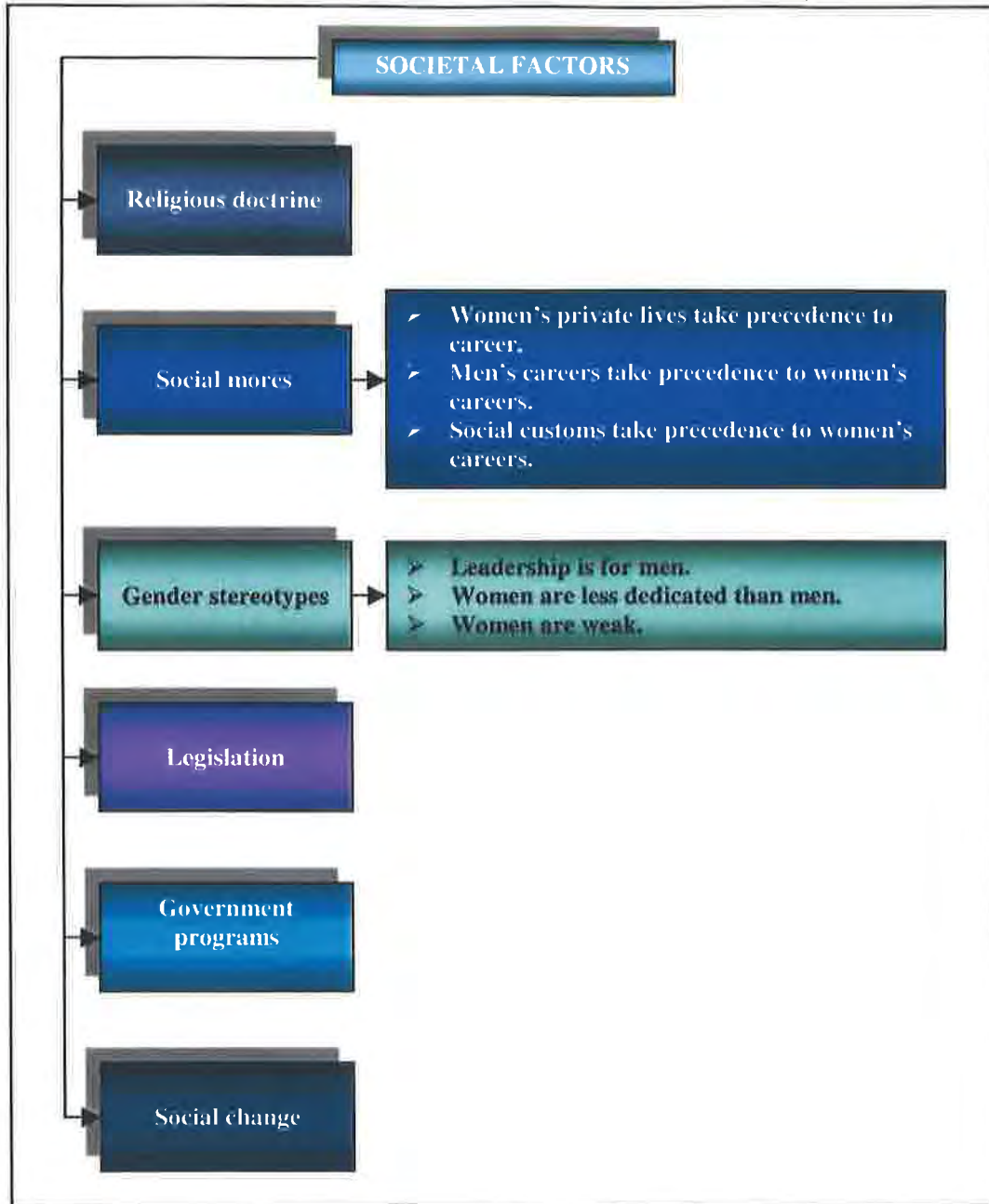
This chapter discusses the different societal factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies depending on the qualitative evidence revealed from the interviews and focus groups. It presents a classification of these factors then moves to a detailed discussion of the roles of religious doctrine, social mores, gender stereotypes, legislature, government programs and social change in influencing women's employment and career development in the Egyptian travel business. The chapter ends with a brief summary.

#### **9.2 Classification of the societal factors**

Six societal factors influence women's career development in Egypt: religious doctrine, social mores, gender stereotypes, legislation, government programs and social change (Figure 9.1). The influence of these factors lies behind and interacts with the influence of the formerly discussed personal and organisational factors. In fact, the comments of most of the interviewees and focus group participants were related to religious doctrine, social mores, gender stereotypes and social change. To compensate for the lack of comments on legislation and government programs I will briefly interpret the influence of these two factors depending on the available literature in addition to my personal background and experiences as a member of the Egyptian society.



**Figure 9.1: Societal factors influencing women's career development.**



### **9.2.1 Religious doctrine**

There is nothing in the Islamic religion, which is the dominant religion in Egypt, against women's employment. The Holy Qur'an affirmed that every man and woman has the right to work and earn the fruits of his/her work as it states *"For men there is reward for what they have earned, (and likewise), for women there is reward for what the have earned"* (Chapter 4, verse 32).

## **Chapter 9: Societal factors influencing women's career development**

Mawdudi (1999) mentioned that the Islamic law as revealed from the doctrines of Allah (God) has laid down detailed rules and regulations regarding profession and earnings. Islam encourages all to work for earning livelihood.

The literature review on Egyptian women under the Arabic Islamic rule refers that the Islamic legislation approves women rights equal to those of men in the spiritual, financial, social, educational, legal and political aspects of life (Radwan, 2001) (see pages 3-9 to 3-25). Badawy (1971) added that Islam regards women's role in the society as mothers and wives the most sacred and essential one. Neither maids nor baby-sitters can possibly take the mother's place as the educator of an upright, complex-free and carefully reared child. However, in Islam there is no decree that forbids woman from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it especially in the positions that fit her nature and in which society needs her most. Also there is no restriction on benefiting from women's exceptional talents in any field. Ali and Ali (undated) further added that maintenance of homes, providing support to husbands and bearing, raising and teaching of children are among the first and very highly regarded roles of Muslim women but if women have the skills to work outside the home for the good of the community they may do so as long as their family obligations are met. Doi (undated) stated that the rules of Islamic religion (shari'ah) regard women as the spiritual and intellectual equals of men. The main distinction it makes between them is in the physical realm based on the equitable principle of fair division of labour. It allots the more strenuous work to the man and makes him responsible for the maintenance of

the family and allots the work of managing the home and the upbringing and training of children to the woman.

According to the Islamic doctrine, supporting husbands, maintaining households, bearing and raising children, and building up new generations capable of following the religious values are the main functions of women in the society. These functions are regarded as sacred and take priority to any other interests. The comments of several female interviewees and focus group participants ascertain that they are fully convinced and satisfied with their role in performing such domestic functions. As examples of these comments, a female tourism student said, *"I am created a female to form a new family. My principal duty in life is to take care of my husband and raise my children"* (FGXb-F7). Another female tourism student added, *"My family deserves all my time and worth it"* (FGXb-F5). A third tourism student further added, *"My husband and family deserve all my time and attention. My natural function in the society is to raise a new generation"* (FGXa-F1). A female student also commented *"I prefer to devote myself to my family rather than anything else. Taking care of the family is the sacred mission of any woman"* (FGXa-F3). Men also were in favour of the same understanding. Comments like *"Taking care of the husband, children and home is more valuable for women than work"* (PrM/FM1-M) were frequently repeated by male interviewees and focus group participants. A male tourism student further contributed:

*The Islamic religion sharply defines certain functions for women in the society. The most important of these functions is to take care of her husband, home and children. To fulfil this function properly she must be totally devoted to her familial duties.*

(FGXa-M3)

However, if women can properly perform their domestic functions and still have the desire, skill and time to work outside home there is no religious restriction on them to do so provided that their husbands agree, their family obligations are met and the aimed work is suitable for their feminine nature. It is for the welfare of the society that women benefit from their exceptional talents in paid work. Nevertheless, male interviewees and focus group participants expressed two different views regarding the issue of allowing women to work. Some of them were in favour of women's work if work conditions are suitable for their nature and does not affect their capacity to fulfil familial obligations while others were too conservative and totally rejected women's work under any circumstances.

Selected examples of the comments of males supporting women's work are "*I may allow my wife to work if work doesn't contradict with her responsibilities towards the family and guarantee that she works in a recognised and safe place*" (FGM-4), "*I would allow my wife to work if I guarantee that work patterns are safe and socially suitable, and work responsibilities will not interfere with the family life*" (PrM/TM2-M) and "*I would agree that women work if it doesn't affect their family lives and do not contradict with religion*"(FGM-5). Some women strongly defended the right of women to work as a female tourism student said, "*There are many jobs that can be done by women. Women have been given the right to learn and, consequently, must have the right to work*" (FGXb-F2).

On the other hand, males who entirely reject women's work argued that women are not created to work outside home and their principal responsibility in life is to raise children and take care of their families. A male accountant said, "*I decided not to allow my wife to work because I am convinced that she has plenty of more important things to do at home*" (PrS/Acc2-M). A male tourism student added, "*I will never allow my wife to work under any circumstances*" (FGXb-M1). Another male tourism student added, "*It is true that the Islamic religion approves equality between men and women but it sets definite obligations for women towards husband and family that ought to take priority to any other thing*" (FGXa-M3). A male tourism student further added, "*God did not create women for work. Their duty in life is to take care of the children and family*" (FGM-2). A male tourism student commented, "*The right workplace for woman is her house. Taking care of the family and the children is a great responsibility*" (FGXb-M3). Making a joke criticising women's work, a male tourism student said, "*The best place for women to show their skills is the kitchen*" (FGXa-M4). Some men oppose women's work because they compete with men for job opportunities. In that respect a male tourism student said, "*Women should not work at all. They have to leave job opportunities for men*" (FGM-1). A male tourism consultant commented on the issue of men's rejection to women's work saying, "*This is a natural reaction to unemployment crisis. Culture-wise work is for men and home is for women*" (TC1-M). Also some female interviewees were in favour of leaving job opportunities for men and dedicating themselves to their families and homes as a divorced female senior tourism specialist in a public travel agency said:

*I prefer that women stay at home. It is enough for them to pay full attention to their homes and raise their children properly.*

*If I have the power to decide I will let all women stay at home and leave job opportunities for men. Men should play their role as sponsors for their families. I myself work only because I need income to sponsor my two sons after I got divorced. If I had any other financial source I would have left my job years ago.*

(PuM/STS1-F)

In fact, the attitude of men who oppose women's work is gradually changing day after another under the increasing economic pressures that make the income of the husband alone insufficient to cover all of the family needs. A male tourism consultant commented on this saying:

*During the last 40 years the Egyptian society stood on the 'family double-income' principle. Nowadays, it is difficult or almost impossible for a large number of Egyptian families to cover the cost of living depending only on the husband's salary. Thus, the wife's salary represents a necessary contribution to the family's income.*

(TC1-M)

Therefore, the need for extra family income encourages wives to seek for jobs. Husbands are more and more turnings to approve the involvement of their wives in paid work to support the family income. Women working merely because of economic need are often not interested in careers and never forget their domestic nature as wives and mothers. They "*do not regard career as a principal aim and work just because they need the salary*" (PrM/ TM1-M). In fact, "*they become more committed to family rather than to work and achieve no career advancement*" (PrS/TO4-F). Moreover, husbands always expect their working wives to fulfil familial duties properly regardless of the effort they exert at work and, in most cases, decline to assist them in household work. A female counter supervisor pointed out the negative attitude of husbands regarding helping their working wives in housework claiming that, besides work, women "*are required to do all the housework and look after the children*

*as well while their husbands sit and relax".* She attributed such attitude to the culturally inherited more that men's "*sole duty towards the family is to work and earn living*" (PrM/CS3-F).

In Egypt, as well as in any other Islamic country, the relationship between religious doctrine and women's work is controlled by the following three important principles:

First, Islamic societies are of a patriarchal nature with dominance for men who are responsible for the maintenance of the family and providing it's economic needs. Religion wise, wives ought to obey their husbands even if husbands' orders are against the desires and wills of wives.

Second, women's domestic functions as wives and mothers (taking care of husbands, bearing, raising children and managing households) are regarded as their sacred role in the society. These functions take precedence to any other interests.

Third, in Islam there is no decree that forbids women from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it. Every man and woman has the right to work and the religion encourages men and women for earning livelihood.

