

I was awarded this scholarship funded by MGSS the Malta Government Scheme and I have successfully finished my studies before time. I read at Greenwich University being the one of the top Universities in terms of sexual health and education. This experience gave me exposure to work with various professionals/experts in the field, share experiences and attended numerous learning of opportunities on campus.

My research study explored the parental perceptions, attitudes and knowledge regarding sexuality and relationships in Malta. A range of barriers and enhancing processes involved were also addressed in order to, understand the complex dynamics involved in the educative process within the family nucleus. The family was considered the fulcrum where, sexuality values would be cultivated from an early age and built upon, as children develop both physically, and cognitively.

The local situation in Malta showed a steady incline in Sexually Acquired Infections, and a number of unplanned pregnancies in teenage years were observed. Since sexuality was viewed as an essential element of any human being often incorporating various issues such as gender, sexual orientations, emotions, intimacy, pleasure, behaviours and relationships, it was considered important to address who, how, when and what was being addressed in the family nucleus. The family was considered to be in a crucial position to start nurturing such important values in children from a young age by adopting an open, sincere, non-judgmental and comprehensive manner. This study utilised a mixed method approach in order derive information from parents. Postal surveys were sent to a random sample of 2,000 mothers who had 14/15-year-old children. The response rate was that of  $n=1.104$  comprised of 50%. Following that, four focus groups were carried out in order to delve deeper into the dynamics of the family practices.

The Unified Theory of Behaviour and the Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Habits (K.A.S.H) model were utilised in order to substantiate the theoretical constructs of the research tools, and to derive the necessary information from parents. A number of recommendations were provided such as empowering parents with the right skills, knowledge and attitudes, in order to carry out their important educative role in children's lives by being timely, open, honest and inclusive of diversity of gender and sexual orientations. Parents identified reliable sources such as Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) teachers who could help them out in their educative quest.

Overall, this Doctorate has made me a better person through endurance, resilience and expertise. This further contributed towards National research, policymaking and education. I will cherish this experience forever and will pave the way in sexuality, health and education. This study will also act as a basis for parental programmes. I want to thank you the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme (MGSS) for giving me the opportunity to further my studies.