

Hospitality students' perceptions on sexual harassment in the workplace

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<p>The hospitality industry is one of the fastest growing industry nowadays. Even though this is positive, it also comes with more negative issues such as sexual harassment. Research shows that many employees have been confronted with any type of sexual harassment in their working environment, and that the consequences of this phenomenon are fiercely. The way hospitality employees provide a service or product is critical to the customer's overall experience.</p> <p>The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions on sexual harassment in the workplace of students who study in The Netherlands within the hospitality industry. This study will focus on the following three objectives. First, what is consider to be sexual harassment. Secondly, what type of sexual harassment have they experienced and lastly, what are the differences based on gender, so the female and male perceptions and experiences.</p> <p>The research method used in this study is a quantitative method. This study can be marked as an exploratory study, which will help getting a better understanding and some new insights on this topic that can be of value. A questionnaire has been created which allows one to share their experiences, view and opinion on sexual harassment within the workplace. Also, non-probability sampling is used within this study.</p> <p>Based on the data gathered, it seems that the results of this study is aligned with previous studies. It has been explored that the perceptions of female and male students on sexual harassment are similar. As a result, the options that are less considered to be sexual harassment are the options that is most experienced. This can imply that the students are more tolerant for these types of harassment as the majority does not considers it to be harassment and therefore, is more frequently experienced. However, there are some differences between gender regarding their experiences. Overall, most forms are more experienced by female students but nevertheless, there is a form where the majority of the victims are male students.</p>	
Keywords Sexual Harassment, Hospitality Industry, Work Environment, Consequences, Students	

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, sexual harassment is a discussed topic. Claims for tons of money are demanded and won in The United States, scandals are being revealed and prominent people are all of a sudden accused of inappropriate behaviour. Even though the interpretation of sexual harassment is different for every individual, using the word or even accusing someone of this behaviour can have big consequences.

This study represent the perception of hospitality student towards sexual harassment in the workplace, whether they might have experienced sexual harassment and in what form it is occurring. This topic is interesting as it aims to create a deeper understanding of the current heavily discussed topic. Also, as more people are open about their harassment experiences, more information and awareness might be created for this phenomenon. Furthermore, as students are the future employees of an organisation, companies and future employers could benefit from the analysis on this topic, to gain more knowledge about what their future employees might experience on a day to day basis. It can be very helpful to do research about this topic, as organisation can update or change their policies if they would know to what extent it is happening on the workplace, to make a safer work environment in general.

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions on sexual harassment in the workplace of students who study in The Netherlands within the hospitality industry. This study will focus on the following three objectives. First, what is consider to be sexual harassment. Secondly, what type of sexual harassment have they experienced and third, what are the differences between gender, so the female and male students' perceptions and experiences.

As it is a heavily discussed topic, a lot of academic research is available. Most data that exists is about sexual harassment in general, different countries or the actions taken by organisations to prevent it. However, this research will be concentrating on the perceptions of hospitality students who experienced sexual harassment while studying in The Netherlands. This study will be to create a more concrete and detailed picture of the origin of sexual harassment, how it is experienced, the consequences, forms and a hospitality students' perspective on it.

However, there are limitations while doing this research, as every person has their own subjective opinion on what sexual harassment is. Therefore, an attempt is done to ap-

proach this topic so specific yet general as possible, to obtain the most accurate data. Another limitation to this research can be that it is only concentrated on students and only to those who are studying in The Netherlands and have worked there within the hospitality industry. Next, due to the fact that it can be a very personal topic it can be that not everyone wants to share their experience and therefore, will not respond to the survey that will be created.

In this study, quantitative research will be used by creating a questionnaire, as it will provide statistical information. Furthermore, data will be converted into percentages, frequencies and charts. This study can be marked as an exploratory study, which will help getting a better understanding and some new insights on this topic that can be of value. A questionnaire will be created which allows one to share their experiences, view and opinion on sexual harassment within the workplace. Also, non-probability sampling is used within this study. Data will be collected through digital media channels, which are in this case Facebook and LinkedIn.

The structure of this research will start with an introduction to sexual harassment on the workplace, which contains literature about the definition, harassment within The Netherlands, perceptions, forms and consequences. It will continue with presenting the research methods and the analysed data. Next, results will be presented and in the end a discussion will be provided following with a conclusion. Lastly, Harvard style referencing will be used throughout the whole report.

2 Sexual harassment in the workplace

The concept of sexual harassment became a widespread topic in the 1970s, and in the 1990s the attention towards this topic increased even more due to scandals involving Supreme Court nominees (Hemel and Lund, 2018). Nowadays, sexual harassment is still a much discussed topic due to the popularity of the #MeToo movement for instance, which was a campaign created by an activist who exposed sexual harassment stories (Holmes, 2018). A way of looking at it, is that it can be alarming that because of the high publicity, the harassment becomes a thing of normality for society. According to Poulston (2008), a belief is created that one needs to be tolerant towards sexual harassment when working in the hospitality industry. This can have negative consequences for the industry, such as a lack of motivation to (go) work in hospitality as well as a bad work performance (Sabitha, 2008). Problems can arise with expressions of sexuality in the workplace, as this type of attention is often unwanted and discriminatory. Therefore, expressions of sexuality at work becomes not only an issue for workers, but also for organisations (Pina and Gannon, 2012).

This chapter will discuss the definition of sexual harassment and to what extent sexual harassment is occurring in the working force. Also, the perspective of employees towards sexual harassment will be researched and the form of sexual harassment it can occur in. Lastly, the consequences and its importance will be discussed.

2.1 What is sexual harassment?

Even though it might be hard to define the term sexual harassment, there are some aspects that the European and American definitions have in common. Sexual harassment can be characterized as “unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, including physical, verbal and non-verbal behaviour”. (Worsfold and McCann, 2000, 249). The feminist author and activist Lin Farley was the first one to come up with a definition of sexual harassment in 1975. She stated that sexual harassment is any repeated and unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions and physical contacts that you find objectionable or offensive that causes discomfort on the job. This term developed over the past 40 years and while Farley was only focussed on harassment of woman by men, today's view is that an individual of any gender can be the victims or the harasser (Hemel and Lund, 2018). The phenomenon sexual harassment also developed over the past years. The conception of today is that objectionable or offensive conduct does not have to be repeated to be considered as sexual harassment. Also, the US court decided that sexual harassment is based on harassment against gender, even when it is not sexual tinted. What matters is that the

harassment is discriminatory on the basis of sex, not whether it is sexual or not. To elaborate, the definition of Farley about sexual harassment is limited to harassment on the job and also includes sexual assault, which is a more extreme form of sexual harassment rather than a separate segment (Hemel and Lund, 2018).

Furthermore, the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission also defines sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature”. Again, in this statement there is a division made between verbal and physical. Moreover, it is stated that the U.S law does not prohibit ‘simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are you very serious’. However, when these elements create an offensive work environment or when it has drastic consequences such the victim being fired, it can be considered sexual harassment which is illegal. This is remarkable as it is difficult to establish sexual harassment as every individual interpret this in a different subjected way. The interpretation of sexual harassment depends on the context, and the perception of threats (Ulusoy et al., 2011). Continuing, as The Netherlands is part of the United Nations just as the United States, the same definition applies. To give another example, The European commission Code of Practice defines sexual harassment as “an unwanted conduct of sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex affection the dignity of women and men at work, this can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct” (Gilbert et al., 1998). It can be broadly assumed that all the previous definitions have most aspects in common.

2.2 The hospitality industry

Studies prove that the hospitality industry is not only more prevalent towards sexual harassment than in other industries, it is also extensively tolerated by both employees and management. A research shows that 89% of hospitality workers have experienced sexual harassment (Powell, 2017). The hospitality industry is growing more than ever. It includes restaurant, accommodation, transportation and entertainment businesses. The competition is increasing a lot and the hospitality market is full of identical or similar organizations. In addition, research shows that people are looking for new and unique experiences more than before, as the lifestyle and social interactions changes. Therefore, a challenge for the hospitality industry can be to be more aware of the needs and wants of a potential guests and to adapt to them. It is suggested that companies constantly improve their strategy and understanding the segment that the company is aiming for (Chen, 2017). Furthermore, quality seems to become a more important factor for the hospitality and tourism industry. Making sure that there are constant improvements made regarding quality, should

be a continuous process to enhance businesses (Singh, 2015). Also, according to Singh (2015), teamwork is key to total quality service. Every department should work together and support each other to achieve the best result possible. The effectiveness of the teamwork can be the reason why one organization is performing better than another, as it can be a crucial factor.

Furthermore, the hospitality industry has changed a lot over the past 30 year, regarding employee skills. Their competences become more important, which results in a skills gap in the hospitality industry. There is more demand for high skilled employees instead of unskilled people. Research show that the abilities of employees can be very important resources that companies use to create value. Understanding the relevance of staff that is capable of maintaining good work performances, can be of value for businesses. Looking at graduates, they might be unprepared for a successful career in the hospitality industry without specific skills (Quinn, 2013).

