

**An exploratory study on sports tourism for seniors in Malta**

**Course: Event & Leisure Management**

**Year: Higher National Diploma**

**Name: Emma Formosa**

**AUTHENTICITY FORM**

# Institute of Tourism Studies

**Consent Form for Undergraduate Research Study**

**Title of Research- An Exploratory Study on Sports Tourism for seniors in Malta**

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| **Researcher** | **- Emma Formosa** |
| **Degree** | **- Higher National Diploma 1 st year of Degree in Events Management** |

Dear Sir,

l, Emma Formosa, a student at the Institute of Tourism Studies am currently in the first year of my Bachelor in Events Management. I am carrying out research on an Explatoratory Study on Sports Tourism for Seniors in Malta and I would like to explore your views on this matter by asking you some questions. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information so you can decide whether to participate in this study. Any questions you may have will be answered by the researcher.

There are no known risks related with this research project other than possible discomfort with the following:

• You will be asked to be honest when answering questions.

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be stored securely and will be made available only to those individuals conducting the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study. 

Your identity will not be revealed in any publications that result from this study.

You can terminate your participation at any time without prejudice. You also do not have to answer individual questions you don't want to answer. Your name will not be attached to the questionnaire and I will ensure that your participation remains confidential.

Participant's declaration

I have read this consent form and am giving the opportunity to the researcher to ask questions. I hereby grant permission to use the information I provide as data in the above-mentioned research project, knowing that it will be kept confidential and without use of my name.



Participant's name Participant's signature Date

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this project was for the student to find out what organizations in Malta are creating in relation to opportunities for seniors in sports. As well as limitations that seniors who already practice the type of sport come across. The writer’s decision to further investigate this topic is to the lack of information missing in relation to seniors regarding the sport. The following issues were investigated by conducting a qualitative type of research using in-depth interviews as a tool.

The student interviewed the minister of youths, sports and voluntary organizations, Hon. Dr. Clifton Grima. The Ex-CEO of sports tourism committee and a sports lawyer. Furthermore, the student conducted several other interviews with seniors in relation to different types of sports.

From the results obtained, one can conclude that Malta is lacking incentives for participation in sports as well as information in relation to seniors. Nonetheless, there are not enough spacious facilities to train as well as events catered for the age group of 55+ and over.

An overall conclusion drawn from this research is that although seniors are taken into consideration for different aspects in the sports sector, there is room for improvement in accessibility of facilities, new incentives and more given attention to satisfy their needs. Furthermore, this can be of a positive implication if further changes are applied and more attention is given to seniors in sports.

**Acknowledgment**

This final project has been successfully completed due to the help of several people. The student would like to thank her tutor Ms. Carmen Rita Bugeja who had been as a guidance for the completion of this project and fill the student with kind words of encouragement throughout the process.

A special thanks also go to Hon. Dr. Clifton Grima for accepting and taking time from his busy schedule to participate in this research. Nonetheless, would like to thank the rest of the participants that helped in the research.

Finally, the student would like to thank her family for their constant support during the completion of this work. A special thanks also go to her parents who have constantly guided her and showed support throughout her life.

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**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This exploratory study is intended to highlight different aspects of sports in relation to seniors in Malta. As a rapid change in the aging style, seniors have adopted a completely new image. This reflects on the change in peoples' perspective of elderly capability as well as a role in society. For a long time, seniors had an association with loss and weak physicality. However, due to improved medical care and high income, a positive approach can be taken in the hope of improving facilities and creating incentives for seniors. (Tokarski, 2014)

In an increase of demand for sports incentives to an individual over 55+, Malta is taking slow steps to provide seniors with more spacious facilities, appropriate equipment, flexibility and more deserved attention. The writer is aiming to approach this research by discussions with seniors themselves into the problems they are facing and the perspective of ideal sports incentives. Moreover, the writer plans to find out as at managerial level, the work that is put onto, new projects and other incentives that seniors are not aware of.

As generations go by, new researches are being conducted showing a rapidly increasing number of seniors practicing sports in Malta. Seniors are living a healthier life which allows obtaining the strength to practice sports and participate in events. This is changing the society perspective on seniors where they are no longer being categorized as the weak link. (Spiteri, 2018)

An example of a study conducted by *Walter Tokarski* in relation to sports for seniors stated that the demand for seniors to practice sports will further increase in 2030. *‘In the years to come, the number of elderly persons in the European population will*

*significantly increase. In 2030 more than 20% of the European population will be older than 60 and 5% will be older than 80 years old.'* (Tokarski, 2014)

Moreover, with changes applied to ease the life of the senior in sports will result further in an increase in the economy. The government then will be able to afford salaries to seniors who volunteer on a full-time basis and investing in new sporting equipment to make use of. However, in further research the writer aims in conducting the study is to find out if Malta has potential advancing in sports tourism in relation to seniors. This study is important as seniors are an asset to the country. Seniors are the people who lived through different generations and therefore, can serve as a source of inspiration to the youths and future generations. Furthermore, the community needs to show appreciation by motivating each one to pursue their hobby as sports and living a healthier lifestyle for longer and peaceful life.

**CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1 Sports tourism and senior citizens**

As the writer was reviewing the existing research in relation to the topic of the long essay, the book written by Joy Standeven and Paul De Knop was found very helpful. The definition of sports tourism described by the authors is that sports tourism falls into two categories. One travels to participate in the sport which in terms is called active tourism. The other category is described as people traveling to specifically observe a sport. Moreover, this category is called passive tourism. Passive tourism can also be defined as a non-commercial form of traveling in relation to sports away from home. (Knop, 1999)

Furthermore, a senior citizen is a term used mostly from British and Americans meaning a person of an older age retiring. A gentleman from the Institute of Genomics and integrative biology defined Senior citizens as "an asset to the nation and have a very important role to play in the society*. ‘Senior citizens have an important role to play in maintaining peace, tranquility and in spreading the message of brotherhood. Their experiences in life can be a source of inspiration to different sections of the society, particularly to the students and the youth in general,’* (Prem Nath Panday, 2017)

In terms of sport tourism, generally is for everyone to act in especially with the rapid increase in the rate of senior participation by playing a sport. Even more so popular, individuals particularly seniors travel to follow their favorite sports team. In which tourism terms is called passive. (Knop, 1999)

A statistic table provided by the *Malta tourism authority* in the period of the last two years shows 42.3% of tourists visited Malta in the purpose of sports during 2018 of the age of 55 years of age and over. Most senior citizens in 2018 opted for swimming, trekking, and hiking.

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|  |
| % Share on the total sample | **45.1%** | **42.3%** |
| **Senior Citizens 55 years and over** | **2017** | **2018** |
|  | **%** | **%** |
| Swimming/ Sunbathing | 51.8% | 42.5% |
| Scuba Diving | 2.5% | 2.0% |
| Water sports | 1.8% | 1.1% |
| Trekking Hiking | 19.0% | 19.2% |
| Sports Event (walking) | 6.5% | 7.1% |
|  |  |  |
| *Source: MTA Traveler Survey 2017-2018* |  |

In continuation of statistic evidence, the writer came across an article written by (Engelhardt, 2014) which states that out of two aged seniors between 55- and 64-years old practice physical activity. As for the medical perspective, from the age of 50, muscle mass and overall strength are reduced by 40 up to 50% depending on the person. One cannot forget that with aging, breath shortens even so if the person smokes and gains a huge amount of excess weight so their physical balance gets weaker. The elderly's

capacity to remain independent is small so staying inactive could be risky. (Editorial Stuff, 2015)

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**2.2 Beneficial factors of sports for seniors**

Sports are increasingly becoming popular with the Maltese citizen and the foreigners each year. This is gaining attention from all ages especially seniors who may be retired and wish to feel fulfillment in their lives by practicing any type of sport. This serves many purposes of beneficial. Examples include keeping themselves busy and maintaining a healthy lifestyle while preventing health scares. Furthermore, beneficial reasons include reducing stress and help ease the mind from unnecessary negative thoughts. Not only, but also helps in increasing social life. Meeting new people and staying in touch can reduce the risk of depression. Moreover, about health benefits, the sky is the limit. Sports can prevent obesity problem which if not treated, can lead to heart diseases and weakness that result in a risk of falling. Sports can serve prevention from causes of illnesses such as cholesterol, blood pressure level, diabetes, and osteoporosis. By maintaining a healthy lifestyle, improves the immune system while living a more peaceful and longer life. Generally, sports practice is unrestricted. Nowadays it's even strongly recommended for the elderly. This result in organizations focusing more on planning activities promotes and include seniors in different sporting events and programs in Malta.

**2.3 Negative impact of sports for seniors**

However, besides all the beneficial factors mentioned above, sports can leave a negative impact if not practiced right while seeking professional help in maintaining health. A consultation with a sports doctor or a physiatrist is a must for the approval of the activity. This is examined to see if it adapts to the person’s health condition. Meanwhile, seniors

need to take further consideration to have stable food and physical routine. The training sessions should start by a few hours per week and progress when the body is comfortable and trained enough to progress in advance. Regularity is important for the body to adapt and get good results while avoiding injuries. Choosing inappropriate materialistic gears such as footwear and clothing can result in bodily harm. The most important factor is to hydrate by drink liters of water during the day especially when training. This is essential for the body to warm up and help more by smoothening the muscle movement. As for mental impact, seniors need to stay focused while belief in getting better as fitness and flexibility can always eventually improves at any day and age. (Editorial Stuff, 2015)

**2.4 Ideal Sports for seniors**

Once seniors have a better understanding of what measures need to be taken, the last step will be choosing a sport that fits. Ideal sports recommended in Malta by a feature article are swimming for improving cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength and cycling which serves as a stress relief type sport while promoting balance. Furthermore, sports with beneficial factors suited in Malta include tennis, golf, and bowling. (Wise old elephant, 2018)

**2.5 Malta as a sports tourism destination**

Malta is known for excellent weather throughout the year surrounded by crystal clear and clean sea, inhaling vitamins from the sun and sea. Nonetheless, beautiful sceneries in different cities all over the island. This serves an advantage as it pushes one’s motivation to go out and do physical activity. Considerably a safe environment, known for good-hearted people as bilingual and a variety of different cultures compare with other niche tourism counties. Malta is the perfect place for senior foreigners to visit and make use of the facilities and services. (Pisani, 2017)

During a study conducted by a blogger, Brandon Pisani on TVM website found that niche tourism is generating an annual income of € 220 million. Meanwhile, to further studies made by the MTA’s, tourists partially seniors involved in sports activity spend an average of nine nights in the Maltese islands which daily spends €1,200 each. Moreover, another amount considers moving permanently to pursue the sport and lifestyle on a full-time basis. Further calculations, estimated 190,000 visiting tourists participated in sports activity like diving, abseiling and kayaking. (Pisani, 2017)

Studies conducted show an estimation of generating high income and an increase in benefits. This result in pushing groups and organization in including seniors in sports events and accessibility in facilities for new opportunities. In fact, the increase in seniors in sports tourism and accomplishments is resulting in an increase in media coverage. Different foreign press and bloggers fly to visit specifically to cover milestone senior athletes' stories, sporting events, and activities that occur in Malta. (Pisani, 2017)

Over the years, Malta has demonstrated to other niche countries, its ability to host varies sports events despite its size. As authors Mike weed and Chris Bull mentioned in their book the events hosted in the past of which includes the participation of seniors; World Offshore powerboat racing Grand Prix, a senior APT tennis tournament, the Malta Marathon, the World Paralympics, and the Small Nations Games. (Bull, 2004) The accomplishments, the country had in the past gives a sense of motivation for the future. Malta is a sustained country that can further develop in the sports industry in relation to seniors.