In Egypt, the three above-mentioned principles strongly influence women's career development. Women do not work and, consequently, do not build careers without the approval of their husbands or male guardians if they are unmarried. In the meantime, husbands do not approve that their wives work unless they make sure that work patterns are socially suitable for their feminine

attributes and do not affect their familial roles. In practice, work fields that satisfy such conditions as set by the husbands are quite limited and, hence, career development opportunities in these work fields become more limited. Most of the working women are usually tied up to their familial obligations rather than to job duties and this certainly negatively affects their career development.

Therefore, the religious doctrine is a major societal factor influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. From a practical point of view, many of the basic work patterns in the travel business do not cope with the prevailing Islamic norms and traditions in relation to women's work. In their attempts to adapt work patterns in the travel business to the religious doctrine, women working for travel agencies mostly tend to prefer office work to operational work. This issue had been formerly discussed in detail (pages 7-30 to 7-32). Women also decline or refuse to participate in all anti-social work circumstances, which represent an essential component of the business activities. Examples for such circumstances are the delays after regular work hours, night-work activities, travelling away from home for business purposes, business parties held in hotels at night as well as the training and marketing workshops and conferences held abroad. Women's isolation for themselves by their own desires in office work only in addition to their absence from the other anti-social business activities drastically decreases their opportunities for exposure to the business sphere and the travel job market and, subsequently, minimises their chances for achieving upward mobility and career development.



In conclusion, when husbands utilise their patriarchal power and prevent their wives from having the opportunity to hold jobs they actually destroy women's careers completely. If husbands are relatively less conservative and allow their wives to work, their approval is, in many cases, conditioned on the suitability of the job and confirming that family requirements are met. Jobs that meet with these conditions, especially in the travel agencies, are quite few and difficult to find. Even if the wife succeeds in capturing a suitable job in a travel agency she will remain always threatened by the probability that her husband might force her to quit work any time if he feels that work has negative reflections on her domestic duties at home. This threat always puts working women under a continuous stress that makes them more tied to their familial life than to their jobs. The same threat also prevents them from participating in many of the anti-social business activities that often lead to better career development opportunities. Thus, the conditioned approval of husbands for women's work in travel agencies, though apparently it is a sign for a civilised attitude, still represents a barrier for women's talents and potentials to achieve career development.

Nevertheless, interviews revealed that some husbands are open-minded, less patriarchal in using their rights set by the religious doctrine and allow their wives to work in a more relaxed atmosphere. They often help the wives to coordinate between work responsibilities and familial obligations through sharing with them childcare and household duties as well as excluding the possibility of asking them to quit work. In this case the husband is a good support to his wife's career development as she performs at work without being stressed with

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household duties or fears to lose her job if her husband decides so. No doubt the performance of the later group of wives will be much better than that of the stressed ones and, thus, their opportunities for career development will increase. In most cases, the co-operative and helpful husband considers his wife's income from her job an essential support for the family's budget.

In some cases, especially when the family raises a number of children, the rules of the religious doctrine strongly dominate and the family concern comes on top of all other concerns. Here, both wife and husband agree by their mutual will that she quits work and totally devotes herself to the family. Sometimes, economic reasons might be behind this decision when the cost of taking care of the children during the absence of their mother at work comes close to or exceeds her income from the job. At any rate, quitting work means termination of career.

As for unmarried women (singles, divorced with no children or widows without any young children), the influence of religious doctrine on their career development is much less than it is on married women. Although unmarried women are constrained in the same areas exactly in the same way they have plenty of confidence, freedom and work-flexibility that enables them to become more involved in the travel business activities to a certain extent and, thus, aspire to promising career development opportunities.

### **9.2.2 Social mores**

Language-wise, social mores [Latin, pl. of mos =custom] are the customs and convictions of a community (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary, electronic version). In the Egyptian community, almost all of the social mores originated from the principles and rules of the Islamic religious doctrine. Even non-Muslim Egyptians are culturally convinced with these social mores and practice them. In fact, social mores and religious doctrine are obviously and closely interrelated to each other. As a result, many of the comments given by the interviewees and focus group participants regarding the religious doctrine indirectly referred to social mores and vice versa. Therefore, some of the quotes mentioned in sub-section 9.2.1 on the religious doctrine might be repeated as comments on social mores.

The research revealed that three major social mores influence women's career development in the Egyptian society as a whole. These mores are "*Private lives take precedence to women's careers*", "*Men's careers take precedence to women's careers*" and "*Social customs take precedence to women's careers*". These mores are rooted to the religious doctrine and are largely interrelated to the different formerly discussed personal and organisational factors influencing women's career development.

#### **9.2.2.a Women's private lives take precedence to career**

It has been indicated earlier that, according to the Islamic doctrine, the sacred mission of females in the society is to take care of husbands, raise children and maintain households. Therefore, the main concern of any Egyptian youth

female is to get married as early as possible whatsoever her educational level is or professional background qualifies for. Almost all Egyptian females look forward to the day when they can get married and form families. They prioritise this desire to any other interest that they might have. In one of the mixed focus groups (FGXa, comprising five males and four females) I raised the following question: **“What takes precedence by the Egyptian woman.. private life or work?”**. Non-hesitantly and quite confidently, all nine male and female participants answered at the same time that private life takes precedence to anything else. A female tourism student said, *“My natural function in the society is to raise a new generation (FGXa-F1)*. Another female tourism student added, *“For women work is not as important as the family. I prefer to devote myself to my family rather than anything else. Taking care of the family is the sacred mission of any woman” (FGXa-F3)*. A third female added, *“I am created a female to form a new family. My principal duty in life is to take care of my husband and raise my children” (FGXb-F7)*. A fourth female tourism student contributed, *“My family deserves all my time and worth it (FGXb-F5)*.

Within such context female tourism students, who seemed to be by nature family-oriented, prefer to stay at home after they finish their education and wait for marriage. In one of the mixed focus groups (FGXb), the female participants debated on this issue while male participants seemed to be totally satisfied with females' views and listened carefully without commenting at all. Some female participants said that by the time they first joined college they were very enthusiastic to work after graduation. However, after they spent two summer training periods and experienced the travel business atmosphere they

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began to realise that work in this particular business will have great implications on their future private lives. Thus, they became convinced that it is better for them not to work after graduation or, at most, work until they get married then quit. One of the female students said, *"After training and experiencing work atmosphere in travel agencies I do not want to work after graduation"*(FGXb-F2). Immediately after she gave this statement all participating male students clapped and shouted, excellent, very good. Another female participant immediately added, *"After training I decided not to work. If I work, I will quit and stay at home when I get married. Because I know that work will affect my private life, I will not work"* (FGXb-F3). A third female participant contributed:

*My great ambition was to work for a travel agency after graduation. Throughout training, I was shocked by the fact that women work at the cost of their families. If work affects my family, and it certainly will, it is better for me not to work.*

(FGXb-F4)

Family-oriented females who get employed usually regard employment as an opportunity to become more exposed to a future husband. A male employer said, *"It is good for a single female to work for a travel agency and have the opportunity to meet clients one of whom might be the future husband"* (EM2-M). Most of those females lose enthusiasm to work and leave their jobs after marriage if their husbands can afford the cost of living without depending on the income their wives earn. The same male employer added *"After marriage she loses interest in work and the family becomes her top priority"* (EM2-M). A male tourism consultant further added, *"Women prefer to leave their jobs after marriage if the family is not in need of the income they get"* (TC2-M).

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If women's work contradicts with their familial obligations they might come to the point that they have to choose between work and family. Being family-oriented they always prefer family to work. A female tourism student said, *"If I have to choose between work and family I will, no doubt, choose the family"* (FGXa-F1). Another female tourism student added, *"I prefer to devote myself to my family rather than anything else"* (FGXa-F3). A third female added, *"when it comes to the choice between work and family I will certainly choose the family"* (FGXb-F7). A female tourism student commented saying, *"I will never hesitate to quit work for good. I will not regret this decision but, on the contrary, I will be happy and satisfied with it"* (FGXb-F5). Women employees were also after the same view as a single female tour operator said, *"I prefer work as long as I am single but after marriage I will certainly quit"* (PrS/TO4-F). Another single female accountant added, *"If work contradicted with my family demands after marriage I will quit work and stay at home"* (PrS/Acc3-F).

The above-discussed qualitative evidence derived from the interviews and focus groups with regard to the societal more "women's private lives take precedence to work or career" emphasises the negative influence of this more on the career development of Egyptian women in general and in travel business in particular. Egyptian women are totally convinced that their sacred mission in life is to maintain their families and prioritise familial life to any other interest. They either stay at home after the completion of their education until they get married or work as long as they are single. After marriage many of them leave their jobs and prefer to dedicate themselves for the welfare of their husbands

and children. Leaving jobs after marriage simply means termination of career and tending to stay at home without work hinders establishing any career. The relatively anti-social work circumstances in the travel business makes it quite difficult for many women to co-ordinate between work and family and forces them to leave their jobs. This is why the rate of women employment turnover among women in the Egyptian travel agencies is very high compared to it in the other economic sectors. Commenting on this issue a male employer said, *"I surveyed the turnover rate in my agency and found that it reached about 25% which is very high. Seventy per cent of the people who left their jobs were females"* (EM2-M). A male tourism academic further commented *"The percentage of both men and women employees turnover in travel agencies is generally high. Turnover among women is relatively higher than it among men"* (AC3-M).

### **9.2.2.b Men's careers take precedence to women's careers"**

Due to the patriarchal nature of the Egyptian society, when any contradiction between men's careers and women's careers takes place the common rule is that men's careers take precedence regardless of any considerations. In other words, within the Egyptian family wives are often the partners that ought to sacrifice their careers for the sake of their husbands'. In most cases wives are usually convinced and satisfied with such sacrifice as they consider husbands the partner responsible for sponsoring the family and providing its needs and, thus, his career must come first.

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Contradiction between women's careers and men's careers occurs in three cases. First: whenever there is a childcare problem and one of the two parents is required to quit work to take care of the children. Second: the geographical move of the husband and the obligatory move of his wife with him to a new workplace. Third: women's career development opportunities accompanied with geographical moves. In any of these cases women mostly sacrifice their careers to properly raise the children and keep the unity of the family.

The most frequent contradictions between women's careers and men's careers are those related to childcare problems. In the Egyptian culture, the classic solution approved by both parties of the married couple to this problem is that the wife quits work. Commenting on this issue a female counter supervisor pointed out that married women are often subject to several career interruptions due to childcare considerations while *"on the contrary, men are rarely subject to career interruptions whatever happens in their private lives"* (PrM/CS3-F).

A female sales manager added:

*Working women may face pitfalls in their career path especially when they have small children. If the working woman has childcare problems she or her husband has to quit working to take care of the baby(s). Of course it will not be the husband who will quit simply because, traditionally, men's careers take precedence to those of women. The option will be that she herself quits work for sometime and sacrifices for the sake of the family.*

(PrM/SM1-F)

A male finance manager further confirmed the precedence of men's careers to women's careers as he said:

*When women fail to co-ordinate between job responsibilities and familial obligations they might decide to quit working, forget about career and willingly give precedence to their*



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*husband's careers. Classically, women are expected to be the first to sacrifice for the sake of the family.*

(PrM/FM1-M)

In Egypt, as well as in other oriental countries, religion and social mores necessitate that women live where their husbands live and if, for any reason, the husband moved to a new place his wife and children ought to move with him unless he prefers that they do not accompany him because of certain circumstance like housing problems, improper education or health facilities *etc.* Accordingly, any change of husband's work that includes geographical moves immediately imposes on wives leaving their jobs and careers behind them to join their husbands in order to maintain the unity of the family. Very few interviewees (only two females) referred to the negative influence of husbands' geographical moves on wives' career development. A recently married female tour operator said, *"If my husband moved to a new job out of Cairo I will definitely go with him although I know that my career might be ruined or at least interrupted* (PrS/TO2-F). Another married female counter supervisor ascertained that she is ready to accompany her husband wherever he goes even if this is at the cost of her career as she said,

*If my husband moves to another workplace inside or outside the country I will certainly never hesitate to accompany him because I put the unity of the family on top of my priorities. Of course this might cost me my job and career but I will not regret it. My husband's work is the main source for the family's income and, thus, his career comes prior to mine.*

(PrM/CS3-F)

Women might reject career development opportunities accompanied with geographical moves. As a matter of fact, none of the interviewees and focus group participants commented on this issue. Therefore, I will interpret it depending on my personal understanding of the Egyptian society. Unmarried

females are not allowed to live alone away from their guardians. Thus, they cannot accept geographical moves except if they can manage to be accompanied by a guardian. Similarly, married women cannot accept geographical moves without the approval of their husbands who in most cases refuse wives stay away from home for career considerations. Furthermore, the majority of those husbands are not ready to leave their jobs in order to accompany their wives who look after career development as they are culturally socialised to the principle that men's careers take precedence to women's careers. As a result, women mostly fail to benefit from career development opportunities accompanied with geographical moves.

