



## **Sexual Harassment Against Cabin Crew in Aviation Industry**

Jonathan Schär

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor's Thesis

2024

Degree Programme in Aviation Business

## Abstract

**Author**

Jonathan Schär

**Degree**

Bachelor of Business Administration, Aviation Business

**Thesis title**

Sexual Harassment Against Cabin Crew in Aviation Industry

**Number of pages and appendix pages**

51 + 19

This report focuses on sexual harassment against cabin crew in aviation industry. According to studies, cabin crew are exposed to sexual harassment at their workplace and face significant amount of sexual harassment on the job in its several ways. Sexual confrontations seem more common in aviation and cabin crew work environment than in other professions and industries. The objective of this paper was to research and unveil the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the industry in order to accomplish and establish preventing actions against all kind of sexual harassment. By achieving and creating a safer working environment for cabin crew, even the whole aviation sector could improve qualitatively as a result. The author works himself as cabin crew and conducted the study without a commissioner. This decision was done on purpose as a commissioner could possibly hinder participants from honest answering or not responding at all. Aim and aspiration was to find out how infiltrated the phenomenon of sexual harassment really is in the industry with the help of a quantitative questionnaire survey research for cabin crew as part of this thesis.

Written and electronic literature were used as sources for the theoretical framework of this report, data for the survey research was collected through web-based platform Webropol. The survey questionnaire was sent out to cabin crew around the world via e-mail and social media electronic channels and accumulated 201 answers in 14 days. The research questionnaire examined in overall on possible exposure of sexual harassment, occurrence, type of harassment, perpetrators and how confrontations have been reported and handled. The survey was created in anonymous manner and encouraged participants to speak up. Both, questionnaire body and results, are presented in this report.

Findings of the study justified suspicion on sexual confrontation and supported the theoretical framework. Results of the survey exposed a larger phenomenon than expected with extensive number of participants experienced sexual harassment on their job either verbally, non-verbally or physically. The study on sexual harassment against cabin crew in aviation revealed the conclusion that a more comprehensive and specific approach in facing and fighting the challenge should be taken by the industry. In overall, findings raised heavy development targets for airlines and the whole aviation sector.

**Keywords**

Aviation, Cabin Crew, Sexual Harassment, Quantitative Survey Research

## Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Sexual harassment .....	3
2.1	Introduction to sexual harassment and its historical context .....	3
2.2	Types of sexual harassment .....	4
2.3	Sexual harassment at the workplace.....	6
2.4	The phenomenon of sexual harassment .....	8
2.5	Case studies and legislation.....	9
3	Sexual harassment against cabin crew .....	11
3.1	Introduction to the aviation industry context .....	11
3.2	Unique challenges faced by cabin crew .....	12
3.3	Overview of the work environment and potential for harassment .....	13
3.4	Prevalence of sexual harassment & comparative analysis to other industries .....	14
3.5	Sources and types of harassment faced by cabin crew .....	17
3.6	Reporting and addressing harassment.....	18
3.7	Cultural and geographical considerations.....	19
3.8	Impact on cabin crew and aviation industry.....	20
3.9	Strategies for change .....	21
4	Research method & data collection .....	22
4.1	Research methodology .....	22
4.2	Implementation of questionnaire study.....	23
5	Data analysis & findings .....	24
5.1	Q1: Gender .....	24
5.2	Q2: How old are you? .....	24
5.3	Q3: Cabin crew work experience .....	25
5.4	Q4: Have you experienced sexual harassment towards yourself?.....	26
5.5	Q5: How often have you experienced sexual harassment? .....	27
5.6	Q6: By whom were you harassed?.....	29
5.7	Q7: What type of sexual harassment have you experienced? .....	30
5.8	Q8: Your position during time of sexual harassment? .....	32
5.9	Q9: Location of crew base while harassment occurred .....	33
5.10	Q10: Have you reported the incident/s? .....	34
5.11	Q11: What was the reason for not reporting? .....	35
5.12	Q12: Has the employer discussed the incident/s with you after reporting? .....	36
5.13	Q13: Do you think your employer/past employer has sufficient reporting tools in case sexual harassment occurs? .....	37
5.14	Q14: Have you witnessed sexual harassment towards colleagues?.....	38
5.15	Q15: Personal reflection on experienced sexual harassment.....	40

5.16 Q16: Thoughts or feedback on the subject.....	40
6 Conclusion .....	42
6.1 Evaluation of research ethics, reliability and validity of study.....	42
6.2 Recommendations & final reflections .....	42
6.3 Key takeaways & own learning .....	45
References .....	47
Appendices.....	52
Appendix 1. Questionnaire body .....	52
Appendix 2. Answers from Q11: What was the reason for not reporting?.....	58
Appendix 3. Answers from Q15: Reflection on experienced sexual harassment.....	64
Appendix 4. Answers from Q16: Thoughts or feedback on the subject.....	68

## 1 Introduction

This report presents a thesis study of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences with the research on sexual harassment against cabin crew in aviation industry. Cabin crew members, wider known as flight attendants, are part of flight crew on commercial and private business aircrafts and mainly responsible for passenger safety and comfort. Cabin crew's work environment is mostly set to airports and aircraft cabins. On aircrafts, their work space differs on aircraft layouts as airplanes are divided into wide-body, a configuration of two or more cabin aisles, and narrow-body aircrafts, with a single aisle configuration.

According to studies, cabin crew face sexual harassment at the workplace regularly. The overall purpose of the study was therefore to research the phenomenon of sexual harassment by studying scientific literature to update and identify challenges within the topic and measure occurrence of sexual confrontations in cabin crew's work environment with a research questionnaire for cabin crew. The motivation was to proof, smother and update ongoing sexual discomfort in cabin work environment for cabin crew in order to accomplish and establish preventing actions against all kind of sexual harassment. The inspiration in choosing the subject lied in years of working experience in the field by the author. The author felt that the challenging, delicate and at hand phenomenon of sexual harassment needed new research and attention. A successful study could help cabin crew in the industry and ease cabin crew's work on daily basis, thus, research could in the end even work as a key to a safer, guarded and more protected work environment for cabin crew. By inventing better rules and principles to protect cabin crew against sexual discomfort, stakeholders in the industry could finally update and fix the outdated image and perception many people still have of flight attendants being there to look beautiful and serve. An already safety driven business sector would improve qualitatively in avoiding misconduct and obviously profit from a psychologically safer work environment for their employees. Especially today, where values and ethics are more on display than ever, a caring, supportive and protected work culture is highly appreciated. The objective was therefore as well to find operating models for companies when the phenomenon of sexual harassment repeats itself or harassment occurs.

Sexual harassment exists and it is not a secret that sexual confrontations against cabin crew are present in aviation. The author has witnessed sexual harassment in its different ways during the years, as well the fact that the topic is still swept under the rug by many stakeholders in the industry. In the theoretical part of this study, several studies are taken into account when analysing the phenomenon of sexual harassment as well as factors which lead to sexual harassment. In overall, many already existing studies and reports underline ongoing sexual abuse in the aviation sector and maintain the challenge of the

topic. An important aspect was therefore to conduct a reliable and anonymous survey as part of this study to get proper results. When choosing the subject, a significant first decision was not to cooperate with a commissioner. Collaboration with a commissioner could hinder survey participants of honest answering as the study would be linked to a particular firm and stakeholder. In the end, the main point of a delicate research like this is to get relevant and honest responds, empower participants to speak up without jeopardizing their anonymity. The author knew of sexual harassment in aviation, however, wanted cabin crew to speak up themselves. Therefore, a new survey research would give important insight from individuals working at the frontline. Insight of a phenomenon, which in reality hinders cabin crew from being safe at work. A phenomenon in existence, which somehow entitles that cabin crew can be confronted with sexual discomfort because it somehow seems to be part of their job. While doing research on the topic, considerations listed above only got clearer and certain hesitation from the crowd was visible. Everyone knew exactly about the sensitivity of the topic and the line with the subject seemed to be very thin for individuals and stakeholders. For the author, this climate of caution around the topic only confirmed that research and discussion on the subject was noticeably needed.

The report follows main thesis structure guidelines given by the university. The report started with an abstract, a short summary where the study was presented. The introduction part identified the research problem, opened up the topic, inspiration and objectives of the study. In addition, the structure of the report is explained. The main body, the literature review, works as theoretical framework, in this particular paper sections two and three. Theoretical parts are divided into two sections, firstly in context to sexual harassment in general and later in opposition to cabin crew. These sections deepen the understanding for the reader on already existing material and studies around the subject. The body continues in chapter four with research methodology and the implementation of the research questionnaire for cabin crew, contacted as quantitative research. In the end, research insights, results and findings of the research data is analysed and presented. The paper ends with a conclusion chapter, where research ethics, reliability and validity of the provided research study is evaluated, recommendations are established and final reflection is done by the author.

The timeframe of the study started in autumn 2023 with the acceptance of the topic. The actual work and research commenced in the beginning of 2024 and lasted four months (February - May 2024). The work process was divided into three main steps: The writing of the theoretical part, secondly the process and implementation of the quantitative research and lastly the analysis of questionnaire results and finalisation of the report.

## 2 Sexual harassment

In the body fragment of this paper, the theoretical part of sexual harassment is explained. In this literature review, types of the phenomena (verbal, non-verbal, and physical) with context to sexual harassment at workplace, case studies and legislation on the subject are perused.

### 2.1 Introduction to sexual harassment and its historical context

Sexual harassment has been socially programmed, and its manifestations sprawl into different sectors of the working environment, eventually affecting the workers' dignity and well-being. It is generally understood as inevitable sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, other verbal or physical conduct, and all of its sexual nature (Acquadro Maran et al., 2022). Sexual harassment consists of behaviours of a sexual nature, which include sexual enticement, requesting sexual favours, and the implied or explicit use of promises to award or backstab the one who agrees to these favours. Sexual harassment is inclusive of unwanted sexual advances, comments of an obsessive sexual nature, asking for sexual favours, and comments about a person's gender in particular, which can create a hostile work environment. Harassers and victims can be of any gender. (Acquadro Maran et al., 2022.) The definition of what constitutes sexual harassment has evolved to the point of embracing any behaviour that is demeaning, hostile, or degrading in the workplace.

The phrase "sexual harassment" originated in 1975 from the activists of Cornell University to label this severe phenomenon. As time changed, the understanding of the sexual harassment concept altered as well; for instance, in the past various ancient societies perceived sexual harassment and rape as an injury to a man's property rather than the violation of women's rights (Siegel, 2003). A build-up of society was going on alongside these acts of injustice, and laws were initiated to punish criminalized wrongdoers (Columbia University, 2021). The significance of sexual harassment is a vital societal and workforce concern since its roots in the generalization movement of the 1970's, which has brought out more issues of female empowerment and violence in the workplace. This attitude was typical until the works of the enlightenment philosophers who had advocated for equality and justice irrespective of gender or class. This perspective had often been ignored or overlooked by the typical attitude of society and the legal system. The official attitude to sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination became a crucial step in its recognition. The landmark point in American history regarding sex discrimination for example, was the signing into law of Title VII in 1964, which bars such discrimination in the workplace (National Organization for Women, 2013). The progress of the concept of sexual harassment has been evolving as society enhances its understanding of its effect on victims, both physiologically, psychologically, and economically.

The evolution of sexual harassment with the changing historical context shows how society moved from having acceptance and normalization to condemnation and steps to address this. This modification stemmed from two major case laws and legislative efforts in the United States, which later set precedents for handling sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination under civil rights laws. These rule of law systems have had a far-reaching impact on the international communities and the individual countries they serve, allowing others to adopt similar mandates. This is an age of sexual harassment advances. However, it is still a tremendous task, considering that many incidents go unreported due to the fear of retaliation or disbelief. Research information continues to bring evidence of sexual harassment in both public and private spaces across the globe, which ensures that there is a need for these places to have anti-harassment policies that provide prevention and support for the victims, inclusive of counselling and accountability for the perpetrators. Perpetuation of sexual harassment in the context of its multifaced nature highlights the need for interdisciplinary strategies to combat it persistently.

## **2.2 Types of sexual harassment**

Their manifestation may differ depending on the situation, however, they influence employees' state and the organization's culture. Sexual violence may come in myriad forms, such as verbal, non-verbal, and physical actions, which hamper the identification and proper intervention measures for each of such specific cases. Verbal harassment is made by using offensive words, telling jokes involving a sexual nature, or making unwanted proposals of a sexual nature. All of these only provoke discomfort and lower the morale of an individual. Non-verbal harassment pertains to behaviours like leering, winking, performing suggestive gestures, making sexual comments, or introducing sexually related materials in the workplace. Physical harassment stands for the most apparent type, denoted by unwanted touching, physical assault, or any other similar display of physical aggression.

Another form of harassment is quid pro quo harassment. According to Aina-Pelemo et al. (2021), this is a form of harassment in which an employee's employment, working conditions, or opportunities are exchanged in a request for a sexual comeback or sexually suggestive behaviour. It is a straightforward form of harassment whereby the harasser assumes sexual favours from the victim as the condition for promotion and advancement in the workplace. The harasser thus becomes very powerful in the workplace. Persistently, the paradigm often falls on supervisors or those with authority posts to handle, making the workers' reporting hard with the constraint of fear of retaliation or career repercussions. The impacts of this approach transcend the limited number of individuals and organiza-

tions subject to it, as it leads to a low level of trust and shared ethical values among stakeholders (Aina-Pelemo et al., 2021). A fundamental success of an organization in its quest to prevent and respond to quid pro quo harassment is to abide by and enforce clear policies that safeguard employees against such predatory practices. The most significant thing with the development of an accountability and respect culture is discussing the method of preventing mutually beneficial harassment and the formation of a safe atmosphere for employees.

When employees are subjected to unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which occurs many times or is intense enough to make the work environment intimidating, abusive, or offensive, a hostile work environment is created (University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, 2019). Such harassment does not often imply the direct uttering of propositions or the setting of conditions at work; instead, it is about the variety of actions that make up a toxic environment. It can impact the victim that lands from an action taken by anyone who is a colleague, boss, or third party, undermining the individual's work performance and mental health. While it may sometimes be challenging to define what constitutes a "hostile" environment, a comprehensive examination of the situation and circumstances must be carried out to help determine whether or not the hostile behaviour is repeated. Organizations must create an environment where sexual harassment is immediately punished with transparent reporting procedures and encouraging resources for the victim (University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, 2019). Training and education focusing on the implications and consequences of creating a hostile work environment should be taken as a curriculum policy. These education programs will build a respectful and inclusive workplace for the employees.

There are different types of sexual harassment, but mainly, they are verbal, non-verbal, and physical actions. Often, there is much difficulty in distinguishing and protecting through these types of harassment (Mamaru et al., 2015). Based on the definition by victim support organizations, verbal harassment includes unwanted comments, jokes, or advances that are related to sex and that create an atmosphere that makes a person uncomfortable or insulted. Non-verbal harassment can be described as sexualizing someone in public by making leering gestures as well as pornographic materials or images visible. Physical harassment is the leading one, and it involves unintentional touches, physical assault, or any other form of intrusion into body space. The array of such behaviours demands a range of perspectives, which pave the pathway not only for sexual harassment but also the process of determining the scope of harassment depending on context and perception. Such policies and training should cover the full range of harassment, and the right employees should be allowed to look out for and report never-tolerated behaviours.

Furthermore, the work environment should be respectful, safe, and toxic-free. (Mamaru et al., 2015.)

### **2.3 Sexual harassment at the workplace**

Sexual harassment in the workplace primarily originates from power imbalances between abuser and victim, where the perpetrator uses the authority to have power over the victim (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). The differential power in this regard not only increases the incidence of harassment but also makes the victim's choices about responding to or reporting the misconduct difficult. Superiors, managers, or individuals in top management positions resist exploiting their authority. It, therefore, becomes an even more terrible situation where the victims know, whether it is expressed or implied, that it would improve their conduct uncomfortable to their careers. It turns out that out of all the harassment around the workplace, nearly 75 % of them have a power imbalance, where the offender is in a higher position than the person being harassed (Acquadro Maran et al., 2022). Individuals with authority sometimes get insensitive and interact carelessly, disregarding business standards. This type of power imbalance has the effect of a climate of fear and silence where victims are the only reason for their torment and feel powerless and with no option but to be silent. When they have a strong impression of their attractiveness, it is possible to find they overestimate the level of interest from others and take it for granted that the people around them are more attracted to them than is true (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). Businesses must indeed acknowledge these unequal power relations and handle them as part of their commitment to preventing sexual harassment. Confidential reporting routes should be implemented, and the rules should be applied consistently to all workers irrespective of their position, which are essential measures to free victims from power imbalance.

Abuse of sexual harassment is not just an isolated issue for those directly concerned. However, it also has the effect of psychological implications, happiness with the job, and career progression for the victims (Cesario, 2020). Victims suffer from an assortment of psychological effects, for example, stress, depression, and anxiety. In some scenarios, they may even develop the below-mentioned post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), making them less efficient in their workplaces and negatively impacting their personal lives. Additionally, the permeating culture of sexual harassment within a workspace may contaminate the working environment, resulting in employees depicting decreased self-confidence, mistrust, reduced morale, and, with this, withering productivity. Such organizations should be aware of the deep scar left by harassment not only on the ones victimized but also on the collective team spirit, asking for early detection of harassment victims and adopting a zero-tolerance policy.

Sexual harassment is an important workplace issue, and reporting mechanisms play a crucial role in addressing it. However, victims may be deterred from speaking up because of the possibility that they will not be believed, retaliated against, or damaged in terms of their reputation (Cesario, 2020). Companies need to create noticeable, convenient, and confidential ways of filing a harassment complaint without risk to the worker facing any determinations. On the same track, laws, and regulations arising from the legal frameworks serve as mighty weapons to combat harassment at the workplace, where they act to guarantee perpetrators are held accountable, and employees are protected. While the effectiveness of such mechanisms will rely on their implementation and the willingness of institutions to comply notably with the established rules and standards, the course would contribute significantly toward developing a culture of respect and safety.

To avoid cases of sexual molestation, we need to develop holistic and multi-dimensional strategies that may go beyond just following legal principles (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2019). Companies must conduct a comprehensive training program to educate employees on how sexual harassment manifests and its critical repercussions and maintain respect for boundaries. It must be compulsory training for all employees, including the management, to identify all segments of employees with shared doctrines on this matter. In addition, providing a code of conduct that explicitly encompasses what is and what is not accepted and stipulates punitive actions to be taken in case of violating these behaviours should be considered. Harassment prevention is not an easy job, and it is not a one-step activity. Therefore, the implementation of the right organizational culture in the presence of ethical leadership can reduce the rate of harassment in the workplace.

As Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights reported (2019), in a nutshell, the battle against sexual harassment in the workplace demands the creation of a secure, supportive, and inclusive work environment where employees feel appreciated and confident. This function is beyond the specific measures mentioned above taken into account. It includes fluent communication with the community, stimulating bystander behaviour, and encouraging diversity and equality (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2019). Organizations that take a holistic approach to employee well-being and establish a safe and equitable culture of encouragement and integrity to defend against the problem of sexual harassment. A staff culture without discrimination would be achieved through a holistic approach to the root causes and by forming a positive workplace culture where people feel valued and respected.

## 2.4 The phenomenon of sexual harassment

To discuss the relevant theoretical frameworks of the phenomenon of sexual harassment, the study considers feminist theory and dynamics of power, psychological impacts on victims, and organizational behaviour and culture. Each of the frameworks comes up with an individual view attached to their focal point of the versatile socio-psychological factors that lead to sexual harassment, which can conjointly assist in coming up with a holistic approach to the feasible interventions to solve this problem.

Feminist theory exemplifies a feminist view of sexual harassment that will be considered a consequence of power imbalance between the genders through historical and structural implications (Arinder, 2020). Here, the reason why the perspective often addressed the inability of societal structures and norms to address the issue of inequality and the role of those structures and norms in promoting the exploitation and mistreatment of women is given. Whereby sexual harassment is viewed through the prisms of feminist theory, we see it not only as a domino effect of single cases of misconduct, however, as a result of patriarchal power structures that marginalize not only women but also all the other emarginated groups. This strategy promotes systemic alterations in societal mentality, the law, and the workplace policy that tackle the underlying root causes of this issue (Arinder, 2020). It appeals to the transition and redistribution of power structures, favouring a society where equality is achieved. The knowledge of how power structures community sexual harassment will help health organizations to develop facts, intervention, and prevention approaches to the underlying social norms.

The psychological deterioration of victims as a result of sexual harassment is significant and multi-dimensional. It touches on their mental state, work capacities, and general life standards. Emotionally, victims may go through an array of psychological issues, which may include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and self-esteem that appear to be lower (Benya et al., 2018). These influences, however, can be enhanced by a sense of isolation and stigma, particularly in places where reporting harassment is not only discouraged but also ignored. The victims may also suffer in terms of the anxiety of bullying or doubt the perception of others (Benya et al., 2018). Being the basis of this framework, it is evident that mental health has to be one of the fundamental factors of the work culture, and staff assistance resources for the quitters of harassment have to be provided. Taking care of psychological ramifications should be the area of a multi-component approach that covers counselling, support groups, and policies to keep pace accordingly.

The role organizational behaviour and culture can play by either bringing it about or preventing sexual harassment is just significant. As contended by Timmerman & Bajema

(2000), a culture that silently harbours or fails to redress harassment not only feeds and perpetuates its growth but can also be a deadly hindrance to the ongoing attempts to eradicate it. The organization's culture includes values, beliefs, and practices that must be shared among members, and it is essential for creating attitudes and behaviours of people toward sexual harassment (Timmerman & Bajema, 2000). The cultures that promote respect, equity, and accountability are much more highly valued than other ones in fostering an environment where this or any different kind of harassment will not do well, and it can be dealt with quickly. Contrastingly, settings that give more weight to the establishment and reinforcement of a hierarchical structure rather than to the respect of equality or that pave the way for the continuation of harassment are the ones that help its persistence. A road map that requires leadership commitment, policy formulation, and education that fosters respect and dignity for all employees must be planned to change organizational behaviour and culture.

## **2.5 Case studies and legislation**

The sexual harassment movement field has been very much informed by several significant cases that were ruled in courts. One of the examples is the case of *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*. In this case, the federal courts considered the speech incense and a hostile environment that distorts the laws (Legal Information Institute, 2023). The decision shifted the definition of acceptable, as now it encompassed even verbal behaviour. Having done this, the federal law court decision in the case of *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton* and *Burlington Industries Inc. v. Ellerth* also influenced the general perception of sexual harassment in the United States. Thus, these cases showed, for the first time, that employers are legally responsible for the behaviour of their employees, which puts a value on the occurrence of corrective actions in the workplace (Kidder, 1999).

Beyond the prior constitutional decrees, court cases as well have stood out as prime movers in the quest to establish the consideration of sexual harassment on a national scale. The late 90's case of Anita Hill versus Justice Clarence Thomas revealed that sexual harassment was a matter of both power and prestige, even at the topmost levels of governmental office (Gross, 2021). *Jones versus Clinton* also epitomized that though someone may carry an influential status and possess significant political power, they are also subject to prosecution in case of sexual assault charges (Froomkin, 1998). These cases are only espoused, which would be the evidence for forming sexual harassment cases. The result was an increase in public awareness about sexual harassment and policy changes that were meant to address this pervasive problem.