**2.6 Sports Laws and Regulations**

In relation to sports, countries have different laws approaches regarding practicing and pursue sports. Malta's regulator of sports that by approval of the government, laws get formed are Sports Malta. The laws are bound to be followed by anyone staying in Malta

including foreigners. Furthermore, institutional punishments are given if is ever to be broken. The writer searched no further than the constitutional law under the sports section.

The state laws, the writer is referring to, by a quotation from (Law of Malta, 2003) are:

 ‘The state recognizes that no discrimination should be permitted on the grounds of sex, race, color, religion or political opinion or residence within different localities of Malta in the access to sports facilities or to sports activities.

‘The state recognizes that everyone should have the opportunity to take part in sports and that where necessary, additional measures shall be taken aimed at enabling and encouraging woman and old gifted people, as well as a disadvantaged or disabled person or groups of such persons, to effectively take advantage of such opportunities’.

‘All sports activities shall respect the human dignity and the health and safety and general welfare of all participants in sports.

‘No person, association of persons, partnership or commercial, or other entity recognized accordingly to law shall be entitled under this act to any assistance or benefit or to make use of our inquiry under any title of any sports facilities unless its registered in the register of sportspersons in accordance with the provisions of this part of this act and complies with such regulations as may from time to time be prescribed’.

‘Sports Malta may refuse to register an applicant in the register if to appears to Sports Malta that the applicant does not satisfy the requirements under this act, and in so doing shall state the reasons for the refusal’. (Law of Malta, 2003)

In conclusion for research that the writer carried out shows that further studies on this subject are being considered and accomplished to find further solutions on how Malta

can adapt to ease and provide opportunities to individuals 55+ interested in pursuing sports.

**CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Introduction**

The researcher carried out the research to explore more in-depth the current opportunities, limitations and their insight on what requires improvement. Other purposes include how the senior over 55+ of age is keeping fit as well as reasons for practicing different types of sports at this age and time. The research is going to further show an understanding of the benefits and progresses on changing lives for the better.

In this section, the writer prepares to find a suitable research method approach to get a clearer understanding of the subject and finding content. The writer, target participants from a higher occupancy position in sports to get more insight on laws and facts. While also targeting senior athletes playing different sports. The writer aspires to find out the problem’s senior athletes encounter, the opportunities and the perspective on practicing their hobby while staying fit and healthy.

To conduct the findings, the writer chose qualitative type research. This falls under the category of primary research. The approach the writer took was a qualitative type of interview, thus including the five questionnaires in the qualitative further down.

**3.2 Primary Research**

Qualitative Research main purpose is to gain an understanding of reasons, opinions and the motivation behind all of this. It provides an insight into the subject and uncovers trends in thought and opinions while follows profoundly into the problems. The methods of collection of data as qualitative vary by using unstructured and semi-structured techniques. This type of approach falls under the primary research. (DeFranzo, 2011)

A common method approach, the researcher chose to conduct is an in-depth type of interview. This interview is conducted individually one on one meeting, were respondents, in this case, are selective. This approach helps the researcher in the consumption of

information from many experienced and knowledgeable individuals regarding this subject as well as people's behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. (MBASkool, 2011)

**3.3 Limitations**

While the writer was in the process of conducting both types of research, encountered with multiple limitations one of them being, scouting participants. Unfortunately, in Malta lacks many people at the age of 55+ who still practice sports. A huge number of hours needed to be put onto, for suitable persons to be found and get in contact with. Meanwhile, waiting weeks for the interview to be conducted in the preferred time and location of the participant. At first, this process was found nerve-racking as to expectations to the participants responds.

By the understanding of the types of research, type approaches the author will be used to conduct interviews and questionnaires, serves as helpful tools to ease the process. By the author moving on to the next chapter in the long essay, will be able to easily collect useful information to further form a base of the analyzing and findings chapter.

**CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

*4.1 Managerial level participants*

In this qualitative type research, the writer conducts three interviews with individuals, face to face to a higher position in the sports industry. The interviewees are the sports lawyer Mr. Peter Fenech as interviewee 1. (IURIS, 2011) Ex-CEO of Sports Tourism Committee, Mr. Schiavone as the 2nd interviewee. Finally, the last interview is accomplished by Hon. Clifton Grima, Parliamentary Secretary for Youths, Sports and Voluntary Organizations. (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2016)

**4.2 Analysis**

*The first participant responds*

The main response of Mr. Peter Fenech was first, the consideration and opportunities for seniors compared to younger athletes, it's not given enough importance as it needs to be. However, there is an increase in opportunities for participation and administration of sports especially with the number of seniors interested in increasing rapidly. Furthermore, this doesn’t change the fact that it can’t be recognized for hosting big events such as the World cup or the Olympic Games.