#### **9.2.2.c Social customs take precedence to women's careers**

Social customs are regarded as unwritten laws set for the good of the society (Al-Saaty, 2000:111). In Egypt, social customs play an important role in shaping the nature and extent of Egyptian women's participation at the work places. These customs have a significant impact on women's career development in all work fields particularly in the travel business. Customs that are strongly related to women's employment in travel agencies include "veiling", *"not allowing females to get involved in night work or any type of work practised under anti-social conditions"*, *"women are not allowed to travel alone or stay away from home for long periods"*, and *"not allowing females to wear culturally unacceptable work-uniforms"*. The influence of such customs on women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies had been formerly discussed at scattered positions of this dissertation.. In general, all of the above-mentioned customs are not in favour of women's careers.

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The custom of “**veiling**” is highly recognised in Egypt and approximately half of the Egyptian Muslim females are veiled. No veiled female accepts to take off the veil in reward of getting employed or promoted to a job position that requires women to be unveiled. On the other hand, many travel agencies refuse to employ veiled women only because they are veiled. The final result of such a conflict is that the travel job market loses the potentialities of about half of the female work force and this huge portion of females is deprived job opportunities just because they insist to follow the religious obligation of wearing the veil.

One of the commonly existing social mores in the Egyptian society is “***not allowing females to get involved in night work or any type of work practised under anti-social conditions***”. Traditionally, Egyptian women are not allowed to stay away alone out of home after sunset. Therefore, any job that includes delays after the regular daytime work hours is often not welcomed and in most cases rejected by women's guardians (fathers, brothers... *etc.*) or husbands. This is why the Egyptian labour law prohibited employing women from 8 p.m till 7 a.m (article no. 152) and set very strict regulations to transport, accommodate and protect them if circumstance necessitated that they work at night. Similarly, any anti-social work activities that require delays at night, especially the business parties held in hotels and resorts, are totally refused by women's guardians. Under such restrictions women working for travel agencies cannot keep themselves involved in all business activities as most of these activities, due to the nature of the travel business, occur at anti-social

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work hours. Women's less involvement in the travel business activities results in less career development opportunities for them.

Another social more that frustrates women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies is that "**women are not allowed to travel alone or stay away from home for long periods**". According to the Islamic religious doctrine, Egyptian women cannot travel from one place to another for any period of time unless they are accompanied with a mature male member of the family. This doctrine limits the capacity of women employees in travel agencies to participate in almost all business activities outside the agency such as local seminars, workshops, meetings and conferences as well as the similar activities held abroad because they are not allowed to travel alone. Consequently, women employees are very much less exposed to the business market and may lose plenty of career opportunities because of their absence from these business gatherings. Even if women succeed in finding a family member who is ready to join them on the business trips, the agencies decline to bear the extra cost of supporting a person who does not work for them. Restrictions on in country and out country travel represent an additional element that deprives women from building careers in the Egyptian travel agencies.

A fourth social more acting against women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies is that "**females are not allowed to wear culturally unacceptable work-uniforms**". According to the Islamic religion, all females must cover all of their bodies except the face and hands (the Noble Qur'an;

Chapter 24, verse 31 and Chapter 33, verse 56). Females are also prohibited from wearing any clothing that shows the sexual attributes of their bodies like too tight and/or extremely short clothes. Some travel agencies require its employees to wear certain uniforms. Sometimes women's uniforms are too tight or extremely short to the point that some women employees may prefer to leave their jobs to being forced to wear such uniforms because they themselves dislike it in addition, of course, to the entire refusal of their guardians or husbands to such culturally unacceptable uniforms.

### **9.2.3 Gender stereotypes**

The findings of the current research indicated that three negative gender stereotypes affect women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. These are "*leadership is for men*", "*men are more dedicated than women*" and "*women are emotional*".

#### **9.2.3.a Leadership is for men**

Some interviewees and focus group participants were of the opinion that leadership is for men only. A male employer made it clear that in oriental societies leadership is a male domain as he said, "*Our oriental society has not yet digested the idea that women can be leaders. As a general rule leadership is for men*"(EM1-M). A male tourism student added, "*management is for men*" (FGM-7).

A female senior tourism specialist explained that leadership is often a male domain in the Egyptian society because women "*are regarded as second-class*

*human beings*”(PuM/STS1-F). She added that men always dominate women either at home or at work and that women seem to accept such kind of dominance as she said, “*Before marriage dominance is for fathers and brothers and after marriage it is for husbands. Also at work men usually dominant women. It seems that women got used to men's dominance and most of them accept it*”. A male Deputy General Manager added, “*In eastern societies men consider women a second-class human beings that cannot hold managerial jobs*” (PrT/DGM2-M) but a female counter supervisor criticised such concept saying, “*Men like to stand alone at the front rows leaving women at the back rows. They never appreciate that women can stand equal to them at the same level*” (PrM/CS3-F).

A female tourism student ascertained inequality between men and women not in leadership only but in all aspects of life as she further added, “*Women suffer inequality in all aspects of life. At both work and home they are dominated by men to the extent that they got used to inequality*” (FGF-1).

In Chapter eight I discussed the reluctance of some employers and senior managers to promote women to managerial posts. Apparently, one of the reasons for such reluctance might be the social more ‘leadership is for men’. As a matter of fact, decision-makers believing in restricting leadership to men will deprive women from holding senior leadership positions in their organisations and, consequently, women's career development is drastically frustrated.

**9.2.3.b Women are less dedicated than men**

Some decision-makers in the Egyptian travel agencies are gender-biased against women. Such bias originates from the long-lasting generalised assumptions they might have regarding women's decreased level of dedication to work due to family considerations. These unfair assumptions represent a major obstacle for women's employment and career development in all work fields.

During the interviews several decision-makers expressed themselves as gender-biased in favour of men or pointed out reactions that ascertain such bias. For example, a male employer said, *"I prefer a man because he will be fully dedicated to the job"* (EM2-M). A male General Manager in a public travel agency added, *"In my opinion, women cannot be managers"* (PuT/GM1-M). A female Deputy General Manager further added, *"The priority in managerial positions is for men"* (PrT/DGM4-F). Another female senior tourism specialist said, *"Women are less dedicated to their jobs than men because of their familial obligations"* (PuM/STS1-F).

Some travel agencies' middle managers and employees confirmed that opportunities for women's career development are frustrated by the above-mentioned social more. Females claimed that men are preferred to women in job and career opportunities as a female counter supervisor said, *"Men are preferred because they are more dedicated to work"* (PrM/CS4-M). A female tour operator justified the preference of men saying, *"I believe that women cannot be perfectly committed for more than one thing, either home or work"*

(PuS/TO1-F). Another female tour operator commented, *"In recruitment for managerial vacancies, the owners of the travel agencies prefer men because women cannot be as fully dedicated for their jobs as men"* (PrS/TO6-F). A third female tour operator further added, *"When appointing managers there is absolute preference for men"* (PrS/TO4-F).

Some male interviewees and focus group participants also affirmed the same trend of preferring men to women. A male tour operator said, *"Owners feel that men are more committed to their jobs"* (PrS/TO3-M). A male finance manager contributed, *"There is a noticeable preference for men when recruiting for managerial positions because they are more dedicated to their jobs than women"* (PrM/FM1-M). A male tourism student further added, *"Men are more committed than women"* (FGXa-M1).

### **9.2.3.c Women are weak**

Women are usually decent, emotional, co-operative, and flexible and enjoy a great deal of seemliness. Some people may judge such feminine attributes as signs of weakness that limit women's potentialities for occupying leadership positions at work. Practically speaking, women themselves are quite familiar with that impression and as a reaction, some of them who occupy leadership positions might pretend to be firm, strict and/or aggressive in their work relationships. However, many men still assume that women are weak even if they insist to show the masculine attributes to hide their internal weakness.



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Both men and women interviewees and focus group participants referred that women are weak and try to imitate men to overcome weakness. Among men, a tourism student said, *"The society regards women as weak human beings. In reaction, some of them tend to show firmness and strictness in work relationships"* (FGXa-M3). A male accountant added, *"Women internally feel that they are perceived weaker than men and try to overcome such feeling by pretending to be firm and stiff"* (PrS/Acc2-M). A tourism consultant further added, *"Some women managers feel weak and try to compensate for their weakness by pretending to be severely strict and firm"* (TC2-M). Females also gave similar comments as a senior tourism specialist said, *"Some women managers try to imitate men and behave sharply and strictly to hide their internal feelings of weakness"* (PuM/STS1-F). Another tourism specialist added, *"Women try to hide their weakness by putting on men's masks"* (PuS/TS1-F) and a tourism student contributed saying that *"Women are certainly weak but they try to show the opposite"* (FGF-6). Decision-makers who are influenced by the stereotype of women's weakness tend to deprive women occupying leadership positions in their establishments and, consequently, might block their career development opportunities under the assumption that such weakness does not meet with the requirements of the managerial jobs.

### 9.2.4 Legislation and government programs

It has been indicated earlier that the Egyptian legislature guaranteed women equality of opportunity in all aspects of life including, of course, the rights of employment and career development (see pages 3-36 to 3-38 and 8-40 to 8-42).

As for government programs, The National Council for Women (NCW) is currently performing 13 ongoing programs for empowering Egyptian women in different areas (NCW, 2004).

### **9.2.5 Social change**

Cultural, societal and economic pressures are known to induce social change in all societies. Practically speaking, it is impossible to change the rules of the religious doctrine but the negative influences of both social mores and gender stereotypes might be more relaxed day after another as a result of the continuing social change. In the meantime, legislature and government programs push forward, support and enhance social change in favour of women's employment and career development.

In Egypt, where education, unemployment and economic problems are increasing simultaneously, the conservative perceptions of women's work are changing in favour of women. Commenting on this issue a male employer said, *"Our classic concepts and beliefs about women's work are changing"* (EM1-M). A male finance manager added, *"Our traditions are changing in favour of women's work. On the long run women will take all rights. It is only a matter of time"* (PrM/FM1-M). A female tour operator further added, *"The old traditional ideas and concepts about women's work will diminish gradually"* (PrS/TO4-F).

Some interviewees pointed out that during the last few decades many of the conservative views regarding women's work and careers are becoming less

rigid. A finance manager said, *"Now, our society accepts things that were impossible to be accepted few decades ago"* (PrM/FM1-M). However, it seems that many people still insist on the old inherited conservative social mores and gender stereotypes in relation to women's work as a male General Manager said:

*It is not easy to change the mentality of people and ask them to get rid of their inherited concepts and perceptions. Such change is a very hard and long process that requires generations. At the moment, many people are still convinced with their traditional views in relation to women's work and never accept to change it.*

(PrM/GM1-M)

Social mores and gender stereotypes represent considerable barriers to women's employment and careers in all work fields in Egypt including, of course, the travel agencies. Fortunately, however, the impact of these barriers is decreasing gradually by time as a male employer said, *"Barriers to women's careers are on the way to disappear"* (EM1-M). Another male employer added, *"When I think of recruiting or promoting a person I absolutely go blind"* (Em3-M). A female Deputy General Manager further added, *"It is true that there are social barriers for women's employment and promotion in travel agencies but the stress of these barriers is decreasing gradually. The situation now is much better than it ten years ago"* (PrT/DGM4-F).

Interviewees attributed the gradual social change in the views regarding women's work to three reasons:

First: *"Women are working hard to prove themselves in the travel business"* (female counter supervisor, PrM/CS2-F).

Second: women are keen to improve their professional standards. A female Deputy General Manager said, *"The society began to accept the idea of women's presence at the managerial levels and their potentialities as successful managers"* (PrT/DGM4-F). A female counter supervisor added that *"the representation of women in the travel agencies is growing and their professional standard is improving"* (PrM/CS4-F).

Third: husbands are becoming more co-operative and willing to allow their wives to work because of their need to extra income to cover the increasing cost of living. A male Deputy General Manager said, *"Husbands are now more willing to allow their wives to work for economic reasons"* (PrT/DGM1-M). A female tour operator added, *"Men are changing their behaviour towards working women and becoming more helpful on home and children responsibilities. The increasing cost of living convinced men to appreciate women's work as a support for the family income"* (PrS/TO4-F).