Anti-harassment laws differ significantly among jurisdictions in different districts globally. As per the 2020 survey by GC Magazine, 122 countries ban sexual harassment in workplaces, and out of these, 116 countries provide this safeguard to both females and males (GC Magazine, 2020). The general sense behind this legislation is the intended efforts for the mitigation of sexual harassment incidents and to protect workers' rights across the globe. In some countries, this is reflected by the rules used in investigating complaints, such as appointing unique bodies or individuals for these purposes.

A comparative overview across 13 countries indicated employment protections in recruitment, remuneration, promotions or demotions, termination, and sexual harassment (Heymann et al., 2020). This proves that the issue is well known, and the companies and the law mayors need to put better policies in place to protect employees. Furthermore, some authorities have drafted laws to remove lousy practices from particular forms of harassment. To illustrate, Hong Kong passed laws that are specifically designed to counter cyber harm, like 'revenge pornography.' This shows an evolving character of sexual harassment and that laws have to evolve notably as well for them to keep up with the times.

### **3 Sexual harassment against cabin crew**

In part two of the theoretical part, the author reflects sexual harassment into aviation and the research problem itself: Sexual harassment in opposition to cabin crew is analysed and explained.

#### **3.1 Introduction to the aviation industry context**

The aviation industry considered a giant with its global outreach and diverse crew members, requires a higher-order level approach to making and maintaining a safe and respectful working place, particularly for cabin crew members (Park & Hyun, 2021). The compartmentalized and transitory atmosphere of aircraft cabins, together with the crew's hierarchical structure and the potential for various types of interactions with passengers from different cultures, compound the likelihood of sexual harassment. The nature of the incidents, the place of their manifestation, and the specificities of the airline industry may become the main risk factors that hinder or facilitate their immediate resolution.

Cabin crew have very much the profession that ensures passenger safety and comfort during very long hours of disturbing work in such small spaces. The society in this environment can become the breeding ground, which, unfortunately, will give rise to instances where boundaries are breached and the exhibition of inappropriate behaviour is recorded and practiced (Park & Hyun, 2021). The existing power relationship between cockpit crew and cabin crew and the perception of teamwork as a prerequisite for keeping the flight safe make the matter of code of conduct issues sometimes overlooked or even neglected. Besides, passengers who emotionally get strengthened by the facial mask and temporary characteristics of the travel also increase the odds of voyeuristic and harassing behaviour.

Traditionally, the aviation industry is the one that constantly transforms and updates as a result of social, economic, ecologic, industrial, and technological trendy items. The two, a pandemic like COVID-19, the growing Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs), and the deregulation have brought a revolutionary change to aviation. (IATA, 2023.) These transformations affect how airlines function, interact with governments, set governance and regulatory standards of behaviour that are universally acknowledged, and manage safety and security in units based in different locations.

Aviation regulation bodies and airline companies are aware of the necessity of taking action against sexual harassment, and there is a commitment on their part to provide safety and a conducive environment based on respect and protection to their employees. Cabin crew members still experience the dark side of harassment on the flight and during their

workday in general, even though they are perfectly aware that sexism is unacceptable and the behaviour is considered illegal. Exploring the distinctness of the aviation industry environment is a vital ingredient to developing effective programs and strategies to fight against sexual harassment of cabin crew. This embodies the specific concerns the particular group is exposed to; the role of the organization's culture has to be supportive and flexible, as well as establishing a common set of standards across the industry that privileges employee security.

### **3.2 Unique challenges faced by cabin crew**

Cabin crew members face unusual issues that will boost the harassment risk, and therefore, their experience differentiates from the sexual harassment employees typical in other professions. These problems are unique as they are present in the distinctive atmosphere created by the aviation industry, which combines long flights and working shifts with the stress that speeds up the interaction process between employees and passengers so that such complex incidents may occur. The nature of this job is dealing with a tremendously large passenger group of different backgrounds, which causes complex issues and calls for an exceptional approach to keep them safe and on guard with dignity. (Wen et al., 2023.)

One great difficulty is the tight working space on an aircraft, which infringes on their personal space. Thus, some interactions cannot be avoided. The physical layout of an airplane could never give any passenger personal space. Thus, the crew members are sometimes forced to work alongside the passengers, contaminating the environment with numerous bacteria and other contagious infections. This environment could somehow create the stepping stone for misbehaviour, inappropriate physical contact, and verbal harassment, as there are not many options to escape or seek immediate help. To make things worse, the contacts on long-haul flights are lengthier, and due to that, they cause an additional impairment to any potential harm from harassment.

In addition, the hierarchy within the flight crew can sometimes become an obstacle to reporting maltreatment. Crew members may dismiss inappropriate behaviour from the higher-posing colleagues or pilots close to them in the aircraft, assuming that their bodies may not raise this alarm. These imbalances of power may silence the victims and even make so that contrary behaviour perpetuates the culture where the harassment is not reported and thus not appropriately resolved. The complication of coherent team dynamics for the sake of operational safety influences the crew members to keep silent, as passengers can think the team harmony is at risk and, therefore, the safety of all will be compromised. (Wen et al., 2023.)

Exchange with a group of passengers whose shape is in a state of perennial variations brings another source of complexity. It is not an easy job for cabin crews to come to terms with cultural differences and, at the same time, manage passengers' expectancies, which may involve outrageous demands of personal attention or unacceptable service methods that go beyond professional boundaries. They might think traveling is safe because they would not be recognized. At the same time, they will be protected from prosecution. This part of their work means that the cabin crew emphasizes the connection between the assertive and professional approach, even if there are no guidelines on dealing with every kind of harassment properly.

Also, varying responses by airline operators or territorial regions to the reported incidents create a wide range of victim services that are inconsistent. In contrast to the situations where businesses have developed detailed procedures for dealing with sexual harassment complaints, the inability of others to deal with such problems is either due to the scant resources that may be involved or the lack of will to handle it knowledgeably. The uncertainty in this kind of scenario can lead to grounding cabin crew in their reporting of incidents as they may be undervalued or disregarded.

### **3.3 Overview of the work environment and potential for harassment**

The nature of the aviation industry workplace is uniquely tricky, which is the main reason for the high chance of harassment. However, many people choose to work there because the environment is one of the advantages. The prescribed environment is challenging, increased stress, considerable publicity, and an enclosed space; thus, it is no surprise that crew, staff, and passengers interact closely. Such factors, which are mutually inclusive, add up to the problem of hazing, thereby without a doubt making it imperative to evaluate the workplace to identify the needed change that would support a better environment and respect for all.

In addition to the various challenges, it is essential to look into the specific situations in a cabin crew's environment that cause the vulnerability to harassment to be intensified. They often have to be in direct touch with the employees and their passengers during flights, which can be more stressful than expected under turbulence, emergencies, or dealing with grumpy passengers. In this situation, people experience stress that does not leave their interpersonal relationships unchanged, and there may be instances where boundaries are overstepped, and etiquette is ignored. On top of having to remain composed and professional in the face of these challenges, the cabin crew's job is also to protect the passengers by preventing any possible harassment.

Not only that, but the space itself on aircraft shows the work environment in which sexual harassment is possible. The small area and ongoing moving around in narrow aisles imply that the crew usually interacts with passengers and each other in close physical proximity. This proximity can dramatically disadvantage crew members sleeping or living in an enclosed place, where one can be teased or touched inappropriately and sometimes cornered in a space with no other person or immediate escape routes (Gale et al., 2019). The workplace environment is architecturally conducive in that it limits personal space, thus making it impossible to avoid interactions one does not wish to engage in.

Another critical factor creating a practical setting for harassment in the aviation sector is the transitory duration of flights (Gale et al., 2019). Crew members talk to hundreds of passengers daily during long working hours. With most of them being strangers, their relationships remain superficial. This anonymity can empower persons to behave to qualities that they may not manifest in other situations where they know responsibilities bind them in the long run. The fleeting nature of these interactions poses a dilemma when reporting and is a barrier to addressing harassment. Since it may not be known if the harassment was related to other instances or not and cannot be traced.

However, the human factor plays an essential role in developing airline policies and training culture, putting the likelihood of harassment into perspective. Airlines that emphasize such crucial elements as safety and respect in their employees' training programs will probably create a working environment where harassment is less likely to occur and where it will be fully addressed if it does happen. In contrast, inadvertent implementation of policies that need to be more robust, transparent, and flexible regarding establishing effective and careful control is considered one of the risk factors. The applicability of these policies and the efficiency of these training programs are crucial as they set guidelines and provide crew members with knowledge and tools to deal with and report a harassment case.

### **3.4 Prevalence of sexual harassment & comparative analysis to other industries**

The persistent occurrence of sexual molestation in the aviation sector is a big challenge specifically depicted by numerous research and data that present further on the scale of the issues. It is not only the frequency of these numbers but also the magnitude of the problem that draws attention. Based on research, sexual assault does not only affect the aviation sectors, but also different industries. Surveys undertaken among industry workers depict a genuinely shocking rate of sexual harassment in this branch. More than 50 % of the respondents are harassed at work by the public and their colleagues. Among the other

examples, the study may reveal that more than half of the cabin crew that were surveyed have suffered sexual harassment of some kind throughout their careers, thus showing that the matter is severe and relevant. (Gekoski et al., 2017.) The data also show that the type of harassment reported goes from verbal cues and non-verbal cues to more severe ones; they include instances of physical siege, attempted assault, and actual assault. Such figures speak much about the complex nature and wide-ranging manifestation of harassment in the aviation field that it does not just reflect narrowly on a single harassment category but includes all behaviours, each one being directed against the personal safety and health of affected individuals.

Flight crew mental health survey shows that 26 % of flight attendants in North America and 11 % from the UK had sexual abuse at the workplace. The actual magnitude may be higher as a parallel study in Poland evidenced that 61 % of the respondents reported unwanted sexual behaviours, denoting possible underreporting. In fact, around one-third said that they suffered from verbal sexual harassment, whereas almost one in five have ever been physically harassed on a flight. The gravitation of sexual harassment and the beginning of the #MeToo era among cabin crew do not seem to have any impact on airlines. Eight out of ten flight attendants have not seen workplace sexual harassment by their airlines over the years. (Węziak-Białowska et al., 2020.)

Interpretation of such data, however, indicates the possibility of underreporting; thus, the actual prevalence rate may be significantly higher than reported. Some flight attendants will not report bullying behaviour due to fears that they may jeopardize their positions, concerns that they will not be taken seriously, or an attitude that this behaviour is actual work (Węziak-Białowska et al., 2020). Due to the availability of the issue of underreporting, the extent of the whole problem is a challenge, and it can be a hard-to-solve problem.

The phenomenon of sexual harassment is not bound to the aviation sector. However, it happens in many occupations at different levels regarding its visibility and impact. A comparative analysis of different industries shows that these professions also share some unique problems of such professionals. At the same time, they are subject to typical harassment cases across various working environments (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ceccato, 2021). This comparison characterizes the aviation sector's own and puts it within a societal making that makes broad and holistic solutions within industries necessary. Workers of services where the hospitality, healthcare, and entertainment occupations belong also very often point to the high prevalence of sexual harassment. In aviation, these areas are where interaction with the public is high or where there are skewed power dynamics, allowing harassment to emerge (Worke et al., 2021). For example, in the hospitality indus-

try, workers dealing with customers are often subjected to sexual advances or inappropriate comments in the same way that the cabin crew encounters similar behaviours with passengers. Unlike other types of work where one can go outside to relieve mental stress, aviation is often dynamic and confined, striking just as hard if not worse than regular work. For instance, EEOC data from 2005 to 2015 reveals that the accommodation and food services sector is the one having the highest rate of sexual harassment reports, and that helps explain why it is represented within 14,23 % of the overall reports in this field. The trade sector in the department of stores took the second place, accounting for 13,44 %. (Cyril, 2023.)

Furthermore, healthcare today is also one of the most intriguing areas. Nursing staff and other caregivers always get verbally abused by patients or their relatives; their peers may also take advantage of them. Such factors as the high-stress workload, challenging conditions on the job, and the predominant power relationships in healthcare work settings also contribute to the problem. The healthcare and social assistance industry was the largest source of sexual harassment cases reported to EEOC, at 11,48 % of the total (Cyril, 2023). Nevertheless, the healthcare industry has been busy implementing more fruitful reporting and support systems, something that those in the aviation industry can learn from to benefit everyone (Feldman, 2022).

The technological industry, which interacts with clients in different ways (being less customer-facing), still faces the problems of sexual harassment, whose causes often include unbalanced gender relationships, as well as dynamics and the culture that historically marginalized women. A survey by Women Who Tech shows that 41,24 % of women startups or employees of the tech industry reported being bullied in one form or another. As for this problem, victims from a background of a traditionally male-dominated society and patriarchal culture are most likely to be affected. (AGEMIAN LAW, 2021.) This male-oriented industry suppresses and devalues women's contributions (OSHMA, 2021). A bad example of the aviation industry seeking guidance is the case of the tech industry, which consists of 48 % of women who experienced sexual harassment. The tech industry's unique history of addressing sexual harassment using policy changes, culture shifts, and the growing level of transparency can teach a huge lesson to the aviation industry that would lead to a necessary behavioural shift. On the one hand, the similarities in their counterparts' aviation work environments, which entail teamwork, which is mainly confined, crew management hierarchy, and the global nature of their jobs create a unique environment that presents many sexual harassment challenges. The fact that cabin crew members are in public view and are in a service-oriented role means they are exposed to abuse, necessitating a customized response from the industry.

### 3.5 Sources and types of harassment faced by cabin crew

Cabin crew in the aviation industry are confronted with specific difficulties regarding the form of harassment put on them within this industry – from co-workers to passengers. Many-sided problems face the integrity of the people and the whole plan. The oppression of colleagues may be rooted in certain hierarchical positions in aviation, so the power relationship must be severe (Park & Hyun, 2021). Situations like this can create circumstances where one may endure unacceptable behaviours for fear of jeopardizing their profession or forming cracks in team cohesiveness (Park & Hyun, 2021). Such abuse exists in many forms, like inappropriate words, unwanted approaches, and even bodily assault. Power games within the group, which involve seniors or those with a more critical position, often carry such cases. As crew members fly for long hours and work together in a small space, this could also worsen the harassment problems from the inside. This narrow space is further multiplied by the instances where crew members work together, thus reducing their ability to avoid harassers during flights.

A variant of passenger-initiated harassment is harassment by passengers, which presents a different set of challenges. Verbal, physical, and gender-based harassment of cabin crew constitute 40 % of the passengers. This harassment can be of any form, such as verbal abuse and utterances that are profane, gross, and dirty to as extreme as physical assault. The passengers get bolder and sometimes use the cabin crew's courteous nature to be inappropriate. The subject is unfounded since not only did the cabin crew become the targets, however, they were also mandated to resolve this issue diplomatically to provide a good customer experience. (Businesswire, 2023.) As the service providers, cabin crew may sometimes face undesired advances, remarks, or even conducive touch from the passengers coming from the passenger's end. As relentless smiling and flattery rarely continue beyond the return to normality, this can leave crew members susceptible to these kinds of behaviour with no viable outlet. When airlines seek customer satisfaction, they can even tell employees to disregard or be ready to cope with any harassment so that they will not get customer complaints. These external harassment elements associated with the passengers rapidly escalate due to the short duration of the interaction. So, they are hard to control and get rid of.

The harassment forms that are present in the aviation industry vary from offensive looks communicated to the touching of passengers and even sexual assault. It is unfortunate that verbal harassment primarily consists of rude jokes, remarks about appearance, and sexual insinuations being made. Not touching but writing the nonverbal terms as different, such as leering and displaying some materials, suggest something. Nonetheless, physical harassment is not necessarily more apparent. This can range from innocuous touching to

serious sexual assault. (Ukwandu et al., 2022.) Moreover, these behaviours significantly influence the level of mental health, job contribution, and overall quality of life of cabin crew members. Due to the short duration and exorbitant context of flying and international expeditions, reporting and dealing with the incidents can be complicated. Therefore, the relevant policies and support systems must be formulated to meet the qualitative demand of the aviation industry.

### **3.6 Reporting and addressing harassment**

In aviation employment, sexual harassment reporting mechanisms are essential to ensure that cabin crew dimensions are well looked after and to maintain a respectable workplace. Essentially, airlines usually have already set up guidelines that keep passengers and crew from abusing each other. Employees can inform the authorities (like supervisors and human resources). Some airlines also developed hotlines run by professional counsellors who deal confidentially with the problem. Additionally, some airlines have introduced digital tools or platforms that assist staff in reviewing the situation, protecting employees from identification and allowing them to report quickly. The emergence of reporting systems designed explicitly for this purpose is to create a comfort zone for potential victims to report their experiences quickly and safely.

Nonetheless, the success of these reporting mechanisms hinges on the willingness of an airline to not only take reports presented to them thoughtfully but also take the appropriate actions. What is more, Airline Pilots Associations of the International Federation (IFALPA), Training Controllers Associations of the International Federation (IFATCA), and International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) are also among those that united in respect to opposition to all forms of harassment and violence in the workplace. They cannot leave it to chance and thus require each employer to ensure workers' safety by providing a same working environment without harassment and intimidation (CHIRP 2023). Also, the CHIRP, an independent, confidential reporting unit, has developed a centralized reporting portal that enables the input of reports and related information stored and maintained within the confidential CHIRP database (CHIRP, 2023).

Reporting mechanisms may be available, however, the actual reporting process is often surpassed by various hurdles and challenges that prevent cabin crew from disclosing their experiences of abuse and even harassment. Reports of harassment and abuse are less likely to be filed when victims worry about retaliation, scepticism about the effect of any action taken, and anxiety about tarnishing their reputation or being held accountable for the situation. Moreover, aviation's multi-tier structure and team principles can keep people

quiet to avoid emotional anguish or defiance that can ruin workplaces or damage their careers. This reluctance is aggravated by the ignorance and distrust among people about the reporting processes, which plays out in underreporting. As a result, the culture of harassment remains within the industry as well. The aviation industry, through case studies, shows clearly both the challenges of managing this issue of sexual harassment and the possibility of success by reporting all incidents and taking practical actions. In overall, lack of support, embarrassment around the topic, minor work experience or lack of proper anonymous reporting possibilities, are factors which uphold the challenge in reporting of incidents.

Improving the reporting and addressing harassment in aviation does not only mean refining the existing mechanisms but also exploring the transformative culture of workplaces. Educating employees on reporting harassment at work, ensuring honesty in dealing with reports made, and creating a conducive environment wherein all staff members feel safe to be themselves and develop to the best of their potential are crucial steps taken to that end. Airlines will have to unambiguously extinguish any form of harassment, even if it means tailoring their policies in such a way as to make them all-inclusive of the perpetrators and the victims. Thus, through creating such systems, the business harmonizes with the objective of a proper working environment where cabin crew members can function without facing the threat of harassment and with vigilant reporting mechanisms.

### **3.7 Cultural and geographical considerations**

Cultural differences will be an essential factor in defining the way how experiences of and reporting sexual harassment should be perceived within the aviation industry. In a society where hierarchical structures are central, a person might be less likely to become a victim of workplace harassment since they will have a greater tolerance for the existing power imbalances and tremendous respect for authority figures. In societies where discussions about sex and sexual assault or harassment behaviours are kept under wraps, victims may feel shameful or may lose esteem as they fear social out casting and thus decide to stay silent rather than face the justice system. These cultural norms are a significant factor that can be the deciding factor in two areas- on the one hand, the likelihood of incidents being reported if they occur and, on the other, the responses those reports receive. (Węziak-Białowolska et al., 2020.) Air carriers, especially those operating across the globe, must overcome the diverse cultural environments within which they operate and develop their training and reporting systems to ensure that the aviation personnel they are dealing with receive the services they are already used to in their context.

Aside from physical and mental health matters, some geographical factors influence the amount and number of reported sexual harassment issues in other sectors of aviation. The regions that enjoy strong legislative safeguards against harassment and a culture that has highlighted the importance of women's rights for example, could have more reports of such incidences because the victims know their rights. There is a mechanism to address the problem. From one side, in areas where the legal system frameworks are weaker or non-existent and gender discrimination more predominant, cases of sexual harassment are likely not to be reported in the trust that the system would be able to offer protections or remedies. Additionally, cultural patterns concerning gender and power of different nations can form the reason for different kinds of harassment and the cabin crew's readiness to denounce the case. Realizing these ethnographical and cultural peculiarities is essential for international airlines to build a tolerant, friendly atmosphere that enables reporting misconduct and eliminates it in all their overseas locations.

### **3.8 Impact on cabin crew and aviation industry**

The effect of sexual harassment on cabin crew members goes beyond what an aboard incident would do, bringing about the psychological state of affairs, professional life, and relationships with loved ones. Survivors may manifest feelings of fear, sadness, and lack of self-assurance, which may last for a considerable time before having a chance to heal. The stressful environment the staff had to cope with permanently may result in staff burn-out, which will be detrimental to their performance and safety. When it comes to career development, professional victims of harassment may face career setbacks, either through taking forced leave or through opting to quit the line of work because the working environment appears awkward where there is no room for personal growth. Personal relationships, too, come to a point where these can suffer negatively after the victim is hounded by harassment in every walk of life, including their interactions with their friends and family, making them remain alone. (Gale et al., 2018.)

For the airlines, the consequences of the lack of the ability to handle sexual harassment cases appropriately are both reputationally and financially. Given that social media and blog sites can be strong individually, a single instance of attack can quickly spiral into a public relations failure that damages the airline's reputation and the confidence of customers (Gale et al., 2018). Such a decrease in public confidence can be manifested in in-flight losses, which would mean people make a flight choice in favour of the carriers that may be perceived as more secure and less disrespectful towards their employees. Furthermore, the airline could face the potential of court cases and compensation claims from the victims, resulting in significant expenditures. Considering the airline's market position and long-term stability, the net of all these factors may be significant in the outcome.

Additionally, the overall effects of the sexual harassment industry enhance a culture that may underpin growth concerning drops in the workforce that is diversified. The steadfast nature of harassment among aviation, sends a signal to the potential employees that they have to leave those areas for good because they will not feel safe and welcome as women, individuals or minorities. This perception is a barrier to diversifying and suppleness of the industry and plays a crucial role in the industry's creativity. This complicates the competition, making it harder for it to compete globally than before. On the one side, the aviation industry must fight the issue of sexual harassment in the right way; otherwise, it will hurt its development chances. Impressive safety and security mechanisms can save employees and make a respectful, equal, and safe environment.

### **3.9 Strategies for change**

Educating and bringing in prevention approaches play a significant role in dealing with sexual harassment in the aviation industry. Successful practices for intimidating sexual harassment are the ones. The committed and involved leaders can combat intimidation and harassment and deal with it consistently. Organizations and harassment policies with solid and comprehensive structures can considerably decrease harassment of a sexual nature. The trust and accessibility of complaint procedures and the regular and interactional training tailored to the audience or the organization can help achieve this result. The program should cover the relevant knowledge to supervisors, leading them to understand how to detect the signs and follow the proper protocols. Therefore, it should be dynamic and adapted to the industry specifications of the aviation sector. (AHRC, 2023.) Changes in policies are also one of the crucial strategies for eradicating sexual harassment. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission views six essential standards that employers must comply with, including the elimination of sexual harassment and the positive duty that they owe to their employees (VEOHRC, 2024). These regulations are leadership, culture, knowledge, risk management, support, notification, probe, evaluation, and traceability (AHRC, 2023). Those principles must be implemented to have a positive influence on the atmosphere at the workplace.