To continue, employee empowerment is a critical factor within the hospitality industry. It can be defined as the process of experiencing the feeling of having competences among organizational members through the identification (and removal) of conditions might raise the feeling of powerlessness. It helps organizations grow and survive in a highly competitive environment. Especially for the hospitality industry it is important, as it makes employees more hospitable to guests, more satisfied with their jobs and therefore, more productive while doing their job. Empowered staff tend to be more committed to their job and also more in control, without the close involvement of management. If employees are satisfied, it is more likely they will satisfy the need of guests or customers (Singh, 2015). Furthermore, the hospitality industry can be considered labour intensive and relatively low paid with long working hours. Therefore, training and development are important factors to make sure that employees are still being productive and have a positive attitude and performance (Kruja, 2016).

The way hospitality employees provides a service or product is critical to the customer's overall experience. Every hospitality organization is likely to have delivered a service that, at a certain point, did not live up to the customer's expectations. These shortfalls can be called service errors and therefore, it is suggested that organizations focus more on error management. This can be significantly important in the hospitality industry as fully avoiding of services errors is not possible in a high error-prone environment. However, preventing making errors may block the opportunity to learn from them, which may have consequences on the long-term (Guchait et al., 2016).

2.3 Sexual harassment in the Dutch workplace

In a letter written by the Dutch politician Ferd Grapperhaus (2017), serving as Minister of Justice and Security in the Dutch parliament, he states that by the end of 2017 there is a lot of (social) media attention regarding sexual harassment due to the #MeToo movements. It is mentioned that 90% of the harassers against woman is from the opposite sex. Also, 13% of the men have been victim of sexual harassment. This happened from their school years to their current work environment. Despite the high number, 95% of the Dutch education institutions are already practising setting and respecting boundaries to children and young adults (Grapperhaus, 2017). Furthermore, Grapperhaus (2017) states that especially on the workforce, hierarchy plays a big part. In the Dutch work place in 2016, 134.000 employees are confronted with sexual harassment by colleagues or supervisors. Also, woman are four times more victim of sexual harassment on the workforce than men. To elaborate, data obtained from a research showed that men who are identified as likely to commit any type of sexual harassment show associations between social dominance and sexuality. This identification is made based on the characteristic of these men such as having the desire to control a woman or holding strong positive thoughts about rape (Williams et al., 1999).

On the Dutch work floor, sexual harassment is not a new topic (Vilters, 2009). According to Vilters (2009), 40% of the respondents to a questionnaire of the Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden (NEA), say to have been harassed in their working environment in the past twelve months prior to the research. This research also claims that victims of sexual harassment might change jobs because of psychological complaints. However, in a research done by Niedhammer et al. (2012) for Occupational Medicine, 31 countries were studied to see the differences in various psychosocial work exposures. The research was based on 14.881 males and 14.799 females. Eighteen psychosocial work factors were studied such as sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and physical violence. The Netherlands is one out of three of the studied countries that scored significantly low on prevalence of exposure to four of the eighteen factors or more (Niedhammer et al., 2012).

Therefore, as almost half of the respondents say to have been harassed, one might say that sexual harassment is very present among Dutch people in the work place. However, one with a more general perspective on the situation may say that sexual harassment is not a big problem among Dutch people, as the country is one with the lowest occurrence rate. Therefore, both point of views are debatable.

2.4 Staff's perspective on sexual harassment at the workplace

According to Vilters (2009), one out of four of the respondents to a questionnaire taken by Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden (NEA), are harassed by external parties such as guests, students or pedestrians. Furthermore, according to Gilbert et al. (1998), the hospitality industry is linked to the close involvement with the customer and all the behavioural norms that are often set around the customer's needs and wants. Furthermore, Gilbert et al. (1998) created a survey for hospitality employees which indicated that almost 40% of the 80% personnel directors that responded, allowed staff to wear very short skirts. Some employees emphasized on the fact that especially on Saturday the skirt will be worn, as it increases their tips. Interestingly, 7% of the staff agreed on the fact that flirting with customers was part of the job and 39% was responded neutral. Therefore, Gilbert et al. (1998) also claims that more than half does not agree and hence has a lower tolerance regarding harassment. The good quality of customer service, which is normally a positive characteristic for a company, may leave staff feeling pressured and unsupported as they are expected to maintain that good level of quality. This might result in staff that needs to respond in a friendly way to customers who overstep the mark. Constantly having to be polite and friendly towards (offensive) guests can end dramatically for employees as they tend to get for instance a burnout, which might result in the employee leaving the company (Gilbert et al., 1998).

Nowadays, the use of social media technologies has created new difficulties regarding sexual harassment policies on the work floor. The employees of these days are more likely to connect via various social media channels such as Facebook (Mainiero and Jones, 2013). This can mean that one might interpret a text message send via an online channel, whether it is with or without ulterior motives, differently and therefore, this can be considered a thin line. While sexual harassment in the workplace can be often considered as an act only taking place in the office, contacts outside the workplace via social media can have the same results. When that happens, one can speak of textual harassment (Mainiero and Jones, 2013). When connecting in real life, employees can see body language and are able to sense the tone of for example, a compliment. However, when the same compliment and answer is given via a text message it can be easy to interpret it differently by both parties (Mainiero and Jones, 2013). Even though romance is overall considered as a positive element, it is easy to change from romance to harassment. Due to for instance conflicts or hierarchical boundaries, there might occur an out balanced relationship between two parties which can possibly lead to one crossing a line where it becomes an unwanted sexual advance (Mainiero and Jones, 2013).

In 2013, CareerBuilder created a survey for over 4000 employees nationwide in America. This resulted in a 39% that admitted to have dated someone at work at least once in their life. Moreover, 29% said they had dated a person with a higher position within the company (Mainiero and Jones, 2013). Significant is that more than four out of five of the millennials generation (age 19 to 29 years old) said they do not have a problem with dating a co-worker, which is more than double the rate of the people of Generation X (age 30 to 45 years old) (Mainiero and Jones, 2013). Furthermore, as there is often a significant level of hierarchy within (hospitality) organisations, the industry has to deal with the constant stress and conflicts that might occur between these different levels. This can cause an abuse of power towards the staff with lower positions within the hierarchy (Mainiero and Jones, 2013).

2.5 In what form is sexual harassment happening towards employees?

Sexual harassment happens in various ways, and the level of seriousness is determined by every individual subjectively. However, Gruber et al., (1996) developed the Inventory of Sexual Harassment (ISH) in order to categorize sexually harassing behaviours. The ISH categorizes three collections of behaviours: "verbal comments (e.g comments on an employee's looks or clothing), verbal requests (e.g repeated requests for dates, etc.) and non-verbal displays (e.g staring, whistling)" (Pina and Gannon, 2012, p. 210). Also, Timmerman and Bajema (1998) have categorized types of sexual behaviour: "verbal (i.e. remarks about physical appearance, sexual jokes, verbal sexual advances), non-verbal (i.e. staring and whistling), physical (i.e. behaviours ranging from unsolicited physical contact to assault/rape) and quid pro quo (i.e. threats of reprisals if sexual advancement is refused, or promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted)" (Pina and Gannon, 2012, 210). Furthermore, sexual harassment can also be distinguished in three forms with regards to the harasser status: sexual harassment by co-workers, subordinates or individuals with a higher position (Pina and Gannon, 2012).

According to Fitzgerald et al. (1995), another widely accepted way of categorizing different forms of sexual harassment is following Till's (1980) classification of 5 sexual behaviours: gender harassment, seductive harassment, sexual bribery, sexual coercion and sexual imposition or assault. Till states that these categories represent a level of severity. Moreover, even though these type of systems that classify harassment in certain orders can be useful, the most used system worldwide is from U.S Merit System Protection Board which created a system that shows seven types of harassing behaviour classified in 3 levels of severity, namely less severe, moderately severe and most severe (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

To elaborate, The United States Merit Systems Protection Board conducted various questionnaires among employees. As an average result of these surveys, 42,6% of the woman and 16% of the men who responded, admitted to experiencing sexual harassment on the job. The most common harassment behaviours according to the participants, included sexual teasing, jokes, remarks and/or questions. This type of behaviour was followed by for example, sexual looks and a form of touching. The numbers of the sexual behaviour that resulted in assault or rape are little, namely around 4% of woman and 2,5% for the men (Jorgenson and Wahl, 200). Most data regarding sexual harassment experiences has been obtained via this system. However, there has been some issues finding literature to ascertain the reliability of these measures (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

To anticipate on this issue, Fitzgerald et al. (1988) created the Sexual Experience Questionnaire (SEQ). This is based on the 5 harassment behaviours of Till (1980) and developed further through literature. All questions added to the different dimensions, that explained the various categories, were written in behavioural terms. The term sexual harassment was not mentioned because of the possible delicate situation. Next, the participants of this questionnaire were given three answer possibilities to which extend they experienced the dimension in question namely never, once or more than once. This way frequencies or percentages could be gathered. An example of the sample items from the SEQ can be found in figure 1.

Table 1. Sample items from the SEQ (modified Fitzgerald et al., 1988)

Category	Sample Items
Gender harassment	Have you ever been in a situations where a supervisor or co-worker habitually told suggestive stories or offensive jokes?
Seductive behaviour	Have you ever been in a situation where a supervisor or co-worker attempted to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you in despite your attempts to discourage him?
Sexual bribery	Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you were being subtly bribed with some sort of rewards to engage in sexual behaviour with a co-worker?
Sexual coercion	Have you ever been in a situation where you actually experienced negative consequences for refusing to engage in sexual activity with a co-worker?
Sexual imposition	Have you ever been in a situation where a co-worker made unwanted attempts to stroke or fondle you?