### **9.3 Summary**

This chapter discusses the societal factors that influence women's career development in Egypt in general and in the Egyptian travel agencies in particular. These include religious doctrine, social mores, gender stereotypes, legislation, government programs and social change. Societal factors lie behind and interact with the influences of the different personal and organisational factors. Three major social mores frustrate women's careers in the Egyptian society as a whole; "private lives take precedence to women's careers", "men's careers take precedence to women's careers" and "social customs take precedence to women's careers". Three negative gender stereotypes further

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frustrate women's employment and careers; "leadership is for men", "men are more dedicated to work than women" and "women are emotional". The negative influences of social mores and gender stereotypes are more relaxed day after another as a result of the continuing social change. In the meantime, legislature and government programs push forward, support and enhance social change in favour of women's employment and career development. Barriers for women's employment and career development are diminishing gradually by time under the social change generated from women's hard work to prove themselves, their keen interest in improving their professional standards and the tendency of husbands to be more co-operative and willing to allow wives work.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS**

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## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS**

#### **10.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter presents a force field analysis for the different driving and restraining forces (the pro's and the con's, respectively) influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel business as interpreted from the findings of the qualitative component of the current research.

#### **10.2 Force field analysis**

In chapters seven, eight and nine I identified the different factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies as revealed from the interviews and focus groups. These factors drew my attention to a variety of forces acting for or against women's careers either on the national level or particularly in the travel business. My impression was that the weight, impact or significance of the different forces varies widely from too poor to too strong. From a practical point of view, it seemed unfeasible to consider all of these forces in the force field analysis (FFA). Therefore, I screened the factors and selected among them the forces that held the greatest weight. The outcome of such selection process of the key driving and restraining forces acting for (the pro's) or against (the con's) women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies is shown in Figure 10.1.

Figure 10.1: Force field analysis.

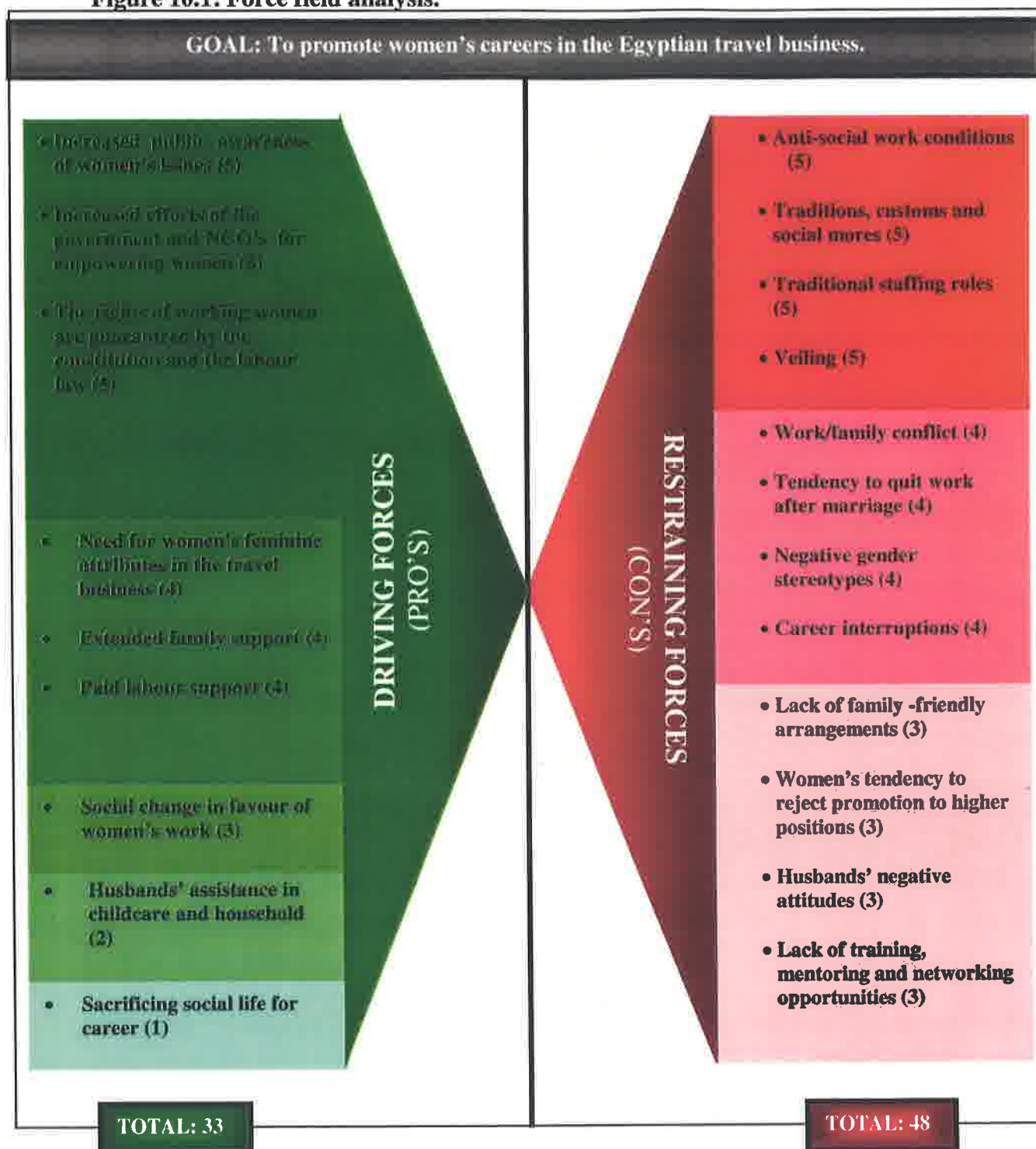




Figure 10.1 illustrates how nine driving forces and twelve restraining forces affect women's career development in the Egyptian travel business. The power of the restraining forces (48 strength rating units) seemed to be greater than that of the driving forces (33 strength rating units), thus indicating that efforts are required to alter as much as possible of these forces in favour of improving opportunities for better women's career development.

### **10.2.1 Driving forces**

As seen on the left-hand side of Figure 10.1, nine forces push forward women's career development in the Egyptian travel business. These forces can be classified into two distinct groups; one including eight general forces that act on all women at the national level and support women's empowerment nationwide, and the other includes only one specific force that acts on women's careers in the travel business in particular. All of the general driving forces seem to have a societal dimension and originate from either the efforts of the government and the NGO's to support and encourage women's work or the social change towards more acceptance and appreciation for women's work.

#### **10.2.1.a Public awareness of women's issues and efforts of the government and NGO's**

Two very strong forces guard women's career development in any workplace in Egypt: the increased public awareness of women's issues and the increased efforts of the government and the NGO's for empowering women. Public awareness of women's issues as well as the efforts of the NGO's increased progressively during the last two decades and lead to creating a noticeable governmental understanding and appreciation for the role of women in the

society. The establishment of the National Council for Women in the year 2000 crowned such understanding.

The National Council for Women *“was founded for the advancement of women; to improve their standing; facilitate their participation in economic, social and political development; and confront and overcome the challenges and obstacles hindering their participation”* (NCW, 2004). One of the principal mandates of the council is to *“enable women to fulfil their economic and social role and integrate their efforts into comprehensive development programs”* (NCW, 2003). In fact, the efforts of the National Council for Women in co-ordination with those of NGO’s are growing continuously and their impact on empowering women and, consequently, on their career development is expected to increase progressively.

#### **10.2.1.b Guarantee of the rights of working women**

The Egyptian constitution and labour law set quite enough legislation to guarantee the rights of working women, motherhood and childhood, and to assist women to co-ordinate between work and familial responsibilities. The proper implementation of the existing legislature is, in reality, a very strong driving force for women’s career development in all fields of work including the travel business. All travel agencies included in the field survey sample (Chapter 6) conformed that they strictly stick to and apply the principles and regulations set by both the constitution and the labour law (equal opportunity principle, equal pay for equal jobs principle and labour law advantages for

women such as maternity leave, breast feeding hours, childcare leave and special leave).

#### **10.2.1.c Extended-family and paid-labour supports**

Another set of the general driving forces that strongly push forward women's career development in the Egyptian society includes the extended family support and the paid labour support. Both types of support are very frequent in the Egyptian community. Many working women depend on their non-working mothers or other members of the family to take care of their children and assist in households while they are at work. Those who do not have extended family support opportunities might depend on the paid labour support (by leaving their children in nurseries, with babysitters or by having private housekeepers and/or servants if the family is well off).

Through the extended family support and the paid labour support many Egyptian working women can manage between work obligations and familial responsibilities and succeed in building careers. In that respect a female Deputy General Manager said, *"No woman can be equally successful at both work and home unless she receives support from her husband and family"* (PrT/DGM4-F). Another female academic added, *"Certain factors help women to manage between work and home such as the assistance of husbands, extended family support and/or the availability of someone to look after the children and the household"* (AC4-F). The increasing tendency to establish more childcare facilities at the workplaces is a further support for women's careers.

**10.2.1.d Social change**

A moderate driving force in favour of women's career development is the continuing change in the Egyptian society day after another. The society is moving gradually towards more acceptance for women's work and holding managerial positions in both the government and the different economic establishments. This social change, though very slow, is quite noticeable and encouraging. A male General Manager said, "*Change is a very hard and long process that requires generations*" (PrM/GM1-M). Certain women attitudes that were totally rejected fifty years ago (e.g. sitting side by side with a male colleague in the school or the university, having say in choosing her future husband or driving a car) are becoming quite normal nowadays. In that respect an interviewed male finance manager said, "*Our traditions are changing. Now our society accepts things that were impossible to be accepted decades ago*" (PrM/FM1-M). A female tour operator added, "*The old traditional ideas and concepts about women's work will diminish gradually*" (PrS/TO4-F).

**10.2.1.e Husbands' assistance (positive attitude)**

Another growing phenomenon in the Egyptian society, which represents one of the general driving forces for women's career development, is the increased tendency of some husbands to assist their wives in childcare and household activities to enable them to balance between work obligations and familial responsibilities and, thus, maintain their careers. A male student said, "*If the husband is co-operative and understandable he becomes a strong support for his wife's career progression*" (FGM-M1). Another female student added,

*“Through the co-ordination with and the co-operation of husbands women can successfully manage to achieve career development” (FGXb-F3).*

Although this force is still weak, it tends to grow more or less quickly due to the tendency of many husbands to acknowledge the need for wives work under the impact of economic pressure and the need for additional income to support the family budget. Commenting on this issue a male Deputy General Manager said, *“Husbands are now more willing to allow their wives to work for economic reasons”* (PrT/DGM1-M). A female tour operator further contributed, *“The increasing cost of living convinced men to appreciate women’s work as a support for the family income”* (PrS/TO4-F).

#### **10.2.1.f Sacrificing social life for career**

Few women, who are by nature career-oriented, are very keen on their careers to the point that they prioritise career to social life. Usually they prefer to remain unmarried or - if married - prefer to have no children in order to save enough time for their work. A male employer mentioned that *“some of the women working for the Egyptian travel agencies remain unmarried until the age of forty years or more”* (EM3-M). A male academic added, *“Challenging nature, some of the married women working for travel agencies decide not to have children”* (AC3-M). This type of women might reach the extreme of getting divorced when their careers contradict with social life. A male employer said, *“Unmarried women represent a phenomenon in the Egyptian travel agencies”* (EM3-M). Despite that this attitude from women’s side is not widely appreciated, it represents one of the general driving forces for women’s

career development in the Egyptian community. However, the FFA group evaluated the impact of such driving force on women's career development as very weak. A female interviewee who had been working for a travel agency for seven years said, *"Most of the women managers in travel agencies are unmarried, divorced or have no children"* (AC4-F). Another female interviewee added, *"Ninety per cent of the women holding managerial positions in the travel business are not married and have no familial life"* (PrT/DGM4-F).

#### **10.2.1.g Need for women's attributes**

The sole specific driving force for women's career development in the Egyptian travel business is the need for women's feminine attributes. This force was rated as strong and was repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees and focus group participants. Women are usually attractive, decent, patient, and helpful and enjoy a great deal of seemliness. Such characters qualify them to handle certain aspects of the travel business better than men, especially in the departments that include direct contact with clients.

Many agency owners and General Managers acknowledged that they prefer to employ women in the ticketing and sales departments because they believe that women's feminine attributes contribute much to the promotion of their businesses. Commenting on the need for feminine attributes a female employer said, *"All of the office work requires women"* (EM4-F). Another male employer added, *"If I am looking for a good reservations manager she must be a woman because such position requires the feminine attributes. We have to employ*

*females at the counter. It will look odd if they are not there” (EM2-M). A female tour operator further commented, “Owners often prefer employing women in the ticketing departments because they have excellent capabilities in dealing with clients” (PrS/TO5-F).*

### **10.2.2 Restraining forces**

The right-hand side of Figure (10.1) shows that twelve different forces restrain women’s career development in the Egyptian travel business. These forces are divided into three groups each comprising four forces. The first group includes the very strong forces: anti-social work conditions; traditions, customs and social mores; traditional staffing roles and veiling. The second group comprises the strong restraining forces: work/family conflict, tendency of women to quit work after marriage, negative gender stereotypes and career interruptions. The third group comprises the moderately restraining forces: lack of family-friendly arrangements, women’s tendency to reject promotion to higher positions, husbands negative attitudes and the lack of training, mentoring and networking opportunities.