Size plays a part in an issue for Malta to host a large-scale event. However, there is potential for hosting other sports events such as small nation’s games. This was shown in the past as to hosting this popular event through the years. Another event that was successful and left an impact on the island mentioned by Mr. Fenech was the European Water polo championship. With vast demand from this age group in various sports, awareness of physical activities has increased. Moreover, this leads to an increase in job

 opportunities. Unfortunately, Malta didn't reach that level as few job vacancies are available on a full-time basis. Individuals only invest time on a voluntary basis.

 In regards to discussions involving seniors when planning an event, development of facilities and sports competitions are all dependent on experience for ensuring that the establishment is built according to practical requirements. Mr. Fenech’s most top choice of sports and its facilities used by international as well as Maltese seniors would be Golf. Malta offers the facility of a golf course as well as indoor golf courses in smaller establishments. As for limitations on applications for signing up to join and play in the establishment, there shouldn’t be any.

Society and its frame of mind have changed over the last decade. Therefore, this brings a change in government's policies and laws towards sports which then it acquires onto the change of legislation when necessary. Lastly, in relation to equality in sports between two generations, Mr. Fenech answered positively however there should be always room for improvement.

*The second participant responds*

Moving on to Mr. Schiavone responds. When asked about opportunities for seniors in sports, the answer was it was always in existence as everyone can apply for the participation of any sports tourism event. An example given by Mr. Schiavone includes marathons hosted in Malta and Middle sea yacht race however it’s not created for seniors only but open for all ages to participate.

As for hosting big events, unfortunately, it is not possible due to lack of enhanced infrastructure like facilities, accommodation and sports venues to able thousands of people under one roof. However, there has been an increase in demand as Europe has the highest ratings of the aging population and so more stigma is arising to keep fit and healthy.

In relation to seniors working on a full-time basis in the sports, the sector is quite uncommon as mostly exists volunteer basis. Furthermore, in discussion to corporate seniors in projects, new strategies from Sports Malta and MTA are being evolved. Some of the developments include new arranged cycling routes and racetracks. Common sport choice with foreigners’ seniors, for Mr. Schiavone, would be mostly jogging around the shore, scuba diving, yachting and water polo practice especially in summer.

Mr. Schiavone discussed limitations as non-existent regarding seniors practicing a sport. Any ideal sport which is tolerant to be practiced in Malta has facilities to accommodate for all ages and approved programs catered for their needs. In relation to future events planned in Malta would be yearly events example marathons hosted in different localities. As for facilities, establishments always improving by new renovations and investments on advanced technological gadgets to help ease for the age group mentioned. This needs to be treated more carefully as there are more possibilities of illnesses and fractures of bones.

Moreover, further investment in transportation must be actioned by expanding and negotiation with other countries for new roots and improved airlines. This will serve as an easy form of accessible traveling. Sea transportation can also be improved when using catamaran or cruises. This is being advertised by each organizations market through their own websites and on the news so any information can be accessed from everyone. This took part in past successful events that were hosted in Malta such as the Rolex middle sea race and Mdina Grand Prix.

 Lastly, Mr. Schiavone concluded that both generations have the same equal rights to an extent on the person's body ability.

*The third participant responds*

Finally, the third interview was conducted by the Hon. Clifton Grima, Parliamentary Secretary for Youths, Sports and Voluntary. In response to the questions asked, the minister started by elaborating regarding seniors in relation to being considered for future projects and investments.

However, the minister preached that not enough opportunities are given. Coaches automatically turn to younger athletes for training so it will be more of a possibility for the team to win. The most crucial factors would be health, the need for a good quality lifestyle and enough participants wanting to get involved. It needs a much bigger budget to encourage seniors to practice sports for a fitter lifestyle. The minister continued by elaborating on the disadvantages regarding sports as big events, are not possible to host in Malta. The country lacks infrastructure, the minimum capacity of hotels able to manage thousands of people as it already lacks throughout the year.

Furthermore, have the potential for standard sports practice and hosting of small events. The demand regarding sports tourism is solid and is being handled very well as a regular continuation for expansion in the future of sports for seniors. This ongoing cycle will lead to an increase in employment. Nonetheless, full-time employment is quite uncommon for the age group but more of a volunteer basis as 90% of the jobs are in the sports sector. The hour's seniors volunteer on a weekly basis is nearly equivalent as a full-time however no one gets paid.

Moreover, it all depends on the senior's interests and qualifications to be able to perform certain job roles in sports especially representing Malta to other countries with bigger potential. As shown throughout the years already, Malta has already shown an indication of importance for the seniors within sports. All utterly depending on the type of sport and one’s potential, mental and physical state to be able to practice.

A popular sport with seniors from the Minister’s perspective would be aquatic sports as this is easily noticeable by the passion for swimming by many people. Furthermore, it is a therapeutic sport for seniors as decreasing the body mass in water and protect body tissues comparing to running where one needs agility and that can cause harm to the body. In the discussion of limitations, only the number of seniors wanting to participate can be an issue, therefore, it's not catered for enough. The government with the help of sports regulator is in the process of development for new incentives to more accessibility in facilities, maximizing them and their use.

 Furthermore, regarding the future project, the government is working on the 2023 games of small countries of Europe to host once again in Malta. The event will be open for participants all ages including seniors which has potential. For Malta moving forward, one needs to take these factors conducted by similar studies and corporate them in creating positive changes for more improved equality. While making it more visible with different levels of qualification, not only agility and physical flexibility but more of talent and potential.