Based on various academic sources named in this report, and the SEQ from Fitzgerald et al., (1995), another table was created to give a more detailed and clear understanding of what will be considered sexual harassment in this report, as well as the type of harassment. As the SEQ can be considered as a more general way of gathering information about sexual harassment experiences, table 2 can help defining the types of sexual harassment. To emphasize, every individual has a subjective opinion on the meaning of sexual harassment. However, to have a clear perspective on what will be considered sexual harassment in this report, a table was made. Everything within the table needs to be considered unwanted for it to be harassment. In addition, table 2 which is created for the purpose of this study, is divided into four forms: verbal, nonverbal, physical and quid pro quo. Quid pro quo can be defined as a type of harassment in which sexual favours are made as a condition for employment (Tinkler, 2008). According to the same source, quid pro quo has a high level of severity as it is more actionable than other forms of sexual harassment such as verbal harassment. However, verbal harassment such as sexual jokes or remarks is claimed to be more common.

Table 2. Types and forms of sexual harassment

FORMS	TYPES
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Sexual comments or remarks on looks, body, clothing or any other topics ✚ Flirting ✚ Request for sexual favours ✚ Suggestive or insulting sounds
Non verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Staring ✚ Stalking via text messages ✚ Whistling in a suggestive manner
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Stalking by following ✚ Inappropriate touching ✚ Assault or rape
Quid pro quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Threats of reprisals if sexual advancement is refused ✚ Promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted

2.6 The consequences of sexual harassment in the working environment

Research demonstrates that if a company's working climate is tolerant of sexual harassment, it directly contributes to negative psychological outcomes for employees. It can damage the well-being and work behaviour of employees (Williams et al., 1999). Anger, fear, mistrust and sadness are examples of what victimized employees experience (Pina and Gannon, 2012). Furthermore, it also can have consequences for a company as employees are likely to reduce how attached and committed they are to their company. This can be a result of the feeling that they are not being protected and/or supported. The feeling of neglect is likely to lead to anger towards the organisation and greater detachment.

Moreover, there appears to be a decrease in work quality, quantity and willingness to work with others (Pina and Gannon, 2012). The Illinois model of the consequences of sexual harassment divides the direct outcomes of sexual harassment into two general categories: work-related outcomes or psychological and health outcomes. This model shows that the relationship between sexual harassment and job related behaviour is mediated by job related attitudes, such as job satisfaction. To elaborate, sexual harassment can be seen as one form of job stress. This model gives a good perspective on the consequences of sexual harassment. In addition, the model shows two categories of withdrawing. Work with-

drawal can be seen as for instance, being late or on-the-job tasks that are being avoid because of the job attitudes. Job withdrawal can be seen as job attitudes that resulted in fully quitting the job (Sims et al., 2005). However, Willness et al., (2007) confirmed that both type of withdrawal are connected, but work withdrawal is more strongly related to sexual harassment. These victims are more likely to avoid certain tasks rather than resigning from their job (Pina and Gannon, 2012).

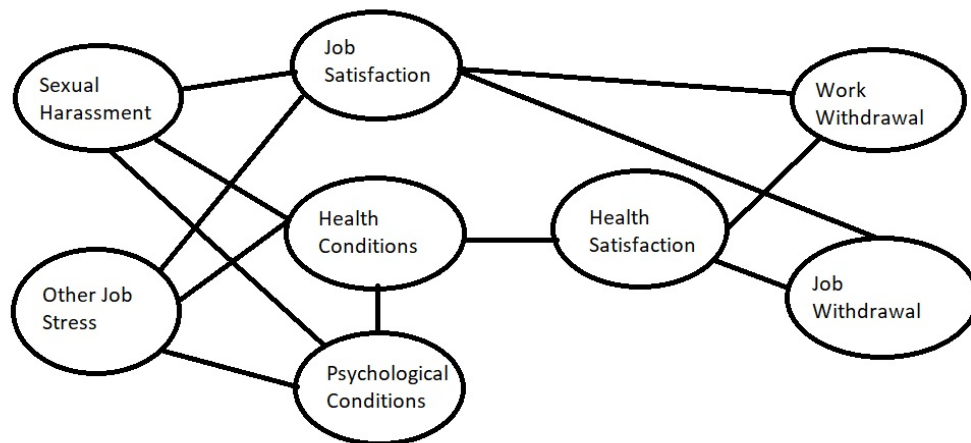


Figure 1. Illinois model of the consequences of sexual harassment (modified Sims et al., 2005)

Next, literature shows that especially younger woman are more exposed to sexual harassment and more easily insecure compared to older woman (Maktoobian and Khorasgani, 2014). Consequently, this might affect the decision of hospitality students to continue their career in this sector. To elaborate, Worsfold and McCann (2000) says that one who has little work experience and therefore is in a more vulnerable position, will experience a threat of loss of employment and poor references which has big consequences for their academic career and further employment in the industry. Some question the fact that sexual harassment is unpleasant not because it is sexual, but rather because it has consequences that are damaging for a career and educational opportunities (Williams et al., 1999). Also, not only age is a risk factor for a potential victim, also single or divorced woman are a likely target. They are targeted more often than married or widowed woman (Pina and Gannon, 2012). Furthermore, when looking at the education level of these potential victims, some studies show that woman with a higher level of education are more

vulnerable than woman with less education (O'Connell and Korabik, 2000). However, Timmerman and Bajema (1999) claim that woman with a lower level of education are the most vulnerable to experience sexual harassment. To clarify, according to O'Connell and Korabik's (2000) research, woman with higher education do not necessarily have to be harassed more frequently but they might be more aware of what constitutes sexual harassment and how to report it when anything happens.

Next, another key factor that can cause sexual harassment and therefore, has serious consequences is social power. Social power can be defined as the ability of a certain person to affect rewards and costs for another individual without the other having no control over that situation (French and Raven, 1959). As a consequence of this abuse, staff is likely to experience long-term sickness absence and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (Friborg et al., 2017.) If the harasser would have no control over the victim's financial resources or job in general, the tolerance of the victim towards harassment might be lower as that individual is more likely to complain about the situation or walk away at no personal cost. Therefore, sexual harassment can be seen as an abuse of power (Pina and Gannon, 2012).

However, Tangri et al. (1982) states that sexual harassment is a result of natural sexual attraction from an individual, and that power differences between individuals is not a reason for the harassment. Nevertheless, Lucas and Deery (2004) suggest that power imbalances accounts for a large part of sexual harassment cases in an organisation. It shows that the motives for sexual harassment is a combination of sexual desire and the need to dominate others. As an example, a customer can use power inequality towards staff to create a power and status differential between the servers and those served, and this way fulfil their need to dominate (Yagil, 2008).

Victimization can be defined as the process of being victimized by someone for a unwanted (sexual) behaviour or becoming the victim of that. People with mental illnesses are more likely to become victimized rather than others (Albers et al., 2018). Overall, it can be stated that sexual harassment has a big impact on mental health. Adolescent and adult sexual victimization (AASV) and childhood sexual abuse (CSA) are often associated with that. Research shows that people who experienced this, have a poorer sexual well-being and therefore, might shift to negative health outcomes. Also, a study shows that woman who experienced sexual harassment in their childhood and their adult life, have an even bigger chance of experiencing any type of psychological damage, compared to woman who only experienced it in their adult life. On the other hand, another research shows the

opposite as it has been said that there was no additive of revictimization (Crump and Byers, 2017).

2.7 Power abuse

Like stated before, an imbalance in power can cause sexual harassment within an organization. The phenomenon abuse can be defined as an action that crosses boundaries of authorization because either a person has ill-formed beliefs, or because they act with self-interested motivations (Vermeule, 2015). When a hierarchical relationship is existing, the potential of abuse of power can be present. The party who can be seen as the who has the authority will have the responsibility to be aware of its role in, this case sexual harassment, situations (Robison, 2004). According to Brandl (2001), abuse can happen for various reasons. It can be that the abuser feels justified, believing they have the right to have control over another person. It might also be that an abuser desires for that control itself or to gain personal benefits. In general, abusers may gain satisfaction by dominating, punishing or humiliating others, including sexually manners (Brandl, 2001).

If the power of a supervisor and its authority is abused by harassing others, it is likely that it will be covered by even higher powers in the hierarchy. On the other hand, there are actions of sexual harassment which a supervisor can commit, that also a co-worker can commit. However, the higher status of that supervisor can make a little difference. Therefore, it can depend on the level of defence an employee can offer towards a higher authority (Baker, 2006).

A study shows that almost 40% of the respondents of the SHRM survey thinks that supervisors should be informed about a relationship between co-workers. In the past, most claims for sexual harassment in the workplace were from prior romances that involved quid pro quo harassment from boss to employees who are lower in the hierarchy of a company. While these situations are still occurring, due to the growth of social media not only sexual harassment is happening between higher and lower statuses, but also between co-workers which affects their performance in the office (Mainiero and Jones, 2013).

To continue, even though reporting sexual harassment to an employer could be financially beneficial for an employee, organizational policies are rarely used by the victims. One research shows that only 8% of 2000 woman only reported to be sexually harassed. Another study shows that only 2% formally reported their experiences. In general, the rate of

reporting sexual harassment to an employer is rather low. It is likely that an sexual harassment experience will not be reported due to a lack of trust towards the company. Also, the fear of retaliation by the harasser and/or employer can also discourage an employee to keep silent (Vijayasiri, 2008). This might also be considered as power abuse, as there is a fear by an employee for negative consequences that the other higher party can undertake because of its status.