#### **10.2.2.a Anti-social work conditions**

The anti-social work conditions of the travel business represent a very strong restraining force for women’s career development. Traditionally, the Egyptian community does not accept women’s delays at work after the regular work hours or at night. Also the community does not allow women’s stay away from home for several days or their travel in country or abroad with men who are not close members of their families. Such social restrictions prevent the women

working in the travel business from participating in many of its essential activities that are often practiced under anti-social work conditions, and drastically affect their opportunities for career development. Unfortunately, the chances for altering the restraining impact of anti-social work conditions on women's career development in the travel business seem to be very poor or almost impossible due to the very specific nature of this kind of business.

#### **10.2.2.b Traditions, customs and social mores**

The society's traditions, customs and mores represent another very strong restraining force acting against women's career development in the Egyptian travel business. Many of these traditions, customs and mores contradict with the work atmosphere in that business. Apart from rejecting the anti-social work conditions, the religious doctrine and the inherited cultural values stand against certain requirements for the involvement of women in the travel business such as participation in the business meetings and parties held at night in hotels, wearing culturally unacceptable short and/or tight work-uniforms and the unemployment of veiled women. Although the rigidity of the traditions, customs and social mores is slowly relaxed by time, the opportunities for altering them in favour of women's careers seem to be very limited on the short run. Even on the long run, the issues related to the religious doctrine will never be changed.



**10.2.2.c Traditional staffing roles**

A third very strong force facing women's career development in the Egyptian travel business is the traditional staffing roles. The problem with this restraining force is that it is quite acceptable by women themselves though they know that it limits their career development opportunities. In Egypt, there is a common acceptance among both men and women that, in the travel business, certain jobs are for men (like tour operators, transfer and transport) and certain jobs are for women (like reservations, sales and information technology). A male General Manager said, *"In recruiting for job vacancies employers take into consideration the nature and requirements of the job"* (PrT/GM1-M). This type of occupational segregation confines women in the office work only with limited career opportunities and exposes men to the operational work that provides plenty of those opportunities. A female Deputy General Manager commented on this issue saying, *"The chances of upwards career mobility in the indoor work, where women are commonly employed, are much less than those in the outdoor jobs, where men are commonly employed"* (PrM/DGM4-F).

Apparently, the traditional staffing roles root lies in the traditions and cultural values of the society. It seems that such roles were developed to mitigate women's desire to work in the travel business and the religious limitations for their involvement in that business. Being closely related to the socio-cultural structure of the community, alteration of the traditional staffing roles in favour of women's careers is not expected to happen in the Egyptian community until the traditions and cultural values change.

**10.2.2.d Veiling**

Veiling is a very strong force restraining women's career development in the Egyptian travel business. In practice, many -if not all- travel agencies refuse to employ veiled women. A female academic said, *"There are many red lines against employing veiled women in the Egyptian travel agencies"* (AC4-F). Meanwhile, almost none of the veiled women agree to remove the veil to obtain a job opportunity. Veiled women argue, and their argument is absolutely true, that the veil has nothing to do with the professional potentialities of women. They further argue that their exclusion is totally unfair and unconstitutional on one hand and deprives the job market benefiting from at least 50% of the available female workforce on the other hand as over half of the Egyptian women are veiled. A female tourism student stressed on this point saying, *"About half of the women in the Egyptian community are veiled. It is ridiculous that veiled women are deprived equal job opportunities just because they are veiled"* (FGF-F2). The owners and managers of the travel agencies claim, however, that the presence of veiled women is deterrent for customers especially those who come from Western countries. The issue of employing veiled women in the Egyptian travel agencies will remain debatable and the probability to alter it in favour of women seems too far. In fact, this issue has never been investigated before and deserves to be thoroughly explored.

**10.2.2.e Work/family conflicts**

One more strong restraining force is the work/family conflict, which puts a permanent stress on working women. Those who can live with that conflict, succeed in coping between work and familial responsibilities (superwomen),

and maintain in the meantime successful careers are very few. A great portion of the working women usually surrender to the pressure of the work/family conflict and end up by leaving their jobs and devoting themselves to the family. Altering work/family conflict in favour of women's careers depends on the tolerance of women themselves. However, supports to the family-friendly arrangements as well as the positive change in husbands' attitudes towards their working wives are possible means of helping women to tolerate work/family conflicts and help them to continue aiming for career development in the Egyptian travel business.

#### **10.2.2.f Tendency of women to quit work after marriage**

Another strong restraining force is the tendency of working women to quit work after getting married or, at most, after delivering their first baby. In fact, this attitude mostly puts an end to women's careers. Women decide to quit work after marriage in one out of three cases. First, if they feel unable to coordinate between work and home and their husbands are quite well off to provide the family needs independently. A single female accountant said, "*If work contradicted with my family demands after marriage I will quit work and stay at home*" (PrS/Acc3-F). Second, if the cost of nursing babies and/or babysitting children comes close to or exceeds the income they get from their jobs. Third, if they fail to find appropriate arrangements for the care of their children while they are at work. An employer narrated that after his wife had her second baby "*she realized that it is impossible to maintain the balance between work and family...she decided to quit work*". Apparently, very little can be done to alter this attitude particularly among the women who are usually

family-oriented. However, the availability of child-care facilities at a reasonable cost might be a means for reducing women's tendency to quit work after marriage.

#### **10.2.2.g Negative gender stereotypes**

A third strong restraining force for women's career development in the Egyptian travel business is the prevalence of certain negative gender stereotypes against women's careers like "management is for men", "women are less dedicated to work than men", "women can only be subordinates" and "the best place for women to show their skills is the kitchen". Such stereotypes have been long established in the Egyptian community and plenty of men, and even women, - though highly educated - strongly believe in them. Gender stereotypes represent a true obstacle for both women employment and career development in many work places including the travel business. They are very difficult to alter, and social change might be the sole hope to get rid of them within the forthcoming decades.

#### **10.2.2.h Career interruptions**

The fourth strong restraining force for women's career development in the Egyptian travel business is career interruptions. Physiologically, women are compelled to certain career interruptions like maternity leave and breastfeeding hours. They are also frequently in need of relatively long childcare leaves. A female counter supervisor said, "*Because of parental responsibilities and familial obligations women frequently have career breaks which interrupt their career progression*" (PrM/CS3-F).

Career interruptions have two adverse effects on women's career development. One is career delay and the other is career termination. Career delays happen when women leave their jobs for periods of time then return back to find themselves beyond their colleagues who remained working without interruption. Career termination takes place when women are forced to leave their jobs for good to care about their young children, as the private travel agencies do not allow childcare leave. A female sales manager pointed out that, *"Working women may face pitfalls in their career path especially when they have small children"* (PrM/SM1-F). Career interruptions represent a restraining force that is difficult to alter. However, one of the options to relax the influence of this force on women's career development is to encourage and enhance the establishment of suitable childcare facilities in the different workplaces to minimize women's need for childcare leave and, thus, enable them to keep their jobs and careers.

#### **10.2.2.i Lack of family-friendly arrangements**

Lack of the family-friendly arrangements is also a moderate restraining force for women's career development in the Egyptian travel business. The influence of this force might be easily altered in favour of women through inducing additional family-arrangements like increased appreciation for the personal circumstances of working women, establishment of on-site and/or off-site childcare facilities, flexible work hours, job-sharing and part-time jobs. Such arrangements are expected to decrease women's tendency to quit work after marriage, relax the stresses of the work/family conflicts on them and minimize their need for long childcare leave.

**10.2.2.j Women's tendency to reject promotion to higher positions**

Another moderate restraining force is women's tendency to reject promotion to higher positions. Although many working women feel confident that they are capable of holding managerial positions in the travel business, they frequently decline to accept these positions because they cannot add extra load to their quite busy time schedules and heavy work and family obligations. A female tourism specialist said, *"If the agency promotes me to a higher managerial position I won't accept it. I need no more demands on my time"* (PuM/STS1-F). A female tour operator added, *"Women themselves may not accept promotion to managerial jobs because they are busy with their families and need no more demands on their time"* (PuS/TO1-F). In this case women limit their career development by their own will. This restraining force might be altered through benefiting from some of the driving forces such as extended family support, paid labour support and husband's assistance.

**10.2.2.k Husbands' negative attitude**

Husband's negative attitude towards working wives is a moderate restraining force for women's career development. Some Egyptian husbands believe that their sole responsibility towards the family is only to provide its financial needs. Their understanding is that "home is a place to sit in and relax". Based on such understanding, this type of husbands declines to exert any effort to assist wives on childcare or household. They argue that so far it is the desire of wives to work; it is their duty to tolerate the consequences. In most cases, husbands defend their negative attitude by claiming that the main responsibility of women is to take care of the family and the household prior to anything else.

Husbands' negative attitudes seem to be difficult to alter in the short term. However, creating awareness among husbands by all means to appreciate wives work and their role in the society as well as the need for mutual co-operation between husbands and wives on childcare and household might help in decreasing husbands' negative attitudes towards wives on the long run.

#### **10.2.2.1 Lack of training, mentoring and networking**

Several female and male interviewees, especially the newly-employed ones, claimed that they suffer insufficiency of training opportunities in the Egyptian travel agencies. The FFA group evaluated the lack of training, mentoring and networking as a moderate restraining force for women's career development. In fact, the influence of this force is expected to decrease gradually by time as the new legislation organizing travel business in Egypt will lead to the amalgamation of the many small-family- businesses travel agencies into a very limited number of large or giant agencies. These future agencies will, definitely, pay considerable attention to human resource management including, of course, the increased interest in training. Nevertheless, mentoring and networking will remain dependent upon the personal capabilities of the travel business employees themselves and their capacity to establish mentoring relationships with their senior supervisors and managers or networking relationships with the other colleagues involved in the travel business.

### 10.3 Validity of the driving and restraining forces affecting women's career development

In an attempt to explore the validity of my interpreted driving and restraining forces affecting women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies I checked the frequencies of referring to each of these particular forces through listening once more to the recorded interviews and focus groups tapes. A summary of the results of such attempt is shown in Table 10.1.

**Table 10.1: Frequency of referring to the different driving and restraining forces in the interviews and focus groups.**

Force	Frequency *
<b>Driving forces :</b>	
1- Increased public awareness of women's issues.	0
2- Increased efforts of the government and NGO's for empowering women.	0
3- The rights of working women are guaranteed by the constitution and the labour law.	11
4- Need for women's feminine attributes in the travel business.	44
5- Extended family support.	5
6- Paid labour support.	8
7- Social change in favour of women's work.	15
8- Husbands' assistance in childcare and household.	9
9- Sacrificing social life for career.	11
<b>Restraining forces :</b>	
1- Anti-social work conditions.	41
2- Traditions, customs and social mores.	61
3- Traditional staffing roles.	52
4- Veiling.	17
5- Work/family conflict.	20
6- Tendency to quit work after marriage.	62
7- Negative gender stereotypes.	39
8- Career interruptions.	20
9- Lack of family-friendly arrangements.	5
10- Women's tendency to reject promotion to higher positions.	8
11- Husbands' negative attitudes.	20
12- Lack of training, mentoring and networking opportunities	6

\* Number of times of reference to force in the interviews and focus groups.



**10.3.1 Driving forces**

None of the interviewees or focus groups participants referred to either the increased public awareness of women's issues or the increased efforts of the government and NGO's for empowering women. This is simply because I didn't ask them about these two forces on one hand, and because they are quite well known to all as *ipso facto* on the other hand. Nevertheless, public awareness and government and NGO's efforts remain, from my own point of view, very strong forces driving women's career advancement nationwide. The need for women's feminine attributes in the travel business was the leading driving force, thus, conforming its great significance for the promotion of women's career development. Social change, guarantee of women's rights by the constitution and labour law, and scarifying social life for career were the three driving forces following to the need for women's feminine attributes. Husbands' assistance in childcare and household ranked next while referring to extended family support and paid labour support as driving forces was relatively limited.