**4.3 Senior Participants**

This conductive research is also a qualitative type approach. The purpose of the questionnaires was for the researcher to get the full picture from the senior’s point of view of age 55+ in relation to different types of sports each individual practice. The researcher had given out five questionnaires in total to athletes with different sports backgrounds. The participants' associated sports are Athletics, Tennis, champion of Table Tennis, aerobics and swimming.

**4.4 Analysis**

*Senior’s general responds*

All participants from different sports backgrounds, answers were all similar to each other. All type of sports serves the same purpose, yet all take different approaches for achievement.

**Question 1**: All participants answered yes, as they do envision sports to have potential in Malta. Awareness is raised on health and fitness while reduces the chances of any illnesses. Even if it still occurs, at least be able to fight and prevent for a longer period. Moreover, the athlete’s passion would be driven for training motivation and sports playing. Even in relation to weather, stable and nice weather would attract more foreigners to Malta for the usage of facilities. The continuous cycle leaves a positive impact as to more income would be generated to Malta.

**Question 2:** Common disadvantages mentioned were that, lacking facilities as there isn’t enough space for seniors to train comfortably. Most of the space is taken by the younger athletes to train. Furthermore, injuries can occur more easily as the bones are more fragile even more practice needs to be taken into consideration for the upkeep of strength and endurance.

**Question** **3**: Regarding the envisage of improvements, vary from organizations to catering more for seniors when comes to spacing and equipment. A suggestion made by the majority would be new indoor facilities to practice example tennis and table tennis for the prevention of bad weather. Furthermore, to the upkeep of the infrastructure even as safer roads. Overall investments in sports to improve health, posture and physical

strength while keeping a healthy lifestyle example preventing diabetes and high-pressure problems.

**Question 4:** Overall personal beneficial in general is the improvement of physical health, more flexibility, and an increase in balance, posture, and stamina. As well as traveling abroad across the world representing Malta. An interesting answer made by most of the seniors would be helping in increasing social life. As being more interactive made the seniors becoming more comfortable in their own bodies and confident.

**Question 5:** As for the creation of opportunities, mostly mentioned the increase in social life by making more friends, experience different cultures while training all over the world and improving skills. This helps in getting the person out of the comfort zone to better oneself.

**Question 6:** All stated different approaches on how started in sports. However. The most common is improving health and losing weight. Interesting enough, a participant from table tennis started from a bet by friends which later ended up getting signed and win multiple championships even at the age of 70. Others were introduced at a young age from family members and pass the tradition to one another.

**Question 7:** All manage to keep up a healthy lifestyle by eating clean and nutritious food, train a certain amount of time per week. Even other sports activities including yoga. This helps by being able to avoid the consumption of alcohol and smoking. Lastly, helps setting goals and force oneself to achieve them.

**Question 8:** As for stories, many shared interesting experiences such as for the participant from athletics getting lost in a marathon while ending up running an extra mile. Others including athletes from tennis and table tennis. The participants played with opponents for championships in foreign countries which fast forward to recent years, unintentionally meeting again after a long time as coaches in a match while staying friends all those years. Meanwhile from aquatic sport, encountered many famous coaches train with their team while using the facility.

**Question 9:** All athletes mentioned great advice as mostly were words of encouragement to play and practice any type of sports. This can only be beneficial without any loss to try as one can feel more fulfilled, happier, healthier and stronger while keeps you distracted from bad habits. By achieving that, one can also be more controllable in coping with life problems.

In conclusion to this chapter, overall answers from the qualitative type research were similar as all seniors encountered the same issues. All senior participants practicing sports have the same purpose as in why investing time in sport as to not getting involved in other hobbies. As from the perspective of managerial level, all highlighted the main issues as to what Malta can be limited in relation to sports for individuals over 55+. Also, the opportunities to what the seniors can benefit from as the improvement that can be done.

**CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

***5.1 Conclusion***

An overall conclusion drawn from this research is that seniors are being considered in discussions regarding sport-related projects such as competitions abroad and events hosted in Malta. However, there is a lack of information for the senior’s knowledge regarding new incentives Malta is creating. Of which includes, *EU keeping fit* where the government provides an amount of money per month to keep fit and tailored programs available in every sports complex. However, as new incentives are creating, facilities are lacking space for seniors to practice as mostly it is filled with young athletes.

Furthermore, from a managerial perspective is established that Malta lacks from individuals over 55+ of age interested in playing a sport and so this diminishes the country from improving the state of sports as there are not enough people whom to cater for. The writer can confirm that this is correct as one of the limitations of conducting the research was the scouting to find seniors involved in sports organizations.

The study can gather that there is potential in Malta in improving. This shows clearly that seniors have the potential to succeed in the sports sector. However, new and effective methods need to be done in order to get the information across.

***5.2 Recommendations***

For future research in this area, the use of secondary data type research is recommended as with questionnaires, one can reach a larger group. The group can consist of Maltese and foreigners in the sports sector. On a large scale, one can get the perspective not only from the seniors but other individuals who are not into sports. This can help further the research into finding out reasons why many people don't practice sport in Malta. This would an excellent way to get a larger picture of various situations and imply them for improvement in conditions.

This research could eventually serve as a base through which larger, more detailed research in this field can be explored and further investigations are conducted in this area of study. It would also be effective if additional research studies carried out in order to explore different aspects of seniors in the sports world and results are compared.