2.8 The prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace

Many organizations have policies regarding sexual harassment. Despite of this, it is still an issue that is occurring. Like mentioned before, there are a lot of consequences caused by sexual harassment. Besides the fact that it can lead to a bad mental health of employees, it also costs a lot of money. A study shows that within a two-year period, it costs the American federal government more than 250 million dollars. Figure 3 is created to show the procedures that in most organizations are explained when talking about sexual harassment policies (Thacker, 2003).

Table 3. Procedures that are typically explained in sexual harassment policies (modified Thacker, 2003)

• What to do if you are a target of sexual harassment
• How to register a complaint
• To whom to report a complaint
• What happens after you register a complaint
• How long it takes before an investigation begins
• Who conducts an investigation
• How an investigation is conducted
• How the investigation results are disseminated

Furthermore, The Equal employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) Interpretative Guidelines on Sexual Harassment states that the employer has the duty to maintain a working environment free from sexual harassment and forms of intimidation. The EEOC suggest that organizations need to undertake a solid part in the prevention of sexual harassment. The Guidelines recommend the companies to develop and implement a policy which prohibits sexual harassment, disciplinary actions to be followed when guilt of sexual harassment, an objective procedure to be used when someone feels to be a victim of sexual harassment and trainings to inform individuals about their rights and responsibilities regarding the prevention of the phenomenon (Licata and Popovich, 1987).

However, strict procedures and policies alone are not the only factors that helps preventing sexual harassment. Many organizations implement prevention trainings. During these trainings employees learn how to recognize sexual harassment and who to complain to if they believe to be sexually harassed. Also, during the training the participants should practice these things. A goal of these exercises is to get the employees thinking about the various responses have impact on the work environment. The main purpose of these trainings is to know how to respond to sexual harassment and to identify the most effective ways to respond (Thacker, 2003). According to Licata and Popovich (1987), trainings are the only way to influence and change the behaviour of people and to develop skills to help them with teamwork. It is suggested that a business invests in a prevention training rather than dealing with crisis management later on, to ensure the effectiveness of sexual harassment policies. For a company there is, besides the moral aspect, also a financial and reputation aspect as they have the responsibility over their employees and therefore, can be held accountable for any type harassment (Licata and Popovich, 1987). According to the same source, sexual harassment is a result of the behaviour of people and therefore, employees should learn how to modify that and prevent harassment

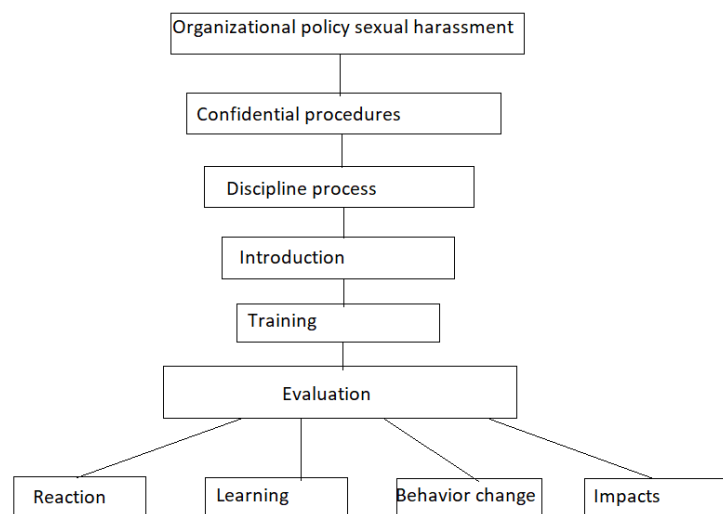


Figure 2. Example of a sexual harassment prevention training (modified Licata and Popovich, 1987)

Figure 4 is created to show an example of a sexual harassment prevention training. This training first makes employees aware of their rights and gives information about how to handle sexual harassment and in what way. Next, it continues with the training and an evaluation to give a recap of everything that has been taught.

Moreover, studies show that 88% of organizations have a formal written sexual harassment policy, and over 70% of companies offer sexual harassment prevention trainings. The same source claims that the percentages of people who agree on the fact that trainings have helped covering harassment, whether that is caused by a co-worker or supervisor, are all above at least 70% (Cole, 2018). Therefore, it can be assumed that prevention trainings of sexual harassment do have a positive impact.

3 Methodology

Selecting an appropriate research method can be a dilemma for many researchers. One might say there is no one best research method, as it depends on the research purpose and type of study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have their advantages and disadvantages, that play a role in a research process (Sogunro, 2002). However, a combination of these two methods can be used as well when conducting a study.

The research method used in this study is a quantitative method. This method was chosen as it generates numerical data that quantify opinions and behaviour. According to Creswell (2014, p 32.), quantitative research can be defined as “an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables”. The variables can be measured and therefore, numbered data can be obtained and analysed. This study can be marked as an exploratory study, which will help getting a better understanding and some new insights on this topic that can be of value. An exploratory study is designed to address key issues and questions that will help to make a situation more clear (Brother-ton, 2008).

Within this thesis, only quantitative research methods will be used. This is because it will provide information that is used to quantify the research question by generating numerical data and data that can be transformed into usable statistics. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. A questionnaire has been created which allows one to share their experiences, view and opinion on sexual harassment within the workplace. This data will be applied in a result chapter further in this report. Moreover, a quantitative method is used as the research question is concerning a social phenomenon, and presumably will show a certain level of measurable reliability.

This chapter will provide information about the questionnaire that has been created, the data collection and analysis. Lastly, the reliability and validity of the research will be discussed.

3.1 Questionnaire design and data collection

The questionnaire that is created with the system Webropol, is considered to be quantitative research, and will also obtain quantitative data as the questions are more specific and the options to answer are already given. It is a structured questionnaire that will lead the

respondents through their answers, which is important to make it possible to perform statistical analysis later on (Brotherton, 2008).

The survey has mostly closed questions, including a part with questions that require an answer that involves a measurement and other of which one or multiple options can be given. Moreover, one open question is added in the end, to gather qualitative data to get more in-depth information. However, as it is only one question, the survey can still be considered structured rather than semi-structured. As there is no face-to-face contact between the researcher and the responder, it is an indirect way of doing research and therefore, the questionnaire needs to be detailed for respondents to fully understand and give accurate answers. Also, sending this questionnaire via digital channels, Facebook and LinkedIn, makes it easier to reach as many students as possible to get a big picture and therefore, quantitative research, even more specific a survey, was used.

The questionnaire starts off with questions about the background from the respondents, such as age, gender and working experiences. This can be considered as categorical data, and is done because it gives the researcher the possibility to classify people with the same characteristics. A reason why that is important, is that with that information one can represent a certain group as a whole. A second reason is to see the differences of the respondents between two variables (Brotherton, 2008). Also, multiple answer questionnaire are created for the responders to show what they consider to be sexual harassment and to show their experiences. These can be considered perceptual questions as it shows their view on a certain topic. They are made to see if the information that will be gathered shows whether agree or disagree with certain statements and if they can be considered important or not (Brotherton, 2008).

The questionnaire continues with a few questions created using the Likert scale. It uses statements on which the respondents can answer the extent of whether they agree or disagree (Brotherton, 2008). The questions that uses the Likert scale method are mostly written in a negative form. The questionnaire ends with an open question to give the respondents the opportunity to give a more detailed answer.

The survey will be published on social media channels Facebook and LinkedIn, as this will most likely reach the most respondents. All the respond gathered via the survey on social media is voluntarily given with no permission needed. All the data obtained from this method will be analysed together. From there, percentages are calculated and they will be converted into for instance, cross tables or bar charts to obtain indications and to form a

conclusion. The population of this research will be all the students that study at Breda University of Applied Sciences. The survey was most on the media channels once, and after that it was posted in various groups from Breda University that was created on Facebook especially for graduation requests or questions. After about a week, the questionnaire post was updated again to remind people to fill it in. After two weeks, the weblink was deactivated and the amount of respondents was 89 in total.

This study uses non-probability sampling as the questionnaire is focused on students who do a study related to hospitality and therefore, not every student has an equal chance of being selected. Also, for the same reason this research executes purposive sampling, as the students requested to fill in the survey have the same relevant characteristics such as study and therefore experiences in hospitality. Another reason for the non-probability sample is the fact that there is not a lot of information about the individuals and therefore, it does not represent the whole population. The respondents in this study can be defined as students who study or have studied in the Netherlands within a hospitality related study. However, as quantitative data has been collected that is completely anonymous, a limitation is that it cannot be checked if all the respondents are valid. It is not controllable if all the participants are legitimate students who are studying in The Netherlands, neither if they study within the hospitality sector.

As the topic might be sensitive for some people, the questionnaire is completely anonymous. Also, is it likely that mostly Dutch people will respond to the questionnaire, but it is decided to only publish it in English. This is because multiple terms written in the survey would have a more loaded or different meaning in Dutch and therefore, the answers would not be reliable enough.