Although the sequence of the driving forces, as arranged according to my interpretation, was not quite identical to that of their arrangement according the frequency of referring to them in the interviews and focus groups, the two patterns of arrangement agreed that women's feminine attributes, which is the sole specific driving force directly related to the travel business, is a very strong force. The two patterns of arrangement further agreed that social change is also a considerable driving force and pointed to the impact of the legislative guarantee of women's rights as an important driving force.

### **10.3.2 Restraining forces**

Arranging the forces acting against women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies - according to the frequency of referring to them in the interviews and focus groups - indicated that women's tendency to quit work after marriage, traditions, customs and social mores, traditional staffing roles, anti-social work conditions and negative gender stereotypes are very strong restraining forces. Slightly less effective, but still strong, restraining forces are work/ family conflict, career interruptions, husbands' negative attitudes and veiling. The moderately effective restraining forces were the tendency to reject promotion to higher positions, lack of training, mentoring and networking opportunities and lack of family-friendly arrangements. The frequencies of the different restraining forces refer that the relative strengths of these forces are nearly similar to those interpreted through the force field analysis and, thus, assure its validity.

### **10.4 Summary**

A force field analysis for women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies was conducted. Nine driving forces (pro's) and twelve restraining forces (con's) were identified. The pro's are three very strong forces (increased public awareness of women's issues, increased efforts of the government and NGO's for empowering women and the guarantee of women's rights by the constitution and the labour law), three strong forces (need for women's feminine attributes in the business, extended family support and paid labour support), one moderate force (social change), one weak force (husbands' assistance in childcare and household) and one very weak force (scarifying

social life for career). The con's are four very strong forces (anti-social work conditions, traditions, customs and social mores, traditional staffing roles and veiling), four strong forces (work/family conflict, women's tendency to quit work after marriage, negative gender stereotypes and career interruptions) and four moderate forces (lack of family-friendly arrangements, women's tendency to reject promotion to higher positions, husbands' negative attitudes and lack of training, mentoring and networking opportunities).

## **CHAPTER 11 CONCLUSION**

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## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **11.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter concludes the present study on women's employment and the factors influencing their career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. It comprises nine sections of which section 11.1 is an outline. Section 11.2 presents the major research findings while sections 11.3, 11.4 and 11.5 deal with the significant contributions of the study to knowledge (theory), methodology and practice, respectively. Section 11.6 highlights the study's limitations and section 11.7 discusses the potential avenues for further research on women's work in the Egyptian travel business. Section 11.8 includes my reflections on the research process and section 11.9 presents my final thoughts about the study as a whole.

#### **11.2 Major findings**

The survey results indicated that women formed 26% of the workforce in the Egyptian travel agencies occupying 21% of private and 30% of public sector posts. On average, women occupied 35% of the managerial positions in the public agencies and 25% of these positions in the private ones. In private agencies, women held 26% and 20% of the middle and senior management positions, respectively. Women dominated, both as employees or middle managers, in the departments that practice office work and were much less present in the operational and ground handling departments.

As for the extent to which there are organisational policies set in place to support women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies, the survey indicated that public agencies and 55% of the private agencies have written policies for selection and recruitment. All agencies strictly stick to and apply the regulations set by the Egyptian labour law that guarantees equality of opportunities. Public agencies and 73% of the private agencies do not refer to sex in the selection and recruitment policies while in 27% of the private agencies males might be preferred to females when recruiting for the jobs that include anti-social working conditions. Experience and qualifications are the criteria used for selection and recruitment in the public agencies whereas the criteria considered in the private agencies are experience, qualifications, marital status and sex. Some agencies might consider other additional selection criteria.

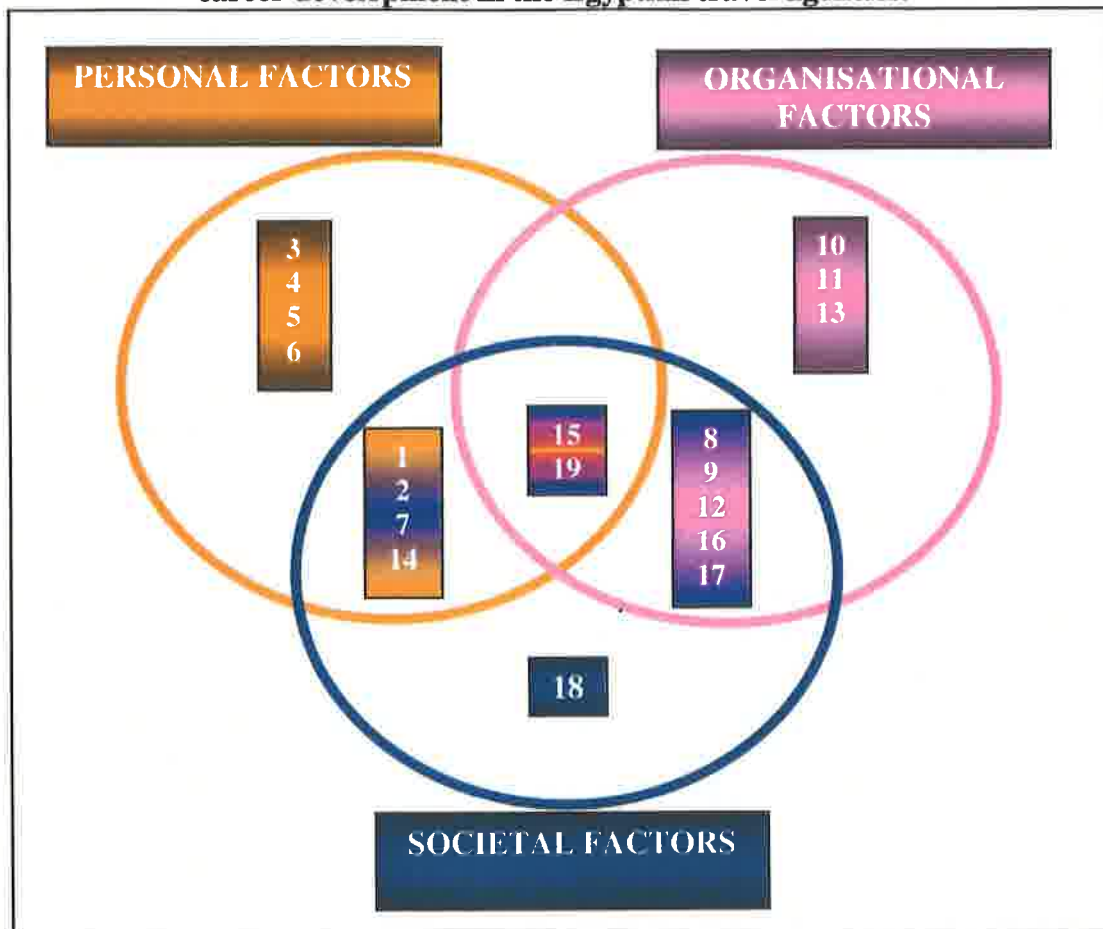
The qualitative evidence derived from the interviews and focus groups revealed that women's career development in Egyptian travel agencies is influenced by three groups of closely interrelated overlapping and interacting factors: the personal, organisational and societal factors (Table 11.1 and Figure 11.1). Personal factors are divided into two sub-groups as family-related and individual-related. The research identified five family-related factors (parents' attitude towards unmarried daughters, husbands' attitude towards wives' careers, dual career demands, work/family conflicts and career interruptions) as well as two individual related factors (work motivation and career choices). Identified organisational factors are initial staffing decisions, promotion decisions, family-friendly arrangements, training opportunities, informal

systems of career development and equal opportunity (EO) policies. Societal factors are religious doctrine, social mores, gender stereotypes, legislation, government programs and social change.

**Table (11.1): Interactions between the different factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies.**

No.	FACTOR	Personal	Organisational	Societal
1	Parents' attitude towards unmarried daughters	✓		✓
2	Husbands' attitude towards wives' careers	✓		✓
3	Dual career demands	✓		
4	Work/family conflict	✓		
5	Career interruptions	✓		
6	Work motivation	✓		
7	Career choices	✓		✓
8	Initial staffing decisions		✓	✓
9	Promotional decisions		✓	✓
10	Family friendly policies		✓	
11	Training opportunities		✓	
12	Informal systems of career development		✓	✓
13	Equal opportunity policies		✓	
14	Religious doctrine	✓		✓
15	Social mores	✓	✓	✓
16	Gender stereotypes		✓	✓
17	Legislation		✓	✓
18	Government programs			✓
19	Social change	✓	✓	✓

**Figure (11.1): Interactions between the factors influencing women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies.**



- 1- Parents' attitude towards unmarried daughters.
- 2- Husbands' attitude towards wives' careers.
- 3- Dual career demands.
- 4- Work/family conflict.
- 5- Career interruptions.
- 6- Work motivation.
- 7- Career choices.
- 8- Initial staffing decisions.
- 9- Promotional decisions.
- 10- Family-friendly policies.
- 11- Training opportunities.
- 12- Informal systems of career development.
- 13- Equal opportunity policies.
- 14- Religious doctrine.
- 15- Social mores.
- 16- Gender stereotypes.
- 17- Legislation.
- 18- Government programs.
- 19- Social change.



The research concludes by a force field analysis identifying the key forces working for and against women's career development in the Egyptian travel agencies. Women's careers are derived by 9 forces and restrained by twelve forces. Restraining forces are rather powerful than driving forces. Such situation imposes the need for altering both driving and restraining forces in favour of improving opportunities for women's career development.

However, because most of the identified driving or restraining forces have a societal dimension altering them is expected to be unlikely very slow. Nevertheless, limited change might occur on the short run as a result of the currently existing continuous persisting efforts of the National Council for Women and the NGO's for empowering women and boosting their participation in the public sphere. It is hoped that these efforts might lead to considerable alteration towards strengthening the driving forces and weakening the restraining forces on the long run.

As a first recommendation to improve women's career opportunities in the Egyptian job market in general and in travel business in particular the results of the current study ought to be carefully considered by the concerned authorities and strategy and decision makers at the national level particularly at the National Council for Women and the ministries of Labour Force, Culture, Social Welfare and Law as well as the direct specific end users; the Ministry of Tourism and the Egyptian Federation of Tourism Travel Agencies.

Other recommendations for improving women's careers in Egypt are: increasing public awareness of women's issues and their participation in the public life at a national level, supporting and encouraging social change towards more acceptance and appreciation for women's work, setting more legislation to assure women's right to return to their jobs after career interruptions (childcare leave and special leave) as well as forcing governmental and economic establishments to provide sufficient in-site and/or off-site childcare facilities, encouraging husbands to assist their working wives on household and childcare responsibilities by all means, relaxing - as much as possible - the anti-social work conditions to enable working women to co-ordinate between work responsibilities and familial obligations, encouraging the slow relaxation of the traditions, customs and social mores related to women's work, combating the still existing gender stereotypes and their strong impact on staffing decisions in favour of men, optimising occupational segregation to allow maximum career opportunities for women, confirming the right of veiled women to equally compete for jobs and preventing - by all possible means - depriving them employment opportunities for just being veiled, supporting family-friendly arrangements such as flexible work hours, part-time jobs and job-sharing to relax the stresses of work /family conflicts on working women, and encouraging women to accept upward career mobility and get rid of the fears of more demands on their time through the different approaches to improve family-friendly arrangements and decrease work/family conflicts.

### **11.3 Contribution to knowledge**

This thesis makes a pioneering contribution to the body of knowledge of the status of women's employment in the Egyptian travel business through a quantitative survey as well as a determination of the factors influencing their career development through a comprehensive qualitative field study. It attempts to identify the extent and nature of women's employment in the Egyptian travel agencies and explores the various forces acting pro or anti women's career development opportunities in the very delicate and dynamic travel industry. Apparently, this is the first qualitative/quantitative investigation of women's employment in the travel agencies in Egypt and a pilot exploration of the factors governing their career development in the travel business.

The findings of this quantitative and qualitative study also contribute to the growing Egyptian research agenda in the field of women studies which are, nowadays, highly requested and encouraged by the Egyptian government under the umbrella of the National Council for Women (NCW). Furthermore, this investigation contributes much to the noticeable shortage of literature on women's employment and career development in the travel industry not only in Egypt but also at the international level of academic studies. Despite that I spent plenty of time and effort digging for literature on women's work in the travel business my searches revealed that, unfortunately, almost none was published in that area and all of the gathered relevant information and statistics mainly concentrated on the involvement of women in hospitality and catering

industries. Therefore, the claim that this research is a pioneering study in the area of women's employment in travel business is justifiable.