## 4 Research method & data collection

In this chapter general research methodologies and further on the implementation of the qualitative research questionnaire is explained.

### 4.1 Research methodology

When dealing with a research problem, the right research method has to be found. In general, research is mainly divided into qualitative and quantitative research. In qualitative terms, the phenomenon has not yet been properly researched, so there is mostly less knowledge around the topic. This type is more often conducted with interview survey research. In quantitative research, there is knowledge about the subject and researchers tend to find deeper measurable insight of an already existing research problem. The aim with this approach is mainly to reach a larger group of participants, thus, this leads the researcher to use survey questionnaires. In case of this study, the author had witnessed and heard about sexual harassment against cabin crew, whereby a quantitative questionnaire was the right choice to investigate the phenomenon further.

The aim of a questionnaire is to find information around the research problem. The researcher explains in a cover letter aim and objectives of the study and mostly includes an estimate of the responding time to participants. Within a questionnaire survey, participants are commonly first asked about personal information like gender, age, marital status, education and profession. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2013, 197.) Quantitative research questionnaires can for example include one-choice, multiple-choice and open questions. In addition questions based on different scales can be included. Multiple-choice questions are used when the researcher expects several answer options from participants and wants to avoid an open question. In general, too many open questions should be avoided in order to keep the survey as interesting and short as possible.

A questionnaire needs to follow a clear structure and participants have to understand all questions the same way. Amount and sequence of questions play as well a central role and participants should be able to answer a questionnaire in approximately 15 minutes (Hirsjärvi et al. 2013, 203). Nowadays, web-based questionnaires with ready-to-pick answers are most common as answers are easy to analyse. The advantage of a web-based quantitative survey is the anonymous, fast and objective aspect. A quantitative survey is mostly sent to those associated with the topic. Quantitative research is quick to complete, offers investigators real time overview of responses and give respondents the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire whenever they want. Especially with a sensitive topic, such as sexual harassment in this case, an anonymous quantitative survey is an obvious choice

as research method. The challenge with web-based surveys might be that not enough respondents are answering or only people interested in the topic respond. Therefore, the importance of conducting a balanced, neutral, interesting and easy to follow survey is extremely important. The questions and topic must be easy to understand for everyone. (Kananen 2015, 213.)

The aim of a research in general is to get reliable and valid findings on the subject. When evaluating research, we speak therefore about reliability and validity. Reliability measures consistency, validity on the other hand, accuracy of the research. Reliability is present, when findings of a research are consistent and the same, regardless on the study or the researcher. As an outcome, we most probably get a reliable and precise research result. Validity evaluates if a research problem is researched accurately. The researcher has to underline, that theoretical facts from the investigation on the research problem supports, in this case, the survey questionnaire. Hence, already analysed data is used accordingly. (Vilkka 2007, 149.)

#### **4.2 Implementation of questionnaire study**

The quantitative questionnaire was conducted as a web-based survey and was implemented according to statistics and raised questions from the theoretical parts. Webropol, which was recommended by the university for online research, served as the platform for conducting and distributing the questionnaire to the audience. The survey link was open for 14 consecutive days during March 2024 and was distributed to cabin crew using social media channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp). In addition, the survey was also linked to emails. Cabin crew was reached out from all over the world working for different employers/ airlines.

The author created a questionnaire body of 16 questions, including 10 one-choice questions, 3 multiple-choice and 3 open questions. The body was easy to follow and none of the open questions were for participants obligatory to answer. This procedure was intentionally used to recruit a larger amount of people for the survey as participants tend in general not to finish or open long-lasting surveys. Therefore, the survey could be kept short in terms of time for participants to answer the questionnaire. Great attention was also paid to anonymity so that the open question-answers could also be published in this report. Possible company names, nationalities or other allusions to people that would damage or reveal the anonymity of those responding were skipped or wording changed by the author. Otherwise, all data of the questionnaire is published originally.

## 5 Data analysis & findings

In this part, the questionnaire study is analysed and opened up question by question. Statistics and findings of the research questionnaire, conducted as quantitative research, are explained and examined. The statistics were all taken from the survey results and compiled as figures and graphs for this analysis. The author was interested in differences between answers from female vs. male and therefore many following graphs are opened up with gender comparisons.

### 5.1 Q1: Gender

A total of 201 flight attendants took part in the survey. Women were more active in completing the survey, 165 were women (82 %). 36 of the participants, around 18 %, were men. There were no answers to 'other'.

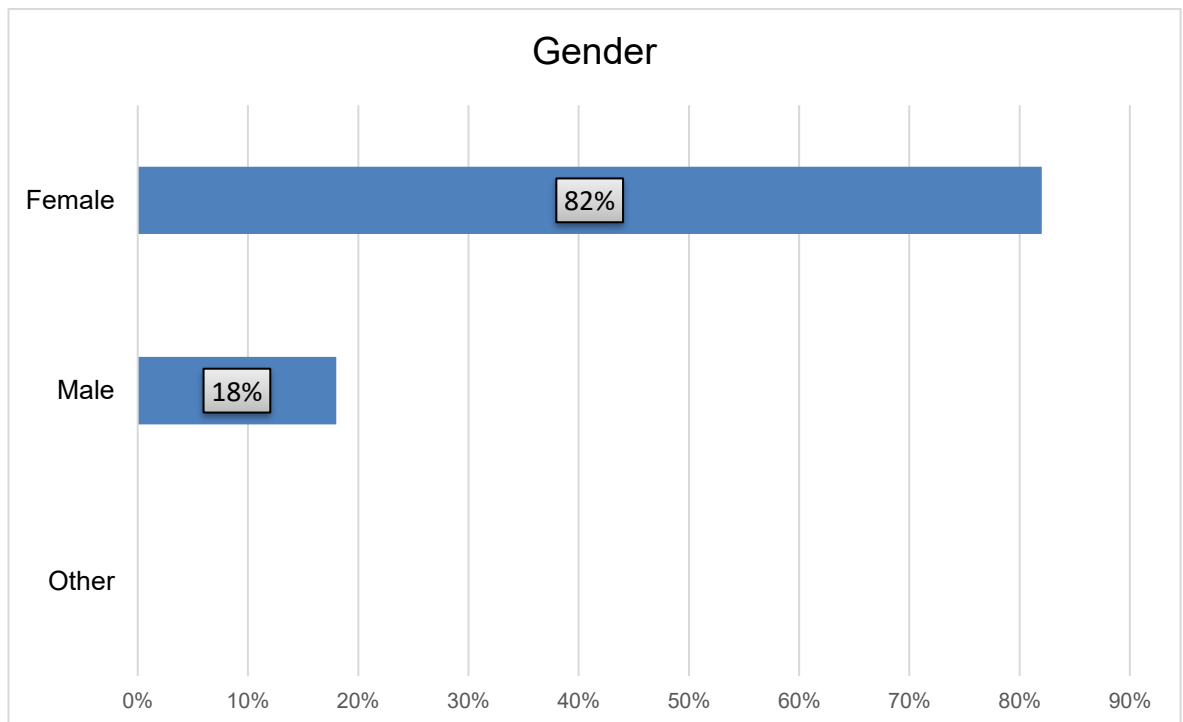


Figure 1: Participant's gender (n = 201)

### 5.2 Q2: How old are you?

No participant under 20 took part in the survey. Among those aged 20-29 (female 21 % vs. male 22 %) and 30-39 (female 36 % vs. male 34 %), the proportion of woman and men was balanced. Among those over 40, there was a split in age. 6 % of men were older in the 40–49-year-old category (female 27 % vs. male 33 %). Among the oldest, those over 50, women were in the majority, +5 % vs. over men (female 16 % vs. male 11 %).

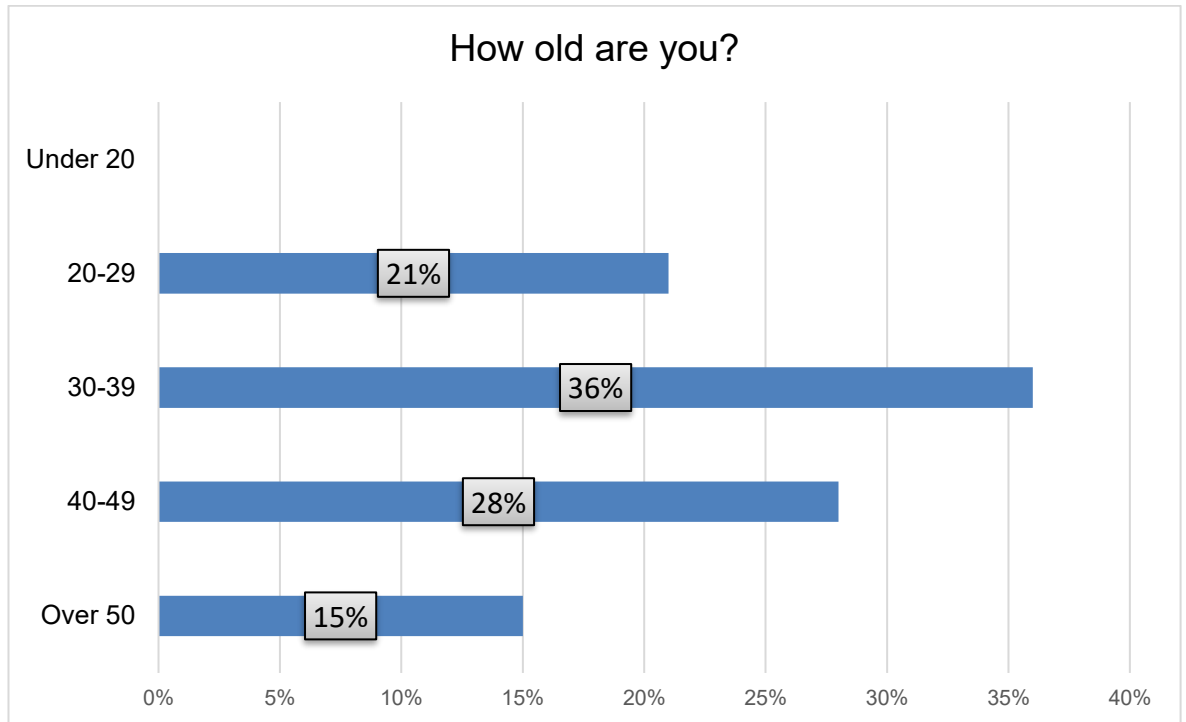


Figure 2: Participant's age (n = 201)

### 5.3 Q3: Cabin crew work experience

When it came to professional work experience, we saw a certain duplication from the previous question. 75 % of participants had more than five years of professional experience working as cabin crew. Only five of those surveyed had less than one year of work experience in the field, in total around 3 %. The largest percentage was 33 % in the 5–10-year category with 67 participants, followed by 31 % (n = 63) with 10-20 years of professional work experience.

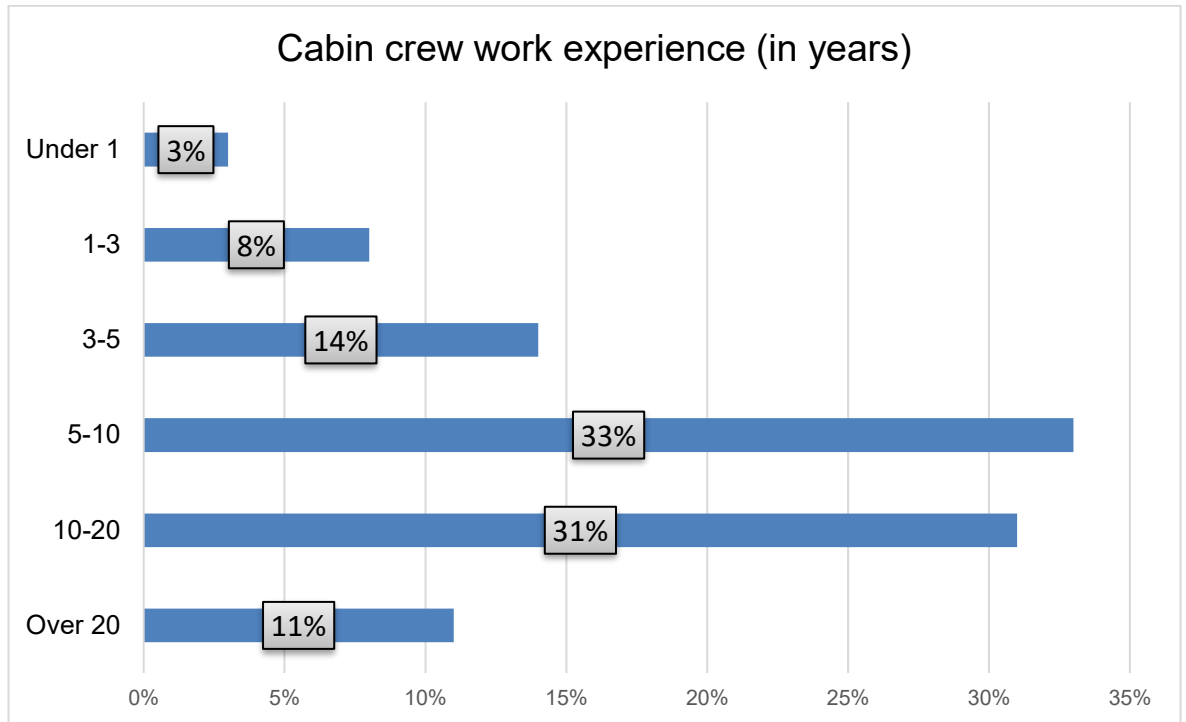


Figure 3: Participant's cabin crew work experience (n = 201)

#### 5.4 Q4: Have you experienced sexual harassment towards yourself?

When asked about experienced sexual harassment at work in their career, 68 % of all those involved in the survey answered 'yes', 32 % had not experienced any harassment on themselves. Women were in the majority of those harassed: Of the 165 women involved, 118 had experienced sexual assault (72 %). Only 48 women involved answered 'no' (28 %). On average the proportion of men was also high: Out of 36 men, 19 were confronted with sexual harassment, hence, more than half of male respondents had experienced sexual harassment (53 %).

All respondents who answered 'no' to this question were notified and forwarded to question 13 after this question. The following 8 questions which were skipped for those participants, were all about experienced confrontations of sexual harassment.

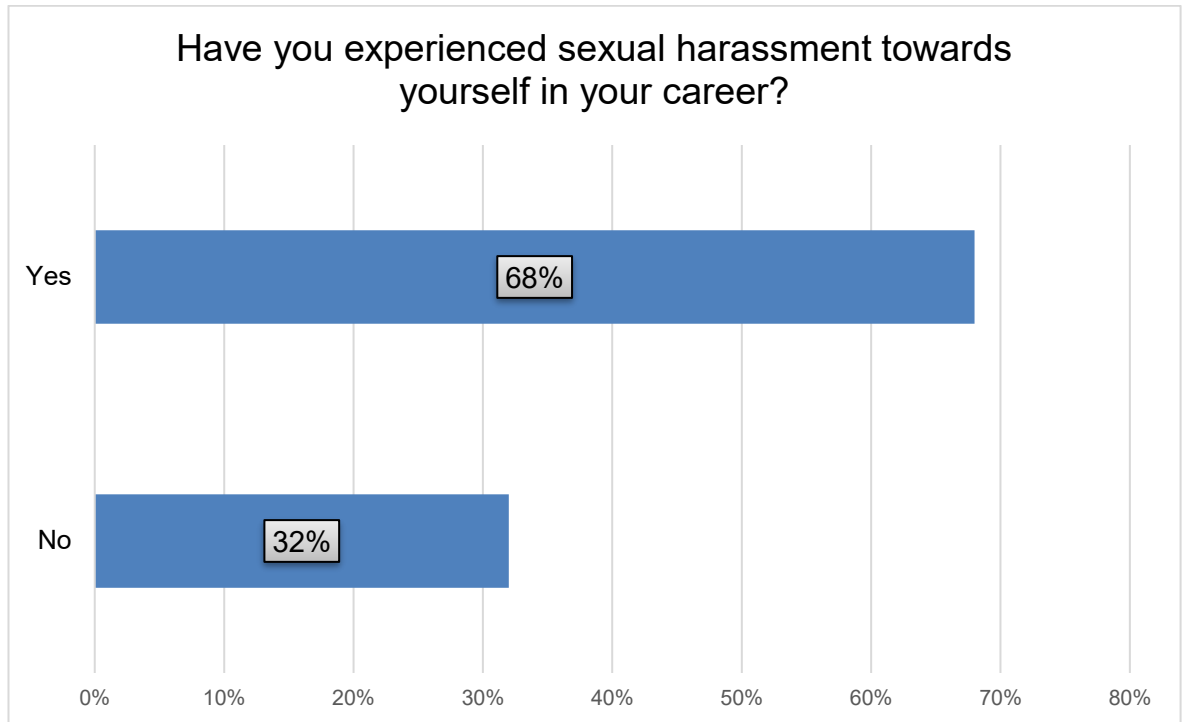


Figure 4: Participant's experience of sexual harassment (n = 201)

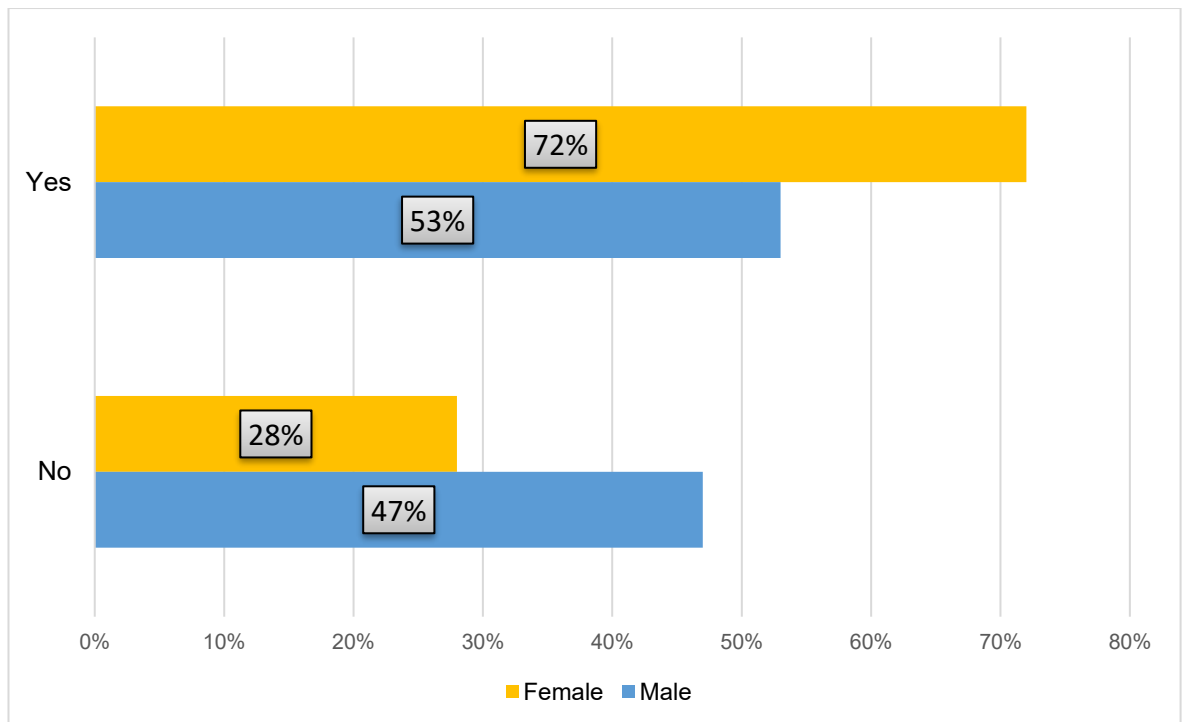


Figure 5: Participant's experience of sexual harassment, comparison female vs. male (n = 201)

### 5.5 Q5: How often have you experienced sexual harassment?

As of this question, participation amounted 137 participants. When it came to frequency of sexual harassment, participants could choose from weekly, monthly, few times a year, few times in my career and once in my career. There were no given answers for 'others'.

Around half of participants chose ‘few times in my career’ (64 out of 118 women and 8 out of 19 men) which corresponded to the majority. Monthly and few times a year- options were both chosen by around 20 % of participants.