3.2 Analysis

As soon as the questionnaire was posted, data was being obtained. All this data needs to be analysed to get valid inferences later on. Normally, the first step is to clean up raw data as there might be some questions that for instance, might not be answered. However, within this questionnaire every question was mandatory and respondents were not able to skip a question before going to the next. As the questionnaire is made with Webropol, coding of the questions and variables will happen automatically.

When looking at all the data, it will be analysed by creating cross tables with frequencies. This will indicate if the data is even divided or if the answers are leaning towards an extreme. The data can be analysed with the help of three measures namely, the mode, median and mean. The modal value will show the answers that are picked the most frequent. The median can be considered as the middle value, as it will take all the answers in consideration when they are arranged in numerical order. The mean will provide information that can be seen as the average of all the obtained data. Using means as a research method can be effective, as it compares different sets of data.

The data in this report will be examined by comparing means. To do this, means, and standard deviation will be done. To illustrate this, cross tables and bar charts will be made. This will for instance indicate, whether there is a difference between gender that will be compared and what is considered to be sexual harassment and gender. Another example is looking at the connection between reporting sexual harassment or not, and what they think are the consequences of reporting. However, when using means, the numbers might be very unequal and pull to one extreme and therefore, paint a misleading picture of the results. Therefore, standard deviation was done and presented to express how much the members of a group differ from the mean value for the group.

3.3 Reliability and validity

When obtaining data, it is important to consider the reliability and validity of the research. When conducting quantitative research, and especially using a questionnaire, there might be issues that can occur regarding the validity. As the questionnaire asks people to answer every question mandatorily, it can be that not everyone answers truthfully, as they maybe do not want to, or because they do not know what to answer. Therefore, there is a possibility that the obtained data is not valid, as the accuracy of the measurement cannot be determined. Moreover, as this questionnaire can be considered as structured, the design is more consistent and constrained and therefore, it tends to be regarded as more reliable than a unstructured or semi-structured questionnaire (Brotherton, 2008).

Next, because of the digital media channels of the researcher that is used in this study, it can be assumed that the biggest group of respondents are not English speaking natives. Even though their English might be sufficient, it can be that some terms or phrases are misinterpreted due to not understanding the questions fully, or due to the fact that the translation can have a more loaded and slightly different definition. This can possibly affect the outcome of the data and therefore, the validity. Also, interpretation is a big key

factor when talking about a sensitive topic as sexual harassment. It might be that not everyone who falls into the sample group answers the questions (truthfully) due to the sensitivity. In addition, every individual has a different perspective on the phenomenon sexual harassment which can influence the reliability of the research. It is impossible to know the honesty of the respondents but it needs to be taken into consideration that these are their experiences and therefore, are reliable.

As it is possible to measure the reliability of a study by looking to what extent another research has the same results in the same scenario's, it is difficult to determine the reliability for this study in that manner. In addition, this study is assessed on an internal basis regarding reliability. It paints a picture via data collection instead of verify and cross-check existing data, which is considered external reliability (Brotherton, 2008).

Lastly, due to the position of the researcher of this study, the choices made regarding researching methods and non-probability sampling are precluded by time, possibilities, access and lack of resources.

4 Results

Within this chapter, all the relevant data will be presented to see the results and answer the research question of this study. First, some background information about the respondents will be given such as age, gender and working experience within the hospitality industry. Next, the results of what these students consider to be sexual harassment and their experiences will be discussed. To continue, perceptions on the hospitality industry will be provided to show consequences of possible sexual harassment. This is followed by giving data about reporting sexual harassment. Lastly, a comparison will be made between female and male participants.

4.1 Background information

After conducting the questionnaire, the total respondents was 89. To start, some background information needs to be provided to get a good overview over the respondents of the questionnaire. Figure 3 shows the age of all the participants, who are all 18 years or older. The biggest group are the respondents between 21-25 years namely 63 respondents out of the 89, which is 71%. Looking at their working experiences within the hospitality sector, the biggest group has worked in hospitality for 3 years or more.

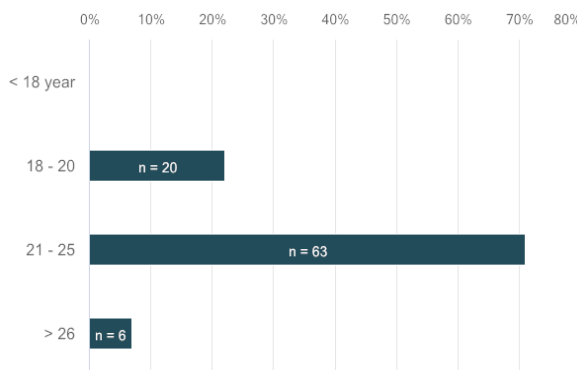


Figure 3. What is your age? (n=89)

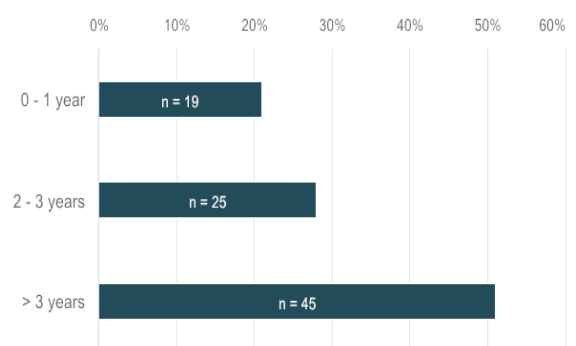


Figure 4. How many years have you worked in the hospitality industry? (n=89)

Furthermore, later on in this study there will be a comparison between female and male respondents. Among the 89 participants, 58 are female and 31 are male.

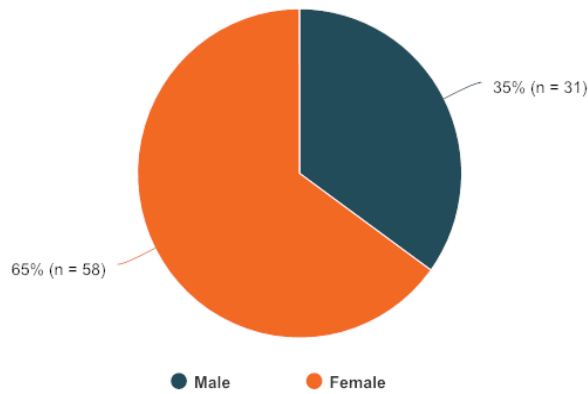


Figure 5. Division of gender (n=89)

To continue, figure 6 shows the division of the 89 respondents of where they obtained their experiences within the hospitality industry. Like mentioned before, this industry includes restaurant, accommodation, transportation and entertainment businesses. There are 10 people who answered the question "What type of hospitality company/business have you worked it?" with the option "other". In the field that was added for people to specify "other", most of the participants said to have worked at festivals, cinemas, theatres or any other entertainment business. Three quarter of the respondents within this question have worked in a restaurant, followed by the hotel industry.

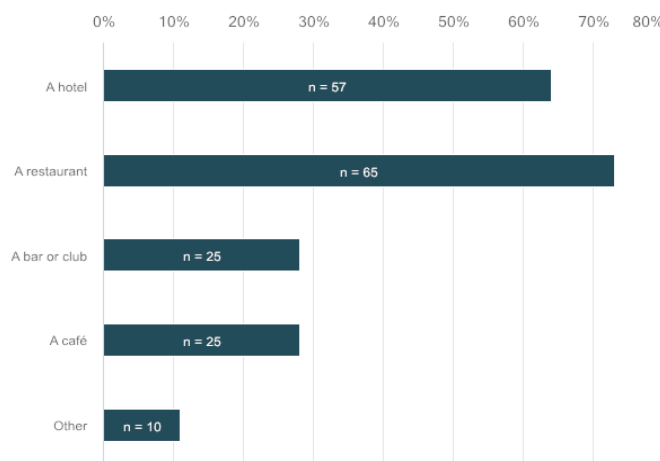


Figure 6. What type of hospitality company/business have you worked in? (n=89)

4.2 Perceptions and experiences on sexual harassment

After gathering information about the background of the participants, the respondents were asked questions about what they think is sexual harassment. As it is subjective what can be considered sexual harassment, categories were made based on theory.

Table 4 represents the numbers and percentages of what the total of 89 participants considers to be sexual harassment. It can be stated that the majority of the respondents consider options "request for sexual favours", "threats of negative consequences when sexual advancement is refused" and "promises of advantages when sexual advancement is accepted" as sexual harassment. Also, sexual comments and inappropriate touching scored high numbers when determining sexual harassment. Only a big minority considers flirting and staring to be harassment. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents marked the stalking via text as harassment, and three out our four thought stalking by following is harassment. Lastly, a bit less than one out of three thinks of whistling as harassment.

Table 4. What do you consider to be sexual harassment? (n= 89)

	n	Per- cent
Sexual comments on body, clothing etc	62	69.66%
Flirting	8	8.99%
Request for sexual favours	85	95.51%
Staring	16	17.98%
Stalking via text (social media/phone)	61	68.54%
Stalking by following	67	75.28%
Inappropriate touching	83	93.26%
Whistling	25	28.09%
Threats of negative consequences if sexual advancement is refused	85	95.51%
Promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted	81	91.01%

Next, table 5 represents the experiences of the 89 participants regarding sexual harassment. The percentages here are less extreme compared to the considerations. However, it is notable that the least considered forms of harassment are the most occurring. Which is in this case “flirting”, “staring” and “whistling”. Also, half of the students experiences that sexual comments are made on their body or clothing. The two types of stalking are not often experienced, however stalking by text is more occurring than stalking by following. Next, two out of five is experiencing inappropriate touching. The forms that were highly marked as being sexual harassment are rarely experienced. To elaborate, less than two out of five experienced getting a request for sexual favours. Also, based on this data “threats of negative consequences when sexual advancement is refused” and “promises of advantages when sexual advancement is accepted” are hardly experienced.