### **11.4 Contribution to methodology**

The main contribution to methodology made by this thesis is that it addresses pragmatism as an independent theoretical perspective in social research. Many researchers combined quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis using triangulation as a corner stone for their studies and yet referred to themselves as being either positivists or constructivists. When I reviewed the classifications of inquiry paradigms in the social sciences I realised that none except Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) referred to pragmatism as an independent research paradigm. In planning for my research I spent much time thinking about choosing between positivism/post-positivism and constructivism but I was neither convinced nor satisfied by either choices. I always felt that I needed a solid methodological justification of my selected theoretical perspective to rely upon in properly and exactly identifying my philosophical orientation towards combining "*quants*" and "*quals*" apart from that of triangulation. Therefore, I finally came to the satisfaction that pragmatism is the most appropriate theoretical perspective for my study.

### **11.5 Contribution to practice**

The current study added two major contributions to practice. First: it precisely evaluated the existing status of women's employment in the Egyptian travel agencies and emphasised that they are less represented than men at both the low organisational and managerial levels thus altering a long-lasting false

impression that travel business in Egypt is women dominated. Second: the study identified the pros and cons of boosting women's career development in the Egyptian travel industry which will help decision makers in developing appropriate strategies for promoting and enhancing women's careers within the travel business.

### **11.6 Study's limitations**

From a practical point of view, it was quite clear from the very beginning that the Western theories, models and metaphors related to women's experiences in the workplace (*i.e.* glass ceilings, glass walls and sticky floors) are certainly inappropriate for explaining the corresponding experiences of women in the Egyptian workplace. Thus, I realised that I have to explore such experiences from a totally different local point of view based primarily on the Egyptian context. Taking into consideration the shortage of the literature on women's issues in Egypt, this research developed the alternative concept of "thick walls" to explain and conceptualise the nature and extent of interaction between women's public and private lives.

### **11.7 Potential avenues for further research**

The status of women in the travel business in Egypt, as well as in the other Islamic countries, is a fertile field of investigation that encounters numerous potential research venues, which to date have not been navigated by the concerned researchers. One of these venues is the exploration of the perceptions of the competence of women as managers. Another venue is the workplace interrelationships between women managers and their subordinates.

A third venue is the business relationships between women managers and clients. The impact of veiling on women's employment in travel agencies and the male/female interactions in the tourism workplace represent two additional venues for future research. Similar studies might also be conducted in the other spheres of the tourism industry.

### **11.8 Reflections on the research process**

My deep interest in women's work in tourism since childhood enhanced me to conduct my postgraduate study towards doctoral work on women's employment in Egyptian travel agencies and the factors influencing their career development. This sustainable interest motivates me to explore more aspects of women's issues in tourism in general and in the travel business in particular. Therefore I will remain eager to tackle as much as I can of the above-identified potential avenues for future research as soon as I return back home and start my academic career as a university staff member.

The significant lessons I learnt while working on this thesis are "there is nothing impossible" and "persistence leads to achievements". I always blamed myself throughout my entire research journey for the topic I chose for my study. Many times I felt as if I am sailing alone in an endless sea aiming for an inaccessible land but I never lost confidence in God and myself that one day I will reach my desired destination and put my feet on a solid ground. Such confidence provided me with intention, tolerance and a very strong will that enabled me to submit this thesis in spite of the various frustrating difficulties I faced. The major difficulty I met was at the core of my research problem as I

conducted my studies for over four successive years in a foreign country while being responsible for a family consisting of a husband and two small children in addition to myself. Therefore, if I reflect on this thesis I would describe it as my third baby with the longest of gestation period. Through my attempts to balance between research requirements and family obligations I felt that I ought to be a superwoman. However, I was always convinced that my familial role should take precedence to my career.

Honestly, I have to confess that without the support of my husband as well as the vast extended family support offered by my parents, who left their jobs in Egypt for long periods several times and came to the UK to assist me in looking after my children and household, I should have never been able to manage and finish my studies. In addition to the husband's and family supports, I was lucky enough to receive extensive doses of spiritual support and continuous encouragement from my two supervisors who, fortunately, were females and very kindly appreciated my extremely tough circumstances.

Apart from the familial difficulties I also had to confront some other conceptual difficulties. On top of these difficulties is the fact that my research topic is unique and has not been previously approached by any other researchers. Such uniqueness might be attributed to the following:

- First, being an insider, who is quite familiar with the local cultural and religious context in Egypt, is in itself a source of uniqueness. If an outsider has to tackle the same research topic he/she might have explored it depending on different approaches and judged the findings from

completely different perspectives. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 8-9) stated that *"the stranger acquires a certain objectivity not normally available to culture members. The latter live inside the culture, and tend to see it as simply a reflection of 'how the world is'"*. Accordingly, I adopted the reflective approach in interpreting my research findings depending on my personal experiences and views as an individual who is quite familiar with the prevailing socio-cultural context of the Egyptian community.

- Second, being a female is an additional source of uniqueness as I share with women the same concerns and feelings as well as the same duties and obligations. This feminine nature facilitated my engagement in friendly and frank conversations with my female interviewees and focus group participants. If a male researcher had interviewed those females, their answers to the interview questions might have been quite different.
- Third, methodologically speaking, my research is also unique in integrating both the quantitative and qualitative approaches in one research program as most of the social research conducted in Egypt is founded on the quantitative approach only.

A second conceptual difficulty was that many of the social aspects of my research are related to the religious and cultural concepts and perceptions of the very specific more or less conservative Egyptian community, which is mainly an Islamic community. Practically speaking, most of these concepts and perceptions are long-lasting unwritten ethics and traditions originating from the Islamic religious doctrine. Although many authors referred to the religious and cultural concepts and perceptions that prevail in the Egyptian community all of



them depended on only two principal sources; the “Noble Qur’an” (the holy book of Muslims), and the “Sunnah” (the sayings of the Prophet Mohamed, Prayers and Peace be upon him). Therefore, it was necessary to support some of my statements by selected verses from the Noble Qur’an and pieces of the Sunnah due to the lack of any other relevant literature sources.

In addition to the above-mentioned familial and conceptual difficulties, the third difficulty I faced was geographic. I was based in the UK while my research material was located in Egypt. I was required to visit Egypt three times: once to dig for gathering any local literature related to my study topic, then again to conduct the agency survey and a third visit to conduct the interviewees and focus groups. Each of these visits lasted for a month or more. Furthermore, whenever I needed any information between my successive visits to Egypt I relied on members of my family to provide the required information through the regular or electronic mail.

### **11.9 Final thoughts**

This thesis is the outcome of over four years of continuous research effort in both UK and Egypt on women’s employment in the Egyptian travel agencies and the factors influencing their career development. The research allowed me to investigate many of the issues related to women’s work in one of the most economically important sectors in Egypt that were unexplored before. It also allowed me to forage several interesting areas through my search for the appropriate methodology and theoretical perspective that correspond to my research.

My affiliation to and study at UWIC has greatly contributed to my knowledge and research aptitude as well as to my personal character. Being supervised by Dr. Annette Pritchard and Dr. Eleri Jones was a great privilege and pleasure for me. They were always very helpful, supportive and understanding of my critical personal circumstances and conceptual difficulties along my research journey. I will never forget the wisdom behind the advice of Dr. Jones that “the best way to eat an elephant is in small bites” and “the darkest hour is before dawn”.

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## APPENDIX

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**Table 1 App.: Estimated population of Egypt in 01.01.2003.**

Population		Economically active (15 – 64 years)	Economically inactive (<15&>64 years)	Total
Males	No.	20,790,439	13,654,034	34,444,473
	%	<b>50.9</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>51.2</b>
Females	No.	20,068,662	12,799,910	32,868,572
	%	<b>49.1</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>48.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	No.	40,859,101	26,453,944	67,313,045
	%	<b>60.7</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS\*, Statistical Year Book, 2003, p. 6.

\* Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.

**Table 2 App.: Percent of illiteracy among Egyptian population by sex and place of residence (1996 census).**

Place of residence	Males	Females
Urban areas	<b>19.81</b>	<b>33.80</b>
Rural areas	<b>36.40</b>	<b>63.23</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.00</b>	<b>50.18</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Statistical Year Book, 2003, p. 33.

**Table 3 App.: Numbers of primary schools, primary school classes, primary school students and primary school teachers in the school year 2001/2002.**

	No.	%
Primary schools	15,653	-
Primary schools classes	174,451	-
Primary schools students:		
Males	3,758,391	<b>52.6</b>
Females	3,382,912	<b>47.4</b>
Total	7,141,303	<b>100.0</b>
Primary schools teachers:		
Males	148,226	<b>46.7</b>
Females	169,212	<b>53.3</b>
Total	317,438	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS\*, Statistical Year Book, 2003, p. 57-59.

**Table 4 App.: Enrollment in the different levels of education for the school year 2001/2002\*.**

Schools	Males	Females	Total
Primary **			
Total	3,758,391	3,382,912	7,141,303
%	53	47	100
Preparatory **			
Total	2,318,243	2,074,968	4,393,211
%	53	47	100
Secondary **			
Total	572,563	590,316	1,162,879
%	49	51	100
Secondary (technical) ***			
Total	1,156,897	992,511	2,149,408
%	54	46	100
<b>Grand Total</b>	7,806,144	7,040,707	14,846,801
%	53	47	100
University education: ***			
Total	801,714	687,701	1,489,415
%	54	46	100

Source: Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p. 14-17.

\* Al-Azher education not included.

\*\* Information department, Ministry of Education.

\*\*\* CAPMAS, Statistical Year Book, 2003, p. 57, 63, 69, 75 and 83.

**Table 5 App.: Enrollment of female post-graduates in Egyptian universities in the academic year 2000/2001.**

Degree	No. of female post-graduates	% female post-graduates
Diploma	31,159	41.4
Master	21,003	39.7
Ph.D.	7,019	33.7
<b>Total</b>	59,181	39.7

Source: Education Development Center, Supreme Council of Universities.

c.f. Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW\*, p.23.

\* National Council for Women.

**Table 6 App.: Women in senior and middle management in the government, Public & business sector and private sector (1996 census).**

Managerial level	%			
	Government	Public & business sector	Private sector	Total
Senior management	25.2	9.6	5.8	12.0
Middle management	30.6			30.6

Source: The renaissance of Egypt, Women.. Citizenship and Development.

First Conference of the National Council for Women, March 2000, p. 26.



**Table 7 App.: Percent of women's representation in the high administrative positions in the government, business sector and public sector in 2000.**

High administrative position	% women representation
Minister or higher	2.49
Deputy Minister	0.00
First Under Secretary	5.64
Under Secretary	13.21
Director General	20.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.74</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Statistics of government and public sector employees, 1988-2000. *c.f.* Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p.57.

**Table 8 App.: Percentages of women practicing in the different professions in the government, public & business sector and private sector (1996 census).**

Profession	%			
	Government	Public & business sector	Private sector	Total
Accountants	42.3	26.9	51.4	37.7
Engineers	6.9	3.3	12.7	9.7
Doctors	31.9	25.6	0.6	31.4
Nurses	84.5	66.7	73.8	83.2
Teachers	39.8	---	50.7	40.4
Social & welfare specialists	58.6	27.6	45.2	55.9
Clerks	39.1	21.3	43.0	38.9
Secretaries	43.5	11.9	52.0	47.8

Source: The renaissance of Egypt, Women.. Citizenship and Development. First Conference of the National Council for Women, March 2000, p. 26.

**Table 9 App.: Percentages of male and female teachers in the different stages of education in 2001/2002.**

Stage	%	
	Males	Females
Pre-primary education	00.94	99.06
Primary education	46.50	53.50
Preparatory education	56.28	43.72
Secondary education	65.10	34.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.35</b>	<b>46.65</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Statistical Year Book, 2003, p. 55-74.

**Table 10 App.: Representation of females in teaching staff in Egyptian universities in the academic year 2000/2001.**

Academic post	% Females
Professor	24
Associate professor	26
Lecturer	34
Assistant lecturer	40
Instructor	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

Source: Education Development Center, Supreme Council of Universities.  
c.f. Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW\*, p.28.

**Table 11 App.: Female staff in scientific institutions and centers affiliated to the Ministry of Scientific Research.**

Staff	No.	%
Males	2,396	56.83
Females	1,921	43.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,317</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p.39.

**Table 12 App.: Females winning state awards (1980-2000).**

State award of:	No. of female winners
Appreciation	3
Excellence	2
Incentive	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

Source: Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p.40 & 41.

**Table 13 App.: Women's representation in diplomatic corps in 2002.**

Position	No.	%
<b>Male diplomats</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>81.1</b>
<b>Female diplomats :</b>		
Ambassador	37	4.1
Minster Plenipotentiary	17	1.9
Counselor	23	2.6
First Secretary	18	2.0
Second and Third Secretary	30	3.3
Diplomatic Attaché	45	5.0
Sub Total	170	18.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p.67.