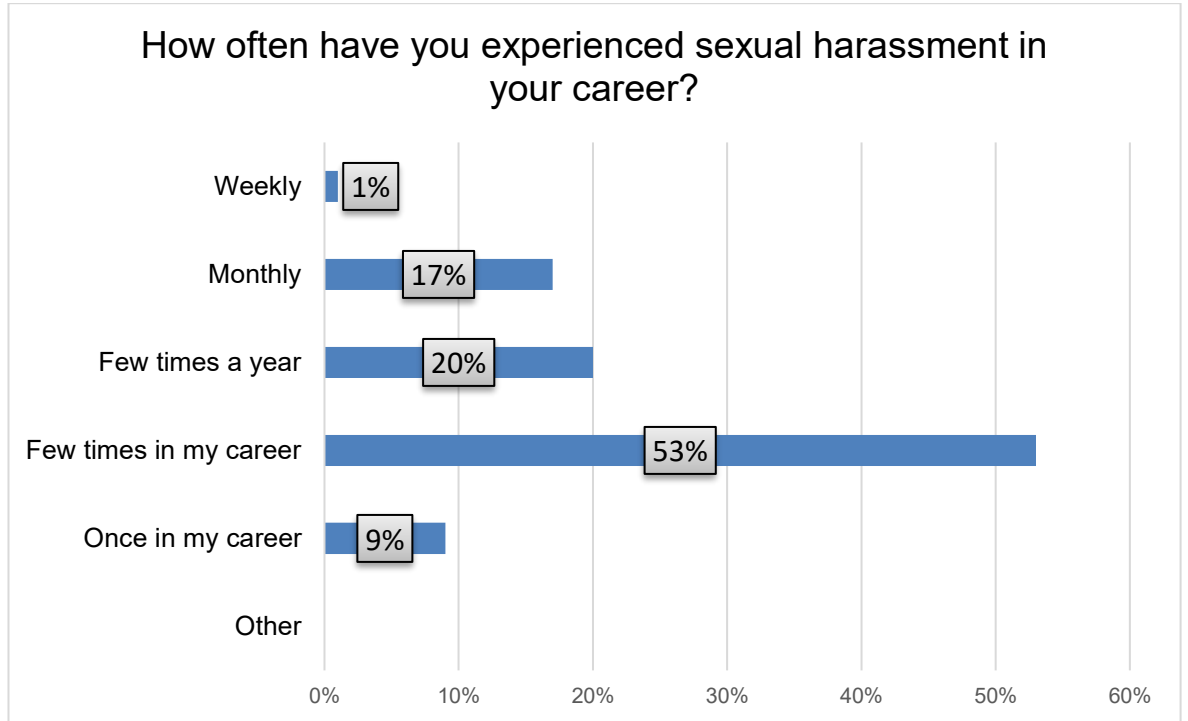


Figure 6: Frequency of experienced sexual harassment (n = 137)

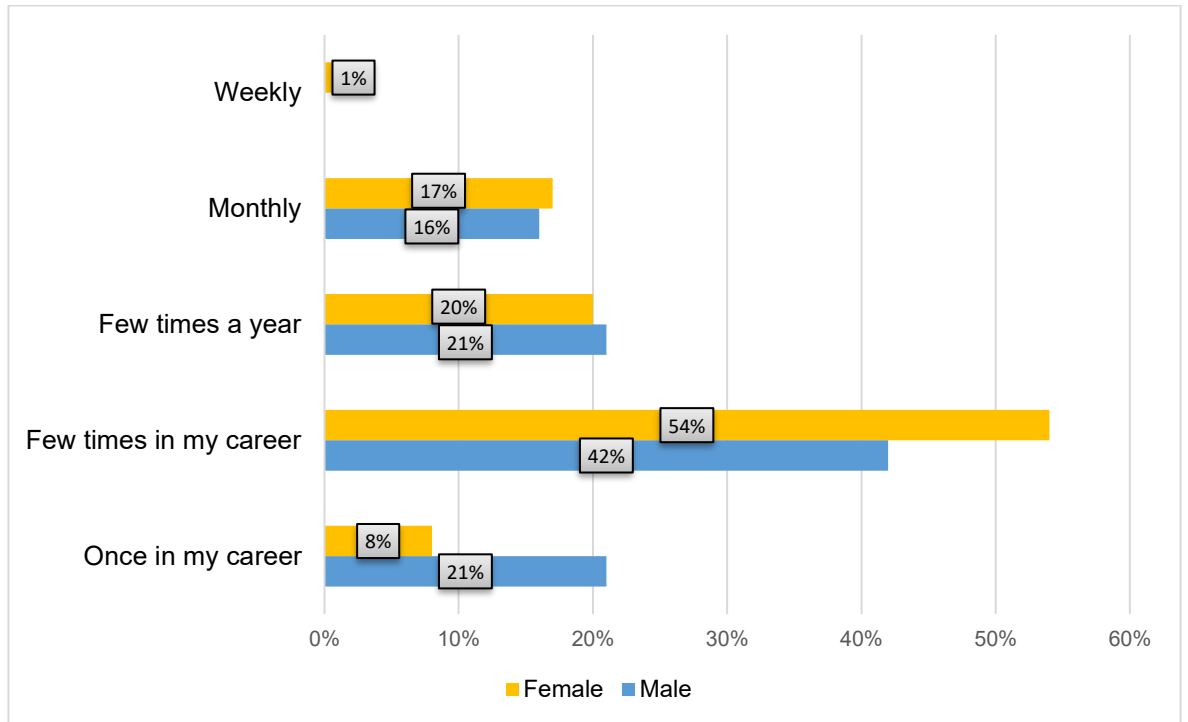


Figure 7: Frequency of experienced sexual harassment, comparison female vs. male (n = 137)

## 5.6 Q6: By whom were you harassed?

This question was a multiple-choice question and participants could select several answers. Out of five possible answers regarding perpetrators, 242 answers were selected by 118 women and 19 men (n = 137).

Harassment by passengers was common for both genders: 89 % of women were harassed by passengers and the number was even higher for men (96 %). When it came to internal company harassment, exposure to sexual harassment by cockpit crew was high: 71 of 118 women were harassed by pilots and first officers, which corresponds a total of 60 %. Harassment committed by cabin crew was significantly higher among men (32 %), compared to 24 % against women. 'Other' (3 %) included for example harassment from "strangers when heading to work" and "strangers at gym (layover)".

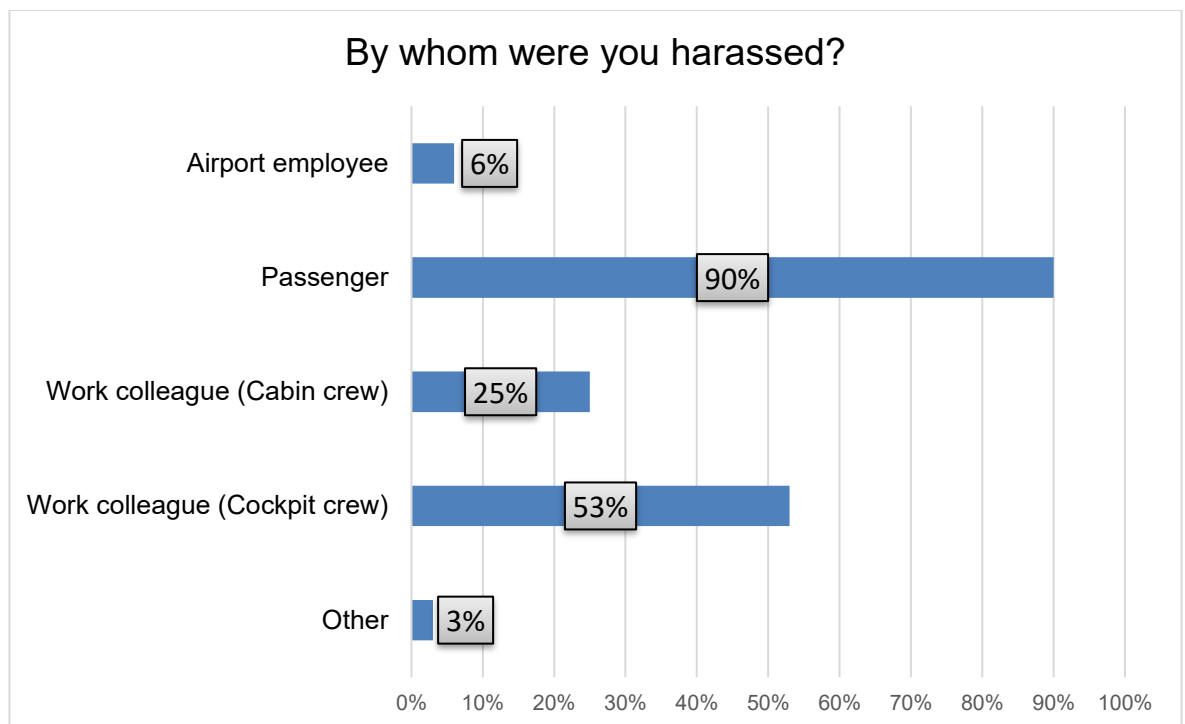


Figure 8: Perpetrators of sexual harassment (n = 137)

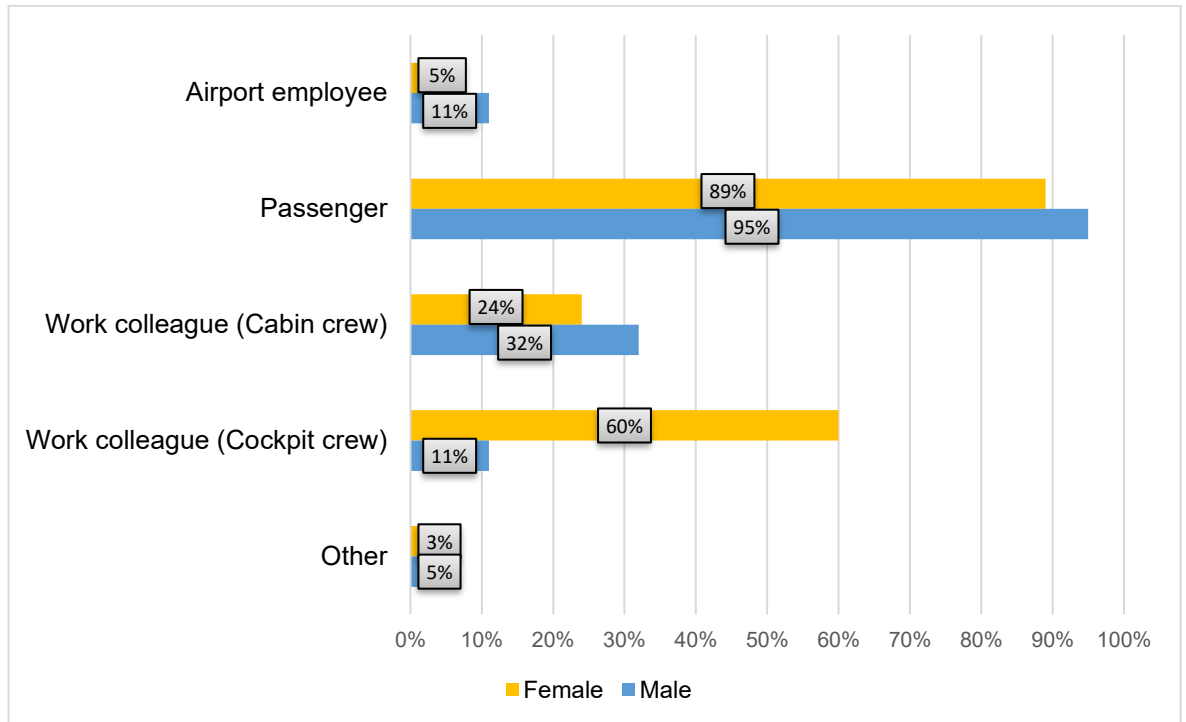


Figure 9: Perpetrators of sexual harassment, comparison female vs. male (n = 137)

Table 1: Perpetrators of sexual harassment, multiple-choice answer distribution, female vs. male (n = 137)

	<b>Female</b> (n = 118)	% =	<b>Male</b> (n = 19)	% =	Total
Airport employee	6	5.1 %	2	10.5 %	8
Passenger	105	89 %	18	94.7 %	123
Work colleague (Cabin crew)	28	23.7 %	6	31.6 %	34
Work colleague (Cockpit crew)	71	60.2 %	2	10.5 %	73
Other	3	2.5 %	1	5.3 %	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>		<b>29</b>		<b>242</b>

### 5.7 Q7: What type of sexual harassment have you experienced?

When it came to experienced types of sexual harassment, the three most common types, non-verbal, verbal and physical, were chosen 309 times by 136 participants in the multiple-choice format. Verbal sexual harassment (offensive words, jokes, unwanted proposals, text messages etc.) was most frequently reported (87 %). Verbal harassment was much higher among women (91%) than men (58 %), thus, almost every woman reported about verbal sexual harassment at work (107 out of 117). Physical harassment (unwanted

touching, patting, physical assault and aggression etc.) was also alarmingly high, both for men and women. Physical harassment (69 %) was reported just as often as non-verbal harassment (leering, winking, suggestive gestures and expressions etc.) with 68 %. At 'other', several photographic activities such as "filming videos under the skirt" were mentioned. Stalking and unwanted contacting via social media was also reported.

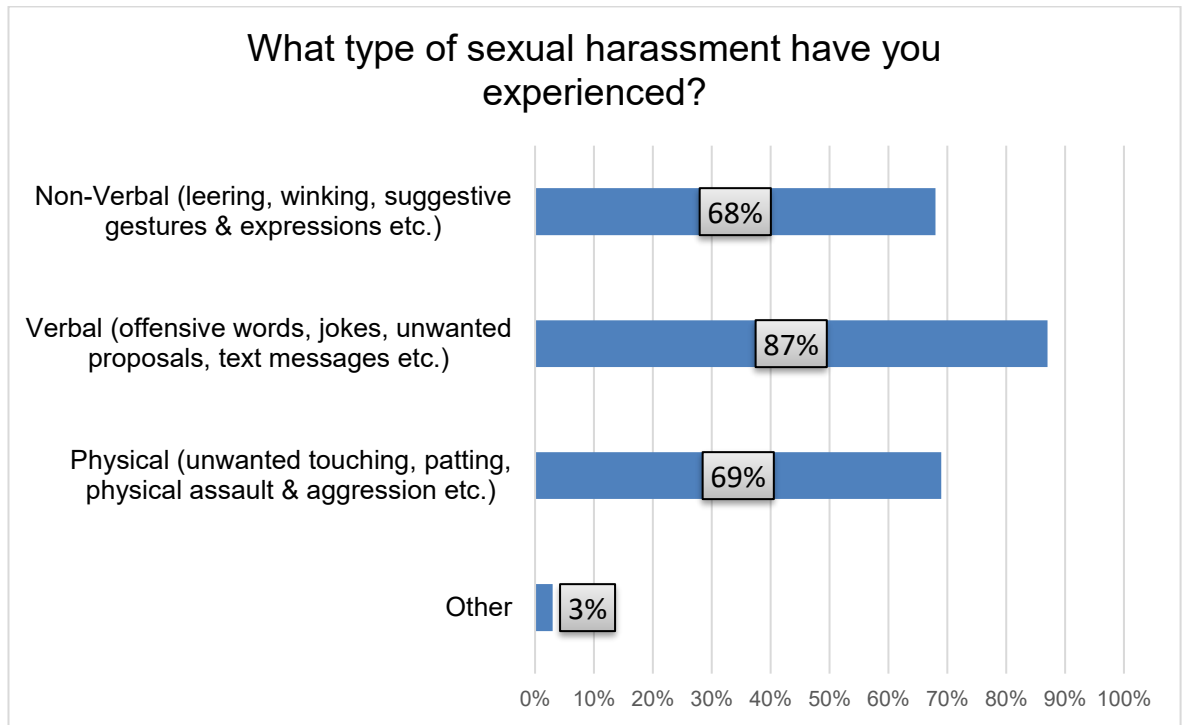


Figure 10: Experienced types of sexual harassment (n = 136)

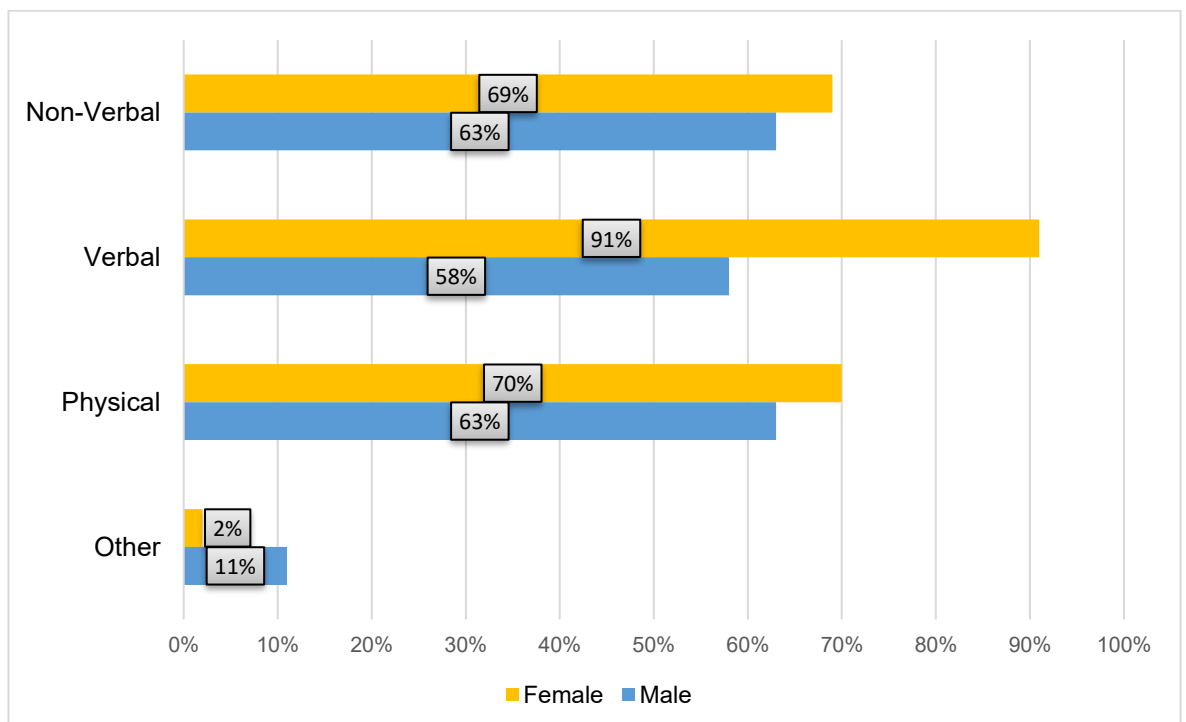


Figure 11: Experienced types of sexual harassment, comparison female vs. male (n = 136)

Table 2: Experienced types of sexual harassment, multiple-choice answer distribution, female vs. male (n = 136)

	<b>Female</b> (n = 117)	% =	<b>Male</b> (n = 19)	% =	Total
Non-Verbal	81	69.2 %	12	63.2 %	93
Verbal	107	91.5 %	11	57.9 %	118
Physical	82	70.1 %	12	63.2 %	94
Other	2	1.7 %	2	10.5 %	4
Total	272		37		309

### 5.8 Q8: Your position during time of sexual harassment?

The work position seemed to be an important factor in connection to sexual harassment as 87 out of 137 harassed participants were not in a leadership position at work while sexual harassment occurred. This underlined the fact that harassment is more common among non-leaders. Among men, we saw a clear tendency that practically only cabin crew and not cabin chiefs were harassed. Of the 19 harassed male participants, only two were cabin chiefs and four were confronted with sexual harassment in dual roles.

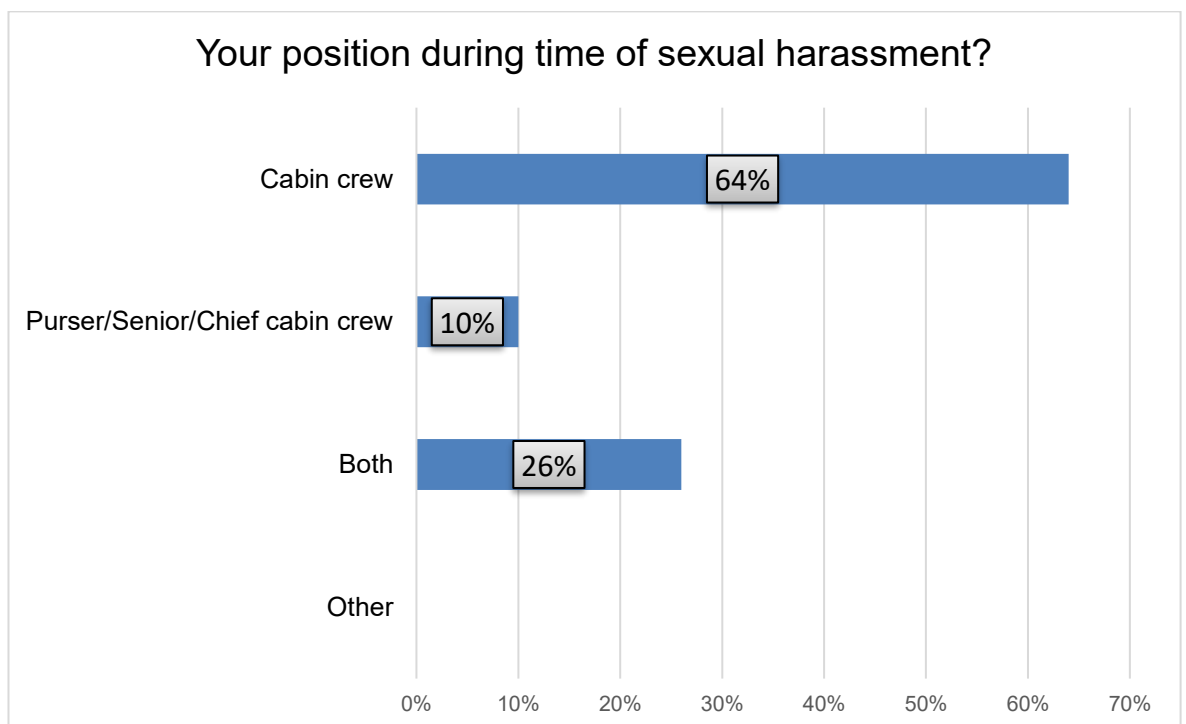


Figure 12: Participant's work position during time of sexual harassment (n = 137)

### 5.9 Q9: Location of crew base while harassment occurred

This question worked again as a multiple-choice question and resulted 185 answers from 137 participants. Northern Europe reached with 110 answers a clear majority in selected answers (80%). In this particular question regarding the location of the crew base during the harassments, the author was interested in possible cultural and geopolitical influence.

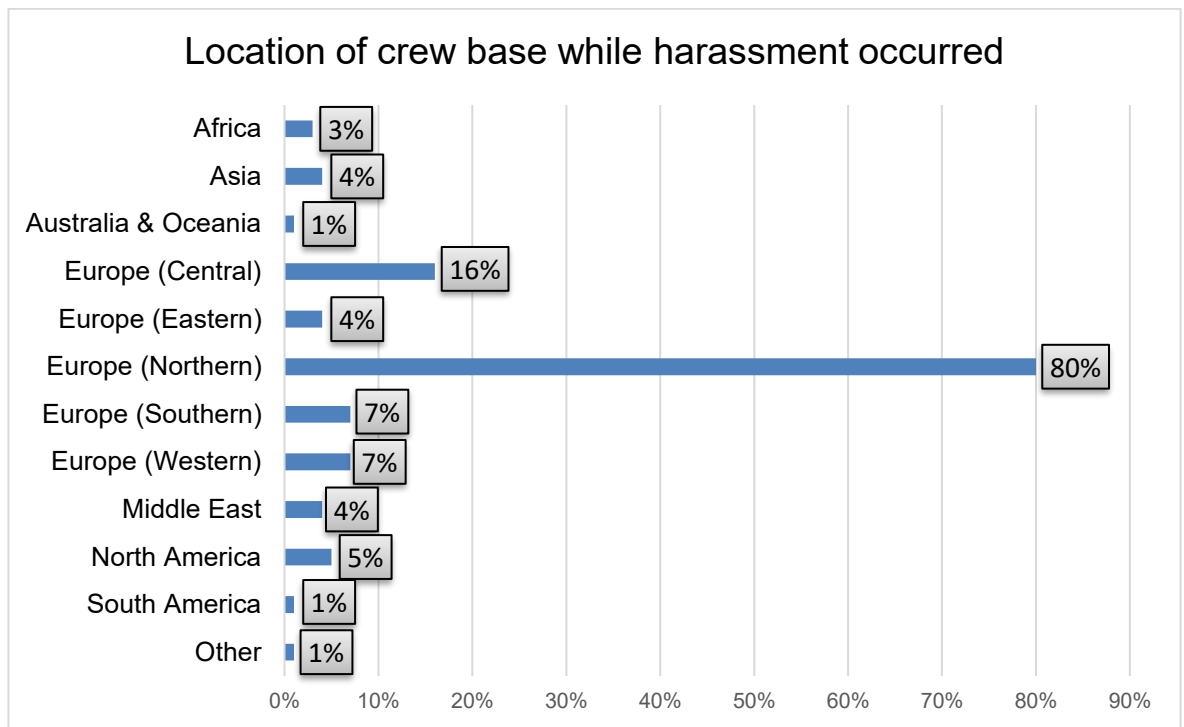


Figure 13: Participant's location of crew base while harassment occurred (n = 137)

Table 3: Participant's location of crew base while harassment occurred, multiple-choice answer distribution, female vs. male (n = 137)

	Female (n = 118)	% =	Male (n = 19)	% =	Total
Africa	3	2.5 %	1	5.3 %	4
Asia	5	4.2 %	1	5.3 %	6
Australia & Oceania	1	0.8 %	0	0.0 %	1
Europe (Central)	19	16.1 %	3	15.8 %	22
Europe (Eastern)	5	4.2 %	1	5.3 %	6
Europe (Northern)	94	79.7 %	16	84.2 %	110
Europe (Southern)	7	5.9 %	3	15.8 %	10
Europe (Western)	9	7.6 %	1	5.3 %	10
Middle East	6	5.1 %	0	0.0 %	6
North America	6	5.1 %	1	5.3 %	7

South America	2	1.7 %	0	0.0 %	2
Other	1	0.8 %	0	0.0 %	1
Total	158		27		185

**5.10 Q10: Have you reported the incident/s?**

The next question revealed that a large portion of those harassed, left the attacks unreported. Of the 137 participants, only 18 reported harassment (13 %). Among women, only 14 out of 104, reported the harassment. Among men, the activity in reporting was almost as low: 15 out of 19 left the incidents unreported.