Table 5. Which one of the following have you experienced? (n=89)

	n	Per- cent
Sexual comments on body, clothing etc	43	48.31%
Flirting	62	69.66%
Request for sexual favours	15	16.85%
Staring	62	69.66%
Stalking via text (social media/phone)	21	23.6%
Stalking by following	6	6.74%
Inappropriate touching	35	39.33%
Whistling	36	40.45%
Threats of negative consequences if sexual advancement is re- fused	3	3.37%
Promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted	3	3.37%

4.3 Perspectives on the hospitality industry

As this study focuses on students who are studying within the hospitality sector, the questionnaire continues with questions about the students’ perspectives on the hospitality industry. Five statements were given, and the participants could share their perspective on them by measuring their agreement. Looking at the first statement, “I think flirting with customers is a part of the job”, most respondents disagreed. However, the other options

are divided quite even. Only 3 participants strongly agreed with this statement. Next statement, about the fact that sexual harassment a significant problem in the hospitality industry can be, the majority is neutral or does agree. To continue, in the third statement the biggest groups answered to strongly disagree or disagree with the fact that quitting the job is the best solution to defeat sexual harassment. The fourth statement is the opposite of statement three and therefore, the biggest group agreed or strongly agreed to pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. Looking at the last statement, the answers are divided more or last equally between disagree, neutral and agree. No real extremes are here, even though still 13 respondents claim to not be afraid at all when reporting sexual harassment.

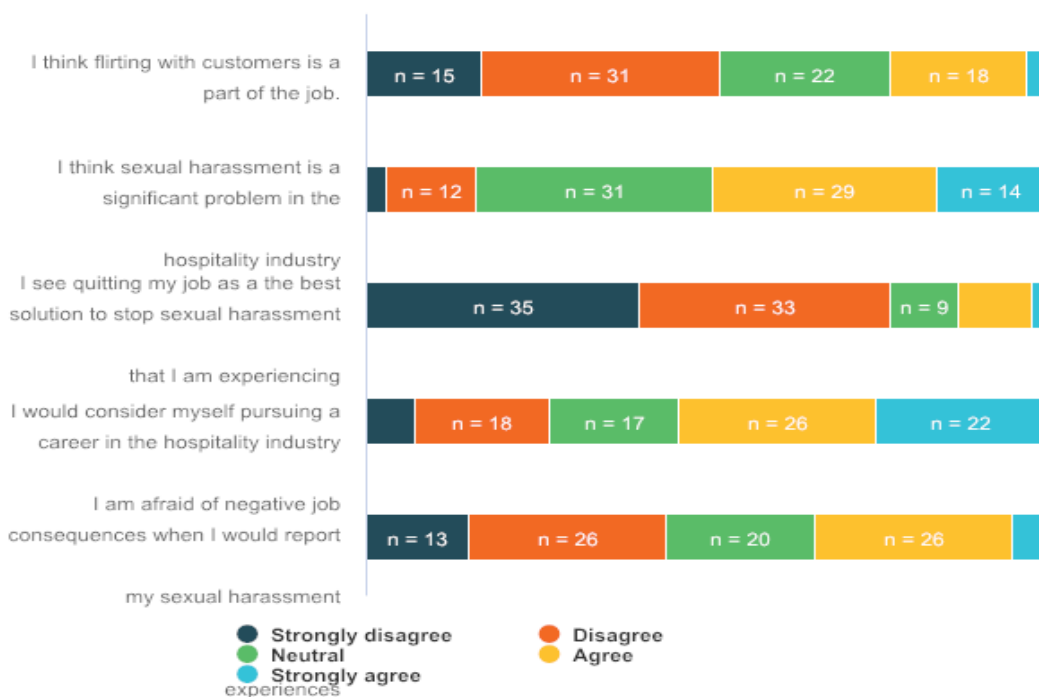


Figure 7. Answers to the five statements (n=89)

Table 6. Average and median on the five statements (n=89)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average	Median
I think flirting with customers is a part of the job.	15 16.85%	31 34.83%	22 24.72%	18 20.23%	3 3.37%	89	2.58	2
I think sexual harassment is a significant problem in the hospitality industry	3 3.37%	12 13.48%	31 34.83%	29 32.59%	14 15.73%	89	3.44	3
I see quitting my job as a the best solution to stop sexual harassment that I am experiencing	35 39.32%	33 37.08%	9 10.11%	10 11.24%	2 2.25%	89	2	2
I would consider myself pursuing a career in the hospitality industry	6 6.74%	18 20.23%	17 19.1%	26 29.21%	22 24.72%	89	3.45	4
I am afraid of negative job consequences when I would report my sexual harassment experiences	13 14.61%	26 29.21%	20 22.47%	26 29.21%	4 4.5%	89	2.8	3
Total	72	120	99	109	45	445	2.85	3

The standard deviation in statistics shows the measurement that is used to assess the amount of variation based on a set of data values. It gives a quantity amount by how much the members of a group differ from the mean value of the group. It has been applied to the five statements which resulted in a deviation of 1.2. Figure 8 was made to show the standard deviation. The mean in this case varies from 2.0 as a minimum to 3.4 the maximum. In table 6 the average and median is also shown per statement.



Figure 8. Standard Deviation and mean to the five statements (n=89)

Moreover, the end of the questionnaire contains an open-ended question for the students to say what they are afraid of when reporting sexual harassment, to give a qualitative insight. Analysing that question, there are some answers that were most frequently given. The students were most often afraid of creating a bad atmosphere in the workplace and to not be taken seriously.

Next, the students were asked to share by whom they experienced one of the forms of sexual harassment. However, the questionnaire did not offer the option to answer none and therefore, all the 7 students who did not experience any harassment answered the option "other" and filled in "none" in the free field that was given. Therefore, the option "other" can be considered as not experienced any. It is shown in table 7 by whom the students experienced harassment.

Table 7. By whom have you experienced any form of sexual harassment? (n=89)

	n	Percent
A supervisor	17	19.1%
A co-worker	49	55.06%
A guest	56	62.92%
Top management	2	2.25%
Other	7	7.87%

4.4 Comparison between female and male students

To see to what extent the considerations and experiences of female and male students differ, a comparison was made. When comparing the answers of female and male students, it needs to be taken into account that there is almost double the amount of female responded compared to male. However, looking at the ratio, it is relatively the same. Both the female and male students do not often consider staring and flirting as sexual harassment, which can be seen in figure 9. Also, among all the respondents a relatively small amount considers whistling to be harassment. Moreover, of both parties, almost 100% of all the students acknowledge "request for sexual favours", "threats of negative consequences when sexual advancement is refused" and "promises of advantages when sexual advancement is accepted" to be sexual harassment. Looking at the data, also "sexual comments on body, clothing etc." is a frequently chosen option.