**Table 14 App.: Estimated labour force, labour opportunities and unemployment in Egypt in 01.01.03.**

Estimated :		
Labour force *	19,776,000	persons
Labour opportunities	17,790,500	opportunities
Unemployment	1,985,500	persons

Source: CAPMAS, Statistical Year Book, 2003, p. 7 & 11.

\* Excluding Egyptians abroad.

**Table 15 App.: Unemployment rates among economically active labour force (15-64 years) by sex and place of residence in the year 2000.**

Place of residence	% unemployment	
	Males	Females
Urban areas	5	24
Rural areas	5	22
Total	5	23

Source: Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p.48.

**Table 16 App.: Percent distribution of economically active labour force by employment status, place of residence and sex in 2000.**

Employment status	Place of residence				Total	
	Urban areas		Rural areas			
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>A-Paid labour :</b>						
Employers	13.2	1.3	23.5	5.2	19.0	3.5
Employees	66.9	69.7	50.3	24.2	57.6	44.2
Self-workers	11.6	2.7	9.9	14.8	10.6	9.0
Sub-total	91.7	73.7	83.7	44.2	87.2	57.2
<b>B- Unpaid labour :</b>						
Family workers	3.0	2.0	11.4	34.3	7.7	20.1
Total	94.7	75.7	95.1	78.5	94.9	77.3
<b>C-Unemployment</b>	5.3	24.3	4.9	21.5	5.1	22.7
<b>Grand total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p.49.

**Table 17 App.: Employment in the government, public & business sector and private sector.**

Sector	No. of employees			% Females	% of total employment
	Males	Females	Total		
Government*	3,736,847	1,334,500	5,071,347	26.3	78.14
Public & business*	728,395	98,129	826,524	11.9	12.73
Private **	499,157	93,485	592,642	15.8	9.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,964,399</b>	<b>1,526,114</b>	<b>6,490,513</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Egyptian women in figures, 2002, NCW, p.50-52.

\* Statistics for the year 2000.

\*\* Statistics for the year 1998.

**University of Wales Institute, Cardiff  
Welch School of Hospitality, Tourism  
and Leisure Management**

**Helwan University  
Faculty of Tourism and  
Hotel Management  
Cairo, Egypt**

/ /2001

**The Head of Board of Directors/  
The General Manager**

**Dear Sir/Madam:**

**Please let me introduce myself to you. I am Nashwa Samir EL-Sherif. I am an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt. Currently I am on a government mission to study for Ph.D in Tourism Management at the Welch School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Management, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, UK.**

**I am conducting a case study of “Women’s Employment and the Factors Influencing their Career Development in the Egyptian Travel Agencies”. Your agency has been included in the random sample devoted for this study. Therefore, I would deeply appreciate your assistance in filling in the enclosed ‘Agency Survey Form’ or refer it to any of your assistants.**

**I would like to confirm that the information included in the Agency Survey Form will be subject to strict security and will never be used for any purposes except scientific research.**

**However, please feel free not to answer any questions that might interfere or contradict with your agency policies.**

**Thank you**

**Nashwa Samir EL-Sherif  
Assistant Lecturer  
Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management  
Helwan University**

University of Wales Institute, Cardiff  
Welsh School of Hospitality, Tourism  
and Leisure Management  
Cardiff, UK

Helwan University  
Faculty of Tourism and  
Hotel Management  
Cairo, Egypt

## AGENCY SURVEY FORM

### Section one: Agency profile

- 1- Name of agency .....
- 2- Name of person filling in the form .....
- 3- Position of person filling in the form .....
- 4- Type of agency                      Public .....                      Private .....
- 5- How many departments are there in the agency? ..... departments.
- 6- How many employees are there in the agency? ..... employees.  
(Please give an approximate number if the exact number is not available).

### Section two: Women's representation and their departmental distribution

- 7- Please list in the table below the numbers of male and female employees in each department.  
(Please give approximate numbers if the exact numbers are not available)

No.	Name of department	No. of employees		
		Males	Females	Total
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
GRAND TOTAL				

- 8- Please list in the table below the numbers of male and female middle managers in the different departments.  
(Please give approximate numbers if the exact numbers are not available)

No.	Name of department	No. of middle managers		
		Males	Females	Total
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
GRAND TOTAL				

- 9- Please list in the table below the numbers of male and female senior managers in the different managerial positions.

No.	Senior managerial position	No. of Senior managers		
		Males	Females	Total
1	Head of Board of Directors			
2	Deputy Head of Board of Directors			
3	General Manager			
4	Deputy General Manager			
5	Other			
GRAND TOTAL				

### Section Three: Organisational policies

#### Section 3A: Selection and recruitment policies

- 10- Are there written policies for selection and recruitment?  
Yes.....(Please attach a copy of these policies if possible).  
No..... (If no Please go to questions no. 12).
- 11- Does the selection and recruitment policy refer to applicant's sex?  
Yes.....  
No.....
- 12- Which of the following criteria are used for selection and recruitment in the agency? (Please tick as many choices as appropriate).  
Experience ..... Qualifications..... Marital status.....  
Applicant's sex..... Other (please specify) .....

**Section 3B: Equal opportunity (EO) policies**

13- Does the agency have policies for each of the following:

Equal pay for equal jobs      Yes.....      No.....

Handling sex discrimination      Yes.....      No.....

Handling sexual harassment      Yes.....      No.....

**Section 3C: Family-friendly arrangements**

14- Does the agency offer/provide any of the arrangements listed in the table below?

Arrangement	Yes	No
Paid maternity leaves		
Paid breast feeding hours		
Unpaid childcare leaves		
Unpaid special leaves		
Flexible work hours		
Part-time jobs		
Job sharing		
Childcare facilities		

**Section four: Inquiries**

15- Is there any difficulty in filling in this form?

No.....

Yes..... (Please specify).....

.....

16- Would the agency approve interviewing some of its employees and managers in the future?

Yes.....

No.....



جامعة مؤسسة ويلز بكارديف  
كلية ويلز للضيافة والسياحة والترفيه  
كارديف - ويلز - المملكة المتحدة

جامعة حلوان  
كلية السياحة والفنادق  
القاهرة - ج.م.ع

السيد رئيس مجلس إدارة/ مدير عام شركة

تحية طيبة وبعد

مقدمته لسيادتكم السيدة / نشوة سمير الشريف المدرس المساعد بقسم الدراسات السياحية بكلية السياحة والفنادق بجامعة حلوان ، وعضو البعثة التعليمية للحصول علي درجة الدكتوراه في إدارة الأعمال السياحية من كلية ويلز للضيافة والسياحة والترفيه بجامعة مؤسسة ويلز بكارديف بالمملكة المتحدة.

أرجو التفضل بالإحاطة باني أقوم بدراسة حالة عن " وضع المرأة في شركات السياحة المصرية، والعوامل المتحكمة في ترقيتها للوظائف الأعلى". وكجزء من تلك الدراسة أقوم بحصر ميداني لتمثيل المرأة وفرص ترقيتها في شركات السياحة المصرية وذلك من خلال استكمال بيانات استمارة حصر الشركات السياحية المرفق نسخه منها. وقد جاءت شركتكم ضمن العينة الاعتبارية المختارة لتلك الدراسة. لذا أكون شاكرة معاونتكم في تعبئة بيانات استمارة الحصر المرفقة إما بمعرفتكم شخصياً أو عن طريق من ترونه من مساعدكم.

أود التأكيد علي أن جميع المعلومات التي سترد ضمن استمارة الحصر ستحظى بالسرية المطلقة، كما وأنها لن تستخدم لأي غرض خلاف أغراض البحث العلمي المحددة سلفاً للدراسة الحالية.

وفي جميع الأحوال يمكن لسيادتكم عدم الإجابة عن أية أسئلة أو استفسارات ترون عدم الإجابة عنها.

مع خالص شكري وامتناني لصادق تعاونكم.

نشوة سمير الشريف  
مدرس مساعد بكلية السياحة والفنادق  
جامعة حلوان

2001/ /

جامعة مؤسسة ويلز بكارديف  
كلية ويلز للضيافة والسياحة والترفيه  
كارديف - ويلز - المملكة المتحدة

جامعة حلوان  
كلية السياحة والفنادق  
القاهرة - ج.م.ع

### استمارة حصر الشركات السياحية

#### القسم الأول : بيانات الشركة

- 1 - اسم الشركة
  - 2 - اسم الشخص الذي يقوم بتعبئة الاستمارة
  - 3 - وظيفة الشخص الذي يقوم بتعبئة الاستمارة
  - 4 - نوع الشركة : قطاع عام
  - 5 - عدد الإدارات بالشركة
  - 6 - عدد العاملين بالشركة
- (يرجى إعطاء أعداد تقريبية في حالة عدم توافر الأعداد بدقة)

#### القسم الثاني : تمثيل النساء وتوزيعهن علي الإدارات المختلفة

7- برجى استكمال بيانات الجدول أدناه عن أعداد الموظفين من الرجال والنساء في كل إدارة من إدارات الشركة.  
(يرجى إعطاء أعداد تقريبية في حالة عدم توفر الأعداد بدقة).

رقم مسلسل	اسم الإدارة	عدد الموظفين		
		رجال	نساء	المجموع
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
المجموع الكلي				

8- برجى استكمال بيانات الجدول أدناه عن أعداد أفراد الإدارة الوسطي من الرجال والنساء في كل إدارة من إدارات الشركة.  
(يرجى إعطاء أعداد تقريبية في حالة عدم توفر الأعداد بدقة).

رقم مسلسل	اسم الإدارة	عدد شاغلي وظائف الإدارة الوسطي		
		رجال	نساء	المجموع
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
المجموع الكلي				

9- يرجى استكمال بيانات الجدول أدناه عن أعداد شاغلي وظائف الإدارة العليا الموضحة من الرجال والنساء.

رقم مسلسل	وظائف الإدارة العليا	عدد شاغلي وظائف الإدارة العليا	
		رجال	نساء
1	رئيس مجلس الإدارة		
2	نائب رئيس مجلس الإدارة		
3	المدير العام		
4	نائب المدير العام		
5	أخري (تذكر)		
	المجموع الكلي		

القسم الثالث : السياسات التنظيمية

(أ) سياسات الاختيار والتوظيف :

- 10- هل لدى الشركة سياسات مكتوبة للاختيار والتوظيف ؟  
 نعم ..... (يرجى إرفاق نسخة من تلك السياسات إذا ما كان ذلك ممكناً)  
 لا ..... (يرجى الانتقال إلي البند رقم 12 مباشرة).

11- هل تتضمن سياسات الاختيار والتوظيف التي تطبقها الشركة الإشارة إلى جنس المتقدم لشغل الوظيفة ؟

- نعم .....  
 لا .....

12- أي من المعايير التالية تطبقها الشركة في عملية الاختيار والتوظيف؟  
 (يمكن اختيار أكثر من معيار واحد).

- الخبرة .....  
 - المؤهلات .....  
 - الحالة الاجتماعية .....  
 - الجنس .....  
 - أخرى (تذكر) .....

(ب) سياسات تكافؤ الفرص :

13- هل لدى الشركة سياسات لكل مما يأتي :

- الأجر المتساوي للأعمال المتماثلة؟ نعم ..... لا .....  
 - التعامل مع موضوعات التمييز الجنسي؟ نعم ..... لا .....  
 - التعامل مع موضوعات التحرش الجنسي؟ نعم ..... لا .....

(ج) السياسات الداعمة (الصدقية) للأسرة:

14- هل تطبق الشركة السياسات الداعمة (الصدقية) للأسرة الموضحة في الجدول أدناه؟

رقم مسلسل	السياسات الداعمة (الصدقية) للأسرة	نعم	لا
1	أجازه وضع مدفوعة الأجر		
2	ساعات رخصة مدفوعة الأجر		
3	أجازه رعاية طفل غير مدفوعة الأجر		
4	أجازه خاصة غير مدفوعة الأجر		
5	مرونة في ساعات العمل (ساعات عمل اختيارية)		
6	العمل بعض الوقت فقط وليس كل الوقت		
7	تقاسم العمل الواحد بين أكثر من موظف		
8	تسهيلات رعاية أطفال النساء العاملات		

القسم الرابع : الاستفسارات

15- هل صادفتكم أية صعوبات عند تعبئة هذه الاستمارة ؟

لا .....

نعم (تذكر) .....

16- هل توافق الشركة علي إجراء مقابلات شخصية مع بعض موظفيها

ومديريها في المستقبل ؟

نعم .....

لا .....

مع خالص الشكر لتعاونكم في تعبئة هذه الاستمارة