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**APPENDICES**

**7.1 IMPORTANT FORMS**

***7.2 Managerial Interview transcript samples***

**First interview by managerial level**

1. **Do you think that seniors in sports are being taken into consideration and provided with opportunities compared to the younger athletes?**

When one refers to sports, automatically we consider teenagers. So naturally one thinks seniors don't have many opportunities. One needs to ask how fact able it can be to show that seniors are provided with the same opportunities. If one, choose base on the concept of winning, then the younger athlete will be chosen. The first factor, one take onto consideration is health. There need to be a good quality of life and enough participants. Furthermore, we need a bigger budget than it provides today in order to encourage seniors to practice sports.

1. **Do you think that with the increasing number of seniors interested in pursuing sports nowadays, Malta can have a future and potential to be recognized in sports example hosting the world cup or Olympic games, etc.?**

Unfortunately, Malta can't host those types of events due to a lack of infrastructure. The committee who organizes sports event look in the number of hotels, accommodation, the situation of roads and facilities. The hotels are already full due to strong tourism and so imagining trying to fit more thousands of people in accommodations. However, Malta can be recognized by finding its dimension in sports as nothing has been done yet and hopefully there will be a change in results.

1. **Comparing to other years, did you see an increase in seniors’ Maltese citizens as well as foreigners participating in the sports sector?**

Yes, for seniors we have strong sports tourism. Last week I attended the opening ceremony of a new athleticstrack in which the next day was already hosted the first international event. More than ever, Malta is getting recognized and included in different events and so more opportunities will arise for seniors.

1. **Do you think there are jobs provided for seniors within the sports industry in Malta?**

There need to be more seniors interested but qualified. As to work in this sector like any other one you need to have the right qualifications, for example, being able to manage a team and go further as winning competitions. In order to be able to provide jobs, there needs to be people with human resources and be able to work full-time with full dedication. In Malta, 90% of the jobs associated with sports are on a volunteer basis then settled jobs although these people invest more than 40 hours a week.

1. **How much importance do you give to the seniors when there are discussions involving the development of facilities, sports competitions, and events held in Malta?**

Starting by events, I'm aware of in relation to that topic, senior citizens are of a particular category. If one reviews other events, recognition is already been given to seniors and this shows an indication of progress within the sports. However, depending on the sport. Some sports organization intend to adequate more for younger athletes but still is open to practice on a level for seniors. Moving on to facilities, we plan on what equipment do we invest in therefore I insist on having a statistic record of the financial position of Malta. Nonetheless, I need to know beforehand the demand of which puts the pressure to prioritize. The process is of looking at the demand and supply of Malta depending on the type of sport and if it's going to serve as multipurpose for other activities.

1. **Which type of sports and facilities are the most popular and used with the seniors’?**

In my opinion, this will be sports aquatics because it is an eye-catching concept as people especially in Malta is known for the beautiful sea to swim in and stable weather all year round as well as serving as a therapeutic session. It's an easy and relaxing form of exercising. In comparison to running where one needs more agility movement of the body and so can cause fractures to seniors' bodies. Moreover, in water the body mass increases and the muscles relax.

1. **What limitations there are when senior applies in an organization for sports practice and participate in a competition or event?**

The only limitation there is, the number of seniors participating, therefore, they are not catered for. If as a country, with the help of studies like these, one starts to create events within a national scale example billiard and snooker that are filled with seniors and form a strong community, Malta can have the potential to more changes. It depends on the type of sports as more organizations need to be created. Such competitions like senior masters are already in succession. However, more incentives need to be created so everyone equally participates.

1. **Are there any future projects events for senior’s participation?**

Yes, there is. We are currently working on the 2023 small nations games and seniors are accepted to participate in however it is not catered only for them but for everyone who has potential in the type of sport.

1. **What has been changed and/or improved from the past, i.e., laws, facilities, use of equipment, etc.?**

Facilities are always improving depending on the demand of that time and new laws, sports Malta can grow in respective of a regulator**\_** while looking at facilities and it’s licensing. It can be improved by higher more adequate individuals and investigating facilities to check that everything is used according to law and there are no consequences of harm.

1. **Are you marketing to encourage and get more seniors to start doing sports? If so, in what ways?**

Lately, we’re increasing TV advertisements, all media friendly. I'm trying to give a new value not only for the segment of sports but even general news so more people can tune in and the message is delivering. As well as working online on government and sports websites for more visibility into what each has to offer. We have a successful sports movement that with the right strategic marketing, can change for the better. For those companies or non-sports organizations who are unaware and are able to help can give contribution even in general aspects for easing the seniors’ life.

1. **What type of programs there is to offer for seniors at the moment?**

There are catered programs for seniors organized by sports Malta such as *Summer on the move 2019.* This is a free membership for seniors to practice different types of sports in various establishments.

1. **Is there any sporting event held that made an impact and success in Malta in the past?**

Yes, in 2018 there was held the world cup of shooting, the small nation's game where many times this was hosted and was successful. Therefore, we are in the plan of hosting another one in 2023 in hope of better and successful results. There needs to be a set high benchmark for Malta. This can be improved by corporate these findings in the planning of future events.

1. **Do you think that seniors have equal sports rights as the younger generation?**

Definitely. However, there should be more visibility of incentives created for seniors. Seniors need to be incorporated more as to have full access for the type of sports preferred.

**Second interview by Managerial level**

1. **Do you think that seniors in sports are being taken into consideration and provided with opportunities compared to the younger athletes?**

Seniors for the age of 55+ there are opportunities as they can apply for sports tourism events example Malta marathons and the middle sea yacht race however it's not for seniors only to participate but all ages. As my concern, there aren't any specific events for seniors' citizens only. This needs more attention from organizations. It's a niche market.