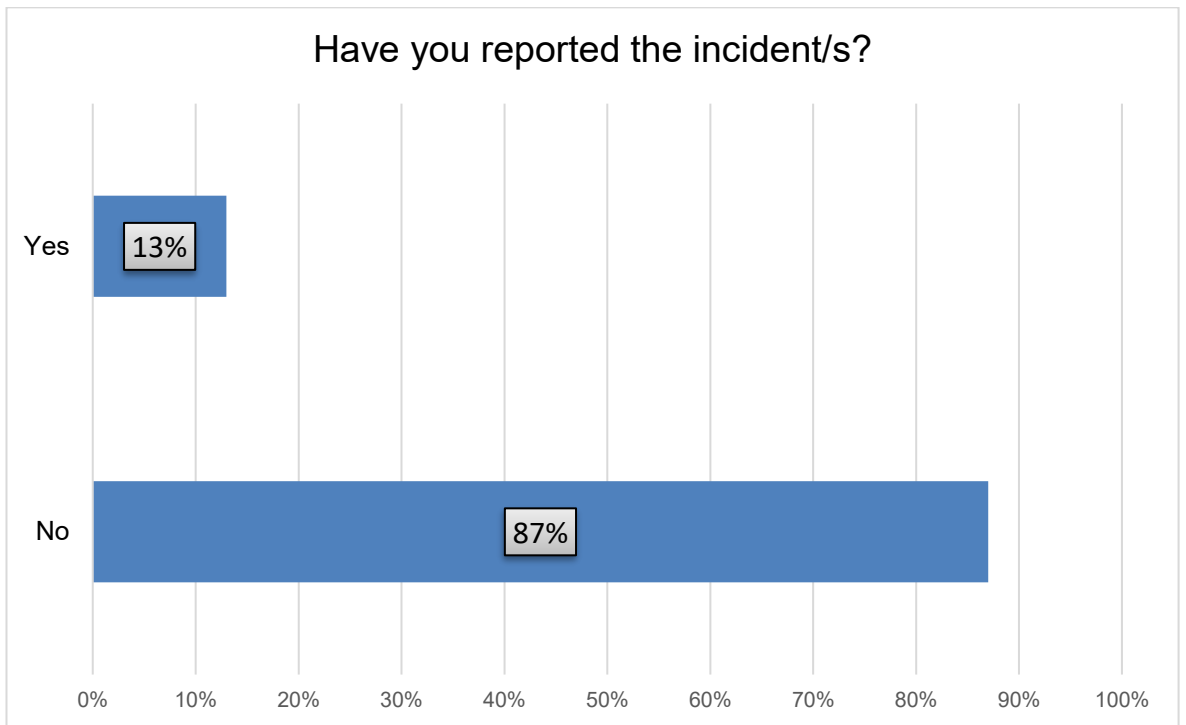


Figure 14: Participant's reporting sexual harassment (n = 137)

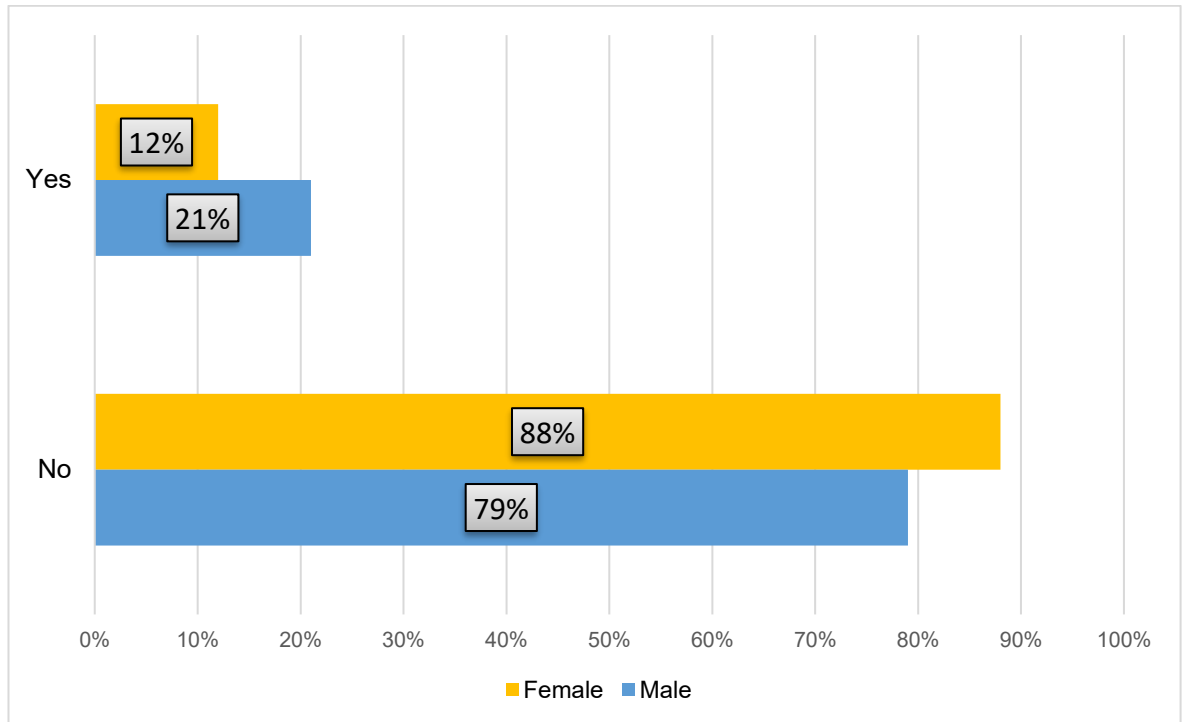


Figure 15: Participant's reporting sexual harassment, comparison female vs. male (n = 137)

### 5.11 Q11: What was the reason for not reporting?

The large number of participants who had not reported sexual harassment were asked for the reason in an open question (n = 119). Answering was not mandatory and 91 of those surveyed answered (76 %). Many of those who responded, did not really know the reason for not reporting. Some did not see reporting as necessary, others blamed their young age. Reporting felt as well too time consuming and complicated. Comments that reporting would not help and would not change anything, were also mentioned. Fear, shame, shock and additional challenges a report could bring also prevented participants from reporting. Few of the comments are listed below, a larger portion of the open answers are found in appendix 2.

Table 4: Participant's reasons for not reporting sexual harassment (n = 91)

"I was too scared for consequences and just hoped that I will never see this person again"
"I feel that nothing will ever be done to address these incidents. Also reporting is very complicated and time consuming"
"Fear of losing job or that no one would have believed me"
"The reporting system is too difficult to use. Harassment is so normal nowadays, you have not the energy to report everything monthly"

“When it was my supervisor, I just froze. It was an older male cabin chief and he just kept following me and coming way too close. I was new and young, was not sure what to do and for some reason the cockpit felt too far away. I still hope I would have reported it but I think they have retired already”

### 5.12 Q12: Has the employer discussed the incident/s with you after reporting?

Only half of those who reported sexual harassment were contacted by their employer (9 out of 19). Eight out of fourteen women were contacted while only one man out of six was contacted after reporting. Reports on sexual harassment against women were clearly investigated further by employers than reports involving men. 79 % of those who had not reported the incidents replied with the ‘no report was made’ option.

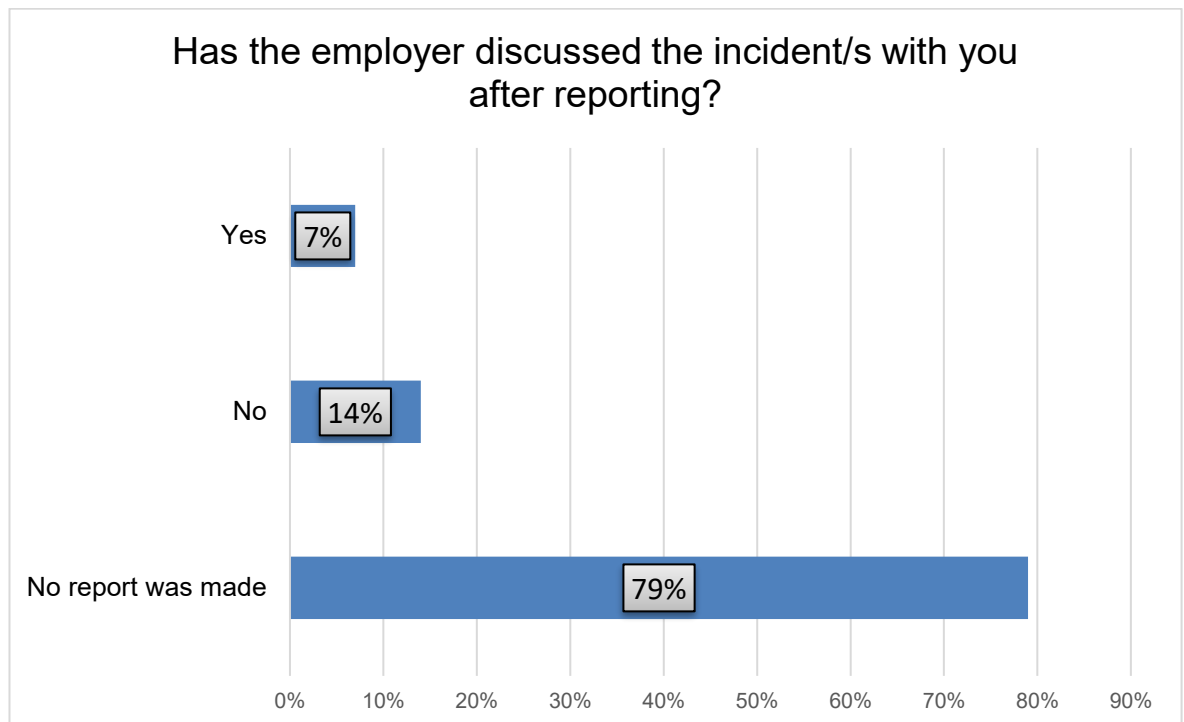


Figure 16: Discussion from employer side after reporting sexual harassment (n = 136)

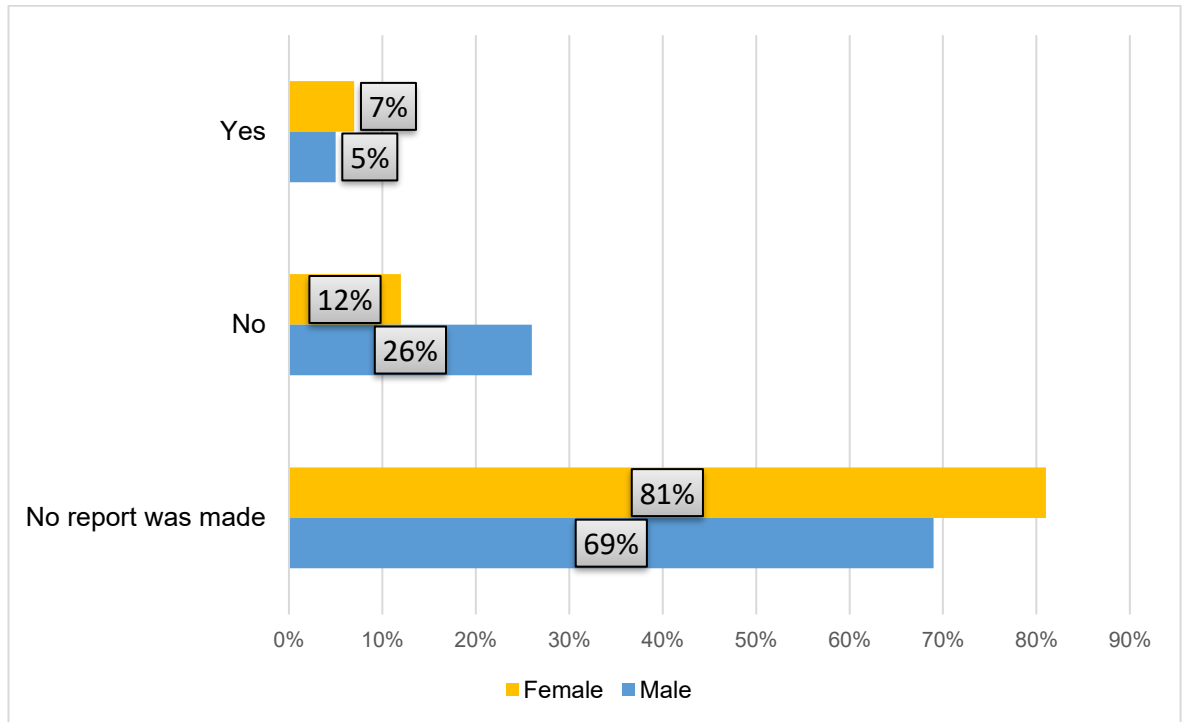


Figure 17: Discussion from employer side after reporting sexual harassment, comparison female vs. male (n = 136)

### 5.13 Q13: Do you think your employer/past employer has sufficient reporting tools in case sexual harassment occurs?

From this question onwards, everyone involved in the survey (n = 201), including participants who did not have personally experienced sexual harassment, answered. 44 % (n = 66) of those surveyed believed that their employer has sufficient reporting tools in case sexual harassment occurs (61 % men vs. 40 % women). A quarter of all participants (n = 49) thought the opposite. 29 % of participants do not know (n = 59) and 3 % do not want to reveal their opinion.

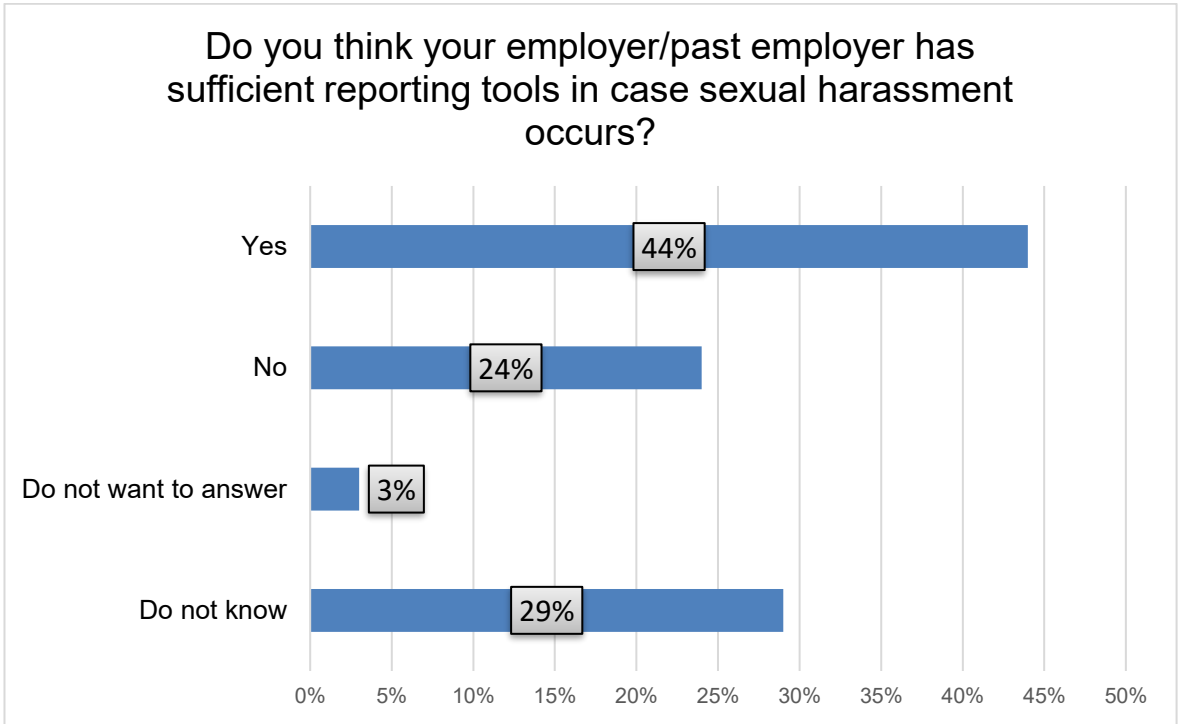


Figure 18: Availability of sufficient reporting tools to report sexual harassment (n = 201)

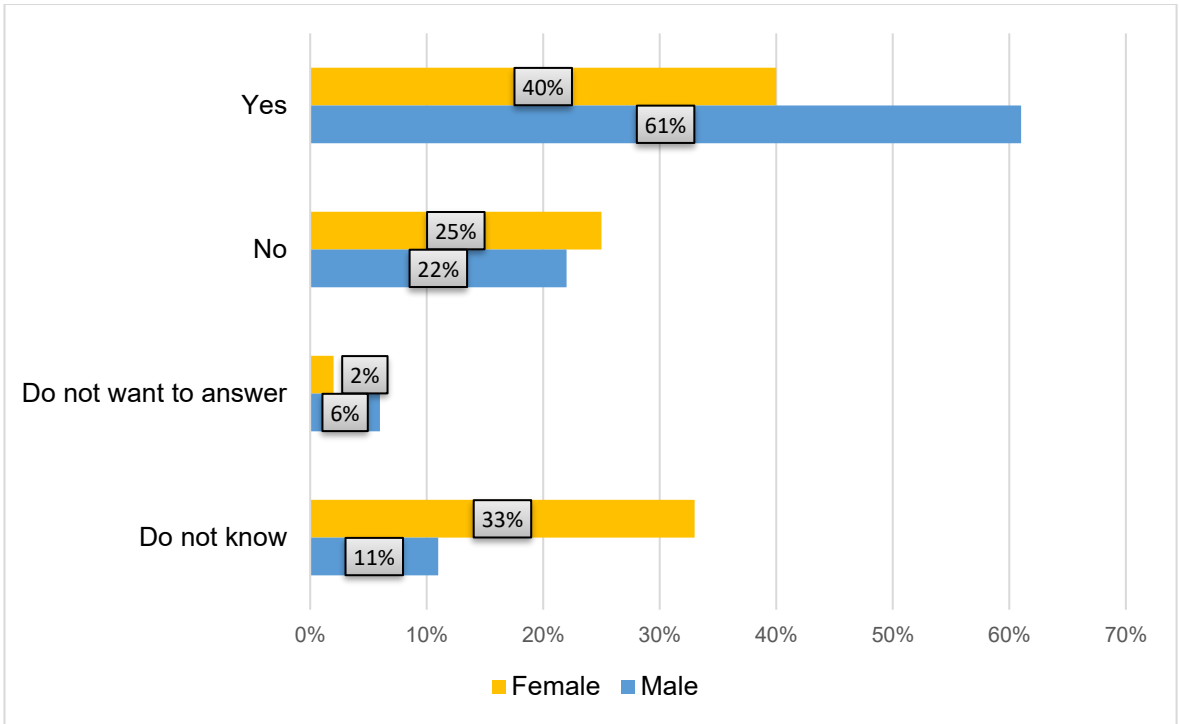


Figure 19: Availability of sufficient reporting tools to report sexual harassment, comparison female vs. male (n = 201)

**5.14 Q14: Have you witnessed sexual harassment towards colleagues?**

Half of the participants witnessed sexual harassment towards work colleagues. When compared between women and men, the difference was larger: Women noticed more harassment against work colleagues (52 %), while men observed 44 %.