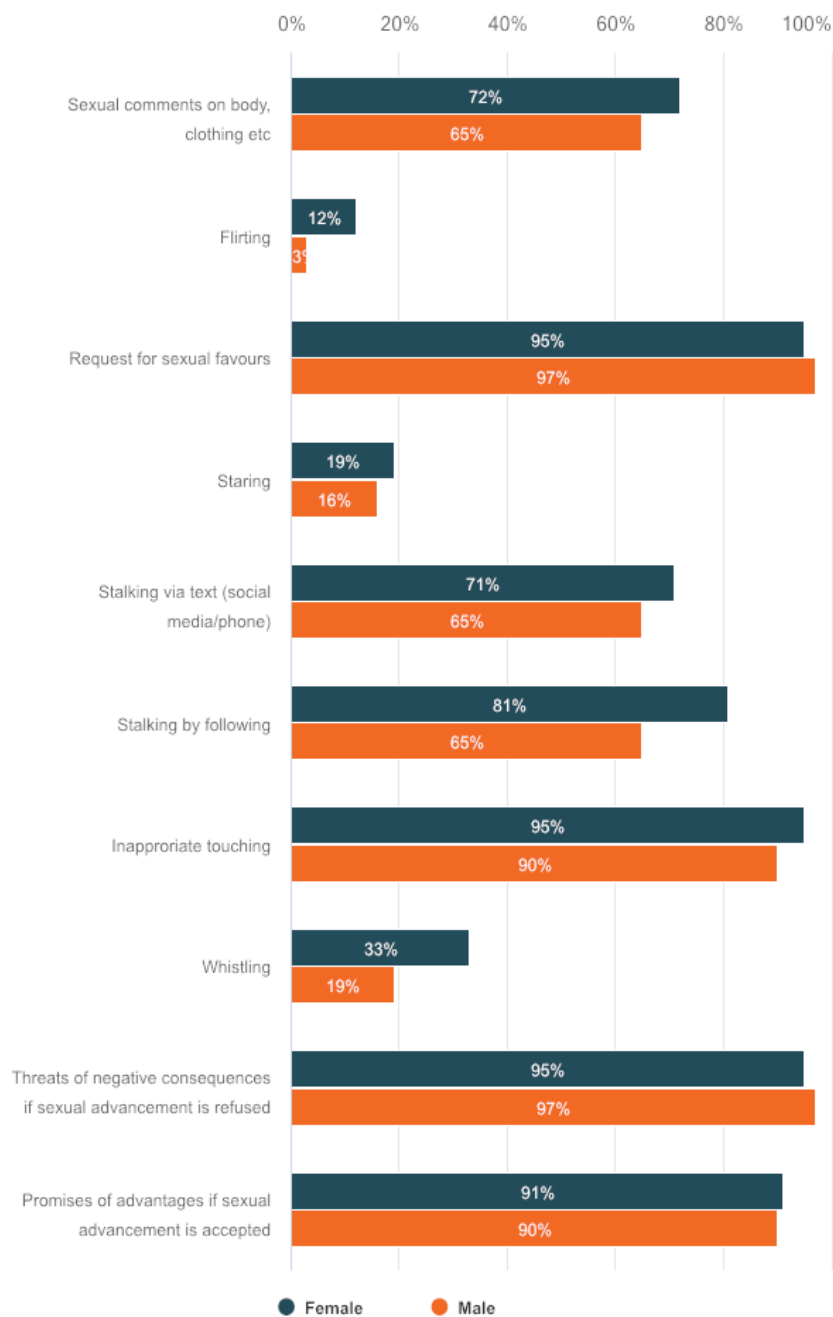


Figure 9. Division of what female and male students consider to be sexual harassment (n=89)

Next, the participants were asked to share their own experiences. Figure 10 provides the information given on the question “Which ones of the following have you experienced?”. Again, it is remarkable that “staring”, “flirting” and “whistling” is not highly marked as being harassment. However, figure 8 shows those incidents are most frequently occurring.

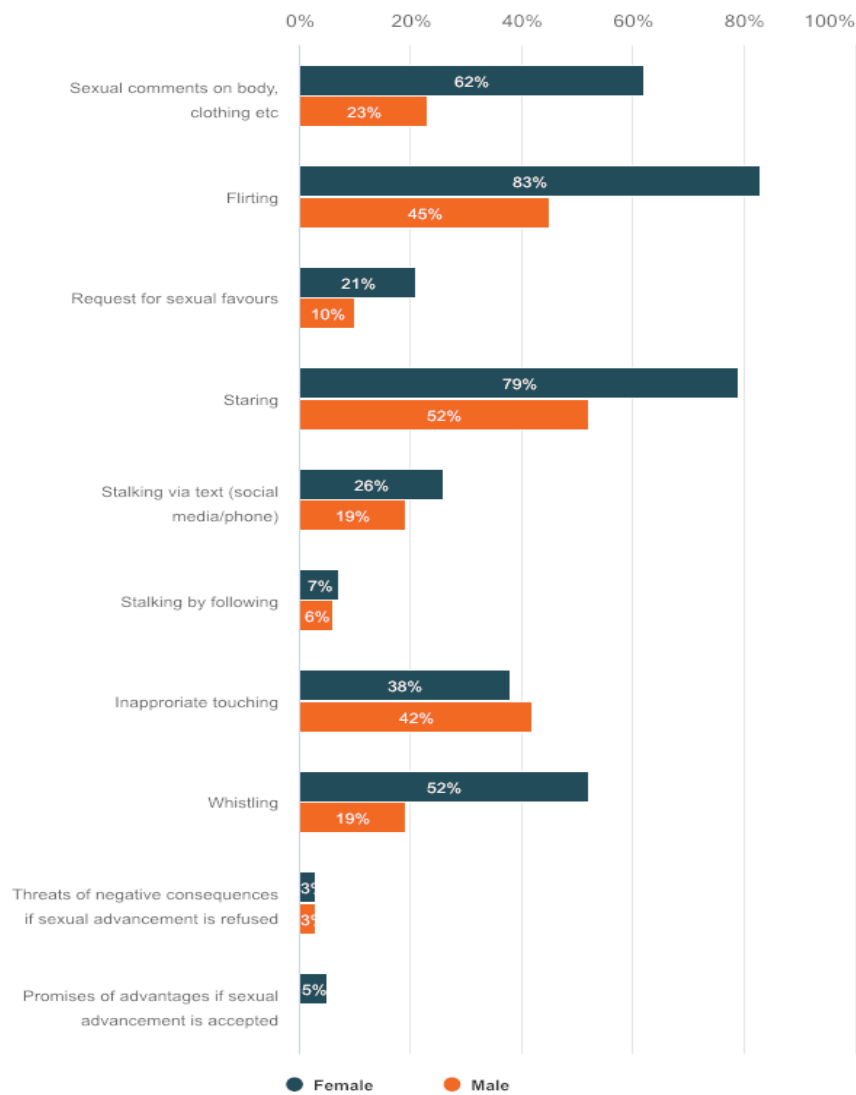


Figure 10. Division of female and male experiences regarding sexual harassment (n=89)

It is remarkable that the things that are often considered as more innocent, are the things that are most occurring. Also, most forms of sexual harassment have a balanced ratio between female and males. However, when looking at the data "sexual comments on body, clothing etc", "staring" and "whistling" is more common for female students. In addition, when looking at the ratios, "inappropriate touching" is more common for male students namely, 42% against 38%.

5 Discussion

This chapter of the study will look into the results of the study. As this is an research-oriented thesis, the reliability, ethical viewpoints and suggestions will be shared. Based on the results gathered, this part will provide a conclusion and further suggestions that can be used for further research, creating added value to a company or/and increase the awareness on the phenomenon sexual harassment. The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions on sexual harassment in the workplace of students who study in The Netherlands within the hospitality industry. This study focusses on the following three objectives. First, what is consider to be sexual harassment. Secondly, what type of sexual harassment have they experienced and third, what are the differences based on gender, so the female and male perceptions and experiences.

The discussion starts off with presenting the main findings. Based on these, a conclusion will be written together with a suggestion. The thesis ends with an evaluation on the process and learning development of the researcher.

5.1 Main findings

According to the source Thacker (2008), it can be proven that sexual harassment has a negative influence on employees in the workplace and is likely to cause negative consequences, such as bad mental health and work withdrawal. It can be stated that it is an earnest form of harassment and therefore, it is important to research, develop measurements and bring it under the attention of employees and employers.

In this study, it is determined what will be defined as the different forms of sexual harassment. Based on Timmerman and Bajema (1998) that is: Sexual comments or remarks on looks, body, clothing etc., flirting, request for sexual favours, staring, stalking via text, stalking by following, whistling, inappropriate touching, threats of reprisals if sexual advancement is refused and promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted. However, a relevant finding is that based on this data students' perceive all these as sexual harassment. Even though there is no form that has not been selected by a student, there are three forms that based on this data, are less considered to be harassment. The number of students who choose the option "staring", "flirting" and "whistling" is lower. This means that even though Timmerman and Bajema (1998) confirm this to be sexual harassment, that in real life students argue this fact. In addition, the data gathered on the question what they consider to be sexual harassment resulted in extremes. Where the three options named above are low rated, the other options are really high rated. The number of students in percentages that choose options "sexual comments or remarks on

looks, body, clothing etc”, “request for sexual favours stalking via text”, “stalking by following”, “inappropriate touching”, “threats of reprisals if sexual advancement is refused” and “promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted” starts at least at 68%. Worth mentioning is that especially the numbers for the options, “request for sexual favours” (95%), “inappropriate touching” (93%), “threats of reprisals if sexual advancement is refused” (95%) and “promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted” (91%) are extremely high. To conclude, almost all of the respondents perceived them as sexual harassment.

Next, looking at the experiences of the students in this data, a finding that can be interesting is the fact that the options that are less considered to be sexual harassment are the options that is most experienced. This can imply that the students are more tolerant for these types of harassment as the majority does not consider it to be harassment and therefore, is more frequently experienced. Moreover, while Poulston (2008) claims that one is forced to be more tolerant in the hospitality industry, data in this study shows that only 18 of the 89 respondents agreed that within the hospitality sector flirting is a part of it. An exception might be “inappropriate touching”, as two out of five have experienced this and also considers it to be sexual harassment. The options of which at least 90% of the students think about it as sexual harassment are rarely experienced, which suggest again that the tolerance level for these forms of harassment is low. To add, looking at the two types of stalking, they are also relatively high considered to be harassment but not experienced. However, stalking via text is more experienced than stalking via following.

When comparing the big picture of what the female and male students are considering to be sexual harassment, the results are fairly similar. However, there are some differences. Looking at the results, the biggest difference in opinion is about “stalking by following”, followed by “whistling”. In both cases the female students think about it as sexual harassment more than the male students. The other forms of sexual harassment is interestingly enough quite the same and in the results there are no real extremes. Looking at their experiences, the differences are bigger. When looking at the overall data, it can be stated that female students experience sexual in general more often in general than male students. The same kind of result have been presented by several researchers (Williams et al., 1990; The United States Merit Systems Protection Board, 1979). There is one exception where male participants have more experience with a type of harassment which is “inappropriate touching”. Even though the difference is only 4% based on this data, it might be an interesting finding as sources often claim that women are more experiencing touching that is inappropriate. Furthermore, there are some differences in percentages that are around the 30%. This is aligned with most of the sources used in this study, as

they often suggest women are more likely to experience forms of sexual harassment in general. Again, it is interesting that the forms of harassment that are noted as more innocent are more experienced, but more often with female students.