**2. Do you think that with the increasing number of seniors interested in pursuing sports nowadays, Malta can have a future and potential to be recognized in sports example hosting the world cup or Olympic games, etc.?**

Unfortunately, no, In Malta we can’t host such big events as we need huge infrastructure. The niche market of the world cup or Olympic games is huge, and we don’t have stable roads around the island or enough accommodation for thousands of people either to

watch the games or participate in them for these big events. Potentially, we can host small nations games but again these are not specifically for seniors only.

**3. Comparing to other years, did you see an increase in seniors’ Maltese citizens as well as foreigners participating in the sports sector?**

This is a fact, in Malta and other European countries there is an aging population and nowadays, for seniors who are 55+, there is more stigma as they continue to pursue sports from younger till this age. Sport types example walking, swimming and more to practice but sports tourism situation stayed the same as no organizations specify for seniors only.

**4. Do you think there are jobs provided for seniors within the sports industry in Malta?**

If referring to full-time jobs I'm afraid there isn't but they do exist part-time and voluntary work wherein these areas, there is quite a big number of employed whose ages are from 55 onwards.

**5. How much importance do you give to the seniors when there are discussions involving the development of facilities, sports competitions, and events held in Malta?**

As in discussions, they're always incorporated but to practice is quite different. However, for the future is being presented with new strategies for sports Malta on sports tourism and MTA. There has been a development such as more cycling routes and planning of racetracks. A government route project was made between Malta and Sicily to encourage mixed markets so seniors can make use of it.

**6. Which type of sports and facilities are the most popular and used with the seniors’?**

As of sports organizations, one can't determine which sports and facilities are more popular although foreigners come more for walking around the shore, scuba diving, and yachting. Furthermore, we have horse racing, football, water polo and rugby which have multi-sports events that are not directed for seniors 55+. We are not geared for advanced sporting tourism in Malta yet.

**7. What limitations there are when senior applies in an organization for sports practice and participate in a competition or event?**

There are no limitations in organizing that I'm aware of. As for our facilities, for swimming events for 55+, we have the national swimming pool and a for the future project even for sailing, the only limitation is for the limit amount of people interested enough to invest a lot of money to create for this age group.

**8. Are there any future projects events for senior’s participation?**

At the moment as an ex CEO in the sports tourism committee, I'm not aware of any but I'm sure there is and for big demand by this age group and increase in population seniors surely will be incorporated in these events and projects.

**9. What has been changed and/or improved from the past, i.e., laws, facilities, use of equipment, etc.?**

As of facilities, we improved by renovated and built more technological advanced. Part of Sports tourism is easy to access to Malta and so it was improved in transportation by expanding more routes, improved airlines, sea transport example catamaran or cruises for 55+ to make it efficient for them to travel to Malta. The government is always investing and improving infrastructure as plays a big part in passive sports tourism. For active tourism, there needs to be more communication with other European organizations to work in big events with them but again not specifically for seniors.

**10. Are you marketing to encourage and get more seniors to start doing sports? If so, in what ways?**

In my position I'm in today, I cannot answer this question. However nowadays every organization market their own by creating websites and apps for Maltese and foreigners interested in the sports market to see what each offer and hopefully make use of their services.

**11. What type of programs there is to offer for seniors at the moment?**

Programs can vary, example Malta maritime 55+, Rolex Middle sea races can be participated by 55+ but for now, there's no marketing for events only restricted for them.

**12. Is there any sporting event held that made an impact and success in Malta in the past?**

Not particular events, but as I mentioned earlier the Malta maritime, Rolex middle sea race and Mdina Grand Prix are quite big and popular events in Malta and sports like scuba diving in summer especially.

**13. Do you think that seniors have equal sports rights as the younger generation?**

Yes, they have certainly equal right to participate but they need to be more work input in order to create and organize sports events specifically for them. However, we specify on

types of sports one can join example MFA takes care of bringing training camps for football in Malta and none of them are the age of 55+ as well as athletes in track and field, we don't concentrate for only seniors but they can be incorporated in these events.

**Third interview by Managerial level**

1. **Do you think that seniors in sports are being taken into consideration and provided with opportunities compared to the younger athletes?**

I do not think that senior sports are given the importance that it may be given, however, I do feel that there are many opportunities for senior citizens to participate in sports and even more in the administration of sport itself.

1. **Do you think that with the increasing number of seniors interested in pursuing sports nowadays, Malta can have a future and potential to be recognized in sports example hosting the world cup or Olympic games, etc.?**

I do not think that, notwithstanding the increased interest in Sports and the ever-increasing facilities on our Island, that we may organize events of the entity referred to in the question. The Island is too small for such large-scale events. I believe however that there are other medium size events that generate both the competition and the public interest that can be organized in Malta. The Small Nations Games comes to mind.

1. **Comparing to other years, did you see an increase in seniors’ Maltese citizens as well as foreigners participating in the sports sector?**

Yes, I do see an increase in senior citizens participating in various sports, you see a trend of citizens changing sports depending on their age, as they grow older, they select sports which they can participate in. Physical awareness is surely one of the reasons for this increase.

1. **Do you think there are jobs provided for seniors within the sports industry in Malta?**

Yes, there are certain jobs for senior citizens in within the Sports Industry in Malta, this field is actually ideal because in Malta and Gozo Sports is carried out on a semi-professional basis and therefore the days where help is required are usually weekends and on a part-time basis, ideal for senior citizens.

1. **How much importance do you give to the seniors when there are discussions involving the development of facilities, sports competitions, and events held in Malta?**

This is dependent on the facility being developed, however, the experience is crucial in ensuring that the facility is built according to practical requirements.