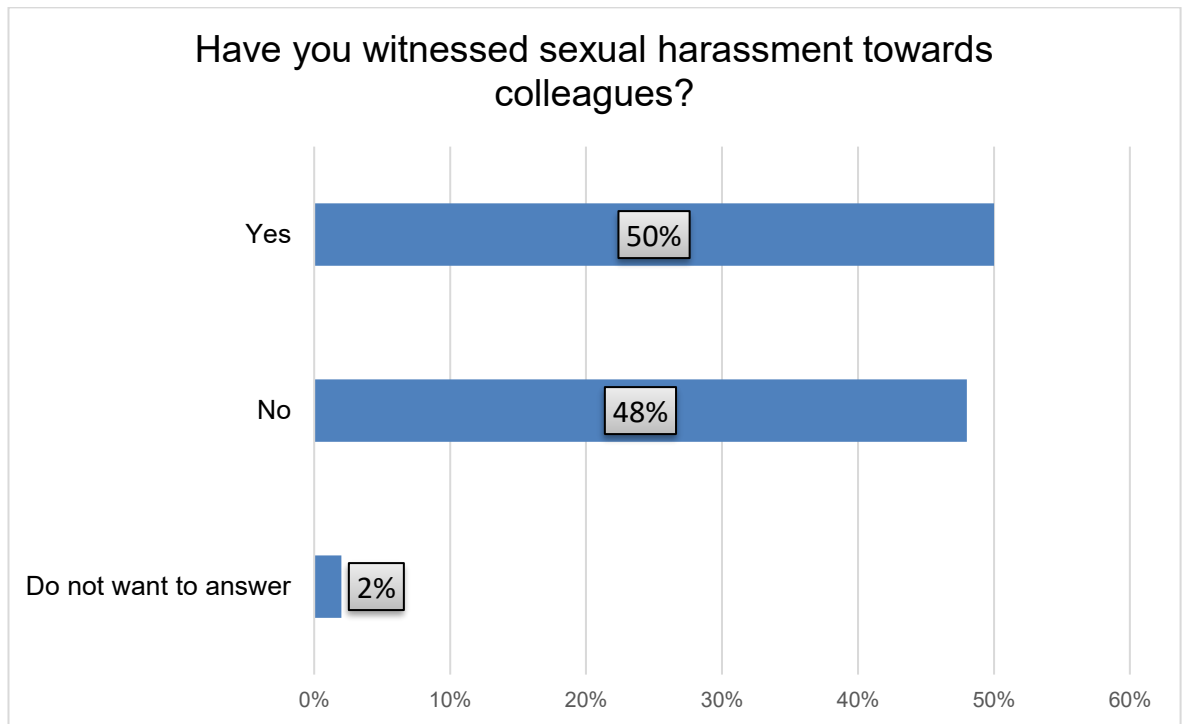


Figure 20: Evidence of sexual harassment towards work colleagues (n = 201)

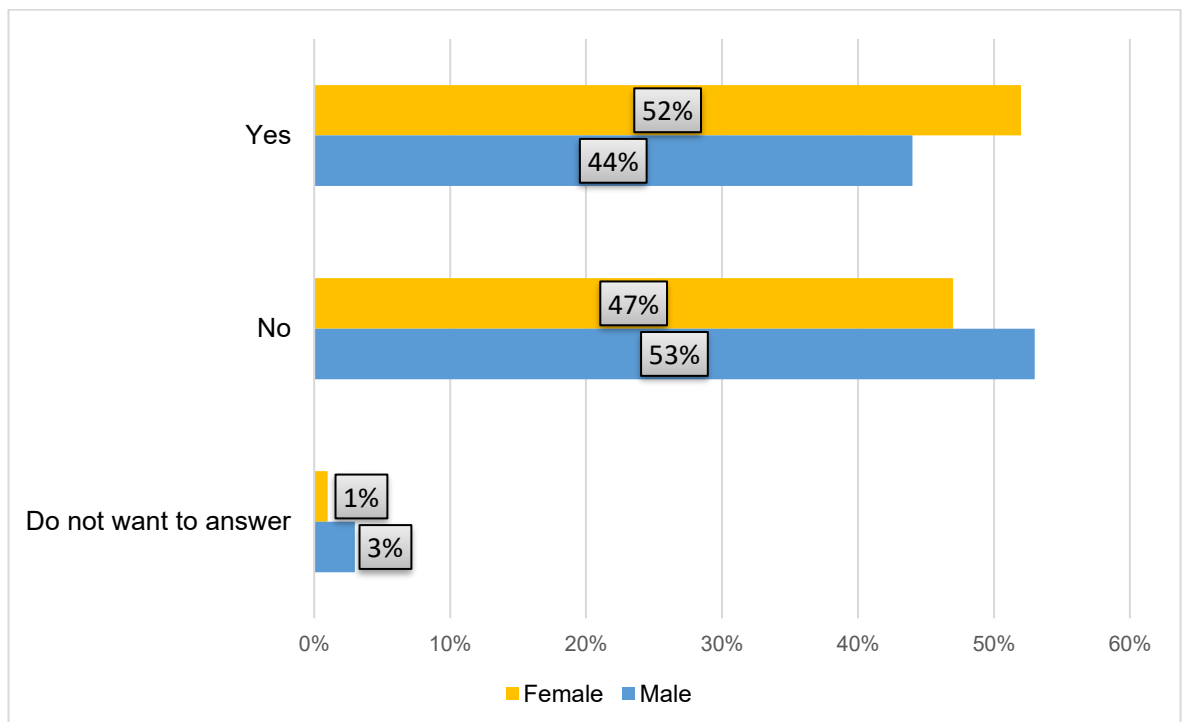


Figure 21: Evidence of sexual harassment towards work colleagues, comparison female vs. male (n = 201)

### 5.15 Q15: Personal reflection on experienced sexual harassment

Participants were asked in an open question about own reflections on experienced sexual harassment. 28 % of all participants answered this optional question. Some comments are listed below, large number of open answers are found in Appendix 3.

Table 5: Participant's reflections on experienced sexual harassment (n = 55)

"I got harassed several times by passengers non-verbally. In addition, a work colleague harassed me physically over a long period of time. After years, I finally reported the harassment"
"It is horrifying that you are not safe at work. It feels like if you like to take care of yourself and if you are friendly, talkative or laugh a lot, then you become an object to males and they do not take you seriously and think you like to be seen and then they give you wrong kind of attention. It makes me feel ashamed, I do not want to participate in any kind of out work activities, because pilots have made suggestions at Christmas parties etc."
"The situation can be really annoying when it involves passengers, but it was downright awful when it was someone from the flight crew perpetuating the harassment. That made me feel very uneasy and unsafe during work and off work on layoff with the perpetrator..."
"Sometimes I feel myself disgusting since anyone can harass me. And for non-physical harassment there is not much to do. For example winking and jokes..."

### 5.16 Q16: Thoughts or feedback on the subject

In the last question, which again was an open one and not obligatory to answer, participants were able to comment about the topic in general and leave feedback. 24 % of all participants responded to this question. Mostly the choice of the topic was praised and the importance of highlighting and talking about harassment against cabin crew was emphasized. Examples of feedback and thoughts from participants are listed below, majority of open answers are found in appendix 4.

Table 6: Participant's thoughts or feedback on the subject (n = 47)

"This is more common issue in aviation that people even realize. It happens daily and people are used to it"
"This is a delicate subject which has been somehow avoided in discussions. Everybody knows the existence but somehow it is tolerated too far and too deep. This kind of study will promote the topic and the importance!"

"Finally someone is talking about this! This subject is never talked about in training etc."

"Passengers are usually drunk, when they harass, but coworkers are not. Older generation pilots still think that they have the right to say very sexual comments towards cabin crew. Younger crew members specially in their early twenties do not say anything to these 50+ pilots, they are afraid. And this is in my eyes a big problem. Young girls are afraid of standing up for themselves and actually say no to these alfa-males"

"Important topic, good that you take it up into research! People do not talk about it enough. I have even heard about a rape inside a company that was not reported. This should not be the way it goes!"

## **6 Conclusion**

The last chapter works as a closure and will round up the report. This chapter includes an evaluation of research ethics, reliability and validity of the provided research study. In addition, final recommendations and reflections on anticipated results are discussed. The author will end this report with takeaways and reflections on own learning throughout the study.

### **6.1 Evaluation of research ethics, reliability and validity of study**

The study questionnaire was sensitive and had to follow a clear anonym implementation. Selected participants were all working in the field, understood the concept and were clearly educated on anonymity, purpose and aim of the study. Within the survey, different types of sexual harassment were explained and opened up with examples. This made the research even more reliable as participants had all the knowledge they needed before answering to any question. As every individual can experience sexual harassment differently, participants can perceive a sexual incident as flirting, others report the same issue as sexual harassment. This is understandable and was taken into account when conducting the survey. Important is that every individual is taken seriously, regardless on the fact what another individual thinks or feels. As a result, even though respondents reported sexual harassment, the author has not full proof if participants have witnessed or were exposed to sexual harassment or not. On the other hand, the result would be the same, regardless on the researcher. Therefore, we still have a reliable result as reliability is not dependent on the researcher.

### **6.2 Recommendations & final reflections**

The provided thesis study justified substantial suspicion on sexual confrontation against cabin crew. According to the study, 68 % of all those involved in the survey got sexually harassed. Women were in the majority with 72 %, men kept as well a high total of 53 %. The conducted study even surpasses the earlier analysed study by Węziak-Białowolska et al. (2020) with 61 % of reported sexual harassed cabin crew.

Few answers accumulated high percentages and could be addressed as a close up. We saw extremely high ratios of passengers harassing crew (95 %) and high company internal sexual harassment, especially from flight deck crew against female cabin crew (60 %). All types of sexual harassment were reported extremely high. One frightening aspect was the number of around 70 % reporting physical sexual abuse, which was obviously reported less than other types, however, should never reach such numbers. Verbal sexual

harassment against females with reported 91 % occurrence went as well beyond all imagination. This number includes rising amount of verbal sexual harassment done via electronic channels like social media towards cabin crew. What surprises most, is the high result of 87 % of cabin crew not reporting sexual harassment due to several reasons.

According to results, companies may not offer enough reliable and easy to use channels to report sexual harassment. Another theory is not necessarily lack of mandatory reporting systems, more the challenge for employees in dealing and getting adequate support after occurrence of sexual harassment. The existence of poor company managemental competencies by often not properly educated HR-managements could be also the problem as brought up by participants in the survey. Another point could also be that companies offer reporting availabilities and send a clear message about not tolerating harassment, however, just not investigate or do enough and reporting feels therefore pointless for employees. The question where cabin crew were asked if the employer has sufficient reporting tools, split answers in all directions. This could be an indication that reporting and the subject in general is obviously not communicated clearly on behalf of companies as 65 % answered either 'no', 'do not know' or 'do not want to answer'. As well the growing harassment rate of men cabin crew exposed that not only women are confronted with sexual harassment as mainly believed in advance, but the challenge is also much broader than expected.

Also hierarchy still seems to be an obstacle for not reporting maltreatment. Cabin crew are still exposed to inappropriate behaviour from higher positioned colleagues, i.e. flight crew. As a result, this power of silence even verifies a culture of not reporting harassment and therefore not appropriately resolve the challenge with the topic. It is easy to notice that the industry has to face the challenge of sexual abuse against cabin crew way more seriously. As mentioned before, reporting mechanisms play a crucial and important role. The effectiveness of such functioning reporting mechanisms relies highly on its implementation and the willingness of stakeholders and airlines. Many open questions revealed that especially younger victims are clearly afraid from speaking up because of the possibility that they will not be believed, retaliated against, or damaged in terms of their reputation.

In general, majority of answers revealed that sexual harassment against cabin crew is definitely not only a myth, more an ugly reality in aviation. Even though, many respondents linked their open answers to 'back in the days', there is still enough evidence that sexual harassment is happening in wide dimensions and statistics underline this fact clearly. Cultural and geographical aspects to link wider occurrence or less reporting to certain parts of the world, was not found with this research as occurrence of sexual harassment was high in all parts and reporting almost not existing throughout all regions. In order to get more

depth in the subject, the study should be widened up and would need a wider audience from outside the Nordics to underline other aspects.

The high number of passengers harassing crew also confirmed the challenging work environment for cabin crew examined in the theoretical part. The small working space used for prolonged time with hundreds of travellers, part of them even intoxicated, revealed that the working environment and atmosphere even feeds sexual harassment. Nonetheless, the topic is challenging and could easily be explained with a hard-to-solve-problem with its wide dimension, the employer has still to do the very outermost to find solutions to protect their employees. Open answers from the survey, gave a clear intention that companies communicate with a clear message on non-acceptance of sexual harassment. This, however, brought up a question mark and is in conflict with findings of an almost non-reporting culture on sexual harassment in the industry. Why do victims not see any help of reporting, while airlines claim that harassment is not tolerated and help is given? This statement should clearly back up employees to act against sexual abuse and reporting it. We see the completely opposite.

The author strongly believes that reporting processes across airlines are not protecting employees enough. Companies need to create noticeable, convenient, and confidential ways of filing sexual harassment complaints. Reporting channels should be easy to use, handled with priority and should always protect the employee. In smaller airlines for example, clear anonymity is hard to give as the word, gossip and rumour is spreading fast. Victims do not want to get the attention with this highly sensitive topic and therefore try to deal with it themselves. This, on the other hand, gives perpetrators a clear sign that harassment is somehow tolerated. Analysing this behaviour, expose a new aspect to the challenge. Why are airlines waiting for reports do achieve change? The aim for airlines should be finding solutions to prevent harassment from occurring and tackle the issue even before sexual assault is happening. Hence, companies should re-evaluate established rules and standards newly and significantly develop a better culture of respect with propriety on the safety for their employees. Stakeholders should provide a clear code of conduct that explicitly establishes what is and what is not accepted by stipulating punitive actions. Only implementation of the right organizational culture in the presence of ethical leadership can reduce the rate of harassment effectively. In order to achieve and creating a psychologically safe working environment for cabin crew, airlines should as well consider the professional leadership aspect in their organisation. Supervisors and HR-management dealing with issues of sexual harassment should be trained accordingly.

Flight crew, both flight deck and cabin, basic training should as well include psychological training over sexual harassment. Topics around protection against sexual harassment and

reporting should therefore be included in yearly recurrent training for flight crew. Until today, cabin crew must mostly develop psychological skills and methods in order to succeed with sexual harassment themselves. It is the employers' responsibility to give cabin crew right tools and knowledge how to act when harassment occurs and on how to report abuse. Stakeholders should keep in mind that newcomers, mainly younger cabin crew, are way more vulnerable and extremely exposed to sexual harassment. Airlines cannot train passengers to act accordingly, however, can give their employees right tools and knowledge to prevent or manage with the situation. Sexual harassment happening 'in-house' from work colleagues on the other hand, should be addressed seriously and smothered with immediate actions from the employer side. Compared to sexual assault done by passengers, organisations should state values and ethics clearly, thus, not only by introducing a zero-tolerance policy, also act against violation done by perpetrators inside the company in appropriate manner as cited. In the end, stakeholders should keep in mind that work cultures need to be supportive and caring as this is the only way to create trust and protect employees. Through the following rules and principles, the aviation business may improve qualitatively in avoiding misconduct.

### **6.3 Key takeaways & own learning**

The early beginning of the work process was challenging, however, positive feedback from people around and appreciation for doing research on an important subject helped to find even more motivation. All in all, the work progress was ascending throughout the whole study and time management worked well. Hence, the work was finalized successfully on time. The author had experienced several semester projects similar to thesis research and therefore the process of thesis writing did not bring up unexpected challenges. However, when working on a study individually, the researcher cannot rely on other participants. Thus, the author gained for sure further knowledge in planning and in working individually on a bigger entity. Especially the implementation of a survey questionnaire was never done by the author before. As a result, the successful implementation initiated new learning progress and development. When analysing the study critically, partly missing literature on the topic could be seen as one main negative aspect and gave, in the end, less theoretical insight on the subject. The outcome was therefore thinner than expected in advance. The author still believes that the research was implemented in good manner and is satisfied with the overall outcome. As the topic was sensitive, 201 questionnaire participants can be seen as a sufficient amount, thus, the surveyed number of participants represent a clear voice and gave depth and reliability to the subject. The author achieved in his opinion the objectives with this study as results clearly underline the presence of the phenomenon and the challenge of sexual harassment in all its ways in the industry. Sev-

eral changes in training and reporting are seen as main improving tools for airlines to reduce and prevent sexual harassment. The research on sexual harassment against cabin crew in aviation revealed in overall the conclusion, that cabin crew are confronted with sexual harassment way too often at the workplace. As a result, the industry should immediately take a more comprehensive and specific approach in fighting the challenge.

The study can be seen in general as a good foundation and kind of a scratch on the surface. Hence, future research on the topic is highly recommended. A worldwide wider audience with broader research possibilities and resources, co-operation with other researchers or even collaboration with open-minded stakeholders, could achieve even more visibility in the future. Even though a study is reliable and reaches cogent results, an individual study from a student has obviously not the power to move mountains and will not impress airlines and stakeholders adequately. Therefore, a wider study on the subject could show an even broader picture of the ongoing phenomenon of sexual harassment and create substantial impact on the willingness of airlines to achieve change and in taking sexual abuse in the industry more seriously.

## References

- Acquadro Maran, D., Varetto, A., & Civilotti, C. 2022. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Consequences and Perceived Self-Efficacy in Women and Men Witnesses and Non-Witnesses. *Behavioral Sciences*, 12(9), 326. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs12090326>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- AGEMIAN LAW. 2021, January 18. Workplace Harassment in The Tech Industry (w/ 2020 Statistics). URL: <https://www.agemianlawgroup.com/articles/workplace-harassment-tech-industry-2020-statistics>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- AHRC. 2023. Guidelines for Complying with the Positive Duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). Australian Human Rights Commission. URL: <https://human-rights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/Guidelines%20for%20Complying%20with%20the%20Positive%20Duty%20%282023%29.pdf>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Aina-Pelemo, A. D., Oke, O. A., & Alade, I. T. 2021. Quid pro quo sexual harassment: Comparative study of its occurrences in selected institutions in South-West, Nigeria. *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 100031. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crbeha.2021.100031>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Arinder, J. A. 2020. Feminist Theory – Theoretical Models for Teaching and Research. Wsu.edu; Pressbooks. URL: <https://opentext.wsu.edu/theoreticalmodelsforteachingandresearch/chapter/feminist-theory/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Benya, F. F., Widnall, S. E., & Johnson, P. A. 2018. Job and Health Outcomes of Sexual Harassment and How Women Respond to Sexual Harassment. National Academies Press (US). URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519461/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Businesswire. 2023, July 25. International Aviation Organizations Condemn Workplace Harassment and Violence. URL: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230725876817/en/International-Aviation-Organizations-Condemn-Workplace-Harassment-and-Violence>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Cesario, B. 2020. Attitudes about Victims of Workplace Sexual Harassment Based on Sex. *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences*, p. 1, 100006. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crbeha.2020.100006>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

CHIRP. 2023. Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Victimization (BHDV) in Aviation. CHIRP. URL: <https://chirp.co.uk/aviation/bullying-bhdv-in-aviation/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Columbia University. 2021. History of Sexual Abuse and Harassment | Freedom and Citizenship. URL: <https://freedomandcitizenship.columbia.edu/gender-equality-history-2021>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Cyril, M. 2023, April 3. Which Industries Have the Most Sexual Harassment Reports? Workplace Fairness. URL: <https://www.workplacefairness.org/2023/04/03/which-industries-have-the-most-sexual-harassment-reports/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Equality and Human Rights Commission. 2020. Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work. URL: [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/sexual\\_harassment\\_and\\_harassment\\_at\\_work.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/sexual_harassment_and_harassment_at_work.pdf). Accessed 28 February 2024.

Feldman, S. 2022, November 28. These 4 Industries Have the Most Sexual Harassment Reports. Safer America. URL: <https://safer-america.com/industries-with-the-most-sexual-harassment-reports/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Froomkin, D. 1998. Washingtonpost.com: Jones v. Clinton Special Report. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/pjones/pjones.htm>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Gale, S., Mordukhovich, I., Newlan, S., & McNeely, E. 2018. The Impact of Verbal Abuse, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault at Work: An Investigation into the Health of Flight Attendants in the Harvard Flight Attendant Health Study. SSRN Electronic Journal. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3234856>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Gale, S., Mordukhovich, I., Newlan, S., & McNeely, E. 2019. The Impact of Workplace Harassment on Health in a Working Cohort. *Frontiers in Psychology*, p. 10. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01181>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

GC Magazine. 2020. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: A Global Challenge – GC Magazine. URL: <https://www.legal500.com/gc-magazine/feature/sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace-a-global-challenge/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

- Gekoski, A., Gray, J. M., Adler, J. R., & Horvath, M. A. H. 2017. The prevalence and nature of sexual harassment and assault against women and girls on public transport: an international review. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*, 3(1), 3–16. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1108/jcrpp-08-2016-0016>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Gross, T. 2021, September 28. Anita Hill Started a Conversation About Sexual Harassment. She's Not Done Yet. NPR. URL: <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/28/1040911313/anita-hill-belonging-sexual-harassment-conversation>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Heymann, J., Bose, B., Waisath, W., Raub, A., & McCormack, M. 2020. Legislative Approaches to Non-Discrimination at Work: A Comparative Analysis Across 13 Groups in 193 Countries. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1108/edi-10-2019-0259>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Hirsjärvi, S., Remes P., & Sajavaara P. 2013. *Tutki ja kirjoita*. Bookwell Oy. Porvoo.
- IATA. 2023. Introduction to the Airline Industry in a Changing World. URL: <https://www.iata.org/en/training/courses/airline-industry-introduction/talg50/en/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Kananen, J. 2015. *Opinnäytetyön kirjoittajan opas – Näin kirjoitan opinnäytetyön tai pro gradun alusta loppuun*. Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy – Juvenes Print. Jyväskylä.
- Kidder, R. 1999. A Conciliatory Approach to Workplace Harassment: Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth and Faragher v. City of Boca Raton. *Houston Law Review*, 36(4). URL: <https://houstonlawreview.org/article/4757-a-conciliatory-approach-to-workplace-harassment-burlington-industries-inc-v-ellerth-and-faragher-v-city-of-boca-raton>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Legal Information Institute. 2023. MERITOR SAVINGS BANK, FSB, Petitioner v. Mechelle VINSON et al. LII / Legal Information Institute. URL: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/477/57>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Loukaitou-Sideris, A., & Ceccato, V. 2021. Sexual Harassment on Transit: A Global, Comparative Examination. *Security Journal*. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-020-00271-1>. Accessed 28 February 2024.
- Mamaru, A., Getachew, K., & Mohammed, Y. 2015. Prevalence of Physical, Verbal and Nonverbal Sexual Harassments and Their Association with Psychological Distress among

Jimma University Female Students: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences*, 25(1), 29–38. URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4337076/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. 2019. Sexual Harassment - Prevention of Sexual Harassment. URL: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/svaw/harassment/explore/5prevention.htm>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

National Organization for Women. 2013, May 7. A Brief History of Sexual Harassment in the United States. National Organization for Women. URL: <https://now.org/blog/a-brief-history-of-sexual-harassment-in-the-united-states/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Park, J., & Hyun, S. S. 2021. Influence of Airline Cabin Crew Members' Rapport-Building Behaviors and Empathy Toward Colleagues on Team Performance, Organizational Atmosphere, and Irregularity. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(12), 6417. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18126417>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Siegel, R. 2003. A Short History of Sexual harassment. *Directions in Sexual Harassment Law*, Forthcoming Yale Press. URL: [https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Faculty/Siegel\\_IntroductionAShortHistoryOfSexualHarrasmentLaw.pdf](https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Faculty/Siegel_IntroductionAShortHistoryOfSexualHarrasmentLaw.pdf). Accessed 28 February 2024.

Timmerman, G., & Bajema, C. 2000. The Impact of Organisational Culture on Perceptions and Experiences of Sexual Harassment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 57(2), 188–205. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1999.1741>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Ukwandu, E., Ben-Farah, M. A., Hindy, H., Bures, M., Atkinson, R., Tachtatzis, C., Andonovic, I., & Bellekens, X. 2022. Cyber-Security Challenges in Aviation Industry: A Review of Current and Future Trends. *Information*, 13(3), 146. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/info13030146>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Vilkkä, H. 2007 *Tutki ja mittaa: määrällisen tutkimuksen perusteet*. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi. Helsinki.

University of Minnesota Human Rights Library. 2019. Sexual Harassment - What is Sexual Harassment? URL: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/svaw/harassment/explore/1whatis.htm>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

VEOHRC. 2024. Guideline: Preventing and Responding to Workplace Sexual Harassment - Complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. URL: <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/resources/sexual-harassment-guideline/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Wen, C. C. Y., Cherian, D., Schenker, M. T., & Jordan, A. S. 2023. Fatigue and Sleep in Airline Cabin Crew: A Scoping Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(3), 2652. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20032652>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Węziak-Białowolska, D., Białowolski, P., Mordukhovich, I., & McNeely, E. 2020. Work, Gender, and Sexual Harassment on the Frontlines of Commercial Travel: A Cross-Sectional Study of Flight Crew Well-Being. *The International Journal of Aerospace Psychology*, 30(3-4), 1–19. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24721840.2020.1796488>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

Worke, M. D., Koricha, Z. B., & Debelew, G. T. 2021. Perception and Experiences of Sexual Harassment Among Women Working in Hospitality Workplaces of Bahir Dar City, Northwest Ethiopia: a Qualitative Study. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1). URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11173-1>. Accessed 28 February 2024.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire body

#### Survey: Sexual harassment against cabin crew in aviation industry

I'm a Senior Cabin Crew Member working with a Northern European airline. Beside my work, I'm studying BBA in Aviation Business and currently writing my Bachelor's thesis. My individual research is about sexual harassment against cabin crew. According to studies, cabin crew face significant amount of sexual harassment on the job in its several ways during their career.