To continue, the results show that most of the participants who experienced any type of sexual harassment was done by either a co-worker or a guest. Looking at the literature, Vijayasiri (2008) does acknowledge the fear for possible negative consequences. However, this researcher suggests the main reason for not reporting is because employees might be afraid of retaliation from the harasser, while based on this data the main reason is because the students are afraid of the consequences to not be believed or that they do not want to ruin the atmosphere in the workplace. Also, despite the fact that there are many students who think sexual harassment is a significant problem in the hospitality industry, the majority still agrees to continue in a career in this sector. The number of students who disagree and agree to be afraid of the negative consequences of sexual harassment are the same. However, looking at the results it can be stated that again the majority wants to pursue their career within the hospitality industry.

5.2 Conclusion and suggestions

Based on the findings of this thesis, it seems that the results are rather similar to the information that have been presented by several researchers (Tacker, 2008; Williams et al. 1999) discussed in the theoretical framework. It seems that both female and male have similar perceptions on sexual harassment, as well as experiences. It can be concluded that the respondents consider options "sexual comments or remarks on looks, body, clothing etc", "request for sexual favours", "stalking via text", "stalking by following", "inappropriate touching", "threats of reprisals if sexual advancement is refused" and "promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted" as sexual harassment as the majority choose to. To elaborate, the other forms of harassment which are "staring", "flirting" and "whistling" are lower and therefore it can be stated that based on this data, it could be a less impactful form of sexual harassment.

To continue, this study did research regarding the experiences of the respondents. When looking at the data it can suggest that the harassment forms "staring", "flirting" and "whistling" are the most experienced. However, they are not necessarily defined as harassment by the majority of the population. Because of this, results imply that the tolerant level for students who study within the hospitality industry in The Netherlands is higher for forms they did not mark as harassment and therefore, it is more frequently occurring.

Another objective that has been researched in this study is the differences and comparisons between female and male students in the population. It seems that in general, the female students are more likely to consider something to be harassment. Overall, it can be stated that the data collected is considerably aligned with the literature presented, there are exceptions which are "request for sexual favours" and "threats of reprisals if sexual advancement is refused". In addition, even though these two forms are more often marked as harassment by the male participants, the difference with the female students are minimal. Furthermore, whereas the female and male considerations are practically the same, their experiences differ more. Based on this data it seems that the female and male students' perceptions on sexual harassment are quite similar. It also seems that based on this data, female students do experience sexual harassment in the workplace more often than male students. This supports the information given by most of the sources used in this study.

Furthermore, as sexual harassment in the workplace is something that keeps on occurring, it is important to fight this phenomenon. Based on the theoretical framework, a few suggestions will be given to either raise the awareness of the topic or to prevent sexual harassment as much as possible. Looking at multiple sources such as Licata and Popovich (1987) and Cole (2018), a sexual harassment prevention training can be effective. As the biggest group of the sample in this study claims that the reason for not reporting harassment is that they are afraid to create a bad atmosphere or to not be taken seriously, a prevention training can positively influence this fear. As it is proven by Cole (2018) to help victims to know how to recognize sexual harassment and what to do when it happens to you, this training can help companies, employers and employees. When participating in the training, everyone will know the boundaries set and therefore, it might be easier for victims to report or to protect themselves on forehand. It can be suggested to implement this type of training to either prevent sexual harassment as much as possible and/or raise the awareness so appropriate measurements can be taken.

To conclude, sexual harassment might be seen as part of a job in some cultures. It can be occurring more often in some countries or nations and therefore, it can be discussed if culture has anything to do with the frequency of sexual harassment and the forms and types. As a suggestion, further research about the correlation between culture and sexual harassment can be suggested.

5.3 Evaluation

To give an overall view on this thesis process, this evaluation is written. When looking at the whole thesis process, the development is considered to be satisfying. Sexual harassment is not an ordinary topic and also sensitive. Looking at the research questions and objectives, it is believed they are answered and that the theory and data collected was reliable enough to do so.

Looking at the project management of this study, the planning was done in an efficient way. At the end of every meeting a new meeting and deadline for thesis parts were set, so it was clear when to finish. As working with a strict schedule works best for me, this way of planning was motivating. However, in the beginning of the thesis process I had to deal with illness and therefore, some deadlines had to be shifted. Nevertheless, the thesis was done in the appropriate amount of time. The execution of the thesis went accordingly as well. Without following a complete thesis course, the writing went more smoothly over time. With the guidance of my graduation coach, the structure and purpose of the thesis became more clear and the way the parts written was discussed was organized and understandable. The closing of the study was based on small improvements that had to be done regarding things such as layout and grammar. On the 7 May 2019 the thesis was handed in, as planned.

The strengths in this study I believe to be the wide range of academical sources, which provide a strong theoretical framework. Based on this, the questionnaire that was created was also structured and designed with the right questions so relevant data could be collected. However, the weaknesses in this study was the lack of time and resources, such as a commissioner party. Because of this, the decision was made to do a non-probability sample and therefore, the population was unknown. In addition, for the same reason a quantitative research method was applied.

Furthermore, to evaluate the further process, the pre assumptions that I had regarding the subjectivity of this topic turned out to play a big role. It was a good choice to use a quantitative research method, as the sensitivity became less of an issue than expected in the beginning.

When reflecting on my learning, it can be said that I got a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. As I do not have my any experiences regarding sexual harassment myself, it was surprising for me to see it that it occurring among people who are similar to me and share the same characteristics. I got an better understanding on which types of sexual

harassment students are experiencing and by whom. My expertise on this topic did really develop, as it normally was not something I have to deal with in real life and therefore, did not have a lot of knowledge about. The most important thing that I learned personally, is that because I am more aware of this frequently occurring phenomenon I am more confident in recognizing sexual harassment and whom to report it to. Also, my own boundaries became more clear when analysing the results.

Overall, the development of this thesis went smooth. Despite some writer blocks once in a while, there were enough academical sources to keep on writing and enough guidance to get a good perspective on what the thesis should look like at the end. Even though the time I had to do research and write this study was tight, by creating and following a good schedule I managed to finish it in time and I am satisfied with the result. Lastly, when having my thesis presentation, the audience was enthusiastic and participated in a discussion that started because of the fact they saw the relevance of the topic and wanted to share their opinion as well. This was satisfying as being the researcher, to see that my topic has a certain effect on people and I hope my thesis helps them find their own boundaries and give them information about what to do in case it happens to them. In addition, a small summary was made and posted on LinkedIn and Facebook to update my respondents and other interested individuals about the overall results of this research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Sexual harassment in the work place

Hello!

For my Bachelor thesis I have created a survey to gather data about the experiences of sexual harassment by students. This survey is for students who are currently studying in The Netherlands or who have studied there, within the hospitality sector. It is completely anonymous and it takes a maximum of 5 minutes. Thank you in advance for your time!

1. What is your gender? *

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age? *

- < 18 year
- 18 - 20
- 21 - 25
- > 26

3. How many years have you worked in the hospitality industry? *

- 0 - 1 year
- 2 - 3 years
- > 3 years

4. What type of hospitality company/business have you worked in? (You can pick more than one option) *

- A hotel
- A restaurant
- A bar or club
- A café
- Other _____

5. Which ones of the following do you consider to be sexual harassment? (you can pick more than one option) *

- Sexual comments on body, clothing etc
- Flirting
- Request for sexual favours
- Staring
- Stalking via text (social media/phone)
- Stalking by following
- Inappropriate touching
- Whistling
- Threats of negative consequences if sexual advancement is refused
- Promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted

6. Which ones of the following have you experienced? (You can pick more than one option) *

- Sexual comments on body, clothing etc
- Flirting
- Request for sexual favours
- Staring
- Stalking via text (social media/phone)
- Stalking by following
- Inappropriate touching
- Whistling
- Threats of negative consequences if sexual advancement is refused
- Promises of advantages if sexual advancement is accepted

7. By whom have you experienced any form of sexual harassment? (You can pick more than one option) *

- A supervisor
- A co-worker
- A guest
- Top management
- Other _____

8. Did you report it to your employer? If not, why not? *

- Yes
- No _____

9. Abuse of power can be defined as the act of using one's position of power in an abusive way. Have you experienced any form of abuse of power in the workplace? And if yes, by whom? (You can pick more than one option) *

- Yes, by a supervisor
- Yes, by a co-worker
- Yes, by a guest
- Yes, by top management
- Yes, other _____
- No

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I think flirting with customers is a part of the job. *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think sexual harassment is a significant problem in the hospitality industry *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see quitting my job as a the best solution to stop sexual harassment that I am experiencing *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would consider myself pursuing a career in the hospitality industry *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am afraid of negative job consequences when I would report my sexual harassment experiences *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. What are you afraid of when reporting sexual harassment? *

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Appendix 2. Invitation to survey on Facebook and LinkedIn

Hi guys!

For my Bachelor thesis I have created a questionnaire to gather data about the experiences of sexual harassment by students. This survey is for students who are currently studying in The Netherlands or who have studied there, within the hospitality sector. It is completely anonymous and it takes a maximum of 5 minutes. The survey is in English. It would be highly appreciated if you can fill in this questionnaire.

Thank you for your time!

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