1. **Which type of sports and facilities are the most popular and used with the seniors’?**

As one grows older the one seems to search for sports which are less competitive or single athlete sports. Sports converts itself to physical activity as one grows older, but the sport of Golf comes to mind.

1. **What limitations there are when senior applies in an organization for sports practice and participate in a competition or event?**

There should be no limitations other than competence in these cases.

1. **Are there any future projects events for senior’s participation?**

I cannot answer that question.

1. **What has been changed and/or improved from the past, i.e., laws, facilities, use of equipment, etc.?**

Society and its frame of mind have changed over the last decades, therefore, bringing about a change in Government's policy towards Sports, which in turn brought about a change of legislation where necessary.

1. **Are you marketing to encourage and get more seniors to start doing sports? If so, in what ways?**

This is a question that should be addressed to the regulator like Sport Malta – To my layman's knowledge they are.

1. **What type of programs there is to offer for seniors at the moment?**

Same as above, previous answer.

1. **Is there any sporting event held that made an impact and success in Malta in the past?**

There were various events which made history, the Small Nations games and the European Water polo Championships are to be noted.

1. **Do you think that seniors have equal sports rights as the younger generation?**

Yes, I certainly do.

**7.3 Sample of senior interview transcript**

***Sport-Table Tennis***

1. **Do you envision sports have potential in Malta in growing as an industry and can continue pursuing this sport more advanced? If yes, in what way?**

Yes. It can have a potential for a good industry in Malta as we have nice and stable weather compared to others, we are also bilingual country and so it will be convenient for foreigner training camps that come here due to bad weather conditions in their country. Also, it can make a huge investment if foreigners come here to learn English while practicing sports.

1. **What disadvantages there is in your opinion, at your age to pursue and train your hobby?**

Unless one is not sick health-wise, there aren't any disadvantages. The only problem would be the lack of venues. Certain organizations don't give people like me chances that easily as their priority would be the youngsters and lastly only a few facilities are around and available to practice.

1. **What improvements do you envisage to be able to practice this type of sport?**

They should build more venues for sports veterans by forming more clubs for any type of sport like Italy have with more professional and adequate for the right equipment and good lighting. There should be more leagues and tournaments organized for our age and encouraging more people to do so by the act on these things while creating incentives example who wins get a 3-day holiday. They should always have aims for them and a proper environment organized for efficiency and space.

1. **Since you started practicing sports and join an organization, what benefits you experience?**

 Healthwise, thanks to this sport, I’m still fit and healthy at 70 years old. Besides physical shape, it helped me builtmy character and maturing while before was shy and scared. This is due to meeting different people with different characters while coaches kept me grounded.

1. **Did this sport create new opportunities for you? If yes, what are they?**

Yes, it created a lot of opportunities as a table tennis champion. I was lucky enough to compete and train all around the world, experience different cultures and new things. I improved my skills as I reached and open to more new strong competitors outside Malta and so it made me train harder and improve. However, sometimes I cried as I was embarrassed by them, laughed through great times and cried with happiness after I won tournaments.

1. **What got you into sports in the first place?**

For me, it was just luck. When I was younger, I used to go to Bugibba at some friends and one day they challenged me for a game of table tennis. At first, I refused as I didn't like the sport and think anything of it so I didn't even bother but as they persisted, I ended up playing soft and calm as I can and ended up hitting the ball each time. Keeping in mind that I practiced many sports like swimming, football, billiard, and athletics but was mediocre at them. In 2 months', time playing table tennis I won each time. It was their grandfather, the secretary of the Malta table tennis association that he offered and put me in the under 17's team, where there I won May's championship. From that day, I stopped everything and focused on that sport only. Then at 17 years of age, under the British high commissioner, brought an English coach named Harry Venner who trained me properly and professionally in 3 weeks and straight after that I was playing in the Malta national's team. It was a hidden talent.

1. **How do you manage to keep up a healthy lifestyle and strength to practice this sport?**

Good and strict healthy diet when training multiple times, a week. This is achieved by eating a lot of carbohydrates. As for in general, keep it balanced by eating a small amount of every source of protein. Even so, most importantly is to drink a lot of water. Back in the days because we were poor instead of Gatorade, I used to mix water with salt, sugar, and vitamin C. For exercise, it's important to train, I even ran marathons. Using weights to train for strength upkeep in order to keep going.

1. **Do you have any interesting stories you experienced since you started this sport?**

There’s plenty, two that sticks out would be in 1965, where English and Tripoli Teams used to come to train in Malta and one certain player called Doddy used to play friendly table tennis games became friends and he left back. After 20 years, I went to play in Rome while a man came to pick us up, we were all talking, and he mentioned that he knew a guy from Malta named Anastasi and by surprise, I told him that I am Anastasi. He was thrilled and surprised to see me as we reunited without knowing. The other story was back when the Chinese where in Malta in 1973 and the champion of the world, Hsu Shao-Fa and I played a friendly game in an expedition in front of the ambassadors for few days and left. After 30 years we met again in Italy, himself as Italy and San Marino Coach and me as a Maltese coach sitting on the same bench in a game.

1. **What advise you have to the other individuals who are interested in starting to play a sport, but they are unsure to do so?**

Firstly, even at that age, no one should stop learning. Keep educating yourself as unfortunately there are no big measurements taken on sports for seniors yet. I know doctors and teachers that after they became champions continued to work and study so should everyone else. Back up is always important to have. Accept your flaws, no need to change just keep strong, follow the coach orders and never back down the cause as experienced it is all worth it. Important to accept what you're doing wrong and be ready to fix and improve for better results.