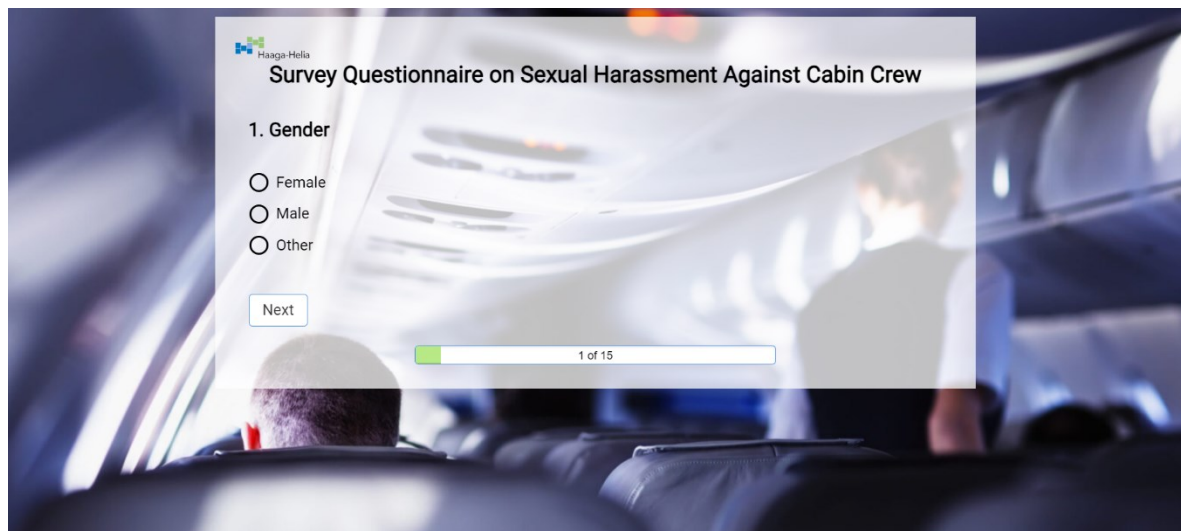
The aim of this study is to create identification on sexual harassment and open up discussion to a more supportive and transformative attitude on the subject. Identification of sexual confrontations is the key to a safer and more protected work environment for cabin crew.

Data collection is done through a survey research questionnaire for cabin crew on the link below. I highly appreciate if you take a few minutes of your time to answer the questionnaire. The survey is anonymous.

Thank you in advance and take care my beloved cabin crew community around the globe!

Regards,

Jonathan S.



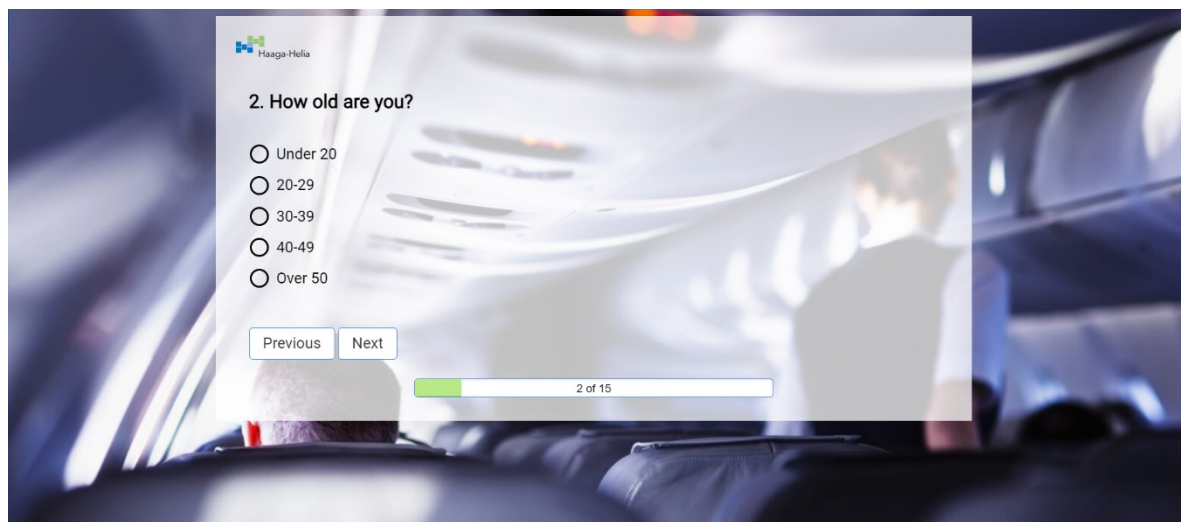
Haaga-Helia  
**Survey Questionnaire on Sexual Harassment Against Cabin Crew**

**1. Gender**

Female  
 Male  
 Other

Next

1 of 15



Haaga-Helia

**2. How old are you?**

Under 20  
 20-29  
 30-39  
 40-49  
 Over 50

Previous Next

2 of 15

Haaga-Helia

**3. Cabin crew work experience (in years)**

Under 1

1-3

3-5

5-10

10-20

Over 20

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

3 of 15

This screenshot shows a survey question titled "3. Cabin crew work experience (in years)". It features six radio button options: "Under 1", "1-3", "3-5", "5-10", "10-20", and "Over 20". Below the options are "Previous" and "Next" navigation buttons. A progress bar at the bottom indicates "3 of 15" questions completed. The background is a blurred image of an airplane cabin.

Haaga-Helia

**4. Have you experienced sexual harassment towards yourself in your career?**

Yes

No (if you choose this answer, you will be proceeded to question 13)

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

4 of 15

This screenshot shows a survey question titled "4. Have you experienced sexual harassment towards yourself in your career?". It features two radio button options: "Yes" and "No (if you choose this answer, you will be proceeded to question 13)". Below the options are "Previous" and "Next" navigation buttons. A progress bar at the bottom indicates "4 of 15" questions completed. The background is a blurred image of an airplane cabin.

Haaga-Helia

**5. How often have you experienced sexual harassment in your career?**

Weekly

Monthly

Few times a year

Few times in my career

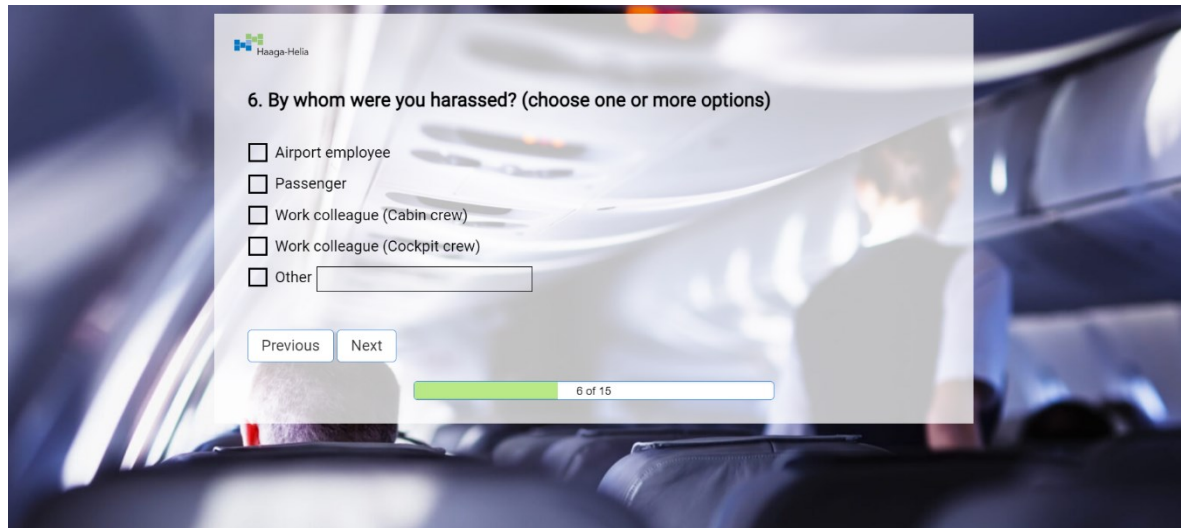
Once in my career

Other

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

5 of 15

This screenshot shows a survey question titled "5. How often have you experienced sexual harassment in your career?". It features six radio button options: "Weekly", "Monthly", "Few times a year", "Few times in my career", "Once in my career", and "Other". Below the options are "Previous" and "Next" navigation buttons. A progress bar at the bottom indicates "5 of 15" questions completed. The background is a blurred image of an airplane cabin.



Haaga-Helia

6. By whom were you harassed? (choose one or more options)

Airport employee

Passenger

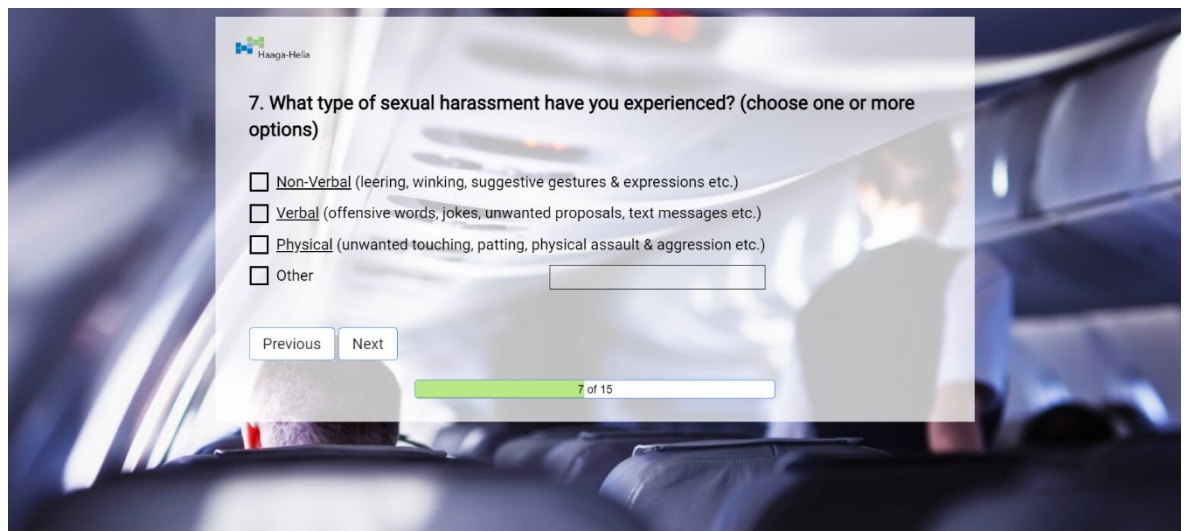
Work colleague (Cabin crew)

Work colleague (Cockpit crew)

Other

Previous Next

6 of 15



Haaga-Helia

7. What type of sexual harassment have you experienced? (choose one or more options)

Non-Verbal (leering, winking, suggestive gestures & expressions etc.)

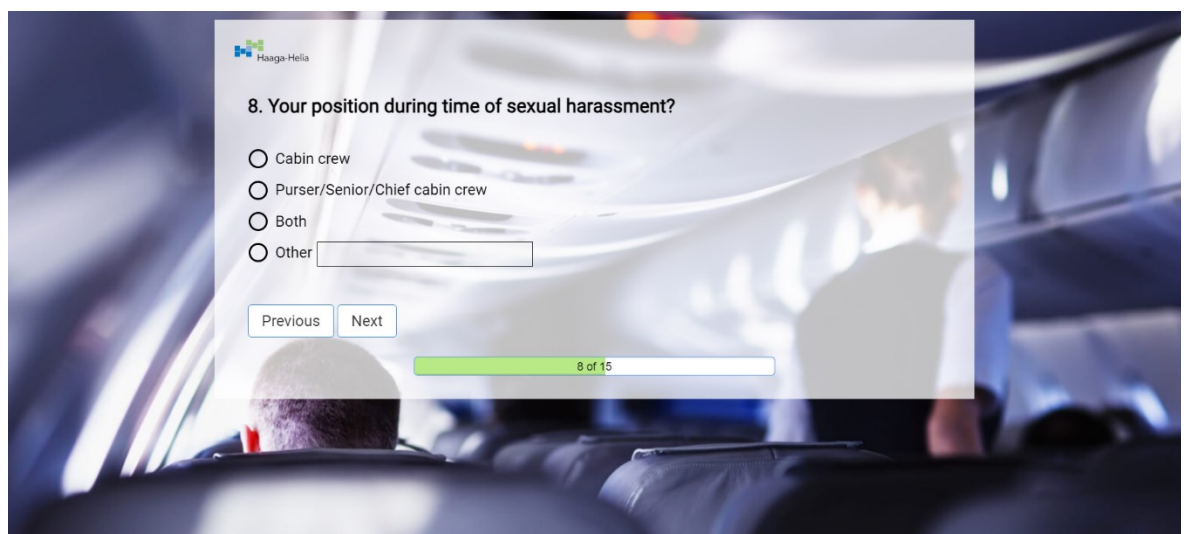
Verbal (offensive words, jokes, unwanted proposals, text messages etc.)

Physical (unwanted touching, patting, physical assault & aggression etc.)

Other

Previous Next

7 of 15



Haaga-Helia

8. Your position during time of sexual harassment?

Cabin crew

Purser/Senior/Chief cabin crew

Both

Other


Previous Next

8 of 15

**9. Location of crew base while harassment occurred (choose one or more options)**

- Africa
- Asia
- Australia & Oceania
- Europe (Central)
- Europe (Eastern)
- Europe (Northern)
- Europe (Southern)
- Europe (Western)
- Middle East
- North America
- South America
- Other

[Previous](#) [Next](#)


 **10. Have you reported the incident/s?**

Yes (if you choose this answer, you will be proceeded to question 12)

No

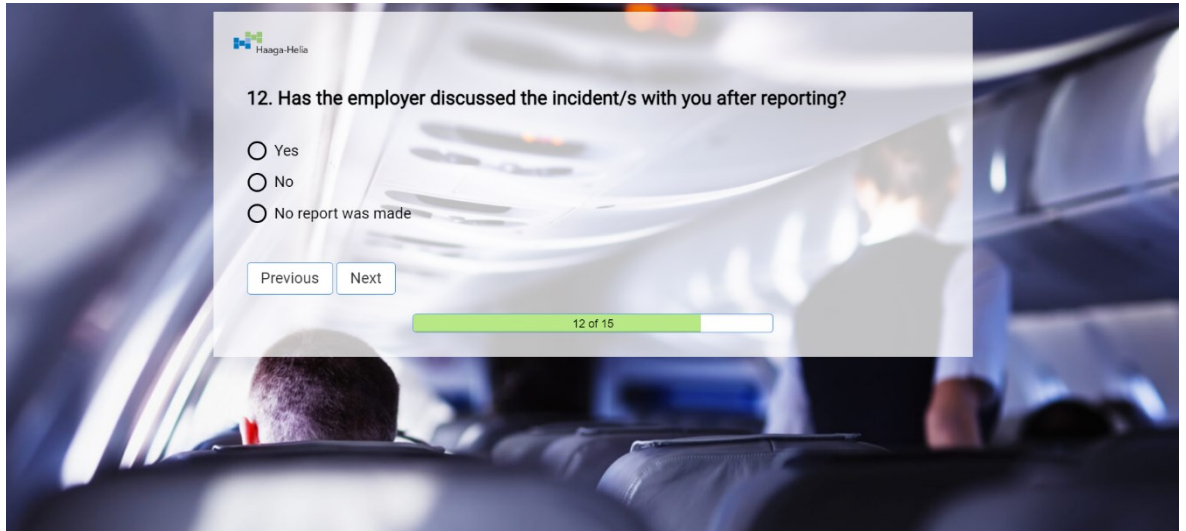
[Previous](#) [Next](#)

10 of 15

 **11. What was the reason for not reporting?**

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

11 of 15



Haaga-Helia

12. Has the employer discussed the incident/s with you after reporting?

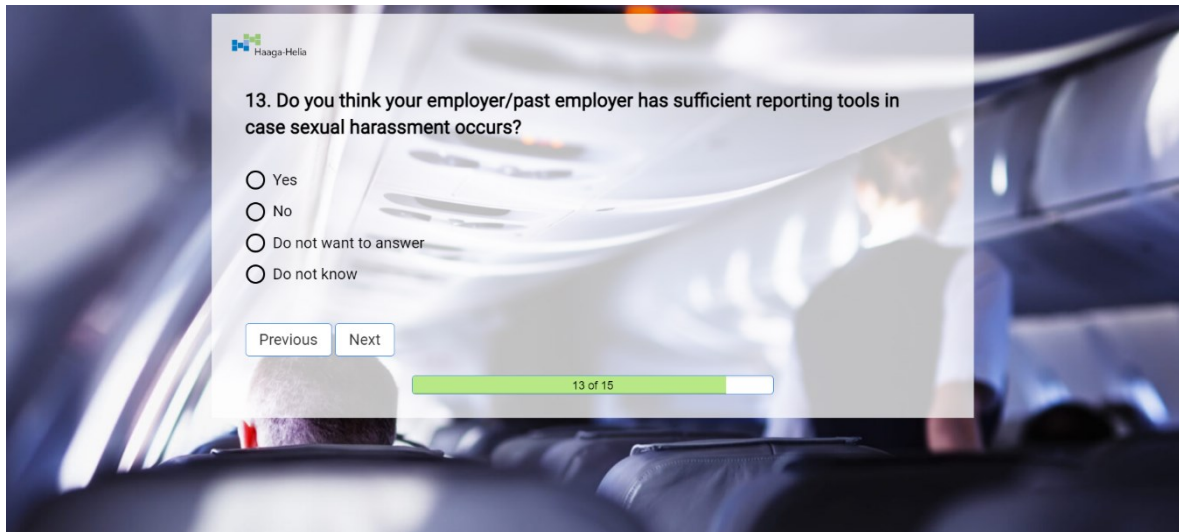
Yes

No

No report was made

Previous Next

12 of 15



Haaga-Helia

13. Do you think your employer/past employer has sufficient reporting tools in case sexual harassment occurs?

Yes

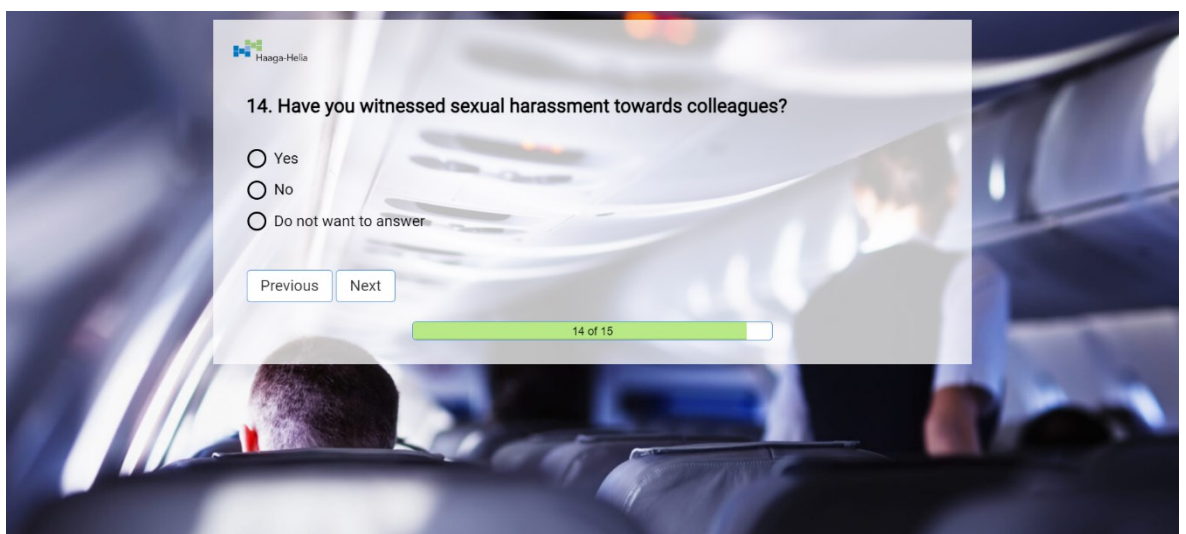
No

Do not want to answer

Do not know

Previous Next

13 of 15



Haaga-Helia

14. Have you witnessed sexual harassment towards colleagues?

Yes

No

Do not want to answer

Previous Next

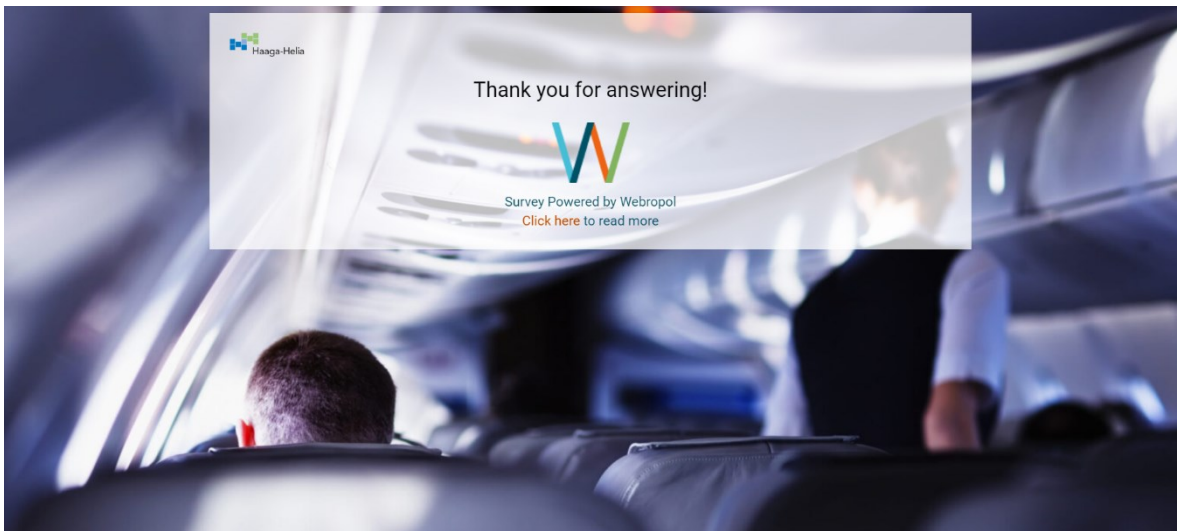
14 of 15

15. Personal reflection on experienced sexual harassment (optional)

16. Thoughts or feedback on the subject (optional)

Previous Submit

16 of 15



## Appendix 2. Answers from Q11: What was the reason for not reporting?

"I dealt with it myself"
"Did not know where to report and did not have time to do reports on my free time"
"Did not seem like harassment at the time"
"Being ashamed, thinking that I may have overreacted, trying to think it was just a joke"
"This was in my early years of career, 10-15 years ago. The topic was not so much discussed at the time, I did not even think about the option of reporting"
"At the time it was not discussed much, as I was a newbie I thought I would be in trouble"
"Took it as a joke, handled it as a joke"
"I was too scared for consequences and just hoped that I will never see this person again"
"It would not change anything"
"With my experiences on verbal and non-verbal harassment, I have taken a stance and asked them to either stop, respect my space, or said that their comment was unnecessary and made me uncomfortable. Often, they apologize and not do it again so I have just viewed them as ignorant idiots. Hoping they understand better when they have been talked back to. But when they just laugh it off and do not take me seriously is infuriating, but as it does not happen again during the flight I do not report. I often only converse with colleagues about it. I feel like the comments I have experienced are very mild compared to others so I do not bring it up. They are just idiots who get carried away on a flight to their holiday"
"I did not think that it was worth reporting"
"I feel that nothing will ever be done to address these incidents. Also reporting is very complicated and time consuming"
"Did not think it was so serious and I forgot about it after a while"
"No specific reason"
"Did not even think about it anymore"
"It was difficult to keep track on the situations when working multiple sectors for the day and something happened on the first one"
"If it was just non-verbal and not persistent harassment, then it was not reported unless I had the time straight away after the work day and it happened outside the aircraft (unlikely). However, there were times of unwarranted attention from flight crew when travelling home on shared taxi service which was reported right away"
"It felt like too much of a hassle and I did not feel that reporting would be any help (although now when I think of it, it would have been good to report in order to raise awareness of these kinds of things happening)"

"Embarrassment and the position of the colleague being a purser or base manager"
"It seems that it is so normal nowadays, especially with non-verbal harassment. The profession of cabin crew is somehow so objective and people relate it somehow as a sexual context"
"Shock and fear of causing problems to the person"
"I did not think it was that serious I should report it"
"I do not think anything would have been done against that person. I just handled it myself saying to myself that person was a pig"
"Maybe at the time I thought it was enough to just talk to the passenger and let them know their behaviour was not okay."
"The first time, I did not know I should make a report. Other times I did not think it was that serious though uncomfortable"
This kind of behaviour was considered normal male behaviour back in the day, as so called "boys are boys". It is same outside work and also very hard to draw a line what is appropriate or inappropriate/ flirting versus harassment. In other words, nothing too serious had never happened I could not handle"
"I only wanted to forget the whole thing"
I have no idea. Maybe I did not report because these cases have happened so fast and I did not care about them because they were made by an intoxicated passenger. I was also very young at the time"
"It was kind of harmless joking"
"I handled the situation with the passenger on spot and notified the passenger in an assertive and firm way that it is not okay to do so"
"Young age and ignorance of my own boundaries"
"I do not want people to dislike me for reporting it"
"I mentioned about the cases to the cabin chief. In both cases, cabin chief's told there is no reason for reporting the cases of harassment"
"Reporting is too hard and time consuming. If an email were enough, I would make more reports"
"Somehow, I was thinking that it is not that serious matter that I should report it. As women we are used to it, I guess"
"I could handle it by myself"
"I felt uncertain and uncomfortable to be faced problem. Also unsure how to get help discreetly without losing the trust at working environment"
"The situations have not bothered me so much"
"We do not have the right place where to report about harassment. I do not think that reporting would lead to anything unless the harassment is a very dangerous attack for

example. Feels almost normal to have these types of incidents so I do not want to go further with these. However, this should not be the case”
“Did not think of it like harassment at the time, but afterwards I realised it”
“The colleague was a flight duty officer”
“Shame”
“To passengers, I have always told that that kind of behaviour is not acceptable”
“1. Female passenger grabbing me from behind while serving drinks. 2. Three older female passengers tipping myself over their seats and laps, touching and kissing. 3. Male passenger ordering drinks and masturbating on a night flight. On all occasions, I told the passengers off firmly and the situations were over”
“That is normal”
“Hard to say, I think the main reason was because it was not badly meant. I think he thought it was a nice gesture, but I just did not like it. So basically, it did not feel as such a big of a deal”
“Shame”
“The cases were not that “serious”. I am quite layback person and do not take these smaller cases that seriously”
“While doing cabin service with a work colleague, we both got harassed by three elderly guys who asked us if we wanted to join them after our flight to their hotel. I did not report because I was still quite new at this time, did not know how to handle the situation and was not more aware about it to be honest. I was also much younger that time. I also had not heard anything from the airline in our course what to do when these incidents happen. My work colleague was much older than me and had also more experience. She told me also just to forget and not to take it personal as these men were drunk. Both of us were disgusted by their action and words”
“No proper channels, young age”
“I have not always realized the moment when it happened and I have experienced second thoughts regarding if it was kind of “bad enough” to write a report. Also as a team member and in the customer service role, I want to be nice and polite and for some reason I have noticed that I would rather make myself feel uncomfortable than the other person. This is of course not how it should be! I feel like I do not know what to say if it has been a joke for example. If I hear that my colleague had experienced something like this, I have zero tolerance for it especially when working as a cabin chief. I do not know why I do not act the same way when it is about me and it is sad to realize that. I feel like I freeze easily in the moment and kind of laugh it away”
“Fear of losing job or that no one would have believed me”
“I did not see a need to report it, it was sort of harmless”
“Dealt with it personally. Peer pressure and uncomfortable to report”

"Very good question, I do not know"
"Retrospectively, I should have reported some of the incidents, because like this, those people just get away with it and do it again to someone"
"In my cases, I never felt like I cannot handle the situation anymore. I told them all directly that they crossed a line and cannot behave like that. Most of them are shocked when you tell them directly. But I never reported officially"
"The cases happened long time ago and sexual harassment was not spoken about as it is today"
"The reporting system is too difficult to use. Harassment is so normal nowadays, you have not the energy to report everything monthly"
"I usually report situations with passengers and action is taken by PDR reports or off-loading passengers. Non-verbal harassment is difficult to report because it is not a clear case with evidence. Situations with crew I never report, usually no action is taken by the company so it is not worth it"
"I thought that it was not so bad that anyone would care"
"I was young and shy"
"I felt like it would not help or maybe give bad reputation"
"It is so common nowadays, and in the Middle East it is frowned upon for reporting such incidents and normally long-term investigations are mandatory"
"Did not want to report a colleague"
"No one believes you"
"Not taking it seriously at that time"
"Did not think reporting would help anything"
"We talked about it already with the crew"
"First, the culture in the eighties, you just tried to escape and manage. Years later, the last case was in the cockpit. I just told in a determined way to stop"
"Different times and #MeToo did not exist yet. Once I got harassed by a person who worked at airport. This happened in Northern Asia and the person was a militia so I thought better just smile and get out of there quickly"
"Did not feel like there was a gateway to report about matters like this"
"I thought that people would not believe me"
"I do not know. First, we were joking together but then the captain went too far"
"I did not feel like it was sexual harassment at the time when it occurred"
"When it has been a passenger, it has never been to the level for me wanting to make a bigger deal out of it as it was. I have mostly been touched 'by accident' by male passengers or a male passenger has been standing too close to me, clearly with purpose, for

<p>my butt to touch their crotch when bending over while working. So it feels kind of 'innocent'. They knew what they were doing, but then again, it is not too severe to officially report it. I have just told my supervisor"</p>
<p>"When it was my supervisor, I just froze. It was an older male cabin chief and he just kept following me and coming way too close. I was new and young, was not sure what to do and for some reason the cockpit felt too far away. I still hope I would have reported it but I think they have retired already"</p>
<p>"Back in the days, this was not a subject to be reported. Nowadays, I have considered reporting sometimes. But frankly, I am older and have quite thick skin. But often I should have reported"</p>
<p>"Although proper reporting channels do exist, sexual harassment towards cabin crew is not talked about in the airline. Small incidents are often brushed off by putting the blame on the passengers drunkenness or 'boys are boys'-attitude. It would be hard to say stop the lewd comments and behaviour to passenger, as calling out bad behaviour often accelerates the situation instead of decelerating it"</p>
<p>"The harassment was more annoying and stupid rather than illegal. Also did not find it would go anywhere and I was still quite new in my job. Nowadays, I would report cause the reporting is also made lot easier"</p>
<p>"In the old days we just had to bear it. Once it was my supervisor who told me that no one would listen to me and he has friends all over the company. I was all alone against him"</p>
<p>"I do not know. Looking back I should have"</p>
<p>"It is unfortunately common to silently accept this behaviour from both passengers and colleagues as well as some airport workers. It is meant as harmless banter by most, and it is honestly easier to just not pay too much attention instead of reporting. If it would be a normal practice to report this type of behaviour I most definitely would, but I do not want to be seen as the difficult one in our working community"</p>
<p>"No strong reporting culture in those days. It was not a thing people took very seriously at the time as it happened during my first years of flying, many years before #MeToo"</p>
<p>"Lack of trust in my company to actually take actions"</p>
<p>"Being unsecure and new at the company"</p>
<p>"Seemed too small to make a deal out of it"</p>
<p>"Do not know, I should have"</p>
<p>"I actually do not know"</p>
<p>"I felt ashamed of the way the colleague called me and wished that at least passengers or other crew members would have heard anything. I have talked about the situation with friends without mentioning the colleagues identity and all agreed it was a difficult</p>

situation. It was improper name calling and I have decided to point it out how I feel if I will get to fly with the person again”

“I did not think that time I should”

“Did not think it will have any effect”

“I told the person face to face. I said this is not the attention I want to have or the situation to be in while I am working”

### Appendix 3. Answers from Q15: Reflection on experienced sexual harassment

<p>"I got harassed several times by passengers non-verbally. In addition, a work colleague harassed me physically over a long period of time. After years, I finally reported the harassment"</p>
<p>"It is horrifying that you are not safe at work. It feels like if you like to take care of yourself and if you are friendly, talkative or laugh a lot, then you become an object to males and they do not take you seriously and think you like to be seen and then they give you wrong kind of attention. It makes me feel ashamed, I do not want to participate in any kind of out work activities, because pilots have made suggestions at Christmas parties etc."</p>
<p>"Lucky enough I do not remember experiencing sexual harassment myself but I can recall one time where my colleagues butt was touched by two drunken passengers during service. The action was some sort of "hand shake" between the two where the hands would rub on her behind. One warning was enough to stop the behaviour. I have heard sexual harassment happening to our female cabin crew more often by our own male flight crew than from our customers"</p>
<p>"I did not take it very seriously as it was not anyway scary or threatening. But a line was crossed so it categorizes as harassment. I could have reported it but I did not. It did not feel as a big deal"</p>
<p>"I am used to it, but I know how unpleasant it is. Consequences: Verbal harassment is very hard to prove without evidence or witnesses. Also I do not want to see this person after all, if I need to write a report"</p>
<p>"Verbal harassment against male is usually done by older ladies. Giving a gentle hint that something would be wanted than just drinks or saying that "I'm not satisfied yet" once asking "Can I get you anything else?" Or they just keep fingers/hands on you little bit longer than any service encounter would normally need. Worst case was when a female colleague started to suggest things and went further on so far that she started to touch me. My position was changed immediately (wide body). However it did not stop and I reported about it to my superior onboard. She had a talk with her but no report or any kind of aftermath whatsoever. I was working with a fixed term contract and as always if you make "trouble" your contract would not be renewed. Early days of my career airlines did not like staff causing trouble with these kinds of things and if one dared to take it up to discussion, it had an immediate consequence to your employment"</p>
<p>"As mentioned in the "why not reported" I just think the comments I have received are very mild so to speak compared to what I have heard others receive. Most of the time passengers mistake your kindness and attentiveness with being flirty - which is not the case obviously. But if that is the case I just try being away/ask a colleague take over for</p>

<p>a little bit more and so they can see they have misunderstood me. The less fuss the situation causes, the less I need to deal with the idiots who made me feel uncomfortable. If I tell someone, it is usually the cabin chief. Never have I experienced anything so severe that I felt was worth to tell the captain or make a report”</p>
<p>“Anger and asking to stop, or careless”</p>
<p>“Some cases were not that serious and I did not take them personally. But once I was slapped to my ass and that I took more seriously”</p>
<p>“Very difficult situation and uncomfortable, especially when it is your colleague. Also passengers have caused sexual harassment with touching hands, bum, tried to kiss etc.</p>
<p>“The situation can be really annoying when it involves passengers, but it was downright awful when it was someone from the flight crew perpetuating the harassment. That made me feel very uneasy and unsafe during work and off work on layoff with the perpetrator...”</p>
<p>“I wish I reacted more strongly to the situations and knew how to better stand up for myself and defend my boundaries”</p>
<p>“Is not easy to be specially a female in industry, for sure”</p>
<p>“People do not probably want to report on colleagues harassing sexually, as especially in smaller companies, it can result in awkward moments, people gossiping and judging”</p>
<p>“Feels like no respect towards me and my job. Like some guys think cabin crew are all easy”</p>
<p>“See my earlier answer (reporting question). I feel if something would not be appropriate, I have tools to report it. Of course you take action on your own first and then seek assistance if needed.</p>
<p>“The company policy was very clear about sexual harassment. Not tolerated. I have witnessed and been subject to the ‘harmless’ jokes, leering eyes etc. A colleague (cabin crew) experienced inappropriate touching from captain, report was made. The captain was suspended for certain time and rostered to fly from another base”</p>
<p>“The company does not take reports seriously enough and there are none or minor consequences for the harasser. Some reports in ‘drawer’ due to ‘buddy rules”</p>
<p>“Some cockpit crew might think it is somewhat okay to harass younger cabin crew, perhaps to show their status. Business men might have an idea that cabin crew are an easy target.”</p>
<p>“It was slightly humiliating but I soon forgot about it”</p>
<p>“There should be zero tolerance to sexual harassment! Both verbal and physical”</p>
<p>“Sometimes I feel myself disgusting since anyone can harass me. And for non-physical harassment there is not much to do. For example winking and jokes...”</p>
<p>“Pilots offering too much wine on layovers with the intention that you would be too drunk -&gt; rape”</p>

"In all cases it has been drunken men"
"I have told a colleague that his behaviour is not acceptable"
"Flight crews basic training should include psychological training over sexual harassment. Especially cabin crews must develop thick enough skin and psychological skills and methods, such as humour, in order to succeed in their work without all minor incidents consuming resources unnecessarily. There is no lack of mandatory reporting systems to the employers - problem in dealing with the issues and getting adequate support lays too often in poor managerial competencies by often not properly educated HR-managements. Harmfulness on whole work community caused by untruthful gossip, woke or cancel-methods used in social media against colleagues should seriously be addressed and hopefully avoided by creating psychologically safe working environment and atmosphere - requires professional leadership"
"I have also got several messages on LinkedIn or Instagram (still don not know how these find our accounts). It is quite uncomfortable to receive these kind of messages"
"Never experienced (and happy for that!)"
"Words, jokes, looks, touching, winks..."
"While the harassment I have seen was verbal and not excessive, it still led to having my colleague feel uncomfortable to continue engaging with the passenger"
"Certain sexual jokes and behaviours specifically in aviation are considered normal or just funny, and most women will deal with the discomfort because of pressure and knowing that a big percentage of colleagues will blame them for letting it happen"
"It is wrong and not accepted at all. It should be reported and spoken out"
"From my perspective, these are always the same kind of people, they just try what they can get with their behaviour. If it works, they are happy. If not, they are just going to try next with someone else"
"I often get told by other female cabin crew (mostly working in the industry for 5+ years) that I should get used to certain comments or looks of male passengers because its quote 'part of the job'. I find this disturbing, as such actions should never be played down or accepted. As a young female flight attendant, I am often a target of older pilots. Sometimes I am too scared to say stop, probably because I want to impress them. Then things get to a place where I'm not comfortable anymore and after it I feel taken advantage of but cannot say anything because I never said no. Then it is difficult to report such behaviour because for the guy it seemed like it was always okay with what we did. But I was simply too scared to set my own boundaries"
"Have not had any"
"Women experience sexual harassment daily, especially in aviation, inappropriate chat and suggesting comments are more norm than exception"

<p>"I have not myself experienced sexual harassment, but I still know that it exists based on stories from my colleagues"</p>
<p>"I think the world has changed; harassment was more common in the 80-90s among crewmembers. Among drunk passenger the problem remains"</p>
<p>"Confusion"</p>
<p>"I am having a flight with this captain in near future and I feel uncomfortable about it"</p>
<p>"People have different kind of sense of humour. Some take it like a fun joke, not meant to be taken seriously, some will take it seriously"</p>
<p>"I think many, in my case, male know what they are doing and it sucks. They know to make it so subtle or they do it in private so that they cannot really be caught but I also think many of them notice you feel uncomfortable. It is a hard problem to be solved"</p>
<p>"An interesting observation: now that sexual harassment is not tolerated anymore, the older women seem to be easier prey, since we do not report"</p>
<p>"Mostly the harassment comes from male passengers over the age of 50, who have been raised up in the time when cabin crew were marketed as more of hostesses and partly sex symbols to attract passengers for the airline. The same demographic takes casual and friendly manners as flirting, and since I have initiated it, they will not take no for an answer, even when you make it known that you are engaged or married or just plainly not interested in following them to their hotel or home. Often alcohol has something to do with their behaviour, but it does not excuse it"</p>
<p>"It usually happens by men but can also happen by women. Usually alcohol is involved. When it comes to 'dirty' jokes between colleagues, you should not do that if you do not know the colleague well enough. We do not know the backgrounds what people might have when it comes to sexuality. As a woman you also need to be more cautious where you can walk alone and what to wear and no man can ever understand that"</p>
<p>"I have heard many sexual harassment experiences from colleagues. Most I have heard is that passengers take or try to take pictures of your private areas. I have personally heard jokes from passengers, but I do not consider those as sexual harassment, but maybe I should?"</p>
<p>"Touching my hips/waist whenever passing by felt like sexual harassment to me but might seem too minor to them or the company. I need to report more but yet a confidential report is not the tool I would prefer to use. No other tool available"</p>
<p>"I think that the world has changed and everything is wrong or not properly behaving for someone"</p>
<p>"People seem to think it is okay to harass flight attendants. That is it part of the flight attendants role to be sexy"</p>
<p>"Even it is a joke, but the person feels offended, it is sexual harassment"</p>
<p>"As I am over 40 it is probably less likely to happen to me than younger ones"</p>

#### Appendix 4. Answers from Q16: Thoughts or feedback on the subject

<p>"Great topic! Sexual harassment needs definitely more identification and actions from the employer side if harassment occurs. I have witnessed too many cases on sexual harassment, especially from passengers and cockpit crew. The problem seems that cabin crew are afraid or ashamed to report the harassment, especially younger and less experienced colleagues"</p>
<p>"Very important subject, thank you for asking!"</p>
<p>"This is more common issue in aviation that people even realize. It happens daily and people are used to it"</p>
<p>"This is a delicate subject which has been somehow avoided in discussions. Everybody knows the existence but somehow it is tolerated too far and too deep. This kind of study will promote the topic and the importance!"</p>
<p>"Even though the aviation is strictly followed by the rules, the atmosphere is loose. We are kidding around with colleagues and with customers as well. We try not to escalate things up in the air. Is this a reason why possible harassments are not taken seriously?"</p>
<p>"I feel that maybe women in the field - and in general, kind of have a mind setting of 'just ignore it' and I know, I often try downplaying others actions because I do not want to cause a scene. I just make a statement back if I feel like it is not a too delicate situation, remove yourself from the situation and keep an eye that they are not doing it again"</p>
<p>"Finally someone is talking about this! This subject is never talked about in training etc."</p>
<p>"Passengers are usually drunk, when they harass, but coworkers are not. Older generation pilots still think that they have the right to say very sexual comments towards cabin crew. Younger crew members specially in their early twenties do not say anything to these 50+ pilots, they are afraid. And this is in my eyes a big problem. Young girls are afraid of standing up for themselves and actually say no to these alfa-males"</p>
<p>"Great subject. According to my cabin chief-friends, I heard that harassment is happening especially to men, working as cabin crew"</p>
<p>"Certain sexual harassment actions, especially the non-verbal, staring or making sexual comments are still disregarded or not taken too seriously"</p>
<p>"It is an important subject and I am happy to see someone researching it, great job!"</p>
<p>"Important topic, good that you take it up into research! People do not talk about it enough. I have even heard about a rape inside a company that was not reported. This should not be the way it goes!"</p>
<p>"I think the world has started to change on this issue and this kind of behaviour is decreasing"</p>
<p>"Should not happening of course, but it occurs in almost every industry"</p>
<p>"It is very much still there, the atmosphere of older white males taking advantage"</p>

<p>"Great subject for a thesis, good luck! Among my colleagues, I wish not to "demonize" all the sexual-type discussion and flirting made in good spirits and with mutual agreement because this "life is not that serious"-atmosphere creates relaxed and easy-going teamwork and fun workdays. It is somewhat essential to have it in small amounts"</p>
<p>"Good luck with your thesis, this is very important topic!"</p>
<p>"People have different lines between harassment, bullying, sense of humour and interfering or approaching other human beings. For one it is comfortable become touched, for others it is already uncomfortable"</p>
<p>"I think this should be discussed more. I think too many flight attendants accept harassment too easily since we cannot do much for non-physical harassment"</p>
<p>"I think a lot depends on the person itself. How the individual behaves and what 'message' is given to the world. Especially when alcohol involved (on free time) people are usually misunderstood"</p>
<p>"It is important to keep a professional distance and discipline between cabin crew and passengers. Let the drunken passengers know their limits"</p>
<p>"Very important subject, thank you for doing this survey!"</p>
<p>"Good topic, and super interesting! I think that time has moved on and cabin crew has more authority and respect than in past days. There are as well more male cabin crew so I think this has a calming effect when thinking of passengers harassing female cabin crew. Also flight deck is more aware about this topic and how it is a serious issue"</p>
<p>"The industry needs to fix its outdated image of its flight attendants being there to be beautiful and serve"</p>
<p>"By building strong character and experience you can handle situations better and realize that people's opinion does not matter and you can take effective action without fearing judgement"</p>
<p>"Sexual harassment is not accepted at any shape. Even 'small ones'. It should always be reported and taken seriously"</p>
<p>"Refreshing to hear that somebody that is not female is interested about this"</p>
<p>"Great subject, cannot wait go through your research!"</p>
<p>"This is important subject, time to raise it up"</p>
<p>"I do not know where to report about sexual harassment. Reporting can be shameful so I would like to hope that reporting could be easy and handled with extra discretion"</p>
<p>"Good work, very important!"</p>
<p>"It used to be more fun at work when people did not take oneself so seriously"</p>
<p>"As a younger woman, it is hard to point out harassment to the person doing it. You just do not want to make a fuss out of it as you could get victim shamed or blamed for over-reacting. Example: While doing service a passenger queues behind you to go to the lavatory. They stand so close to you that they touch you from behind. You ask them to give</p>

<p>some space but whenever you grab something from the bottom of your trolley your butt touches their crotch. You kindly ask again, but they just wink at you or give a look. How are you going to explain this to your supervisor without sounding crazy? You can tell when it is an accident, however, when it is done with intention, it is hard to proof anything and it makes you feel very uncomfortable”</p>
<p>“I'm happy about this survey! It's about time!”</p>
<p>“Very good and important topic which should be talked more especially at workplaces”</p>
<p>“Interesting topic, would love to see and read the results!”</p>
<p>“Very good thesis subject. Thank you for this survey, I hope its revealing”</p>
<p>“I am not offended by harassment, comments etc. It is of course a bit weird but that is the reason I have not made a report. Because I do not think it is that serious”</p>
<p>“Important subject and thank you for pointing this out without #MeToo-sensitivity”</p>
<p>“My experience has been vague, I got contacted by text messages and social media and have just ignored it/not replied. Once got slapped on my butt by male cabin crew member and told the person off”</p>